

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY  
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS**

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**THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION  
IN THE THOUGHT OF DESMOND TUTU**

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South Africa was both the first and last bastion of extended European colonial rule in Sub-Saharan Africa. Due to the extensive and prolonged interaction between the black and white races, who were distinguished by divergent philosophies of life, friction developed between these two major ethnic blocs, as well as the other peoples that came to labor for the whites or have arisen as a result of miscegenation between the blacks and the whites. Archbishop Desmond Tutu holds that racial tension is neither good for South Africa nor even Christian, and insists that it should be eliminated, giving way to reconciliation.

The purpose of this research was to set forth, analyze, and evaluate Tutu's view of the church as a reconciler of alienated people. To attain this goal, Tutu's convictions were considered in the context of his doctrine of the church against the backdrop of his view of the atonement God wrought through Jesus Christ.

After an overview of South Africa's colonial history and a discussion of Tutu's conception of God's intention for the church, the dissertation focuses on his recommendations of how to dismantle racism and ensure that justice reigns in a postapartheid South Africa.

Finally, the dissertation evaluates the inner consistency, the use of the Bible as a major source of theology, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of Tutu's conception of the church as God's agent of reconciliation, from the point of view of his theological system, methodology, and presuppositions.