



# CHRIST COVENANT COALITION

740 40<sup>TH</sup> STREET, BROOKLYN, NY 11232

TELEPHONE (718) 436-0242 EXT. 15 FAX (718) 436-5628

WWW.CHRISTCOVENANTCOALITION.ORG

## PRESIDING BISHOP

Rev. Dr. Joseph Mattera

## GREATER NEW YORK COUNCIL

Bishop Ronald Bailey  
Bishop Hector Bonano  
Bishop Carlton Brown  
Bishop Roderick Caesar  
Pastor Walt Healy  
Pastor Robert Johansson  
Dr. Luciano Padilla  
Dr. Marcus Roberts

## NATIONAL COUNCIL

Bishop Harry Jackson  
Dr. John P. Kelly  
Dr. Bob Phillips  
Bishop Bart Pierce

## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Pastor George Bakalov  
Pastor Dennis Bambino  
Pastor Jeff Beacham  
Pastor Raul Burgos  
Pastor Robert Cassara  
Bishop Frank Duprée  
Pastor Michel Faulkner  
Pastor Steve Hannett  
Pastor Gary Hartley  
Pastor Walt Healy  
Pastor Victor Nazario  
Pastor John Picarello  
Pastor Damian Smeragliuolo

January 10, 2012

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver  
LOB 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Speaker Silver:

The U.S. Supreme Court recently announced that it would not review a lower-court decision backing New York City's decision to ban the Bronx Household of Faith, an Evangelical congregation, from holding its Sunday services at Public School 15, where the church has held worship services since 2002.

As a result, the 2 to 1 decision of the 2nd Circuit Appeals Court in *Bronx Household of Faith v. Board of Education of the City of New York* will stand. The Court decided that church services were prohibited in public school buildings. It noted, "A worship service is an act of organized religion that consecrates the place in which it is performed, making it a church." The judges further noted, "The place has, at least for a time, become the church."

New York City is now in the process of evicting hundreds of churches that currently rent public school facilities for weekend services. The *New York Times* found that at least 160 churches rented public schools during the 2010-11 academic year. The City has ordered all churches out by February 12, 2012.

Available and affordable real estate property is a rare commodity in New York City and extremely difficult to come by. If this decision is allowed to stand, the planting of new churches would become almost impossible. Many existing City churches would simply close.

Although today the case impacts New York City churches meeting in City schools, some feel that opponents of organized religion could be emboldened to make a move banning churches from meeting in schools or other public places anywhere in the state. As evidence of this, we need look no further than the recent *New York Daily News* editorial entitled "New York City Housing Authority shouldn't evict churches: Bloomberg administration's war on religion." The *News* notes that the Bloomberg Administration is moving beyond merely evicting churches from City schools, but City Housing Authority common spaces as well.





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State Senator Marty Golden (R-Brooklyn) and Member of Assembly Nelson Castro (D-Bronx) have introduced legislation, S.6087 (Golden) / A.8800 (Castro) that would permit churches to continue meeting in City schools. Their legislation authorizes the use of school buildings and school sites for religious meetings and worship when not in use for school purposes or when such service or worship is deemed not disruptive of normal school operations. To save the churches from eviction this legislation must be passed and signed into law by February 2012.

**In addition to Christ Covenant Coalition, the following pastors and churches urge all legislators to support S.6087 (Golden) / A.8800 (Castro):**

## NAME

## ORGANIZATION

MATT BENNETT

CHRISTIAN UNION

Jacob Zaske

Skyline City Church

David Hitchcock

The Community of Grace

R. Vassar

Apostles Church of the City

Rev. Swiff

Westchester Chapel

Rev. Edgard Torres

Westchester Chapel Church of the Nazarenes  
Urban Youth Alliance

Josh Goodwin

Morning Star New York

Hugo Monroy

Christ Fellowship Network

J. Kirk van der Swaagh

Neighborhood Church of Greenwich Village

Jan Tyson

Trinity Grace Church New York

## ORGANIZATION





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January 10, 2012

TO:

Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chair  
New York State Assembly Committee on Education  
LOB 836  
Albany, NY 12248

and Education Committee Members:

Carmen Arroyo; Michael Benedetto; James Brennan; Karim Camara;  
Barbara Clark; Jane Corwin; Steve Englebright; Al Graf; Carl Heastie;  
Earlene Hooper; William Magnarelli; Alan Maisel; David McDonough;  
Joel Miller; Joan Millman; Dean Murray; Daniel O'Donnell; Amy Paulin;  
Edward Ra; Phil Ramos; Bill Reilich; Bob Reilly; Naomi Rivera;  
Joseph Saladino; Teresa Sayward; Kevin Smardz; Robert Sweeney;  
Fred Thiele, Jr.; Matthew Titone; Harvey Weisenberg

Honorable Chairperson Nolan and Members of the Education Committee:

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The Community of Grace

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Urban Youth Alliance

Josh Goodwin

Morning Star New York

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