



## Christian Protests Lead to Pastor Terry Jones Getting on TV Nightly

Gutless religious leaders' collective passivity over the last few months has caused foolishness and mayhem to hook up with unfiltered church folk ignorance. The South is doubling down on biblical backwardness and the protests about Mosques have gone from honking horns, signing petition, and lawful protest to unlawfully burning of construction equipment to now a church sanctioned holiday called "Burn the Koran Day". This craziness is being captured on every network that has minutes to spare to interview Pastor Terry Jones who has taken his five minutes of fame and abused the FCC airwaves.

Pastor Terry Jones is the leader of a 50 member Gainesville's church with a love and peace sounding name, Dove World Outreach Center, has even saints scratching their heads wondering who ordained the minister and founder of Burn the Koran Day. I wish I could say I am surprised by the latest shenanigans but I am not. Because so many have ignored the constant drip of sanity slipping from our grasp as our country has allowed whispers of anti-Muslim sentiments become part of main stream conversation, we are seeing more and more outlandish acts against Muslims. Shouting and spewing hateful words have become the norm. The media has helped facilitated the chaos and confusion to where we are now.

Two weeks ago, very few people nationally knew of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Today, the wonderful quite college town is included in every Mosque story on cable news because of the protests against the building of a Mosque. Individuals are using the media's focus to escalate fear and hate. Not long after I posted my blog from last week, I was getting emails about Pastor Jones deciding to use the slow holiday weekend news cycle to show up and show out. On every network he was advocating burning Korans on September 11, a day that is still very painful to our country.

Why tug at the hearts, minds, and souls of millions of Americans by evoking such painful memories of September 11 with current political commentary? I believe firmly because many religious leaders have sat on the sidelines without conviction and courage for months allowing political rhetoric to become entwined with church folks' unbiblical truthiness, the rationale behind the protests is being lost somewhere between Sunday and Monday. The first to condemn Pastor Jones publicly was not a religious leader but General Petraeus who is in Afghanistan serving with our troops. General Petraeus spent two days urging the pastor who was virtually unknown nationally before his multiple appearances on CNN and other networks. Even the Veterans of Foreign Wars have spoken out against the Pastor. There will be nothing good gained by going down this path.

Before you speak your thoughts, yes, I am aware of bibles have been burned as well but do we swap one group's foolishness for another's mayhem. General Petraeus has stated that the actions of Pastor Jones could harm our troops and directly affect our fragile peace talks in Muslims countries worldwide. I would think as many patriotic individuals that believe in a strong military, General Petraeus words would bring civility and calmness to the heated debates about Muslims, mosques, and now. the Koran. But with anti-Muslims hate at or near 9/11 levels, words of wisdom are not deterring the Pastor's misplaced zeal.

On Tuesday, several religious leaders from many organizations *finally* came together in Gainesville to denounce Pastor Jones.

Reuters reported: *Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious leaders denounced the "misinformation and outright bigotry" against U.S. Muslims resulting from plans to build a Muslim community center and mosque not far from the site of the September 11, 2001, hijacked plane attacks in New York by the Islamist militant group al Qaeda that killed 2,752 people.*

It took a deranged media hungry Pastor of a tiny church in Gainesville to get the attention of our military commander overseas in Afghanistan to plead for common sense before religious leaders took a stand. Hmm, let that soak for a minute.

The debates about building Mosques in various communities started out wrapped in aged constitution looking papers but quickly faded away to expose fear of Islam becoming the dominant religion in our country. The constitution angle could no longer be used to keep Mosques from being built because as Mayor Bloomberg bravely stated; we cannot deny a Mosque from being built because freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. The religious arguments about the Koran are being wrapped in bible looking parchment papers. That argument loses its creditability quickly when you put it up against Jesus words of "love your neighbor". When Pastor Jones was asked, he admitted he has never read the Koran and gets most of his information about Muslims from You tube! I can hear my grandmother words, "Bless his lil' heart."

Here's more from the global leader of International Burn a Koran Day:

*According to the deposition, Jones and his wife learned much of what they know about Sharia Law - the sacred law of the Muslim religion - by watching videos on YouTube.*

*"Do you know where Sharia law came from?" Jones is asked.*

*"Not really, no," he replies, "I think there's experts that say it came from the old Mosaic law. But no."*

*Attorneys also asked Jones how many Muslims he knows personally.*

*"I don't think I know any personally," he says, "I haven't interviewed any." Jones also says he has not attended any interfaith discussions and that he believes that such discussions are part of "our problem."*

*In his deposition, Jones acknowledged that his congregation has decreased in recent years, telling attorneys that he currently has a congregation of about 50 people - whereas he had 100 people when his congregation was at its largest.*

*"I think mainly just because the things we're involved in are just really way too hot for your normal Christian and your normal person."*

There are many Pastor Jones walking around Middle Tennessee at this moment. With all the churches and faith based organizations, how many are challenging their members to not allow Biblical truths to become entwined and suffocated by political beliefs and over the top sensationalism. Hmm. How many are willing to admit that the fear of the unknown the unwillingness to practice loving your neighbors is really at the heart of some of this? Until we start to have honest dialogue about what is really driving this behavior, folks will continue to find different papers to wrap around their arguments. As for me, I want to have as many conversations with my neighbors as possible, even the ones I don't agree with, practice their religion, or live in their neighborhood. I believe if we continue to talk to each other, I just might learn something.