



Public Hearing: March 21, 2010
Private Session: March 22, 2010
The Riverside Church, New York City

Nationwide Conversations about Conscientious Objection and Just War:
March 23-October 1, 2010

Commission Report Released: November 11, 2010

The United States of America is founded on principals of political and religious freedom. When we punish the soldier who heeds his or her moral compass, our democracy is in grave danger. We fail as American citizens and we fail as human beings. As a mother, an advocate, a teacher, a feminist, and a legal scholar, I testify that the first *Truth Commission on Conscience in War* is vital and timely.

— Rev. Dr. Kaia Stern, Truth Commission Chair and Professor, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute,
Harvard Law School

PROJECT SUMMARY

This *Truth Commission on Conscience in War* will launch a six-month campaign to educate the public and religious communities about the moral criteria of just war and international agreements on the conduct of war, especially the Nuremberg Principles and Geneva Conventions. This educational process will focus attention on the question of expanding military regulations for Conscientious Objection – which currently only recognize objections to “war in any form” – to also recognize objections to a *particular* war.

RATIONALE

In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, President Obama used criteria of just war to assert the rare necessity of war. Unfortunately, few people understand the moral criteria of just war or international agreements on the conduct of war and the importance of international courts. Hence, public conversations about the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have focused on strategy, troop counts, and efficacy, rather than international law or the morality of these wars, except in relation to the use of torture and the Geneva Conventions.

Yet, members of the armed forces are expected to exercise individual moral conscience in military service; Nuremberg Principle IV states, “The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him.”

Military regulations in the United States have long recognized an individual’s right to refuse military service for reasons of faith or conscience. The United States takes pride in the integrity, loyalty to duty, love of country, and willingness to sacrifice of all who serve in the armed forces. However, U.S. military regulations governing Conscientious Objector (CO) status require objections to “war in any form,” a requirement that denies freedom of conscience to many serving in the military who belong to traditions that uphold just war.¹

Members of the U.S. Armed Forces who oppose a particular war, such as those in Iraq or Afghanistan, have no legal basis for refusing to deploy, even if they believe participation implicates them in an immoral war or in war crimes. Instead, they face sanctions, and even court martial and prison for their refusal to serve. The suffering and moral dilemmas of the service men and women who morally object to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars are evidenced in the large number of soldiers who have refused deployment, are in prison, been dishonorably discharged, or have committed suicide.

The majority religions use criteria of “just war” when addressing the morality of a particular war, and, as a member of the United Nations, the U.S. is governed by the Nuremberg Principles. Current CO regulations must be expanded to include the right of soldiers to refuse deployment in a particular war.

There is no better historical moment in our nation’s history for a national process of citizen education about the rights of conscience of service members who object to a particular war given

- Religious and ethical distinctions between just war and pacifism,
- Requirements of international agreements such as Nuremberg Principles and Geneva Conventions,²
- Religious, moral, and legal concerns surrounding the justification and conduct of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and
- The devastating impact of these wars on many service members.

PROJECT DESIGN

The Truth Commission on Conscience in War (TCCW) event in New York will begin a six-month campaign in grassroots communities across the country to address the profound moral and legal dilemmas of members of the armed forces and to educate the public about criteria for just war, Nuremberg, and Geneva. By bridging current polarization between advocates for peace and supporters of the military, these conversations will generate momentum for expanding

¹ In the colonial era, members of pacifist religious groups could be exempted from military service. During the Civil War, when the federal government issued the nation's first draft, it also formally recognized conscientious objectors. See <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/334/conscientious-objection.html>. Only members of certain religious groups known for their pacifist beliefs, including Quakers and Mennonites, could qualify for conscientious objector status. In 1971, *Gillette v. United States*, 401 U.S. 437, broadened the criteria to include “deeply held beliefs” that did not require membership in a religious tradition but defined CO status for those with “deeply held beliefs that cause them to oppose participation in war in any form.” See <http://supreme.justia.com/us/401/437/case.html>.

² Texts of Nuremberg are available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtconst.asp> and the Geneva Conventions at <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/CONVPRES?OpenView>.

current military regulations to recognize the right of soldiers of conscience to object to a particular war.

PUBLIC HEARING: This campaign will begin with a major public hearing on March 21 at the Riverside Church in New York City. The Commissioners and audience will receive testimony about the dilemmas created by the current CO regulations. The hearing will begin with excerpts from the powerful documentary film, “Soldiers of Conscience,” which follows eight soldiers serving in Iraq and which was made in cooperation with the U.S. Army. Then, testimony will follow from those most personally affected by the current CO regulations and from expert witnesses.

PRIVATE SESSION: The following day, March 22, testifiers and commissioners will meet in private session to create effective strategies for the six month campaign. Commissioners will be prominent leaders from a variety of religious traditions, community activists, directors of nonprofit organizations, veterans, scholars, artists, and members of the media. They will receive briefing materials for understanding current U.S. regulations, for understanding varieties of approaches to just war, and the standards of Nuremberg and Geneva on the exercise of conscience in war.

SPECIAL STUDY COURSE AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE: An Accountability Committee—composed of a group of graduate student commissioners who are nominated and granted academic credit by co-sponsoring schools—will monitor the national conversations. Beginning Feb. 1, they will study the work of Truth Commissions, prepare briefing materials for the March TCCW hearing, attend its meetings, monitor the progress of the nationwide conversations, create summaries of the conversations, and compose the TCCW Report. This course will be taught by Professors Rita N. Brock and Gabriella Lettini of the Starr King School in Berkeley, both members of the Truth Commission Planning Committee.

COMMISSION REPORT: In November 2010, the Commission will release its Report, which will be sent to members of Congress and be made available to the public online.

GOALS AND EVALUATION

This Commission will:

1. Educate religious communities and the general public about religious ideas of just war, international agreements and laws, and the moral, legal, and spiritual implications of current CO regulations for soldiers and their families;
2. Build a national network committed to improving current CO regulations and honoring international law on the conduct of war;
3. Bridge polarizations between pacifists and followers of just war traditions and between the military and peace movements;
4. Increase support for the work of international courts and agreements on the conduct of war;
5. Heal the moral and spiritual injuries of war in veterans and in religious communities; and
6. Demonstrate how the arts, especially film and music, can be powerful partners in educating the public about profound moral issues in ways that bring people together to work for the common good.

Evaluation of these goals will be determined through:

1. Greater understandings of just war and Nuremberg and Geneva among religious leaders, educators, and grassroots communities;
2. High visibility and support for the Commission Report in grassroots communities and among policy makers; and
3. National momentum for improvements in CO regulations.

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Planning Committee Chair: Rev. Dr. Rita N. Brock, Director, Faith Voices for the Common Good.

Convener of Commissioners: Rev. Dr. Gabriella Lettini, Director of Studies in Public Ministry and Religious Leadership for Social Change at the Starr King School for the Ministry

Director for Staff Administration: Mr. Ian Slattery, Luna Productions

Members of the Planning Committee:

Director of Media Technology: Ms. Catherine Ryan and Mr. Gary Weimberg, Producers and Directors, Luna Productions

Director of Communications and Web Services: Mr. Justin K. Waters, Assistant Director, Faith Voices for the Common Good

Director of Outreach and Press Relations: Ms. Erin Reece, Onsite Administrator for the Truth Commission, New York City

The Riverside Church and Union Theological Seminary will be the host institutions and are primary sponsors of the event. Representatives below are members of the Planning Committee and will also serve as Commissioners.

Riverside Church representatives: Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas, Rev. Dr. Bob Coleman, Ms. Carol Nixon

Union Theological Seminary representative: Rev. Dr. Serene Jones

Various national faith and advocacy groups will be invited to co-sponsor at a minimum contribution of \$500 and to nominate potential commissioners. Institutions of Theological Education will be invited to co-sponsor and to nominate one seminarian each to be a commissioner.

PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS

FISCAL SPONSOR

Faith Voices for the Common Good (FVCG), Oakland, CA

www.faithvoices.org

FVCG was founded in 2004 and received its 501c3 status in 2007. It works to create greater public awareness of the country's diverse religious traditions and leaders, through programs, events, and other educational activities. It has focused on issues of war and peace, the protection of religious freedom, and economic justice. It engenders new

ideas and language to frame progressive religious values and inspire new strategies for change, to strengthen networks of religious organizations, to press for greater women's leadership and feminist ideas, and to identify and support new religious leaders committed to creating a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. At the core of its work have been several guiding practices:

1. Creative Networks and Coalitions: FVCG consistently works to create coalitions of progressive religious people and organizations and secular progressive groups, especially focusing on unlikely partners who would benefit from new cooperative ventures.
2. Nimbleness and Responsiveness: FVCG has used religious values in relation to current issues to create opportunities to make educational interventions that further social change. For example, the Axis of Friendship with Iran has brought together Iranian American and peace groups and two Protestant denominations committed to humanizing the people of Iran, to preventing war, to supporting the growing women's movement in Iran, and to promoting cross-cultural and inter-religious friendship.
3. Innovative, positive approaches to social issues: FVCG has sought to place the best in progressive religious values at the forefront of advocacy for justice and peace, and created programs based in them. The Truth Commission on Conscience in War seeks to honor the moral discernment and religious freedom of women and men in military service and the importance of adherence to international law.

Current FVCG projects are the Axis of Friendship with Iran Project and the Truth Commission on Conscience in War. In addition, it is a cosponsor of the Poverty Truth Commission of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

PLANNING COMMITTEE SPONSORS

Luna Productions, Berkeley, CA, committee administration

www.soldiers-themovie.com

Luna Productions is an independent documentary company that specializes in award-winning full-length social issue documentaries for television as well as short videos in support of foundations and non-profit organizations. Since completing the Emmy-nominated PBS documentary, *Soldiers of Conscience*, in 2007, Luna Productions has been working with faith, veterans, and advocacy communities around the country to use the film as a resource for enhancing public dialogue about complex, often taboo issues of conscience in war.

The Riverside Church, New York, NY, facilities host

www.theriversidechurchny.org

Founded in 1929, The Riverside Church is affiliated with the American Baptist and United Church of Christ denominations. Regarded as one of the most important Protestant pulpits in the U.S., past ministers have included Robert James McCracken, William Sloane Coffin, and James A. Forbes, Jr. On April 4, 1967, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his noted speech, "Beyond Vietnam: Time to Break Silence" at an interfaith service which marked the founding of Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam. Riverside continues to be one of the most important churches in progressive

Protestantism, not only in the city of New York, where it is known for its diverse and effective programs in social witness, education, and pastoral ministries, but also across the country through the national visibility of its ministers and members.

Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA, course host

Program in Public Ministry and Religious Leadership for Social Change

www.sksm.edu and www.sksm.edu/academics/masc.php

Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA has been educating Unitarian Universalist ministers and progressive religious leaders from different backgrounds since 1904. It is a member of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), the largest and most diverse partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States, pursuing interreligious collaboration in teaching, research, ministry, and service. The Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (MASC) was launched in 2005. It is a professional degree designed for those who ground their justice activism in a spiritual practice and work for the common good in secular or religious institutions. The program emphasizes integration between theological knowledge and practical experience in community organizing, media relations, non-profit management, political action and social service ministries.

Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY, local host

www.utsnyc.edu

Founded in 1836 with a mission to pursue rigorous scholarship and a practical dimension to theological education, Union is the oldest nondenominational seminary in the nation and remains independent of any denomination or university. Grounded in a Christian heritage that is at once progressive and evangelistic, Union educates leaders for ministry in churches and related organizations and for theological education, extends the work of social justice, and enriches the academy through teaching and research. Education at Union is also significantly instructed by the insights of other faiths, making connections between them and the most profoundly challenging issues of our contemporary experience: the realities of suffering and injustice, religious pluralism, the fragility of our planet, and discoveries of modern science. Union alumnae and alumni bring a religiously grounded, critical and compassionate presence to the major personal, social, political and scientific realities of our time.

CO-SPONSORS

- American Friends Service Committee, New York Metro Region | www.afsc.org/nymetro/
- Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary | www.ambs.edu
- Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America | www.bpfna.org
- The Beatitudes Society | www.BeatitudesSociety.org
- Buddhist Peace Fellowship | www.bpf.org
- Catholic Peace Fellowship | www.catholicpeacefellowship.org
- Center on Conscience & War | www.centeronconscience.org
- Centurion's Guild | www.centurionsguild.org
- Chicago Theological Seminary | www.ctschicago.edu
- Christian Peace Witness | www.christianpeacewitness.org

- Christian Reformed Church in North America | www.crcna.org
- Courage to Resist | www.couragetoresist.org
- Disciples Justice Action Network | www.djan.org
- Drew Theological School | www.drew.edu/theo.aspx
- Fellowship of Reconciliation | www.forusa.org
- Friends for a Non-Violent World | www.fnvw.org
- Graduate Theological Union | www.gtu.edu
- Healing of the Nations Foundation | <http://www.healingofthenations.com/>
- Institute to Honor Freedom of Conscience
- International Veterans Fellowship Of Reconciliation
- Iraq Veterans Against the War | www.ivaw.org
- Ithaca Veterans Peace Coalition
- Jewish Peace Fellowship | www.jewishpeacefellowship.org
- Judson Memorial Church | www.judson.org
- Justice & Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ | www.ucc.org/justice/
- Mennonite Central Committee U.S. | www.mcc.org/
- Mission and Social Justice Commission of The Riverside Church | www.theriversidechurchny.org
- New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends | www.nyym.org
- Orthodox Peace Fellowship | www.incommunion.org
- Park Avenue Christian Church | www.parkavenuechristian.com
- Pax Christi USA | www.paxchristiusa.org
- Peace Majority Report | www.peacemajority.org
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship | www.presbypeacefellowship.org
- Progressive Christians Uniting | www.pcu-la.org
- The Shalom Center | www.theshalomcenter.org
- Society of Jesus, N.Y. Province | <http://nysj.org/>
- Witness Against Torture | www.witnesstorture.org
- Women in Islam | www.womeninislam.org
- World Christian Student Federation of North America | www.wscfglobal.org
- Yale Divinity School | www.yds.edu

APPENDIX I LEADERS, TESTIFIERS, AND COMMISSIONERS

Those who have agreed to participate are asterisked.

Honorary Host: Chaplain (Colonel) Herman Keizer, Jr.,* U. S. Army Chaplain, retired, Director of Chaplaincy Ministries for the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Rev. Keizer, served in Vietnam; taught at the Army Chaplains School; was on the staff of senior officers and civilians in the Department of the Army and the Department of Defense; and authored the policy on Accommodation of Religious Practices in the Armed Services and the Army Family Action Planning Process. In the 1990s, he was Command Chaplain of the United States European Command and military advisor to the Ambassador for International Religious Freedom at the U.S. Department of State.

Commission Chair: Rev. Dr. Kaia Stern,* Director of the Pathways Home Project at the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School. Dr. Stern has worked extensively with veterans in prisons, where she often teaches, and in programs helping those formerly incarcerated to remain free. She holds a Ph.D. in religion and law from Emory University and a Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School.

Testifiers and Expert Witnesses:

Dr. Camillo "Mac" Bica,* Professor of Philosophy, School of Visual Arts (NYC), former Marine Corps Officer and Vietnam Veteran
Joshua Casteel,* veteran and conscientious objector, former US Army Interrogator at Abu Ghraib; featured in the documentary, *Soldiers of Conscience*
Jacob C. Diliberto,* US Marine veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq, Founder of Veterans for Rethinking Afghanistan, Fuller Theological Seminary
Dr. Sohail Hashmi, Professor, Mt. Holyoke College, MA
Chris Hedges,* former war correspondent for the New York Times and author of *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*
Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz,* Congregation B'nai Yisrael; Member, Executive Board, Jewish Peace Fellowship
Logan Laituri,* Army veteran with service in Iraq during OIF II, and co-founder of Centurion's Guild Rev.
Dr. Pamela Lightsey,* Associate Vice President, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, veteran, Dr. Brett Litz, Boston Veterans Hospital, medicine
Camilo Mejia,* veteran and conscientious objector, author of *Road from Ar Ramadi*, featured in the documentary, *Soldiers of Conscience*
J. E. McNeil,* Executive Director, Center on Conscience & War, legal expert
Ms. Celeste Zappala,* Member of Gold Star Families Speak Out; Mother of Sgt Sherwood Baker, Pennsylvania National Guardsman, killed in Baghdad, April 26, 2004, while searching for weapons of mass destruction.
Additional Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

Commissioners (* indicates confirmed):

Sister Aisha al-Adawiya,* Executive Director, Women in Islam, Inc.
Michael Baxter,* National Secretary, Catholic Peace Fellowship
Rev. Dr. Maxine Beach,* President, Drew University Theological School, NJ
Dr. Elizabeth Bounds,* Professor, Candler School of Theology, GA
Rev. Jennifer Butler,* Faith in Public Life, Washington DC
Fr. Drew Christiansen,* Editor, America Magazine
Ms. Pat Clark,* former director, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Commissioner,
Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TX
Mr. Charlie Clements,* President, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Dr. Valerie Dixon,* independent scholar, Just Peace Theory.com
Dr. Joseph Fahey,* Professor of Religious Studies, Manhattan College, Co-
founder and former General Secretary and Chairperson of Pax Christi
USA
Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., *Senior Minister Emeritus, Riverside Church, NY
Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm,* Christian Churches Together
Dr. George Hunsinger,* Professor, co-founder of National Religious Campaign
Against Torture, Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ
Dr. Alice Hunt,* President, Chicago Theological Seminary, IL
Mr. Matthew Glenn Hunter,* Friends for a Non-Violent World, MN
Rev. Alvin O. Jackson,* Pastor, Park Ave. Christian Church,NY
Mr. Mark Johnson,* Executive Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation, NY
Mark Koenig, Coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Compassion,
Peace and Justice Ministry, General Assembly Mission Council,
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Rev. Peter Laarman,* Director, Progressive Christians Uniting
Dr. Kristen J. Leslie,* Professor, Yale University Divinity School, CT
Mr. Ray McGovern,* Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Washington DC
Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt,* Senior Minister, Fourth Universalist Society, NY
Robert Emmet Meagher,* Professor of Humanities, Hampshire College; Founder,
The Nostoi Project: Stories of War and Return
Mr. Peter Vander Meulen,* Coordinator, Office of Social Justice and Hunger
Action, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Rich Meyer,* Mennonite Church USA representative to the US-World Council of
Churches Committee of the Decade to Overcome Violence; Member,
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Dr. David Miller,* Associate Professor, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Jim Murphy,* International Veterans Fellowship of Reconciliation
JT Nakagaki,* Sensei, New York Buddhist Church
Dr. Jack Patterson,* retired, Quaker United Nations Office
Titus Peachey,* Director of Peace Education, Mennonite Central Committee,
U.S.; Counselor, GI Rights Hotline
Rev. Loey Powell,* Office of Justice and Witness, United Church of Christ
Garland Robertson,* Pastor, Austin Mennonite Church, Institute to Honor
Freedom of Conscience

Mr. Daniel A. Seeger,* former Executive Director, American Friends Service
Committee New York Metropolitan Region
Rev. Ken Sehested,* Founding Executive Director, Baptist Peace Fellowship of
North America
Amir Soltani,* Operations Director, Omid for Iran, Semnani Foundation, UT
Jose Vasquez,* Executive Director, Iraq Veterans Against the War; Veteran, US
Army and Army Reserves
Rabbi Arthur Waskow,* The Shalom Center, PA
Rev. Dr. Traci West,* Professor, Drew University Theological School, NJ
Rev. Dr. Carol Wickersham,* Founder, No2Torture, WI
Col. Ann Wright,* ret., Former State Dept. Diplomat, author of *Dissent: Voices of
Conscience*

APPENDIX II ENDORSEMENTS

This Truth Commission, rather than focus on troop deployments or withdrawals, has been designed to step back and ask the most important questions: Are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan just? Are they permissible under international law? Are they moral? And if they are not, as I believe they are not, what are the options for a person of conscience serving in uniform?

- Mr. Chris Hedges, Pulitzer-prize winning war correspondent for *The New York Times* and author of *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*
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Giving testimony – and bearing witness. These are practices as old as the hills and as needed today, in the midst of two wars, as much as they have ever been. Let’s hear the voices of the traumatized echo in our midst – and be moved to justice anew for all who serve in the armed forces and willingly sacrifice on our behalf.

- Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President of Union Theological Seminary and author of *Trauma and Grace*
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The United States of America is founded on principals of political and religious freedom. When we punish the soldier who heeds his or her moral compass, our democracy is in grave danger. We fail as American citizens and we fail as human beings. As a mother, an advocate, a teacher, a feminist, and an interfaith minister, I testify that the first *Truth Commission on Conscience in War* is vital and timely.

- Rev. Dr. Kaia Stern, Truth Commission Chair and Professor, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, Harvard Law School
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Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan dominate much of current U.S. foreign policy, I cannot think of a more timely moment for this Truth Commission. It holds the promise of bringing moral ideas too often hidden in narrow academic circles into a setting of lively public discourse, thereby making a principled contribution to an urgent, fractious national debate. The focus on conscientious objection centralizes the core question of individual, citizen moral rights in relation to the practical interests of the nation-state.

- Rev. Dr. Traci C. West, Professor of Ethics and African American Studies, Drew University Theological School
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APPENDIX III TYPES AND TASKS OF TRUTH COMMISSIONS

Truth Commissions have become an important strategy for encouraging emerging democracies in the aftermath of atrocities, failed states, and gross injustice, as well as in maintaining democracies recovering from violence and injustice. They use a variety of formats and follow various processes related to the issues they address and the intended outcomes. Countries and communities have used truth commissions to educate the public about how to foster justice, reconciliation, and healing; to investigate human rights abuses, systemic injustices, and acts of terrorism; to address crucial social issues in need of resolution; and to explore unresolved incidents of violence. Truth commissions lift up the often silenced and invisible voices of victims and of others directly affected by atrocities, major conflicts, failures of democracies, or ongoing injustices, offering them an official public forum to testify to their experiences and to educate others about the impact of injustice and violence.

Some, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (1995), have legal powers granted by their governments. Others, such as the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2004), are created by community organizations and seek to investigate past injustices and incidents of violence in relation to previous official accounts. Grassroots organizations also use the Truth Commission format to raise awareness on issues that affect their communities on an on-going basis, such as the Poverty Truth Commissions at Union Theological Seminary, NY, and the Graduate Theological Union, CA.

The success of truth commissions depends heavily upon the moral integrity of commissioners, who are often drawn from the ranks of those in professions of public service whose work carries moral expectations and responsibilities. Commissioners receive the witness of testifiers; they study the outcomes of injustices in relation to the larger society; they make recommendations; and they issue rulings and reports based on their findings. Among their findings, they can create forms of accountability and restitution for crimes, generate strategies for change, educate the public, and offer means for healing and reconciliation.

The *Truth Commission on Conscience in War* has been informed by all of these previous commissions in its design and its intention to educate religious communities and the general public about a currently unresolved and crucial moral issue of religious freedom and international law: the right to exercise conscience in war. We seek to establish protections for Selective Conscientious Objection (SCO) that guarantee the moral and religious liberty that are so fundamental to American democratic and constitutional values and international agreements governing the conduct of war.