

FOREWORD

DESMOND TUTU, ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS
AND NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE, 1984

*F*rom *Bloodshed to Hope in Burundi* is, partly, a story of faith: faith in the power of the people in a small, little-known nation in central Africa, Burundi, to be capable of reestablishing peace and democracy in their war-torn homeland, which for over a century has suffered from colonialism and its own tyrannous military government. The authors, Ambassador Bob Krueger and his wife, Kathleen, document their experience of living amid genocide in a country heroically seeking to throw off decades of domination by a small group of Burundians whose armed forces have employed murder, torture, intimidation, and segregation to keep the majority of the population under their control. The authors had faith that if the world knew the truth of conditions in Burundi, the truth could help set Burundi's people free. Using the advantage of outsiders who were freer to travel, discover, and speak the truth than were most of Burundi's own citizens, they also believed that only by revealing the truth of Burundi's suffering could reconciliation between its warring factions be achieved.

The story they tell is frank, unsparing, and directly documented by personal observation and experience. The narrative recounts scenes including the annihilation by the Burundi Army of 430 people in the village of Gasorwe, and the selling of tickets by a group of young thugs to allow buyers to watch and participate in the torture and killing of a group of eight laborers whose only crime was to have been born into a different ethnic group. But their account equally recounts the heroism of courageous citizens, ranging from civilians in government to educators at the university and peasants living in the countryside, who were willing to step forward at their own peril to reveal the horror being perpetrated against Burundi's people.

Recognizing, then, that only after the truth of genocide and tyranny is revealed can reconciliation be possible, the authors proceed to a call for forgiveness by all parties in this ethnically divided nation, and for attention and support from a world that has ignored the Burundi genocide as if kill-

ing tens of thousands of people in a little-known country somehow didn't matter. Yet Jesus reminded his followers, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Therefore we in the twenty-first century should surely be able to see that if democracy is denied, if tyranny and injustice anywhere in the world go unreported and unattended, then all of us suffer from our neglect and indifference toward our brothers and sisters with whom we share this planet.

The story of Burundi is therefore our story: not simply the story of Africans, or Americans, but of all of us. This particular story takes place in Africa, and this is an important book about Africa. But the practices of tyranny, of ethnic and cultural division and oppression, and of unattended suffering and apathetic inattention take place in various forms around the world. This account, written with pain and compassion, but with scrupulous specificity, makes that clear. After its searing report, it offers a hopeful vision of the budding green shoots of a democratic future for Burundi that even now seem to be emerging. The book is thus a reminder that, in the words of the spiritual sung by slaves in America over a century ago, "All God's children got wings."

If we are to fly to our full height, we must all fly together.