



A Call to Community

America is at a crossroads.

One road leads to community; the other to the chaos of competing identities and interests. We have all hurt one another, often unconsciously, in ways we would never intend. We need each other. We need to eradicate the scourge of racial division. We must demonstrate that our diversity is our greatest strength and that out of this diversity is rising a new American community. We can offer hope to a world torn by divisions of every kind.

We invite everyone to join us...

...in a renewed commitment to an American community based on justice, reconciliation and excellence. The original promise of this country, that out of a rich diversity of peoples a great nation would rise, has only partially been fulfilled. This unique experiment remains incomplete because the promise of equal opportunity and dignity for all has not been fully realized. Much of the distrust, resentment and fear in America today is rooted in our unacknowledged and unhealed racial history.

For many of us, race determines where we live, where we send our children to school and where we worship. Because racism is deeply embedded in the institutions of our society, individuals are often insulated from making personal decisions based on conscious racial feelings and do not experience the daily burden that their brothers and sisters of color have to carry. We must change the structures which perpetuate economic and racial separation. But no unseen hand can wipe prejudice away. The ultimate answer to the racial problem lies in our willingness to obey the unenforceable.

The new American community...

...will flow from a spirit of giving freely without demanding anything in return. In the new American community, when any one individual is injured, exploited or demeaned, all of us will feel the pain and be diminished. It will be a place where hearts can put down roots and where each feels accepted and at home. Some painful memories cannot be erased. But forgiving is not forgetting; it is letting go of the hurt.

To build this new American community, we must empower individuals...

...to take charge of their lives and take care of their communities. In cities across America, bold experiments are taking place. Citizens have initiated honest conversations - between people of all backgrounds - on matters of race, reconciliation and responsibility. They have chosen to move beyond blame and guilt, beyond hatred and fear, deciding to face the past with courage and honesty. They are demonstrating that through honesty, a willingness to embrace each other's painful experiences, and with God's power to change us, the wounds of the past can be healed and our nation become one community.

This approach calls us to a...

New Concept of Partnership and Responsibility...

It means:

- Listening carefully and respectfully to each other and to the whole community.
- Bringing people together, not in confrontation but in trust, to tackle the most urgent needs of the community.
- Searching for solutions, focusing on what is right rather than who is right.
- Building lasting relationships outside our comfort zone.
- Honoring each person, appealing to the best qualities in everyone, and refusing to stereotype the other group.
- Holding ourselves, communities and institutions accountable in areas where change is needed.
- Recognizing that the energy for fundamental change requires a moral and spiritual transformation in the human spirit.

Together...

...we will share our lives and the resources God has given us to make America a community of hope, security and opportunity for all.

This document grew out of the experiences and visions of many around the country and was launched at the National Press Club in Washington, DC in May 1996 with the support of endorsers from across the United States and partnering organizations. One of the earliest endorsers to lend support to A Call to Community was former Senator Bill Bradley, who wrote on the occasion of the national launch: "I salute the effort that is being launched today with A Call to Community and applaud the leadership demonstrated by these participating organizations and individuals. They have come together to build the bridges of understanding we need to move forward in our pursuit of a spiritually transformed community in which reconciliation is possible."

ENDORSEMENTS

Mayor Jerry E. Abramson
Louisville, Kentucky

The Rev. Dr. Charles G. Adams
Past President
Progressive National Baptist
Convention &
Pastor
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church
Detroit, Michigan

Leon Adams
President
National Human Rights Association
Columbus, Ohio

Tommy P. Baer
International President
B'nai B'rith
Richmond, Virginia

Dr. Raymond J. Bakke
Executive Director
International Urban Associates
Chicago, Illinois

Kenneth Blackwell
State Treasurer
Ohio

Mayor David J. Berger
Lima, Ohio

Mayor David A. Bowers
Roanoke, Virginia

Senator Bill Bradley
Former US Senator
New Jersey

Gilbert T. Brown
Economist
World Bank (Retired)
Washington, DC

Rev. Dr. Crystal Clarity Bujol
First Woman's Church in the City of the
Angels
Los Angeles, California

Reid Carpenter
President
Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation
Pennsylvania

Representative Margaret Carter
Oregon State Legislature
Oregon

Caroline Chang
Community Activist
Boston, Massachusetts

Mayor Larry Chavis
Richmond
Virginia

Congressman Dick Chrysler
Michigan

Fred Cloud
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Intergroup Relations
National Association of Human Rights
Workers

Alderman Vilma Colom Chicago, Illinois	Henry L. Gates, Jr Chair, W.E.B. DuBois Professor of Humanities Harvard University Cambridge, Massachusetts	Bernice Powell Jackson Executive Director United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice Cleveland, Ohio
Mayor Rosemary M. Corbin Richmond, California	Robert Gentile Executive Director A Partnership of Faith in NYC New York	Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. Illinois
Rev. Gordon and Mary Cosby Church of the Savior Washington, DC	John Gilligan former Governor Ohio	Rosemary Jackson President School Board Camden, New Jersey
Cathy Cox Executive Director Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality Indianapolis, Indiana	Thomas E. Gottwald President, Ethyl Corporation Richmond, Virginia	Herbert Johnson Catholic Interracial Council of New York New York
Douglas Cruickshanks, Jr. President NationsBank Richmond, Virginia	Wilson Goode Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and former Mayor Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	The Hon. Nathaniel Jones US Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit Cincinnati, Ohio
Gerald Cunningham Homeland Ministries Christian Church Indianapolis, Indiana	Rabbi Dr. Marc Gopin George Mason University Institute for Conflict Analysis & Resolution Fairfax, Virginia	Charles Jordan Director Portland Parks and Recreation Oregon
Harlon L. Dalton Professor Yale Law School New Haven, Connecticut	John Graham Executive Director The Giraffe Project Whidbey Island, Washington	Mayor Vera Katz Portland, Oregon
Lawrence J. Dark President and CEO The Urban League Portland, Oregon	Alderman Jesse D. Granato Chicago, Illinois	Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury Portland, Oregon
Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. New Haven, Connecticut	Representative Avel Gordly Oregon State Legislature Oregon	Walter T. Kenney former Mayor of Richmond, Virginia
Mayor Kane Ditto Jackson, Mississippi	Chester Hartman Executive Director Poverty Research Action Council Washington, DC	Mayor J. Mark Lawler Anderson, Indiana
Michael W. Dominique Louisiana Main Street Managers Associa- tion Franklin, Louisiana	Robert C. Harrod Executive Director National Conference Cincinnati, Ohio	The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia Richmond, Virginia
Gus Envela Three times Equatorial Guinean Olympic Athlete Los Angeles, California	Senator Mark O. Hatfield former U.S. Senator and former Governor Oregon	Rabbi Philip Lefkowitz former Assistant Director Chicago Rabbinical Council, Illinois
Rev. Dr. James Forbes Senior Minister, Riverside Church, New York	Rev. Canon Robert G. Hetherington St. Paul's Episcopal Church Richmond, Virginia	Carolyn Leonard Coordinator Multi- Cultural/Multi- Ethnic Education Portland Public Schools Portland, Oregon
Fran Frazier Administrator for Cultural Initiatives Ohio Department of Human Services Columbus, Ohio	Dr. John Hirt Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation Pennsylvania	Commissioner Mike Lindberg Portland, Oregon
Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse Oregon	David Hurd, Chairman Emeritus The Principal Financial Group Iowa	Senator Henry L. Marsh, III Virginia State Legislature
Mayor James A. Garner Hempstead, New York		Rev. Dr. B. Herbert Martin Pastor, Progressive Community Church Chicago and Coordinating Committee of the Million Man March Chicago, Illinois
Chris Gates National Civic League Denver, Colorado		David Marzahl Executive Director Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Protection Chicago, Illinois

Prema Mathai-Davis
National Executive Director
YWCA of the USA
New York, New York

Prof. Ian Mayo-Smith
Director Emeritus
Institute of Public Service International
University of Connecticut
West Hartford, Connecticut

Martha McCoy
Co-Director
Study Circles Resource Center
Pomfret, Connecticut

Alderman Richard F. Mell
Chicago, Illinois

Ruth Messinger
President
Borough of Manhattan, New York

Kwesi Mfume
National President
NAACP

Imam W. Deen Mohammed
Muslim American Spokesperson
Chicago, Illinois

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun
Illinois

Clay Myers
former State Treasurer and
Secretary of State
Oregon

Kristine Olson
U.S. Attorney
District of Oregon

Rev. Rodney Page
Deputy General Secretary, National
Council of Churches in Christ in the USA;
Executive Director, Church World Ser-
vice and Witness,
New York

Sharon Parker
Director, Social Responsibility Programs
Office for Social Responsibility
The Union Institute, Washington, DC

Spencer Perkins
Editor-in-Chief
Urban Family Magazine
Jackson, Mississippi

Congressman Rob Portman
Ohio

Mayor Roxanne Qualls
Cincinnati, Ohio

Bill Ray
Community Development Director
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
Portland, Oregon

Chris Rice
Managing Editor
Urban Family Magazine
Jackson, Mississippi

Barbara Roberts
former Governor of Oregon

Steve Rothschild
Executive Director
Twin Cities Rise!
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Charles Schiffman
Executive Director
Jewish Federation of Portland, Oregon

Alice Schlenker
Former mayor
Lake Oswego, Oregon

Mayor Kurt Schmoke
Baltimore, Maryland

Douglas R. Sharp
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
Lombard, Illinois

Representative Rev. Frank Shields
Oregon State Legislature

Prof. Edward C. Smith
Director, American Studies Program
American University, Washington, DC

Senator Gordon H. Smith
US Senate

Rev. Ken Smith
President
Chicago Theological Seminary
Chicago, Illinois

John Springer
Executive Director
Interfaith Action for Racial Justice
Baltimore, Maryland

Rabbi Joshua Stamper
Executive Director
Institute for Judaic Studies
Portland, Oregon

Commissioner Erik Sten
Portland, Oregon

Commissioner Bev Stein
Chair
Board of Multnomah County
Commissioners

The Most Rev. Walter F. Sullivan
Bishop of Richmond, Virginia

Rev. W. Douglas Tanner, Jr.
Executive Director
The Faith and Politics Institute
Washington, DC

Justice John Charles Thomas
Virginia Supreme Court Justice, retired
Richmond, Virginia

Representative W. Curtis Thomas
Pennsylvania State Legislature

The Rt. Rev. Herbert Thompson, Jr.
Bishop of Southern Ohio

Mayor Bruce Todd
Austin, Texas

Jim Wallis, Sojourners
Washington, DC

Freddye Webb-Petett
Director
The Kellogg International Leadership
Program
Battle Creek, Michigan

Paul M. Weyrich
President, Free Congress Foundation,
Washington, DC

Lorraine Williams
Dismantling Racism Task Force
Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation
Pennsylvania

Raul Yzaguirre
President and CEO
National Council of La Raza
Washington, DC

Rabbi Joel Zaiman
President of the Baltimore Jewish Council
Maryland

*In addition, the following organizations and
governmental entities have endorsed the Call:*

A More Perfect Union:
Americans in Conversation, New York

A Partnership of Faith in NYC

Board of Supervisors, Chesterfield, VA

Board of Supervisors, Hanover, VA

Board of Supervisors, Henrico, VA

Camden County Human Relations
Commission, New Jersey

City Council, Selma, AL

City Council, Camden, NJ

City Council, Richmond, VA

City Council, Cincinnati, Ohio

The Prejudice Institute, Towson, Maryland