

WITH FAITH IN THE WORKS OF WORDS

THE BEGINNINGS OF
RECONCILIATION IN
SOUTH AFRICA, 1985-1995



ERIK DOXTADER


"This is simply the best available record and analysis of the debate leading to the adoption of the South African TRC and its implementation. No one interested in South Africa's transition from apartheid to the beginning of democracy can afford not to read it." – Charles Villa-Vicencio

With Faith in the Works of Words is the first book to look behind the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and examine reconciliation's larger and fundamental role in the transition from apartheid to nonracial democracy. In doing so, it finds that there have been many beginnings of reconciliation in South Africa.

Based on documents that have received little public attention, including controversial texts from the religious community and fascinating transcripts from South Africa's constitutional negotiations, the book reveals how reconciliation was used to energize the struggle against apartheid and the ways in which it underwrote the negotiated revolution, including the development of a constitution whose very promise was pegged to the willingness of South Africans to pursue the work of "reconciliation and reconstruction".

With Faith in the Works of Words challenges many common assumptions about the discourse and dynamics of reconciliation in South Africa. An important history of reconciliation's rhetorical power, this book shows how reconciliation shaped the process of South African nation-building long before the TRC took to the stage and captured the world's imagination.

Erik Doxtader is Professor of Rhetoric at the University of South Carolina and a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. A former Social Science Research Council–MacArthur Foundation Fellow, he has authored several award-winning essays on the theory and practice of reconciliation and co-edited a number of books addressed to reconciliation and the South African transition, including *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa – The Fundamental Documents* (David Philip, 2007) and *To Repair the Irreparable: Reparation and Reconstruction in South Africa* (David Philip, 2004). He lives in Cape Town and Columbia, South Carolina.

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