

National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD)

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Values of a democratic South Africa based on fundamental equality of humans created by God, not to be defined in discredited racial categories

As religious communities, our fundamental point of departure is that we are all created by Godⁱ, not only equal, but in fact responsible for one another's well-being. This is our true identity. We are therefore alarmed by the current political debate in South Africa in which there is an attempt to use discredited racial categories again to define the value, place and role of human beings in our society.

It would be the ultimate failure of the struggle for the liberation and dignity of all South Africans, visitors and foreigners amongst us, if we remain captive to the racial or quasi-biological concepts and categories that were used in the past to divide, oppress and exclude some people in South Africa from realising their full potential. Our new identity and our hopes for the future are based on our common destiny and our responsibility for one another.

As a religious community in South Africa we strive to build a just and equitable society, a society that cares for all its citizens, especially for those who are weak and marginalized; we wish to sustain a democratic society that respects our Constitution, the rule of law, that guards against the misuse of power, that fosters our diversity and plurality, and that promotes the role of civil society. Such a society can only be built on the shared moral values within our diverse traditions in order to build a wholesome society. This is the true challenge of national reconciliation.

Thus we must have the courage to build a common future for all South Africans – based on our true identity as being equal, according to the image of God, focussing on how we can help one another, serving one another to realize our God-given potential, seeking justice for the weak and giving hope to the destitute and the poor, so that South Africa can really be a home for all, a shining light amongst the nations of the world.

Father Richard Menatsi, Chairperson, Executive Director, IMBISA Catholic Centre
Sheikh Achmat Sedick, Deputy Chairperson, Muslim Judicial Council
Bishop Ivan Abrahams, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of South Africa
Archbishop Dr. Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, Union of Orthodox Synagogues
Dr. Isak Burger, President, Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa
Ms Shohreh Rawhani, Baha'i Community, South Africa
Rabbi Ron Hendler, Union of Orthodox Synagogues
Bishop Lunga ka Siboto, Presiding Bishop of Ethiopian Episcopal Church
Prof. Piet Strauss, Moderator, Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
Dr. Jakobus (Kobus) Gerber, General Secretary, Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
Prof. Thias Kgatla, Moderator, General Synod, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
Archbishop Dr. Zandisile Magxwalisa, Jerusalem Church in South Africa
Pastor Dr. Lucas Yakobi Founder, Assemblies of God South Africa
Rev. John Sigudla, President, Baptist Convention of South Africa
Bishop Dr Joe Ramashapa, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
Rev. Lucas Plaatjie, Moderator, Cape Synod, Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
Canon Desmond Lambrechts, Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Ev. Linda Cibane, General Secretary, Ebuhleni Nazareth Baptist Church (Shembe), Durban
Rev. Mzukisi Faleni, General Assembly Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Africa
Dr. Jerry Pillay, General Secretary, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Brennan, Fr. Vincent; General Secretary, Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference (SACBC)
Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, President of the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conferenc (SACBC)
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ⁱ The Buddhist community of South Africa are in full agreement with the heart of the statement, and thus support it, although the concept of an almighty and/or creator (God) does not have relevance in Buddhism. We do, however, acknowledge and appreciate that it is of significant relevance and importance to the majority of other religions in South Africa. Ms Helen Terre Blanche - Buddhist community in South Africa.