

**NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Network of Religious Communities represents a diverse gathering of faith-traditions. Each of us worships our Creator in a different way. Even when we read a shared sacred text, we read it from different viewpoints and come to different conclusions. And therein lies our strength. We constantly cause one another to question our assumptions and to confront our prejudices, to stretch and to grow in order to meet the demands of the One we all revere.

Becoming a Network of Religious Communities has required envisioning new ways of coming together and being together. It has required each of us to learn to respect and appreciate the contribution of each religious community. It has required listening to voices and perspectives quite different from our own, even when the voices seem to threaten our normal way of understanding and our accepted practices. It has required ensuring that each community is represented at the table when important matters are discussed, significant plans are developed and vital decisions are made.

We have been affirmed in this effort by the teachings of our individual faith traditions. In their various ways our faith traditions hold a vision of a new covenant, a new heart, a new community, a new and better city. Our religious traditions call us to do something new and better for the sake of all the people.

In light of our experience and the teachings of our various faith traditions we the members of the Board of the Network of Religious Communities :

Call upon Governor George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, State Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi, Mayor Anthony Masiello, and Erie County Executive Joel Giambra to recognize the unique opportunity that exists for the renewal of the City of Buffalo, the County of Erie and the entire Western New York Region through the creation of a Financial Control Board for the City of Buffalo by:

1. Choosing members of the control board who bring a broad diversity of qualifications and life experiences to the task; visionaries, economists, academicians, pragmatists, men and women, and persons of various faith traditions.
2. Ensuring that the financial control board is representative of the entire citizenry of the region, giving attention to the fair representation of African American and Hispanic persons living in the City of Buffalo.
3. Having the courage to appoint persons to the financial control board who bring a new vision and enthusiasm to the task rather than the same group of persons who have managed and directed the City of Buffalo and Western New York over the past decades.

Call upon the members of the New York Senate and New York State Assembly to support the Governor, leaders of the New York State Senate and Assembly, The State Comptroller, the Mayor of Buffalo, and the Erie County Executive in their efforts to accomplish the above and to remain vigilant, ensuring that the Financial Control Board serves the best interest of the people of Buffalo, Erie County and Western New York and not just the interests of the well connected few.

Call upon all the members of congregations, temples and mosques and all residents of the City of Buffalo, Erie County and Western New York to celebrate together the rich religious, racial and cultural diversity of our region, acknowledging that all voices matter and working to insure that all voices are heard in governmental hallways, board rooms and especially the meetings of the Financial Control Board.

June 30, 2003

List of those signing document on next page.

**NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
MEMBERS OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS SIGNING THE STATEMENT**

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Rev Deacon Leann McConchie Episcopal Diocese of Western New York
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Neal Western NY Churches in Covenant (Disciples/UCC)
The Rev. John Powell Mennonite Mission Network (Mennonite Church)
Dr Othman Shibly Islamic Society of the Niagara Frontier
The Rev. Merle Showers Buffalo District, United Methodist Church
Dr. Surjit Singh Sikh Society of the Niagara Frontier
Dr. Dilip Sinha Hindu Cultural Center
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Deacon James Anderson New Hope Baptist Church
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