

**WHO:** Rabbi Ron Kronish  
**WHAT:** "Interreligious Relations: Impact of Papal Visit to Israel"  
**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Thursday  
**WHERE:** Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2921 Airport Blvd.

**MOBILE REGISTER**  
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## Rabbi will discuss papal visit to Israel

By **KRISTEN CAMPBELL**  
 Religion Reporter

Whether speaking to Pope John Paul II in Israel or to Jews, Christians and Muslims here, Rabbi Ron Kronish's message remains the same: Pursue peace.

The director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, Kronish will discuss interreligious relations and the impact of the papal visit to Israel during a 7:30 p.m. lecture Thursday at Mobile's Westminster Presbyterian Church.

His lecture is sponsored by the Mobile Christian-Jewish Dialogue, in cooperation with the Celebration 2000 Interfaith Committee.

"Interfaith relations is probably one of the most important acts of bridge-building that we can take on to ensure better international relations in the third millennium," said Donald K. Berry, professor of religion at University of Mobile and co-chairman of the Celebration 2000 Interfaith Committee.

Such dialogues, Berry said, aren't just important in Israel. Mobilians can benefit from them as well.

"The key word is 'talk,'" he said. "We really need to talk to people from other backgrounds. The more understanding you have, the less frightening different religions become."

Too often, Berry said, people are scared of those who hold different beliefs.

"I wonder if people don't have the notion that to be a good member of your own group means that you necessarily exclude others," he said. "It's a human problem. It's part of the way we're made up psychologically and socially — to protect groups that we're members of."

But Berry said there's a divine solution.

Learning from those who have different beliefs, he said, is "an inherently Christian thing to do."

## Kronish is a rabbi, author and lecturer

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Husam Omar, president of the Islamic Society of Mobile, said he likewise welcomes the opportunity for interfaith dialogue.

"It's very important for everyone," he said. "To me, the more dialogue the better. ... We will talk to each other rather than at each other."

Kronish, a graduate of Brandeis University and Harvard University, is a rabbi, lecturer and author. In Jerusalem with the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, he works to improve dialogue between Jews and Christians, Jews and Muslims, and dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Reflecting on the Pope's recent visit to Israel, Kronish applauded the pontiff's message of peace and reconciliation to the people of Israel.

"This special spiritual message couldn't be more timely, if we are indeed going to find the way to share this land and coexist together as two distinct peoples which both lay claim to the same land as holy," he wrote in *Insight Israel*, a publication of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. "What we will need here in Israel — and in the Palestinian entity — is a change of heart and a new will to move forward to achieve peace."