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Wall Street, Main Street & the Churches

Michael Sean Winters | Dec. 16, 2009 NCR Today

Much coverage was lavished on the President?s meeting with top bankers on Monday. But, another White House meeting might have been more enlightening. A group of prominent clergy met with members of the White House economic team to insist that Wall Street be held accountable for its rapacious ways and to advocate for those facing foreclosure. Earlier, the group held a prayer vigil in front of the Treasury Department.

Jim Wallis of Sojourners, who attended the meeting, said, ?To take advantage of consumers should not only be a crime, but is also a sin against God. Teachers, social workers, small business owners and our men and women in the armed services all know what it means to sacrifice for the good of our country in tough times, and they do so with pride. I refuse to believe that Wall Street is the one place in the country that is exempt.?

The event was organized by a coalition of progressive groups including PICO National Network, Faith in Public Life, Sojourners and the Center for Responsible Lending. In addition to the clergy, homeowners struggling to keep their homes participated in the event.

?This financial crisis has revealed deep weaknesses in our economic and regulatory systems - not to mention our basic national values,? said Brian McLaren in a written statement of support for the group. ?Our regulatory infrastructure needs profound reform, and so does our national ethos at the level of values and commitments to justice and compassion.? McLaren, pastor at Cedar Ridge Community Church in Spencerville, Maryland, was named by Time magazine as one of the 25 most influential evangelicals in America and a best-selling evangelical author.

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