



University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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2-22-1998

### Letter Regarding March 5, 1998 Conversation on Race

Commission for Blacks

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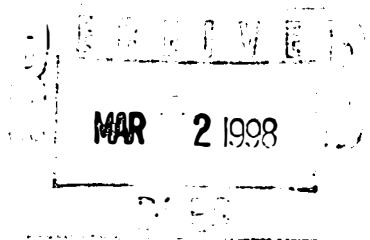
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*The National Conference  
of Christians and Jews*

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Virginia S. Anagnost  
Executive Director



February 22, 1998

Dear Members and Friends:

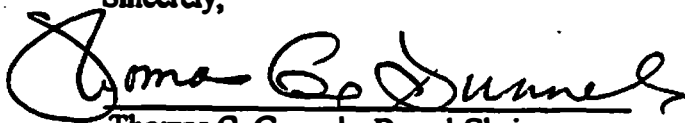
The March 5 *Conversation on Race* will focus on **Police/Community Relations** with Phil Keith, Chief of the Knoxville Police Department, leading the discussion. This will be the fourth *Conversation* in the series based on the President's national *Initiative on Race*. Previous dialogues have focused on "Education and Racial Identity," "Racism in the Schools," and "Fair Housing in our Community."

Given the problems that have surfaced of late concerning trust between many residents of our inner city community and the police department, it is prudent for us to understand better what the department is doing to correct perceived or actual deficiencies and to re-establish a legacy of trust in the fair treatment of all citizens. Issues surrounding the establishment of a Citizen Review Board have the potential for further dividing our community and need to be approached with careful understanding. The Bernstein Commission, astutely appointed by Mayor Ashe, is currently investigating allegations of inadequacies and the use of excessive force and unfair treatment and is expected to make its recommendations to the Mayor in early summer. These are some of the concerns to be discussed with Chief Keith. *The dialogue will be held on Thursday, March 5, at 11:30 am at Ramsey's Cafeteria*, located on White Avenue behind the UT College of Law. Do plan to come and help spread the word among your friends and associates. It is only through honest discussion and respectful dialogue that we can reach the understandings necessary to bring about a better sense of unity in our community.

Kathleen Armstrong, Treasurer, extends sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the work of the Conference through the payment of membership dues. The National Conference does not accept public funds and is solely reliant on private donations in order to carry out its important mission of building bridges of understanding across the religious, racial and ethnic lines of our community. If you have not yet made your payment, kindly do so in the category of your choice: **Corporate- \$250, Supporting- \$100, Sustaining- \$50, Member- \$25, and Student- \$15.**

We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at the March 5 forum.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas C. Gunnels, Board Chair

*The National Conference of Christians and Jews, founded in 1927, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. The National Conference promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.*