

# Comparison of the leadership successes of desmond tutu and the failures of nicolá...



## Compassion Makes a Difference: A Comparison of the Leadership Successes of Desmond Tutu and the Failures of Nicolás Maduro

### **Introduction**

Bravery, trustworthiness, or the ability to communicate well are well-known skills for leaders to have. Compassion may not be at the top of many people's list for leadership skills, but it is a critical key to successful leadership. "Compassion is the key. ... Compassion, therefore, is more proactive, which means we can make a habit of it. By doing so, we can counter the loss of empathy that results from holding power, and in turn enable better leadership and human connections at work (Valdellon, 2018)."

Compassion - or the lack thereof - shall be discussed using three examples each from two very different world leaders: Desmond Tutu and Nicolás Maduro. Tutu, a former archbishop in the Anglican church, has worked against the apartheid and in human rights activism in South Africa his entire life, while Maduro is the current president of Venezuela, whose tenure in office has been rife with human rights offenses.

### **Desmond Tutu**

Desmond Tutu was born in 1931 in Klerksdorp, British Imperial South Africa, the same year the Union of South Africa became a separate and autonomous territory of the British Empire through the Statute of Westminster. This statute was key in the enactment of the apartheid, an institutionalized system of racial segregation that remained active in South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s.

While Tutu had wanted to pursue a career in medicine, his family was poor, and he could not afford the training. In 1955 at the age of 24, Tutu became a teacher, a post from which he resigned two years later in 1957 to attend the St. Peter's Theological College in Johannesburg, South Africa. Tutu was ordained an Anglican priest in 1961 and moved to England in 1962 to pursue a master's degree. He taught classes at a seminary and university in southern Africa in the late 1960s, and then moved back to London in 1972 to accept a position as director for Africa of the Theological Education Fund.

A key turning point in Tutu's life was in 1975 when he became the first black person to be the dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg. It was in this position that Tutu would first begin publicly speaking out against social injustice. Tutu caused uneasiness among his congregation by promoting ordination of women in the church and the replacement of masculine nouns with gender neutral nouns in his sermons (Boulay, 1989).

Tutu also met and worked with prominent anti-apartheid figures such as Winnie Mandela. In 1976, he wrote a letter to South Africa's Prime Minister pleading with him to eliminate the apartheid, and six weeks later, the Soweto Uprising broke out (Boulay, 1989). Tutu also used this position to endorse an international economic embargo of South Africa.

In 1978, Tutu became the South African Council of Churches' first black leader. In this leadership position, he strove to have the Council become a visible face of human rights advocacy in South Africa, a move that did not curry him favor with the South African government. He also installed senior

leadership within the organization and gave them the autonomy to make their own decisions and take care of the details of the Council (Allen, 2012).

In 1984, Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize for his “ role as a unifying leader figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa (Nobelprize. org).” His acceptance of the prize in Oslo was punctuated with a bomb scare, and the South African media heavily criticized or downplayed the award (Boulay, 1989).

Tutu’s image was used on election posters South Africans to vote in the April 1994 general election in which multiple races were allowed to vote. When Nelson Mandela won, Tutu managed the religious portion of the ceremony (Allen, 2012).

When asked about compassion in an interview, Tutu had this to say: “ Compassion is not just feeling with someone but seeking to change the situation. Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action (Barasch, 2005)!” In other words, Tutu sees compassion as an action rather than a passive feeling.

## **Nicolás Maduro**

Nicolás Maduro was born November 23, 1962, in Caracas, Venezuela.

Maduro had a similar start in life to Tutu, as both were born into a working-class family with mixed race parents. Maduro’s interest in leadership also blossomed in his mid-20s when at 24, he lived in Havana, Cuba, with other South American leftist militants and attended the Escuela Nacional de

Cuadros Julio Antonio Mella, a school run by the Union of Young Communists  
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(Oropeza, 2013). During his time in Cuba, Maduro trained under Pedro Miret, a senior member of the community party in Cuba who was also close to Fidel Castro. The combination of the Havanese education and Miret's training provided Maduro with the ability to gain notice back home in Venezuela. Maduro eventually joined forces with Hugo Chávez in the 1990s.

Maduro was described by some as " the most capable administrator and politician of Mr. Chávez's inner circle (Córdoba & Vyas, 2012)." When Chávez rose to power, Maduro's power also grew. In 1999, he helped draft Venezuela's new constitution and further rose in power when he was elected to the National Assembly of Venezuela in 2000 (Lopez, 2012). From 2005 to 2006, he held the position of Speaker of the Assembly. From 2006 until 2013, Maduro served as the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In 2011, Chávez revealed on Cuban television that he was receiving cancer treatments. In the summer of 2012, he declared a total recovery from cancer and won the presidential election in October of the same year. The next month, Chávez returned to Cuba for more cancer treatments. In 2013, Chávez died. Maduro made the announcement of Chávez's death, with a broken voice and tears running down his face. Maduro appeared on Venezuelan television, requesting " Those who never supported the comandante Hugo Chávez, respect the pain of the people. This is the moment to think of our families, of our country (Associated Press, 2013)."

According to the constitution of the country, the National Assembly chief, who at the time was Diosdado Cabello, should have taken over as interim president, but also that an election should be called within 30 days. In that

election, which took place on April 14, 2013, Maduro was elected president of Venezuela.

Since Maduro has come into power, Venezuela has rapidly declined into a political, social, and economic crisis. The country faces food and medicine shortages, and people are fleeing the country. “ Government security forces in Venezuela carry out unjustified killings without any apparent consequences as the rule of law in the country quickly vanishes, a United Nations report charged Friday, drawing a rejection from Caracas (Associated Press, 2018).” Maduro’s predecessor, Chávez, “ was loved by the country’s poor and working classes (Aleem, 2017).”

Maduro, however, did not come across as genuine but rather as a copycat of Chávez. He has poorly connected with the public, his own administration doesn’t view him with the same amount of power as Chávez and gains military support by appeasing members of the military powerful positions in his administration (Aleem, 2017).

Maduro has ruled by decree for the vast majority of his presidency (Kraul, 2017), and Venezuelans have taken to the streets in protest. Hundreds of thousands of people protested over several weeks in early 2017 “ to protest food shortages, rising crime and anti-democratic measures taken by Maduro, including the suspension of elections, neutering the powers of the National Assembly and the barring of opposition candidates from running for office (Kraul, 2017).”

Rather than leading with compassion for his now malnourished and sick people, Maduro has been tightening his authoritarian grip over Venezuela. <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-the-leadership-successes-of-desmond-tutu-and-the-failures-of-nicols-maduro/>

Unlike Chávez who maintained power through elections and winning the love of the working class and the poor, Maduro uses heavy-handed tactics such as the rigged election of July 2017 that replaced the opposition-controlled National Assembly with a new legislative body of his own creation (Aleem, 2017).

## **Comparing Tutu to Maduro**

A gigantic chasm exists between the leadership styles of Tutu and Maduro. Tutu practices transformational and servant leadership with compassion. Through the combination of these two leadership styles, Tutu demonstrated how compassion for the people he was leading could lead to positive change for the greater good.

Transformational leadership is practiced by those “ who seek to change existing thoughts, techniques and goals for better results and the greater good (St. Thomas University, 2014),” and those who practice it “ possess a single-minded need to streamline or change things that no longer work (St. Thomas University, 2014).” Tutu’s continuous actions against the South African apartheid demonstrate his strong will to make a change in a system that was unfair and unjust to black people in South Africa.

In servant leadership, the leader “ focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership).” Tutu demonstrated this when he worked to empower the women in his congregations to achieve leadership roles and gave more people leadership roles in the South African Council of Churches.

By contrast, Maduro engages in autocratic leadership, similar to that of a military leader. Also known as authoritarian leadership, autocratic leadership “ is a leadership style characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members (Cherry & Gans, 2018).” Maduro shows a total lack of compassion and blatant disregard for the well-being of Venezuelans through massive food and medicine shortages and increased military killings of civilians.

Autocratic leadership can lead to a wide variety of problems. Since this leadership style discourages input from anyone outside of the leadership, discontent can grow among group members, and that is certainly reflected in the increasing opposition to Maduro’s rule. Chávez also utilized autocratic leadership in ways, but he also maintained a semblance of a democratic voting system, which made Venezuelans feel like they were still involved somehow.

Tutu and Maduro both lead or have lead large groups of people, but with incredibly different results. A huge contributor to their success or failure can be directly attributed to the amount of compassion each leader had for their people. Maduro is failing as a leader because of his lack of care and compassion for the Venezuelan people and the country’s downfall, while Tutu was a successful leader in the struggle against the South African apartheid, of which he saw the end.

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