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Grantwriting sample

TRC Grant Proposal

***Truth and Reconciliation Commission
for
The Nation of Jamaica***

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	3
Statement of Need	4
Project Description	6
Budget	9
Organizational Information	10
Conclusion	11
Appendix	
Staff resumes/bios	
Board list	
News articles	
Photos	

Executive Summary

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is seeking grants from foundations and corporate organizations to empower a panel of inquiry for the Caribbean nation of Jamaica. Modeled after the success of a similar group in South Africa, it will reverse growing political tribalism, expose and reduce crime in impoverished ethnic urban areas, known as “garrisons,” offer amnesty to perpetrators, where appropriate, and suggest a means for future mediation.

Founded by Reverend Dr. Al Miller, President of Whole Life Ministries, a Christian-based organization started in 1983, TRC has joined with hundreds of Church leaders throughout the Jamaican community to support the objectives and strategies of reconciliation. It is circulating a petition through its web site, www.truthjamaica.org, as well as church, business and civic sectors. Upon completion, the petition will be presented to the Jamaican government to provide legal authority for hearings throughout the island.

Due to migration patterns and the search for employment, nearly half of the population of Jamaica now lives in urban regions. The development of garrisons has caused an explosive increase in crime, corruption and unrest. Political partisans have disrupted local and national elections with violence and fraud, and observers have accused police of up to 200 vigilante-style killings every year. In 2005, criminals in garrisons committed 80 percent of the homicides (1,333 out of 1,674). In northeast Jamaica, political gangs and dons run a growing narcotics sector. Amid continuing cycles of atrocities and reprisals, some Jamaicans despair about the possibility of another “Rwanda.”

By opening the lines of communications among all societal groups, combined with offers of amnesty for honest and complete testimony, TRC will foster understanding, repentance and forgiveness. It will hold hearings through three separate committees:

- The Human Rights Violation Committee will examine incidents from 1965 to the present.
- The Amnesty Committee will offer pardons to perpetrators in exchange for their testimony.
- The Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee will treat and compensate victims.

Upon completion of the investigation, to last between 18 months and two years, TRC will issue a comprehensive report with its findings and distribute the document in public forums, newspapers and electronic media. It will also suggest a mechanism for future mediation.

The success of TRC could encourage similar efforts in Haiti, Grenada and other nations in the region.

Statement of Need

1. Need

The Caribbean nation of Jamaica faces a political, economic and social crisis. The trouble is rooted in its migration patterns, economic inequality and ineffective government.

Largely composed of the descendants of former slaves, the Jamaican population has migrated from rural communities to find jobs in manufacturing, the tourist trade and mining. At the beginning of the 21st century, nearly half of the population lived in urban regions and a third in the Kingston metropolitan area.

The transition to a more urbanized society has led to an explosive increase in crime, corruption and unrest. The Jamaican economy was in recession for large parts of the 1990s when the mining sector declined, the price of aluminum fell, and American manufacturers moved to other locations.

Today, the Jamaican government is buried by obligations to other nations -- as much as seventy percent of government spending is allocated for debt service. Local and national elections have been disrupted by political violence and fraud by both major parties, the JLP (Jamaican Labor Party) and PNP (People's National Party). Police have been accused of vigilante-style killings — as many as 200 per year during the decades of the 80s and 90s; and prisons are overcrowded, with long delays before cases are brought to trial. Violence and crime are especially prevalent in poor urban areas.

These poor urban areas, commonly referred to as garrisons, are marked by poor social services, inadequate sanitation and extensive crime. In 2005, criminals in garrisons committed 80 percent of homicides (1,333 out of 1,674). In northeast Jamaica, political gangs and dons administer a growing narcotics sector.

Garrison residents express feelings of fear and hopelessness and are routinely stigmatized by more affluent classes. The dichotomy of lifestyle between corrupt government officials and trapped urban dwellers has led to cycles of atrocities and reprisals.

The feelings of deprivation in the garrisons have been exacerbated by advances in communications and globalization. The Jamaican underclass has become increasingly aware of the prosperity and political stability of other nations. The spread of the Internet allows increased access to other societies and spreads the concept of rebellion against injustice.

Many Jamaicans despair about the possibility of “another Rwanda” in their country. Disappointment and resentment have grown in garrison communities for over 40 years and have not been adequately addressed by either political party.

2. Opportunity

In nations such as South Africa, and other divided societies, “truth and reconciliation” commissions have forestalled and eradicated social rebellion, revenge and resentment. By opening the lines of communications among all societal groups, combined with offers of amnesty when appropriate, they increase understanding and promote forgiveness.

The role of the Church as a neutral force underpinning these commissions establishes trust in the process. The Church mobilizes the population, demands governmental action, and creates hope of justice and reconciliation.

Commissions change the atmosphere and reality on the ground. The cycle of retribution is broken, and a forum is established to air grievances; otherwise, bottled-up resentments are bound to explode.

Most important, truth and reconciliation commissions provide a method for final resolution. Perpetrators who testify and explain their motivations benefit from amnesty (except for the most serious cases), and, if necessary, a witness protection program. Similarly, victims receive mental and physical treatment and may apply for compensatory payments.

Schisms do not disappear over night, but the national discourse becomes more productive. Small steps build upon each other and create momentum.

After hearings are completed, the commissions generate comprehensive reports to analyze societal problems and suggest future remedies. With an overarching focus on truth and justice, they treat all parties fairly and may suggest new methods of mediation.

Truth and reconciliation commissions dispel prejudices, create hope for the future, and spread a vision of economic and social parity. By combining the teachings of the church with an empowered investigative body, they foster cooperation among all elements of society, increase understanding and counter desperation.

Project Description

Overview

Working in conjunction with the church, the Jamaican government and other organizations in civil society, Jamaica's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will work to reduce crime, violence and corruption, and dispel prejudices accumulated during many decades of oppression and injustice.

The Church will serve as a neutral party and lobby to empower TRC by preparing and submitting a petition to the Jamaican government. TRC will provide logistical support and organize prominent leaders to speak out on its behalf.

Upon legislative approval, TRC will foster truth and forgiveness among disparate, and often segregated, communities throughout the island. It will alleviate crime and unrest among entrenched garrison communities such as Kingston, St. James and Spanish Town.

1) *TRC Objectives*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will work to create a secure and prosperous Jamaica by exposing incidents of oppression, crime and corruption. It will seek to close the gulf between powerful and impoverished groups through confession, forgiveness and amnesty, and will foster both trust and mutual cooperation in its fight against injustice.

2) *TRC Empowerment*

TRC will work with the populace and Church for government approval. It will propose a structure to achieve its primary goals and work directly with government officials to craft suitable legislation. As a neutral party with an independent staff, TRC's suggestions will carry credibility with all parties.

In addition to empowering legislation, the Jamaican government will enact regulations on amnesty and work with the Church to defray operating expenses. The Church, in turn, will publicize TRC's goals through sermons and the distribution of promotional brochures. It will lead its congregants in prayers of forgiveness and confession.

All three groups, TRC, the Church and the government, will work together to establish a potent panel of inquiry.

3) *TRC Structure*

TRC has consulted legal experts and staff from 15 other Truth and Reconciliation Committees around the world and considered their advice in light of Jamaica's unique historical legacy. Similar to its affiliates, TRC's inquiry will heal tribal divisions by avoiding vindictive punishments and fight government corruption by diligently seeking the truth as an independent investigative body.

After intensive examination of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, probably the most successful model in the world, TRC suggests establishing three separate committees:

- The Human Rights Violation Committee will examine incidents from 1965 to the present and suggest ways to avoid them in the future. By forcing engagement among abusers and victims, it will mend resentments accumulated during decades of oppression and prevent future schisms in Jamaican society.
- By offering pardons to fully repentant individuals, the Amnesty Committee will encourage them to relate their actions and underlying motivations. Through exposure and analysis of their crimes, the Committee will suggest legal and societal remedies.
- Victims will be treated for physical and mental abuse and receive compensatory payments through the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. They will be encouraged to forgive perpetrators and will receive counseling from the Church to re-establish trust with offending groups.

Thus, TRC will employ a simple three-part division: one panel for the criminals, one panel for the victims, and an amnesty board mediating between the two. The fusion of the three sub-structures will mirror and suggest the resolution of conflicting elements in Jamaican society

4) *TRC Operations*

After legislative approval by the Jamaican government, TRC will conduct informal public hearings with a minimum of rancor and accusation. It will gather testimony in five concentric spheres -- victims, perpetrators, political parties, institutions and events.

TRC will investigate relevant information, encourage public statements, and offer a witness protection program. The Church will establish satellite locations for the hearings at existing sites, thus creating an accessible island-wide network at a minimum cost.

The informal hearings will expose injustice, provide healing and restore broken lives. TRC will refer serious crimes to a Formal Commission for Government, Political and Criminal Violations.

5) *TRC Report*

Upon completion of the investigation, TRC will issue a comprehensive report with its findings and suggestions to prevent future human rights and criminal abuse. It will also propose a mechanism for future conflict mediation.

TRC will promote and distribute the report in public forums, newspapers and electronic media. Even after the hearings are over, it will work to maintain an atmosphere of truth, forgiveness and liberation.

Implications

The success of Jamaica's Truth and Reconciliation Commission could cascade into similar societies as well. Haiti, Grenada and other Caribbean islands with a history of conflict could be transformed into peaceful and productive nations.

The role of the Church in promoting TRC could pave the way for a more active and engaged social policy. A constructive role in Jamaica could lead to increased credibility and effectiveness in its fight against poverty, discrimination and other social ills.

Budget

Start-Up Costs

(converted from Jamaican to American dollars)

Program	Notes / description	Amount
I. Property, plant, equipment		\$ 56,150
Computer hardware	5 units	\$ 3,800
Computer software, installation	5 units	\$ 9,850
Furniture and fittings		\$ 7,600
Office equipment		\$ 4,550
Motor vehicles		\$ 30,350
II. Operating costs		\$364,100
Rental and utilities	Water, phone, light	\$ 37,925
Motor vehicles	Maintenance and fuel	\$ 7,600
Publication of report		\$ 30,350
Educational forums		\$ 4,550
Media and promotion (1)	Before inquiry	\$ 45,500
Media and promotion (2)	After inquiry	\$ 30,350
Office supplies	Stationery, postage, printing	\$ 3,025
Training		\$ 30,350
Legal costs		\$ 22,750
Staff salaries, recruitment		\$151,700
TOTAL		\$420,250

NB: Doesn't include insurance for protection from liability.

Organizational Information

Overview

The Truth Commission will fight crime, violence and the decline in social order caused by “garrison” communities, impoverished urban regions in Jamaica. The Commission is distributing a petition in every parish, to be presented to the Jamaican government, to empower an independent investigative panel to address human rights violations in a constructive way without fostering bitterness or reprisals. The panel will be divided into three committees to expose and analyze incidents, offer amnesty where appropriate, and heal physical and mental injuries through counseling and compensatory payments.

Mission

The TRC will restore trust and hope in the possibility of justice, the necessary prerequisite to building a just and prosperous society, by examining violence and corruption among political and ethnic groups in Jamaica. Through hearings and investigations by a neutral body backed by the Church, it will expose injustice without recriminations, heal broken lives and suggest solutions for future mediation.

History

Reverend Dr. Al Miller, President of Whole Life Ministries, founded TRC when he grew concerned about the lack of morality and increase of political tribalism in Jamaica. Whole Life Ministries, inaugurated in 1983, is affiliated with other Jamaican programs addressing societal needs including the Build Jamaica Foundation, established in 1996 to encourage national development, and the Professional Development Institute, to offer skills training courses for future employment.

Dr. Miller joined with other church leaders to prepare and circulate a petition appealing to the Jamaican government to establish a panel of inquiry. He created a web site to describe TRC's goals and to facilitate the collection of signatures from the public. Upon its empowerment, TRC will hold hearings for a period between 18 months and two years on incidents from 1965 to the present. It will then prepare an analytical report with finding and recommendations and will distribute it throughout Jamaica.

Staff

TRC will include a director/chairman, administrator/secretary, computer technician, research/investigative officers (20), an accountant, liaison officer, lawyer/legal aid, training officer, case officer, recorders/stenographers (5), commissioners, panels for hearing, witness protection and security. Initial hearings would be held in Kingston, Montego Bay and St. Catherine. Currently, TRC operates through hundred of leaders from the church, government and civic organizations.

Conclusion

TRC offers a rare product in our world today, the commodity of hope. Unwilling to resign itself to a breakdown of Jamaican society, its founder and backers believe in the positive force of truth in an atmosphere of repentance and forgiveness. TRC also offers something more tangible, a proven strategy to both alleviate the violence and corruption plaguing Jamaican society and prevent the government from degenerating into anarchy.

TRC's struggle may be compared to the battle of good and evil throughout the world and throughout history. Victory depends on active support and concern by good people everywhere, people who will not shut themselves off to the realities of life in faraway places. As pleaded in the Bob Dylan song, "How many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?"