

BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Religion and Conflict
Case Study Series

**South Africa:
The Religious
Foundations of the
Truth and Reconciliation
Commission**

August 2013





Abstract

This case study explores the religious underpinnings of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a governmental body established to facilitate the peaceful transition from the apartheid government to a truly democratic society by exposing human rights violations and administering both justice and forgiveness. The case study looks at the commission and its cultural bases through three questions: What are the historical origins of apartheid in South Africa? How did religious themes inform the truth and reconciliation process? How important were international religious and political forces? Additionally, the case study also includes a timeline of key events, a summary of relevant religious, political, and nongovernmental organizations, and a list of recommended further readings.

About this Case Study

This case study was crafted under the editorial direction of Eric Patterson, visiting assistant professor in the Department of Government and associate director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

This case study was made possible through the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs.

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INTRODUCTION

South Africa's history was characterized by racism and discrimination from the beginning of colonialism. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the apartheid government faced growing challenges from both domestic resistance groups and international actors. This pressure eventually led to the apartheid government's demise and its replacement in a free and fair democratic election. How to deal with the perpetrators of human rights abuses was one of the most pressing concerns in the transition process, eventually resulting in the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC could, where appropriate, grant amnesty to those who had committed atrocities. In return,

perpetrators had to fully disclose their crimes. This approach of restorative justice had both theological roots and pragmatic policy justifications. The TRC had other religious elements, including the recurrent use of prayer and prominent role of religious leaders such as Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a former president of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and Deputy Chairman Alex Boraine, a former president of the Methodist Church of South Africa. In order to fully understand how the TRC was formed and operated, one must delve deeper into the religious nature of South African society and see how the TRC was rooted in the religious convictions of the nation.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Apartheid, the official policy of racial separation enforced by the South African government from 1948 until 1993, had its roots in European colonization. Permanent white settlement began in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company established a provisioning station at the site of what would later become Cape Town. Following a British victory in the Anglo-Boer Wars (1880-1881 and 1899-1902), the Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State were consolidated with the British colonies of the Cape and Natal into the Union of South Africa in May 1910. The Union's constitution kept all political power in the hands of white people.

Apartheid entailed more than political privilege for whites—for decades it enjoyed theological sanction by the local Dutch Reformed Church. The idea was that God's purpose was to intentionally separate distinct races (apartheid is Afrikaans for apartness). In 1910, the United Party, led by Jan Smuts, began to introduce more stringent laws to legally separate whites and blacks and further curtail the rights of the black majority. Such laws included the Mines and Works Act of 1911 that restricted black people to menial work, the Native Land Act of 1913 that set aside less than ten percent of the arable land for the black population, and the continued enforcement and intensification of the "pass laws" (first initiated in the 1905 General Pass Regulations Bill), which required black Africans to carry an identity document and regulated their movements.

In 1948, the National Party (NP), in coalition with the Afrikaner Party, narrowly defeated the United Party to take control of the country. The NP further solidified the white minority's control of South Africa. Among the most infamous pieces of legislation that they passed was the Group Areas Act of 1950, which was primarily designed to geographically separate white and black communities. In summary, NP apartheid policy ensured that blacks were excluded from government as well

as many geographical areas, and that all races were prohibited from interracial relations. During the 1960s and 1970s in particular, forced resettlements took place as the NP government moved black populations into designated areas. Many blacks were forced to revoke their South African citizenship in favor of "homeland citizenship" in these designated areas.

However, the black majority did not accept such discrimination passively. The African National Congress (ANC), established as a national liberation movement in 1912, encouraged strikes and acts of public disobedience in 1949 with its Programme for Action. In June 1955, along with the South African Indian Congress, it adopted the Freedom Charter, which aimed at establishing a nonracial democratic state. In 1959, dissident members of the ANC formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which advocated more militant resistance. That year, as part of nationwide demonstrations against the pass laws, a black crowd congregated in the Sharpeville Township. The police opened fire, killing 69 protestors. In response to continued protests and strikes, the NP government banned the ANC and the PAC and declared a state of emergency. Many ANC and PAC leaders and activists were arrested and tried under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the General Law Amendment (Sabotage Act) of 1962. These events contributed to the ANC's formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, or Spear of the Nation (MK)—an armed resistance movement—and the adoption of more aggressive guerrilla warfare tactics. For the remainder of apartheid rule, the MK organized attacks ranging from isolated bombings of power stations to a concerted military underground resistance strategy known as Operation Vuliindlela ("Open the Road").

The government reacted to this resistance with increasingly tough reprisals and numerous declarations of states of emergency. Moreover, they frequently detained, beat, and tortured

black suspects. However, by the 1980s, it became increasingly clear that the white government could no longer continue its policies and hope to prevail against the majority-black population. Indeed, religious leaders, trade unionists, and others were making common cause by the early 1980s to topple apartheid, and even all-white denominations were taking open stands against its policies. The efforts of religious leaders were recognized in 1984 when Desmond Tutu, then secretary-general of the SACC, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

During the early 1980s, many believed that the country was on the brink of a full-scale civil war. Secret talks began between the government and opposition figures, but stalled time and again. One of the primary sticking points was how to deal with the perpetrators of human rights violations, particularly within the white apartheid government.

After numerous secret negotiations in the 1980s and subsequent high-profile public negotiations in the early 1990s, it was finally decided in 1995 in the preamble to the new Interim Constitution that a “truth and reconciliation commission” would grant conditional amnesty to perpetrators, as long as they fulfilled a variety of conditions (their crimes had to be political, proportional to their goals, and they had to disclose, when questioned in front of the TRC, the full truth about their actions). The aim of the TRC was restorative justice, that is, to restore South African society and make it whole rather than systematically punish all perpetrators. Indeed, Desmond Tutu once commented that “there are different kinds of justice. Retributive justice is largely Western. The African understanding is far more restorative—not so much to punish as to redress or restore a balance that has been knocked askew.” This was the primary aim of the TRC.

Founded by the Interim Constitution, the TRC began its hearings in April 1996. It was divided into three sections: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee, and the Amnesty Committee. The

first of these committees investigated human rights abuses that occurred between 1960 and 1994; the second committee was charged with restoring victims’ dignity and providing some recourse for reparation; and the third committee had the authority to grant amnesty. Thousands of public hearings were held around the country over a number of years, with the final hearing taking place in July 1998. Ultimately, a total of 7,112 people applied for amnesty, however only 849 of these applications were granted. Those whose applications were rejected were eligible for criminal prosecution, though in practice few were tried. The TRC presented its final report to President Mandela in October 1998.



Nelson Mandela shows the freedom salute after his release from prison.

When Nelson Mandela was given the final report of the TRC he said that the report “represents a toil of nurturing the tender fields of peace and reconciliation and the plodding labor of opening the bowels of the earth to reveal its raw elements that can build and destroy.” The TRC is often lauded as a political miracle for allowing South Africa to move on from its bloody, repressive past to a democracy while avoiding a potential civil war. Whatever the case, it is clear that the TRC in South Africa was both a novel and somewhat successful transitional justice mechanism that aided the country in recovering from its difficult past.

DOMESTIC RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Without notable religious figures like Desmond Tutu, the TRC would never have come about; without the high religiosity of South Africa, the TRC would likely not have achieved the success with which it is often credited.

First, however, it is important to note the highly religious nature of South African society. Approximately 95 percent of South Africans are affiliated with a Christian denomination and a high percentage of the population is actively involved in their local church or parish. This provides a common set of cultural and theological frames of reference for the country, including Christian understandings of the Golden Rule, forgiveness, mercy, restitution, and healing.

The advent of the TRC itself was the result of a long period of negotiations. Each side of the political divide had different priorities for the political settlement, and each side had varying views as to what should be done with human rights violators. The NP apartheid regime hoped to gain a blanket amnesty during the negotiations. Many of its members argued that the slate needed to be wiped clean and that a blanket amnesty was the only way to enact a clean break from the past. However, the ANC and other liberation movements were in too strong a position to allow what they perceived to be a travesty of justice.

On the other side, the liberation movements initially wanted criminal prosecutions to punish those guilty of human rights violations to the full extent of the law. However, many of those in the ANC were highly religious. Organizations such as the SACC and other high-profile figures, including Desmond Tutu himself, preached the value of forgiveness and reconciliation. While such calls might not have satiated the liberation movements' desire for retributive justice on their own, they combined with the political realities pertaining in South Africa to allow for the creation of the TRC. The liberation movements were not in a sufficiently strong position during the transitioning years to impose criminal trials upon their old adversaries. In fact, many of those people who

would have been put on trial were vital to the negotiation process itself. Moreover, if free and democratic elections were ever to be held, then those whom the ANC accused of human rights abuses would be needed to make the process run smoothly. Thus, it rapidly became clear that criminal prosecutions would not be politically feasible. However, without the tradition of strong religious conviction in South Africa and, in particular, the Christian churches' calls for forgiveness and reconciliation, it remains unclear whether the ultimate TRC solution would ever have been envisaged, let alone whether the ANC or the general population would have accepted the TRC model.

Religious leaders arguing for forgiveness and reconciliation were critical for harnessing support for the TRC from the black population. Additionally, in its day-to-day work, the commissioners included clergy and laity and opened with prayer. Although religious influences have been criticized by some for detracting from the commission's secular work of recording the truth in favor of amnesties for wrongdoers, Christian themes of reconciliation were critical to the commission's ability to promote national healing.

Moreover, the moral force of Christian forgiveness was augmented by the traditional African concept of Ubuntu in South Africa. Ubuntu, a concept roughly summed up by a common Xhosa expression "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye bantu" ("People are people through other people"), is regarded by many as a critical factor in the workings of the TRC. It was this African principle, consonant with the Golden Rule, which emphasized the notions of community and interdependence. According to these teachings, the vindictive pursuit of retributive justice might not be appropriate in a situation where one must consider the future of the country. Indeed, it was religious calls for forgiveness that allowed those in the negotiation process, and the populace more generally, to go beyond anger and attempt to find a solution that was best for the country as a whole. Ultimately, the interlinking of religion and Ubuntu certainly provided a potent moral mix that aided the process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

While the TRC was the primary transitional justice mechanism employed in South Africa to deal with apartheid and the human rights violations committed in its name, it was far from the only tool utilized. One of the most significant elements of apartheid was its socioeconomically discriminatory policies against the black population. These included restrictions on blacks' ability to own land and their forced resettlement in underdeveloped, unfertile regions of the country. As a result, it forced large swaths of the population into poverty.

In order to combat this legacy, the post-apartheid government enacted land redistribution schemes and attempted to rectify the injustices of the previous regime. However, this rectification proved difficult. While it was relatively unproblematic to reverse laws such as the prohibition on interracial relations, it was less clear how to restore the majority of citizens to an adequate place in society. Huge proportions of the black population lived in squatter camps lacking electricity or running water. However, any sudden, drastic reallocation of jobs or resources from whites to blacks would have caused a mass exodus of the white population. The lesson of the Portuguese departure from Mozambique (where, upon decolonization, the white population abandoned the country and took most of its assets with it) was a stark reminder for South Africa that the white population could not be displaced without cost.

Thus, many problems existed in South Africa. In 1994, the population of the country stood at a little over 40 million, of which over 70 percent were black. This majority had been denied access to political and economic resources for more than a century. Some form of restitution was needed. Ideas about the proper role of restitution, equality, and a shared future—with blacks and whites coexisting—were often drawn from religious teaching. The decisions made

by those negotiating the path to democracy were thus influenced by some of the religious principles and voices discussed earlier.

To be clear, many of the choices made by the new ANC government were made for pragmatic political reasons—because they had to be made if the country was to develop into a successful and prosperous democracy. Nevertheless, the ethical underpinnings of many of these decisions were rooted in Christian ideas and debated vociferously in the public square by voices from universities, churches, the media, and civil society. Religious themes permeated the actual practice of the TRC: confession (truth-telling), forgiveness (amnesty), brotherly love (reconciliation), and restitution (reparations).

One of the enduring challenges was how to grant financial restitution to the black populace. This is often considered one of the failures of the TRC process, because financial reparations were small and dispersed slowly. Many agreed that some form of reparations were both a political necessity and a moral imperative, but many of the underprivileged still struggle with access to education, housing, healthcare, and jobs to this day.

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

By the 1980s, international religious voices tended to be strongly against apartheid and supportive of the SACC and Desmond Tutu. However, external religious actors had little direct effect on the evolution of the TRC. With the demise of apartheid, external religious organizations tended to provide development and humanitarian assistance or be involved in proselytism rather than become directly engaged in the domestic work of the TRC. In contrast, the TRC has had a global influence on thinking about justice, reconciliation, and political transition, and many of its leaders—most notably Tutu—have assisted in peacebuilding in other parts of the globe.

In the mid-1990s, transitional justice was not a highly developed field, and the most prominent examples, often drawn from Latin America, were primarily of blanket amnesties granted to well-entrenched military regimes in order to facilitate democratic transition. South Africa decided to draw lessons from both the Nuremberg trials and from the Latin American blanket amnesties but devise a novel solution by employing conditional amnesties.

The international legal community first viewed the TRC with considerable skepticism. At the time, the international community was trying to ensure that gross human rights abuses would never go unpunished. Thus, the TRC began to work at about the same time as UN war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, most of the international community had been adamantly opposed to apartheid and had enacted sanctions against the South African government (although these were never

made mandatory). In the end, the TRC was regarded as a domestic solution and one that might prevent any need for large-scale financial assistance from the international community for the country.

In conclusion, South Africa's TRC was informed by external examples, particularly the negative examples of postcolonial civil war and reprisal in Mozambique, Angola, and elsewhere. South Africa's leaders, both whites and blacks, sought a politically pragmatic yet morally satisfying approach to ending apartheid and ushering in a new era for the country. However, one cannot wholly grasp the features of this painful yet peaceful transition without understanding the prevalence of Christian beliefs among the majority of the populace, the highly respected role of clerics in the society, the joint application of Christian and traditional African principles of restorative justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and the role of religious symbols and rituals like prayer in the TRC process. South Africa's TRC and the personnel associated with it have become world figures through their efforts to resolve intractable conflict.

KEY EVENTS

1652 First Dutch settlers arrive in the Cape.

1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War.

1910 Union of South Africa comprised of the former British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State is formed.

1948 NP wins all-white elections and enacts policy of apartheid.

1960 Sixty-nine demonstrators are killed and another 180 injured at protests at Sharpeville. ANC and other anti-apartheid political parties banned.

1986 At its National Conference, the SACC adopts the Harare Document. While the SACC had previously avoided weighing in on the question of sanctions, the Harare Document shifted this position to a call for comprehensive sanctions as the only remaining nonviolent method for ending apartheid.

1987 Eighteen months after the Harare Conference, the SACC moves more deeply into political involvement by issuing the Lusaka Statement, in which institutional churches declared, for the first time, the South African state to be illegitimate. Once the state was deemed illegitimate, the legitimacy of the police and defense force were also questioned. This opened the door for a debate on the proper use of force against the state.

1990 Anti-apartheid political parties, including the ANC, are reinstated and Nelson Mandela is released after 27 years in prison.

1994 ANC wins first non-racial elections. Mandela becomes president.

1995 Truth and Reconciliation Commission is established in order to promote the political and social healing of the wounds created by apartheid. Three active ordained ministers, all of which were at one point the national heads of their denominations, served as commissioners on the TRC, the most well-known being Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The mandate of the commission was to bear witness to, record, and in some cases grant amnesty to the perpetrators of crimes relating to human rights violations.

1998 TRC issues its final report to President Mandela and brands apartheid a crime against humanity.



Robben Island Prison

RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Religious Minority Groups and Organizations

Muslim, Hindu and Jewish communities make up less than four percent of the population. Although the number of adherents to Islam has more than doubled in the last 20 years, currently only 1.5 percent of the South African population is Muslim (approximately 750,000 people). The population of Hindus in South Africa has always been low and now stands at its peak with approximately 550,000 people. Hindu religious organizations were of little significant opposition to apartheid. However, the strong trend of Gandhism that originated from Gandhi himself living in South Africa (1893-1914) during the struggle played a very important role in shaping Black nonviolent resistance to apartheid in the early stages of oppression. This strong current of Gandhism was to play a role in much of South African history and has even been acknowledged as part of the thought process behind the formation of the TRC. The Jewish population, despite being very small in South Africa (at its height 2.5 percent of the white population and 0.3 percent of the overall population), played an active role in anti-apartheid activities. For example, all of the whites who were tried at the Rivonia Trial—in which ANC leaders were accused of sabotage intended to dismantle the apartheid government—were Jewish. Notable Jewish activists included Helen Suzman, who campaigned for better treatment of black prisoners, and Nadine Gordimer, who drafted Mandela's defense at Rivonia. Thus, many Jews were prominent in the anti-apartheid struggle but as an institution and religion it was too small a community to present a significant opponent to apartheid. The Jewish population in South Africa has shrunk in recent years to around 70,000 people.

South African Jewish Board of Deputies

<http://jewishsa.co.za/>

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD)

serves as the central representative institution of most of the country's Hebrew congregations and Jewish societies and institutions. The SAJBD protects the civil rights of Jewish people in South Africa, organizes a variety of services for the Jewish community to enrich and maintain Jewish life, and is involved in development and welfare activities that improve the lives of the country's disadvantaged communities.

Christian Groups and Organizations **African Independent Churches (AICs)**

African Independent Churches (AICs) make up the largest group of Christian churches in South Africa. Once labeled as Ethiopian churches, the majority are now referred to as Zionist or Apostolic churches. There are more than 4,000 AICs, with a membership of more than 10 million, constituting approximately 20 percent of the population. The Zionist Christian Church is the largest AIC, with an estimated membership of more than four million. AICs serve more than half the population in northern KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga areas. There are at least 900 AICs in Soweto.

Mainline Protestant Churches

Mainline Protestants are comprised of Methodists (7.4 percent), Reformed, (7.2 percent), Anglicans (3.9 percent), Lutherans (2.5 percent), Presbyterians (1.9 percent), Baptists (1.5 percent), Congregationalists (1.1 percent), and the Dutch Reformed family of churches. The number of Christians in South Africa grew by almost 12 percentage points between 1951 and 2001, despite a 20.5 percentage point decline among mainline Protestant denominations. In response, even some of the mainline denominations have incorporated charismatic practices and beliefs.

Pentecostal Groups

Pentecostal groups include traditional apostolic and Pentecostal churches. In the Pew Forum's 2006 survey, approximately one-in-ten respondents indicated that they belong to a Pentecostal denomination, and more than two-in-ten identified as charismatic.

Roman Catholic Church in South Africa

The Catholic Church in South Africa consists of five archdioceses (Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, and Pretoria), 21 dioceses, one vicariate apostolic, and the military ordinariate. There are approximately 3.3 million Catholics in the country, or about 7.1 percent of the total population. Between 1951 and 2001, the Catholic population increased by about 1.7 percentage points.

South African Council of Churches

<http://sacc.org.za/>

Founded in 1968, the SACC comprises 26 member churches from diverse denominational backgrounds as

well as various other affiliated organizations. The SACC works “for moral reconstruction in South Africa, focusing on issues of justice, reconciliation, integrity of creation and the eradication of poverty and contributing towards the empowerment of all who are spiritually, socially and economically marginalized.” The SACC concentrates on lobbying policymakers as well as coordinating projects at the community level to address issues of health, education, and reconciliation.

South African Catholic Bishops' Conference

<http://sacbc.org.za/>

The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), comprised of the Roman Catholic bishops of Botswana, South Africa, and Swaziland, is an organization of diocesan bishops, approved by the Holy See, serving in the ecclesiastical provinces of Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, and Bloemfontein. The particular aim of the SACBC is to provide the bishops of the territories mentioned above with facilities for consultation and united action in matters of common interest.



St. Georges Cathedral, Cape Town.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

African National Congress

<http://anc.org.za>

The South African Native National Congress was founded in 1912 with the aim of bringing together Africans to defend their rights and fight for freedom. In 1923, its name was changed to the African National Congress. In the 1994 elections, the ANC won 62 percent of the vote and Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first democratically elected president. In the 1999 elections, the party increased its majority to a point short of two-thirds of the total vote. Thabo Mbeki served as president from 1999 until 2008, when he was replaced by Kgalema Motlan. Motlan's successor, Jacob Zuma, became president in 2009.

Democratic Alliance

<http://da.org.za/>

The Democratic Alliance, formerly known as the Democratic Party, advocates liberal democracy and free market principles. The party's forerunner was the Progressive Federal Party, whose veteran politician Helen Suzman was its only representative in the white parliament for many years. Suzman upheld liberal policies in the apartheid-era legislature and spoke out against apartheid laws.

Congress of the People Party

<http://congressofthepeople.org.za/>

The Congress of the People is a political party established in 2008 by former members of the ANC, with the Reverend Mvumi Dandala elected as its first leader. The party gained 30 seats in the national assembly in the 2009 elections.

Inkatha Freedom Party

<http://ifp.org.za/>

The Inkatha Freedom Party, led by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, became a political party in July 1990, championing federalism as the best political option for South Africa. It draws its support largely from Zulu-speaking South Africans. Its strongholds are the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the migrant workers' hostels in the metropolitan areas of Gauteng.

African Christian Democratic Party

<http://acdparty.org.za/>

The African Christian Democratic Party of South Africa was founded in 1994 and seeks to promote Christian principles, freedom of religion, an open-market economy, family values, community empowerment, and human rights in a federal system. Primary issues of focus include education, unemployment, health care, security, poverty, abortion, and capital punishment.

United Christian Democratic Party

<http://ucdp.org.za/>

Lucas Mangope formed the United Christian Democratic Party in 2004. The party's mission statement stresses the need for Christian values, nonracial democracy, and government inducements for personal self-reliance.

NONOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

<http://accord.org.za/>

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is an NGO focused on peacekeeping, founded in 1992 in Durban, South Africa. The Centre teaches courses on conflict management, publishes books and journals on issues related to violent conflict, and gives out an annual Africa Peace Award to outstanding individuals in the field of peacemaking. Teams from ACCORD have organized seminars in many African countries to facilitate government-NGO cooperation in peacekeeping. ACCORD is also constructing an Africa Peace Centre in Durban.

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

<http://csvr.org.za/>

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) aims to promote peaceful societies based on democracy, human rights, social justice, equality, and human security. They have done much work in the post-TRC environment in South Africa, including providing trauma counseling for those who testified in front of the TRC. In the post-TRC years, the CSVr tried to identify the gaps left in South Africa by the work of the TRC and conducted programs to try and fix these problems.

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

<http://ijr.org.za/>

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation seeks to promote reconciliation, transitional justice, and democratic nation-building in Africa by means of research, analysis, and selective intervention. It aims to understand the causes of conflict and promote understanding as a means

for resolution. It provides situational analysis, builds capacity, and produces resources for social transformation and development.

Legal Aid South Africa

<http://legal-aid.co.za/>

Legal Aid South Africa is an organization dedicated to meeting the constitutional promise of a fair trial and equal justice for all. They mainly provide legal representation to the indigent population in order for them to attain the access to justice that they were denied under apartheid.

National Interfaith Council of South Africa

<http://nicsa.org.za/>

The National Interfaith Council of South Africa (NICSA) brings together faith leaders from across South Africa to create a unified moral voice on public policy issues such as corruption, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and education. NICSA was formed out of the merger of the National Religious Leaders Forum and National Interfaith Leadership Council in 2011. NICSA's work focuses on family values, human rights, poverty, unemployment, inequality, social cohesion, and the spirit of Ubuntu. NICSA has spoken out against certain ANC policies while simultaneously being accused of supporting other ANC policies on which the organization has little relevance.

The Damietta Peace Initiative

<http://damiettapeace.org.za/>

The Damietta Peace Initiative, based in Pretoria, is a Franciscan outreach effort that seeks to encourage collaboration among different religious groups with the

aim of spreading peace in Africa. The project especially focuses on organizing Pan-African Conciliation Teams to promote interfaith understanding.

The Siyam’kela Initiative

<http://www.policyproject.com/siyamkela.cfm>

A USAID-funded South African project whose name means “we are accepting” in Nguni, the Siyam’kela Initiative seeks to identify, document, and disseminate indicators of internal and external stigma, best practices, and interventions for reducing stigma and discrimination toward People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Siyam’kela sought to develop stigma indicators in order to address the lack of theoretical and quantitative tools to pinpoint the level of HIV/AIDS-related discrimination in a given context. The initiative also studied PLWHA, national government departments, and faith-based or-

ganizations, and outlined a targeted set of recommendations for each of these groups. The key issues that were raised were managing disclosure, leadership, and support of PLWHA. Key recommendations for FBOs included the need to practice disclosure management and confidentiality, and train faith leaders on their handling of HIV/AIDS-related issues.

The South African Human Rights Commission

<http://sahrc.org.za/>

The South African Human Rights Commission is a national independent institution established in October 1995 to entrench democracy and deepen the transitional process. It draws its mandate from the South African Constitution. It both monitors and seeks redress for human rights violations committed in the post-apartheid era.



Cape Town business district

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the historical origins of South Africa's ethnic divides?
2. How did religious themes inform the truth and reconciliation process?
3. How important were international religious and political forces?

¹The PAC also had their own armed movement named Poqo.

²The official TRC website, which contains links to actual testimonies given in front of the Human Rights Commission, can be accessed at: <http://justice.gov.za/trc/>

³http://law.cornell.edu/wex/south_african_truth_commission

⁴Statement by Nelson Mandela on receiving the Report of the TRC. Available at http://info.gov.za/speeches/1998/98a29_trc9811312.htm

⁵<http://hsrc.ac.za/>

⁶Lyn Graybill and Kimberly Lanegran, "Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Africa: Issues and Cases," *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, 2004, accessed at <http://africa.ufl.edu/asq/v8/v8i1a1.pdf>, p. 6.

⁷*Ibid.*