

Consumer protection chief seeks allies in faith leaders

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

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WASHINGTON (RNS) The architect of the Obama administration's new consumer protection bureau met with faith-based groups Tuesday (Feb. 8) in a bid to shape the agency's work as a moral crusade.

"The most recent financial crisis caused many to question the moral underpinnings of our financial dealings with each other," Elizabeth Warren, a former Harvard University law professor who was appointed last year to start the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

"Our laws reflect who we are and they shape who we become. To pursue regulatory change without reflecting on its moral dimension would be wrong," she said.

Warren met Tuesday with about 20 Christian and Jewish religious leaders to get their input on focusing the bureau's work, and to hear stories of how the financial crisis has affected their communities.

Her meeting included representatives of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Sojourners and the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference.

A former Sunday school teacher and a United Methodist, Warren said moral and religious traditions have long informed rules about fair

lending. "The Bible speaks about not cheating people," she said.

She hopes the bureau's fledgling partnership with religious leaders will eventually extend from the pulpits to the pews to educate Americans on how to avoid becoming victims of risky financial schemes.

"They're not merely passers-along of information," she said. "These are people who have thought deeply about a financial crisis that has moral and spiritual dimensions. I want this agency to be informed by the deeper thinking that they've brought to these issues."