

A Look at the Many Reasons For Practicing Tolerance

By REV. DR. RAYMOND ROBERTS
The uproar sweeping the Arab world in response to cartoon depictions of Muhammad gives us much to ponder. Although most religious people support the democratic values of tolerance, freedom of religion and the press, churches, synagogues and mosques are called anew to explain why these values express our deepest convictions.

To advance this conversation, allow me to share why this Presbyterian believes tolerance (the idea that others have the right to advocate views that are entirely wrong) is a deeply Christian value.

God's majesty: Christians, like Jews and Muslims, believe God is greater and more excellent than our theology. This conviction, confirmed by an experience of God's awesomeness, supports a sense of humility. We are not the measure of all things.

Human sinfulness: Christians believe that humans have dignity, even as they bear the fault called "sin." This realism leads us to be suspicious of utopian schemes, even those that claim religious inspiration. It compels us to limit power with checks and balances. A confrontation with one's own sinfulness, which Christians consider necessary for salvation, should yield a humble recognition of one's tendency to error.

Natural Law: The Apostle Paul claims that gentiles, who do not have the divine law, know they fall short of God's glory because "The word of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness..." (Romans 2.15). This has been traditionally interpreted to mean that non-believers can grasp the Natural Law through the use of reason. Confidence in the moral capacity of nonbelievers contributed to the Constitutional ban

on religious tests for office.

The Holy Spirit: Christians believe that conversion is the work of the Spirit illuminating a person's heart. This leads us to resist legislating matters of the conscience. An experience of the Spirit reminds us that truth has its own advocate.

The example of Jesus: Christians believe that Jesus' life is exemplary. When the ultimate blasphemy took place on the cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Space does not permit us to explore how a belief that people are created in the image of God should remind us to respect another's integrity, or how justification by grace (and thus saved from needing to justify ourselves before God) should produce non-defensiveness, or how the doctrine of sanctification (the idea that the Christian life involves continual growth in godliness) should support openness to continual learning and conversion, or how the doctrine of the church contributed to the development of the separation of church and state. Nevertheless, we see that Christians have a host of reasons to practice tolerance.

Persons of other faiths will give their own distinctive reasons for supporting democratic values (Hear these reasons at the "Paths of Peace" conversation between Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders on Wednesday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield). Though our religious reasons differ, we can unite in treasuring these values and recommending them to the world.

Reverend Roberts is Senior Pastor at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, located at 140 Mountain Avenue in Westfield.

Purim Carnival to Feature Activities, Food and Music

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central New Jersey, located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains, will hold its annual Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 12, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The festivities, open to both JCC members and the general public, will include an array of rides, games, crafts, music, food and the traditional goldfish. There also will be a chance to win an iPod Nano.

This year there will be two ticket options. For children seeking a lot of activity, wristbands are available for purchase entitling them to unlimited rides and games, plus two crafts. For youngsters who prefer fewer activi-

ties, tickets are for sale in units of 30-ticket cards.

Wristbands purchased in advance are \$22 per child; the cost will be \$25 on the day of the carnival. Thirty-ticket cards purchased in advance are \$15 each, and \$18 on the day of the carnival. Anyone who purchases wristbands or tickets in advance will be entered into a drawing for a prize.

In addition to celebrating the Purim holiday, the carnival also serves as a fundraiser. All profits will support scholarships to the JCC's After School Care program. To purchase wristbands and/or tickets, or for further information, please contact Jodi Baxter at (908) 889-8800, extension no. 235, or at jbxater@jccnj.org.

SP Library to Extend Amnesty March 6 to 11

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Public Library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, will offer amnesty for any late materials returned the week of March 6 through March 11.

The trustees have approved this week of no fines as a gesture of appreciation to patrons for their patience during the last several months of construction at the library, according to Library Director Meg Kolaya.

Normal programming has resumed and the Friends of the Library are collecting materials for their annual book sale later this month. For further information or directions to the library, please call (908) 322-5007.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BEN!... Girl Scout Brownies and Daisies (kindergarten through grade 2) at Franklin Elementary School in Westfield attended their annual Brownie-Daisy Dance on January 6. This year's theme was "Ben Franklin's 300th Birthday Bash," for which the girls donned white paper hats to resemble powdered wigs. Patrick Rooney, former assistant principal of Franklin School, in background, also attended the party dressed as the famous statesman and scientist.

Senior Club to Learn Tips On Organizing Possessions

SCOTCH PLAINS - Regulars and newcomers alike are invited to attend the 12 O'Clock Club's monthly luncheon and program at noon on Tuesday, March 14, at the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church in Scotch Plains. The meeting will take place downstairs in the church's Ryno Hall.

Guest speaker Jamie Novak will present a program entitled "Stress-Free Downsizing." A professional organizer, Ms. Novak is the author of "A Busy Person's Guide to a Life You Love" and "1,000 Quick and Easy Organizing Secrets."

Caregivers Meeting Slated For Monday

WESTFIELD - A support group for those caring for elderly or chronically ill loved ones will meet on Monday, March 6, at 8 p.m. in the parish center of St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church, located on Lamberts Mill Road in Westfield.

Meetings are held on the first non-holiday Monday of each month. These are information and sharing sessions. For more information on the group, please call Marilyn Ryan at (908) 233-8757.

Final 'God's Wonders' To Feature Sea Life

WESTFIELD - The final class on "God's Wonders in Science" will take place on Wednesday, March 8, from 7 to 8 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Westfield, located at 170 Elm Street.

The topic will be "Under the Sea," in which whales will be compared to sharks and there will be a hands-on submarine experiment. This class is geared toward those in kindergarten through fifth grade and costs \$10.

Pre-registration is required and may be done through the church office, by calling (908) 233-2278 or e-mailing firstbaptist.westfield@verizon.net.

HAZAK Plans Author Visit; Annual Ethics Conversation

SCOTCH PLAINS - Congregation Beth Israel's HAZAK social group for people age 55 and older has announced the dates for two events to be held at the synagogue, located at 18 Shalom Way in Scotch Plains.

On Wednesday, March 15, HAZAK will host a talk on Kabbalah and Mysticism at 1 p.m., featuring Max Anteby, author of the book "The Jewish Theory of Everything." Mr. Anteby studied Talmud for nine years at Mirrer Yeshivah in Brooklyn, N.Y. and currently is Chief Financial Officer for "In Motion," a private label swimwear company.

In the past, he served as director for various organizations within the Brooklyn Sephardic community and now devotes his spare time to learning, teaching and writing.

Reservations for this event are required and may be made by calling (908) 889-1830. The cost to attend is \$2 for non-members.

On Sunday, March 19, at 11 a.m., HAZAK and the synagogue's Adult Education Committee will host their combined program, called the Annual Ethics Conversation.

This interactive discussion between a panel of professionals and the audience will explore ethical questions encountered in daily living. The panelists will include Rabbi George Nudell, attorney Heidi Grossman and Dr. Michael Rosenberg. Attorney David Littman

First Baptist Offering Stations During Lent

WESTFIELD - As part of its Lenten observance, the First Baptist Church of Westfield is offering stations for private reflection in the sanctuary. The church is located at 170 Elm Street.

Each station will include a scripture reading from the last week of Jesus' life, an object on which to focus one's thoughts and an activity to engage the individual in applying the scripture to his or her own life.

The stations will serve as a means to engage all the senses: touch, smell and taste, as well as sight and hearing. They will be changed every other Wednesday.

A worship service introducing the new ones will take place on March 15 and March 29. In all, 12 stations will have been presented prior to Maundy Thursday, April 15.

Stations will be open to the public Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., as well as whenever the church is open for evening events. For more information, please call the church office at (908) 233-2278 or email firstbaptist.westfield@verizon.net.

will moderate the discussion. Admission and light refreshments will be free, but reservations are required and may be made by calling (908) 889-1830.

Temple Shalom to Hold Twice-Monthly Minyan

FANWOOD - Temple Shalom, located at 74 South Martine Avenue in Fanwood, will present Shabbat Morning Minyan on Saturdays, March 11 and 25, at 10 a.m. at the temple.

This Minyan and Torah study program will enable participants to learn about services, study Torah and experience worship in a casual roundtable setting. No fee or pre-registration is required and all are welcome.

To start, the Minyan will meet two Saturdays a month. For scheduling or more information, please call Temple Shalom at (908) 889-4900.

Interfaith Discussion To Focus on Peace

WESTFIELD - A new local interfaith initiative entitled "Paths of Peace" will begin on Wednesday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield.

Speakers will include Muslim Imam W. Deen Shareef, Rabbi Douglas Sagal of Temple Emanu-El in Westfield and the Reverend Dee Dee Turlington of the First Baptist Church of Westfield. Together, they will explore sacred texts, traditions and historical religious figures that speak of peace.

Members of the public are invited to attend. The purpose of "Paths of Peace" is to bring people together to study the meaning of peace and to implement it in their daily lives.

WNC Sets Talk Friday On Prescription Plans

WESTFIELD - Area residents are invited to attend a free presentation on the new Medicare prescription plans for 2006 tomorrow, Friday, March 3, at 10:30 a.m. at the Westfield Neighborhood Council, located at 127 Cacciola Place in Westfield.

A specialist from Aetna will be the featured speaker, and a continental breakfast will be served. Space is limited. For reservations and more information, please call (908) 233-2722.

www.goleader.com



Wendy:

Happy 50th!

From Your Friends



Our Alzheimer's care begins with what's been forgotten.

Each senior has a history that makes them a unique individual. At Sunrise our approach to Alzheimer's care begins with understanding the stories and details of a senior's life.

Knowing our residents better means we can help them attain what we call "pleasant days" by finding activities they can enjoy and be successful at. We do this in specially designed

surroundings that are both safe and nurturing, where who they are is never forgotten.

Visit or call a Sunrise Senior Living community for more information about how we care for seniors with memory impairment. In Mountainside and Westfield, we feature our Reminiscence program for Alzheimer's residents.

Free glaucoma screenings and personal consultations at Sunrise of Westfield
Tuesday, March 14 from 9:30am-1:00pm

SUNRISE
SENIOR LIVING



Mountainside	Brighton Gardens of Mountainside	908-654-4460	1350 Route 22 West	AL, ALZ
Westfield	Sunrise of Westfield	908-317-3030	240 Springfield Avenue	AL, ALZ

AL=Assisted Living ALZ=Alzheimer's Care

www.sunrise seniorliving.com

We know that having a baby is hard work. Shopping for one shouldn't be.



destination baby

\$10 OFF!

Bring in this ad and save \$10 off any purchase of \$50 or more. Offer expires on March 31, 2006 and may not be combined with any other promotions or coupons. Limit one per customer.

The premier destination for all your baby needs from cribs to clothing, bibs to backpacks, and silverspoons to strollers.

- A registry that earns rewards you'll love
- Special orders, so you can get what you want
- Appointments to fit your lifestyle
- A private lounge for nursing moms
- Free gift wrapping
- Home delivery for those hard to carry items

Crosspointe Town Square • (Across from Wegman's)
25 Woodbridge Center Drive
Woodbridge, NJ 07095 • 732-750-0022
www.destination-baby.com

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10am-9pm
Sunday: 11am-5pm

THE PREMIER DESTINATION FOR ALL YOUR BABY NEEDS