

Must we simply close our minds?

By Robert F. Eade

In response to recent letters to the editor from Debbie Austin and Kurt and Lois Pfaff condemning the attempt by Anna Bush to create one universal church, I offer my thoughts on the subject.

Ms. Austin wrote: "True Christians have no desire to join an open-minded, free-thinking spiritual congregation."

My goodness, Ms. Austin, would you have us simply follow along like lemmings into the sea, without having the audacity to question various tenets that we are uncertain of? Did God not give us free will to make decisions, right or wrong?

Should we just close our minds and stop trying to think about the "why" and "how" of religions? We might as well be robots if that is how you truly feel.

I do not profess to know every chapter and verse of the Bible — I leave that to the fundamentalists of the world. What troubles me the most, however, is the belief of the these same Bible-thumping Christians that there is only one path to God. I suppose in their minds, then, no Jews, no Muslims, no Buddhists, no Hindus and, dare I say it, no agnostics can ever reach heaven.

Readers' Turn to Write

By the way, did Jesus not say, "In my father's house, there are many mansions." I wonder what he meant by that. Could it be he was saving a place for these "non-Christian heathens"?

As for Mr. and Mrs. Pfaff's comments, they too state that the only path to God is to read the Bible and obey what it says. So, using that philosophy, if I don't read the Bible, even though I try to live by the 10 Commandments, I'm not going to heaven, either?

Don't get me wrong, the Bible is a good book, perhaps the written word of God, but it was written by men who were not infallible. Isn't it at least possible these same men wrote what they thought should be recorded in order to convince the early Christians of their authenticity?

If reading the Bible gives you a warm, satisfying and comforting feeling, by all means, please read it as often as you choose.

In closing, to Ms. Austin and Mr. and Mrs. Pfaff, I recommend the book/film "Inherit the Wind." It might open your eyes somewhat to find out how easy it is to condemn people who might not believe what you do.

For the record, I am a Catholic who has tried to be tolerant of other races, religions and lifestyles. I judge not, lest I be judged.

(Mr. Eade lives in Olean.)

Second Sunday Series continues at church

OLEAN — The Olean Unitarian Universalism Community will continue its Second Sunday Series of free programs to acquaint the public with the group's ideas at 2 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Olean Public Library.

The next program, "Ecology, Justice & Compassion: Does the Earth Have Moral Rights? An Exploration of the Interdependent Web," will be presented by Richard S. Gilbert, who has been a Unitarian Universalist minister for 45 years. He is the author of the "Building Your Own Theology" series, among other works.

Additionally, the group's steering committee would accept "one or two more members," according to member Anna Bush.

For more information, contact Ms. Bush at oleanuu@gmail.com or 307-7694 or visit www.oleanuu.org.