

APARTHEID EDUCATION: The most evil act of all

Desmond Mpilo Tutu and his family grew up before the formal policy of apartheid was introduced. Like most black South Africans who attended school at the time, they were educated in what has been called "an enormous benevolent empire" of church schools.

But when the apartheid government took power in 1948, it seized control of their education and perverted it to its own ends. Bantu Education would first change the course of Desmond Tutu's life, and later the trajectory of South African history.



"The Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them. There is no place for the Bantu child above the level of certain forms of labour."

> DR HF VERWOERD Minister of Native Affairs, 1954

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TOP LEFT

Before white minority governments were prepared to finance black education, it was missionaries who started schools such as this one in Sophiatown, Johannesburg in 1928, and Healdtown and Lovedale in the Eastern Cape. Church schools were often "colonialist in their attitude and practices," said Nelson Mandela, "yet their benefits outweighed their disadvantages."

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Desmond Tutu was born on 7 October 1931 in a segregated township in Klerksdorp, North West Province, but his family soon moved to nearby Ventersdorp. He first went to school in the Tshing Methodist Church, which still stands in Ventersdorp today.

Church,

© John Allen

TOP RIGHT

After attending secondary school on the West Rand, Desmond followed his father, Zachariah Zelilo Tutu, into teaching. Among his fellow students at college was Mmutlanyane Stanley Mogoba (back row), who went on to become a leader of the Methodist Church after spending several years in prison on Robben Island. Front row (left to right): Isaac Sibanyoni, Dee Sechele and Desmond Tutu.

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BOTTOM RIGHT

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During his college holidays, Desmond found himself attracted to his younger sister's friend, Nomalizo Leah Shenxane, who was also training as a teacher at another college. After courting for several years, they were married in 1955.

"This Synod deplores
the type of school
education which will be
provided for the African
children under the Bantu
Education Act. It regards
this Act as contrary to
the Will of God."

1954

RESOLUTION OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG





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After the introduction of Bantu Education, both Desmond and Leah left teaching. Tutu then enrolled at St Peter's College in Rosettenville, Johannesburg in 1958, where he trained for the Anglican priesthood. In 1963 St Peter's College was forced out of what became a "white area" under the Group Areas Act, and relocated to Alice in the Eastern Cape.

DITLE

BOTTOM LEFT

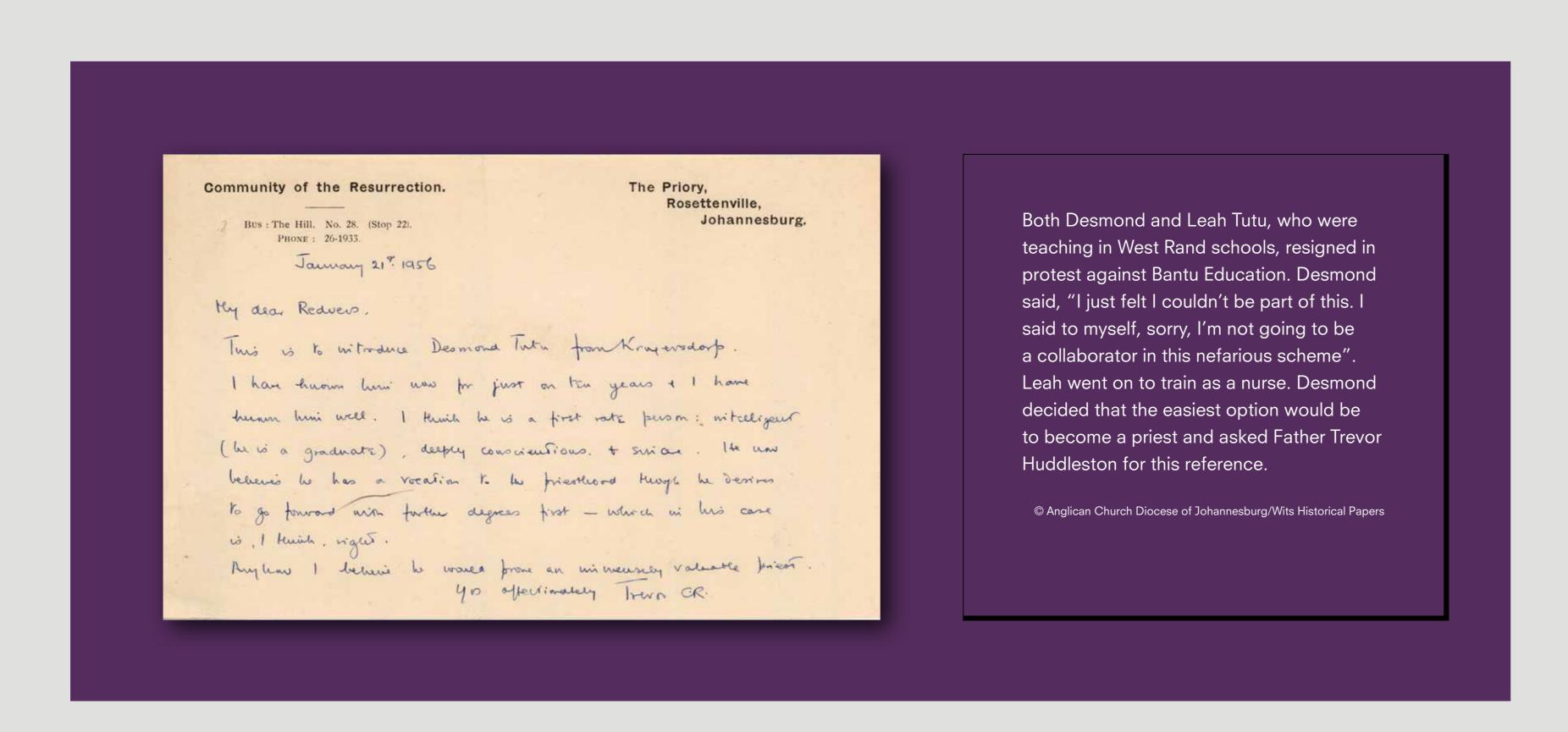
Desmond and Leah are pictured here with their four children, circa 1964. Front row (left to right): Trevor Tamsanqa (b. 1956), Thandeka Theresa (b. 1957), Nontombi Naomi (b. 1960) and Mpho Andrea (b. 1963).

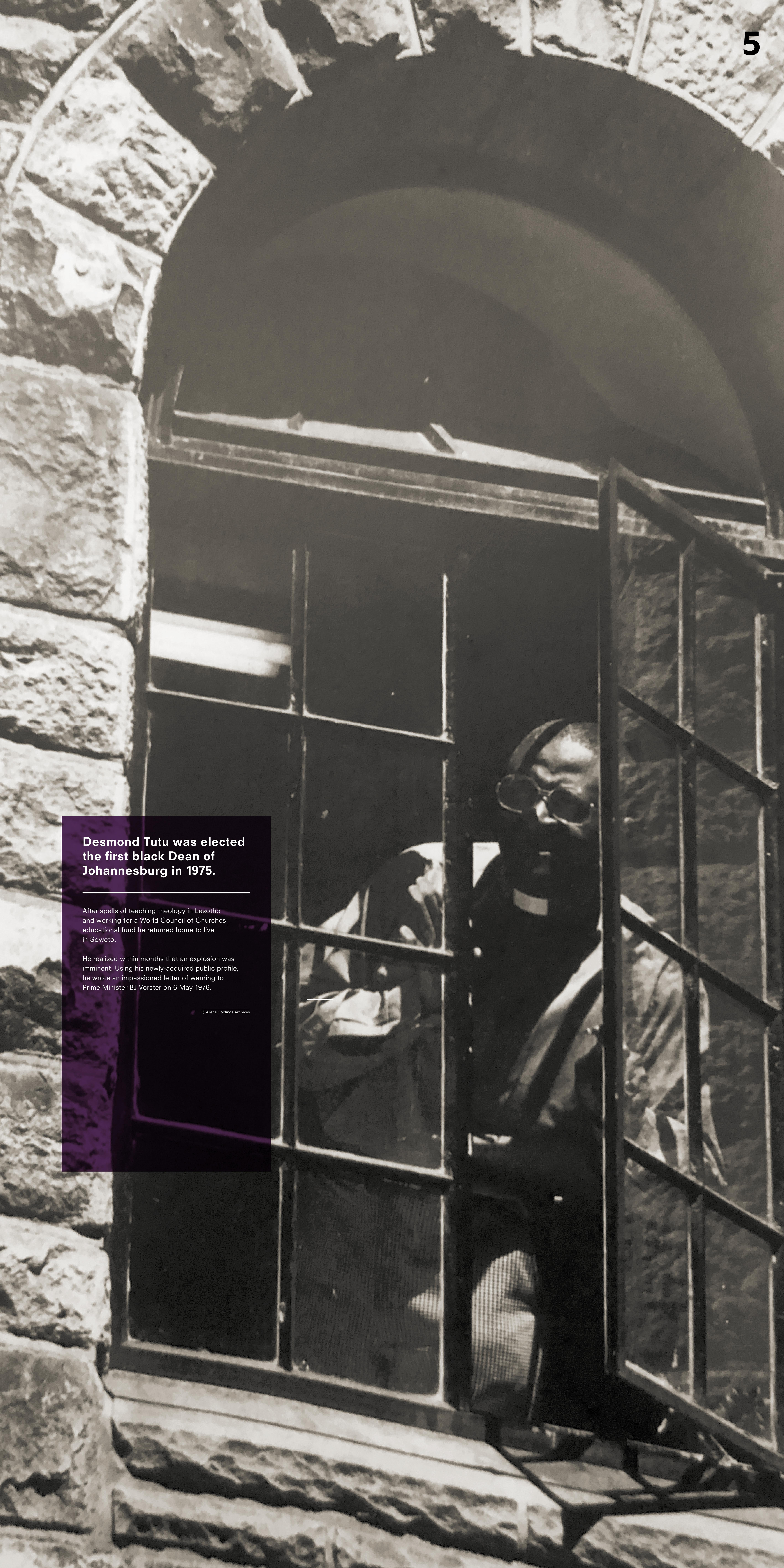
After being ordained as a priest in 1961, Tutu studied for a Master's degree in theology at King's College, London. His family enjoyed a period of living without the constant degradations of life under apartheid. Tutu family pictured here (left to right) with other children: Thandeka, Nontombi, Leah holding Mpho and Trevor.

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BOTTOM RIGHT

Desmond Tutu returned to South Africa in 1967 to teach theology at St Peter's College, today part of the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice in the Eastern Cape. The seminary was seen as a subversive influence by officials of the adjoining University of Fort Hare, as well as by the apartheid government.





"I'm writing to you,
Sir, because I have a
growing nightmarish fear
that unless something
drastic is done very soon,
bloodshed and violence is
going to happen in South
Africa almost inevitably."

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU Letter to Prime Minister BJ Vorster, May 1976 "The broad masses of Soweto are perfectly content, perfectly happy. Black-white relationships at present are as healthy as can be. There is no danger whatsoever of a blow-up in Soweto."

MANIE MULDER, Chairperson of the West Rand Administration Board, Rand Daily Mail, May 1976



Six weeks after Tutu had written his letter to Vorster, the Soweto uprising began - over the very issue that had driven the Tutus out of teaching 20 years earlier: Bantu Education. The student uprising was initially triggered by the compulsory teaching of half the school subjects in Afrikaans. It gradually transformed into a wider attack on the ruling white government. All symbols of government authority such as beerhalls, buses and council buildings were attacked. After the repression and despair of the 1960s, a new, more defiant spirit was felt across the country, and a host of new political organisations sprang up. South Africa was never the same again – and the accuracy of Tutu's prediction propelled him onto the national stage. © Mike Mzileni

DRIVEN BY COMPASSION:

A human rights activist

Archbishop Tutu's human rights activism was born out of the discrimination and humiliation that black people experienced during apartheid. With the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Tutu left teaching to study theology. His refusal to be part of the inferior Bantu Education system changed the trajectory of his life.

THEME ONE

MONITOR STAND