



The Interfaith Alliance
LONG ISLAND CHAPTER
www.interfaithalliance-li.org



Minutes – Meeting of 6/4/2009

Attendance: Mark Lukens, Chair; Habeeb Ahmed; Hank Arond; Ronnie Around; Syed Asad; Paul Auerbach; Joyce Gorycki; Marty Melkonian; Mary Beth Moore; Dolores Tibbets; Rich Tibbets.

Mark called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

Minutes: Since many members did not receive the April minutes, they are being resent with the minutes of our June meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Dolores Tibbets reports \$675 in income and \$712.26 in expenses (primarily food for the May 21st Clergy Luncheon) leaving a balance of \$1,523.67.

The income included \$425 in Membership Dues plus a \$250 donation from the Islamic Center of Long Island to assist with expenses for the Luncheon.

Clergy / Lay Leaders Luncheon: We had a brief discussion of TIA's recent Clergy Luncheon. A total of 40 persons attended. The faiths represented included Brahma Kumaris, Christian, Judaism, Islam, Quaker, Sikh, and Unitarian Universalist. Several persons commented on the excellent presentations and lively discussion. We appreciated this opportunity to strengthen relationships among our diverse religious traditions.

Diversity of TIA Membership: We discussed ways to attract more members to monthly meetings and increase diversity of our membership. Rich noted that there is a wide range of concerns confronting faith communities and suggested that we stress issues, such as opposition to hate crimes, which members of all religions can agree upon. Dolores suggested that we could have presentations at our meetings to attract people interested in broadening their understanding of TIA's mission and related issues of concern.

Nuclear Disarmament: Mary Beth spoke about an upcoming event sponsored by the Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives and others to discuss nuclear disarmament. The meeting, "Renewing Commitment, Rekindling Hope," is scheduled for Thursday, June 18th. It is intended to engage the community in dialogue and advocacy around nuclear disarmament. Mary Beth referred to President Obama's April 5th speech in Prague in which he vowed to work towards nuclear disarmament.

TIA voted to co-sponsor the LI Alliance's "Renewing Commitment, Rekindling Hope" dialogue.

Racial / Religious Tolerance: Mark noted that many Long Islanders are suspicious of both Latinos and Muslims. He also noted that Long Island is very segregated and that the current war mentality is not conducive to improving the way people view immigrants and

other minorities in this country. Mark contrasted such attitudes with the message presented by President Obama at his June 4th speech in Egypt

TIA to Address Local Muslims: Syed Asad, TIA-LI member who is also a member of the Islamic Center of Long Island (ICLI) in Westbury, noted that TIA members speak in a very supportive manner about our Muslim neighbors and friends. However he noted that post 9/11, many Muslims seldom hear such positive comments and instead hear the negative. Syed suggested it would be helpful for TIA to make a presentation at the ICLI. Several members, including Mark, Habeeb, Mary Beth, Paul and Rich agreed to meet to plan such a presentation.

Habeeb spoke about the Islamic Center's efforts to bring youth of different religions together. He noted that Muslim youth from the Islamic Center travelled to Israel with young Jews and Christians.

TIA National: Rich noted that Rev. Dr. Welton Gaddy, President Interfaith Alliance, was interviewed by Keith Olbermann of MSNBC on May 18th regarding "The Politics of Religion." When Olbermann asked Gaddy what the Bible says about war, Gaddy replied, "Different things in different times." He said that you can find whatever you want to justify your position on any issue. However, Gaddy noted that if you want to be religious, you should not merely quote the Scriptures, but should "act like the Scriptures tell you to act."

To watch the Olbermann interview, visit the website www.interfaithalliance.org and enter "Olbermann" in the Search Box.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Tibbets

NEXT INTERFAITH ALLIANCE MEETING

The next TIA meeting will be:

Thursday, July 16th at 2:00 pm
at the Islamic Center of Long Island
835 Brush Hollow Road
Westbury, NY 11590
Telephone: 516-333-3495

Call the Islamic Center for directions, or visit the website:

www.icliny.org/directions.php