

2003

## Correspondence: Lavinia Browne, Personal to Assistant Archbishop Tutu responds to researcher, March 11, 2003.

Lavinia Browne

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**Foreman, Kerri**

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**From:** Lavina Browne email address redacted  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2003 5:45 AM  
**To:** 'adrian fynn'  
**Cc:** 'Foreman, Kerri'  
**Subject:** RE: student

Dear Adrian

Thank you for writing to Archbishop Tutu. He is in the United States where he is Visiting Scholar at the University of North Florida for the spring semester. I will forward your enquiry to him but he is under considerable pressure of work so I reply on his behalf.

The critical issues and motivating force that caused him to speak out against apartheid were his conviction that all people are created in God's image. Each person is a God-carrier – we are all God's children and therefore each individual is worthy of the utmost respect. To treat anyone as less than this is not only immoral and unjust, it is blasphemous. Apartheid was not only a system of oppression and repression accompanied by gross violations of human rights, torture, murder, detention without trial, forced removals of thousands of people and social engineering of a most heinous kind, etc. the system caused people who were not white to question their own identity, their self-worth – as if God had made a "mistake" in creating them..

The imperatives of the Gospel motivated Archbishop Tutu to speak and act as he did and not to rest until all South Africans, black and white could be free to be truly God's children, brothers and sisters in a rainbow nation. He has now retired but is in much demand to address the issues of today. His sermons and speeches are still similar to those he gave in the '70's and '80's. The Gospel has not changed. The Archbishop's message is still that people were created to be interdependent, to live in community, in harmony, where the weakest in the community are given dignity and helped to stand on their own feet, to live in trust and cooperation. This is not just pie in the sky. The South African experience of a relatively peaceful negotiated transition followed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has impressed the world. According to the Institute for Transitional Justice, New York, there are now seventeen countries emerging from conflict that are studying and learning from the South African experience and attempting to implement peaceful change and transition in their contexts.

Two books that would be helpful to you are: The Rainbow People of God – a collection of the Archbishop's sermons and speeches and No Future without Forgiveness – his own personal account of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I attach an abbreviated biography.

Yours sincerely  
 Lavinia Browne

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