

# International Advocate for Peace Award 2003



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## Opening Remarks

### David Rudenstine:

On behalf of the entire law school community I wish to welcome all of you. I particularly wish to welcome our students, faculty, administrators, and our outside guests. I want to thank the student organizations, the Journal of Conflict Resolution and the International Law Students Association, which worked so hard to bring this special occasion about. I also wish to acknowledge the leadership of Harpreet Mann and Aaron Kiviat in this overall effort; they will both be speaking to you during our program this afternoon. Of course, I also welcome our distinguished and honored guest, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Having him here does great honor to the law school and we thank him for accepting our invitation.

I have just a few brief things I wish to say. Having the Archbishop with us today is an occasion that reminds us about something that we can all often forget. There are at least two important theories of history. One emphasizes that individuals can often make an important difference in world events and it celebrates the role of individuals in contributing to the public good. The other theory emphasizes the role of larger, impersonal forces in shaping world events. These two approaches offer two quite different ways to understand not only human events but the capacity of each of us to substantially influence the course of history.

Although the world today may make us all feel as though we, as individuals, have little if any capacity to have a significant impact on what is happening in the larger society in which we live, our guest today offers us a dramatically different lesson. During the 1970s and the 1980s, it is most unlikely that many, if any, believed that apartheid in South Africa would end in a peaceful manner. But yet, that is what has happened. Many people, including the Archbishop, participated in an astonishing effort that ended apartheid and transferred political power to Black Africans in a way that avoided a bloody, disastrous, and long civil war. Archbishop Tutu was one of those exceptional individuals who believed that peaceful change was possible. He along

with others were courageous in their hearts and in their deeds. They set an example for all to admire, and they gave us reasons to believe in the capacity of individuals to affect societal change in unexpected and unanticipated ways. Together they sent us a message that we should not surrender our initiative to affect change even though the forces arrayed against change seem insurmountable.

There is much to be said about this gentleman, but since someone else will formally introduce him, I am only going to retell an anecdote that reminded me of the Archbishop just minutes ago. When the membership of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was under consideration, it was decided that individuals under consideration would be asked questions at a public hearing about their qualifications. Accordingly, when the Archbishop came forward to be interviewed, one of the first questions he was asked was: "I do not even know what to call you. Aren't you going to be very intimidating when you ask our leaders to tell about their experiences? Should I call you Your Highness? Should I call you The Bishop? I do not know, what would you say to that?" The Archbishop answered, "Well I do not care what you call me as long as you do not call me Your Graciousness. With regard to being intimidating, I in fact think I am a lot of fun!"

If you spend a minute or two with this man, you will find that the one thing he does most easily is laugh, and he does that gracefully and frequently at himself. On behalf of the Law School, I say welcome to the Archbishop. We are honored to have you with us.

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## Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Acceptance Speech

Dear friends, good afternoon.

Thank you so very, very much for this wonderful award and all the very kind words of welcome, Mr. Dean and the wonderful young people. Thank you very much for your kind words.

I am supposed to be relatively brief in my responding remarks, but you probably do know that I am a preacher. You might have heard of the story of the preacher who went on for a very long time and at long last he said, "What more can I say"? And somebody in the back of the church said "Amen."

May I be allowed to receive this prestigious award on behalf of the many unsung heroes and heroines who have worked tirelessly for peace. When you are in a crowd and you stand out in that crowd, it is really only because you are being carried on the shoulders of others. I am prominent only because I have a prominent nose and a very easy name, Tutu. Imagine if my name was something like Kakalue.

Don't think that I want you to go away with, "Oh, isn't he nice, he's so modest," because I am not conventionally modest. My wife and I were visiting West Point Military Academy on one occasion and, at the end of the visit, the cadets decided that they were going to give me a cap as a memento of the visit. It didn't fit me! A nice wife would have said, "Well, the cap is too small." My wife said, "His head is too big."

But obviously there are different ways of dealing with differences of opinion. The most used is where you give as good as you got – when you beat the living day lights out of your adversary to retaliate when you can and, if you cannot, then you go about nursing grudges which intensify your bitterness and anger. You await your moment when you can go about dispatching your enemy with gay abandon. Although so popular, it in fact has turned out to be a futile method for resolving difference and conflict for it has tended to set off a cycle of reprisal provoking counter reprisal at infinitum.

When you cannot engage your enemy on an equal footing, then you resort to desperate measures such as guerrilla warfare and suicide bombings, which inevitably provoke retaliation. Then it is hit as hard as you can.

This is the distressing pattern being played out so horrendously in the Middle East , in Northern Ireland , in Sri Lanka , in Chechnya , and in Columbia . As happened in Liberia , Algeria and in Bosnia between the Serbs and the Albanians. It has also given rise to the ghastly genocide in Rwanda . We could go on and on and on with this doleful catalogue.

A second way is the one that we sort to follow in South Africa . As you have heard in the introductory remarks, almost everyone had expected that a racial confrontation would overwhelm our beautiful land. Wracked as it was already by violence that seemed to be going to be endemic. But it didn't happen. The disaster did not strike; the catastrophe did not over take us. Instead, enemies sat down to talk, to negotiate, to compromise, to concede, to make accommodations, and to take risks. And, presto, the result was a relatively peaceful transition from repression to democracy, epitomized by the magical first democratic elections of our country on the 27th of April 1994 .

This spectacular victory has been won over the ghastliness of apartheid. And, we constantly are aware of just how much we owe for that victory to the support that we enjoyed from the international community. I remember how many times I used to come to this country calling for economic sanctions to be applied to the South African apartheid government. I've come here around about May when students like you would be or should have been worried about exams and grades and things of that kind. It would a fantastic thing. I don't know what cockles are but the cockles of my heart were warmed when I used to come visiting university campuses to find students, not pouring over their books but actually sitting out, frequently in the baking sunshine, demonstrating in order to pressure their universities and colleges to divest.

That was fantastic and I have the great, great honor and privilege of being able to say on behalf of millions of my compatriots, thank you very much for the support we got then from such as yourselves. For you are, even now, fantastic people who have the capacity to make a tremendous change in the world. But first of all, let me clap you and, through you, vicariously all those others. But if I clap you all by myself it would look a little odd, wouldn't it? So join me in clapping you. You do it so lackadaisically, it's a lousy clap and so I will tell you what I have. I actually have a magic wand, which I wave over crowds. When I wave it over you, it turns you into instant South Africans. So, I wave it over you and you are now fellow South Africans. So, let's give these Americans a real humdinger. Thank you, and I wave it over you again and you will revert to your normal, shy, reserved American selves.

In South Africa the expected pattern of retaliation, retribution, and revenge was expected to resume once a black led government came to power. People expected an orgy of revenge in which blacks would give vent to their pent up anger for all they had suffered in the previous three centuries. It didn't happen. Instead, as you heard, the world in fact was awed by the spectacle of the truth and reconciliation process when perpetrators of some of the most gruesome atrocities, in exchange for a full disclosure of the facts relevant to the offense for which they were asking amnesty, would be granted amnesty. Quite frequently, we had the spectacle of victims who had suffered unspeakable things, embracing their former tormentors in an extraordinary exhibition of magnanimity and generosity, as people were willing to forgive and to embrace in reconciliation. Spectacularly, it was most obviously embodied in Nelson Mandela who by rights should have been consumed by bitterness for all the suffering he had undergone and, particularly, the harsh incarceration of twenty-seven years. Yet, when he came out of prison, the world was amazed that here was someone who was to become an icon of forgiveness and reconciliation.

It seems through the experience that we have had in our country, that the first way, the normal way, leads to a spiral of violence, guaranteeing neither peace nor security. Forgiveness in post-conflict situations is not some nebulous entity meant for religious people and idealists. It is something that belongs in the realm of real politic. It isn't just a facile, empty slogan, "no future without forgiveness." Basically, it is to strive for peace and justice. We learned that true security will not come from the barrel of a gun.

I'm a member of the Shimon Peres Peace Center in Tel Aviv. Two years or so ago, attending one of the Board meetings, I said that that was one of the major lessons that we learned at home. That it was a lesson that had aptness for the situation there. That until Israel is recognized as a sovereign state with borders that

are internationally acknowledged and respected, but equally, until a Palestinian state viable, sovereign, and respected – that unless these two entities exist, there is no hope for peace.

We have discovered an extraordinary thing, that an enemy is a friend waiting to be made. That when you continue to believe in the essential humanity of the other person, then there is hope. Those who wage a war almost always do so by demonizing the adversary. That other one is not always quite as human as we are and so, anything goes. The trouble is, friends, your humanity, whether you like it or not, is bound up intimately with the humanity of that other. When you dehumanize another person, the way this universe is structured, whether you like it or not, your humanity will be undermined.

God is crazy; God is crazy because God dreams. God dreams that one day you and I will realize a fundamental thing about us, that we are family. That we are family! That we belong in the family of God. That the other one we might not like is still my sister and my brother. God is hoping one day that you and I will help God's dream come true. God's dream, which is a dream that we will understand that there are no outsiders. All! All! All! All! All belong! All! All! Black! White! Short! Tall! Beautiful! Not so beautiful! Clever, stupid, male, female, gay, lesbian, straight! All! All! Arafat! Sharon ! All belong! Bush! Saddam Hussein! It is so radical, all belong in this family and we apply the ethic of family. We won't tolerate spending the amount of money that we spend on the budgets of death and destruction when we know that a very, very small fraction of that budget would enable our sisters and brothers out there to have clean water, to have enough to eat and to have a good education.

The only way that we will survive, the only way that we can survive is when we help God realize God's dream that we belong in this family. All of us! God's family! The human family! The rainbow people of God! Thank you.