

Burning or Banning?

Written by Cassandra

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The anniversary of 9/11 is necessarily a time of introspection for many in the West, who are increasingly wondering what we have done to incur the wrath of the Muslims. No such problems arise for much of the Islamic world, who simply blame the US, Jews or just about anyone except Islam.

So it was predictable that when the Pastor of a small church in America threatened to burn the Koran, many in the West were outraged at this sign of disrespect to one of the world's great religions, whilst many in the Islamic world reacted with anger and threats of yet more violence.

It is hardly surprising therefore that Reuters reported "Koran-burning plan draws worldwide condemnation":

Plans to burn a copy of the holy Muslim book have added to what U.S. religious leaders have described as an "anti-Muslim frenzy";

The UN said such an act would be "abhorrent";

"I would like to express in the strongest possible terms our concern and indeed outrage at the announcement by a small religious group abroad of their intention to burn copies of the holy book of the Koran".

In 2006, about a dozen people were killed in violent protests in Kabul after a Danish newspaper published cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad and a similar number died in another protest a year earlier.

General David Petraeus said the plan could trigger retaliation against U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

...the Vatican added to world condemnation of the planned Koran burning.

"These deplorable acts of violence cannot be counteracted by an outrageous and grave gesture against a book considered sacred by a religious community... Each religion, with its respective sacred books, places of worship and symbols, has the right to respect and

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protection."

Germany's leading Jewish group joined the chorus of condemnation, saying it evoked the mass killing of Jews in the Holocaust that followed Nazi book burnings. [\(source\)](#)

Why are we outraged about Quran burning but say nothing about burning Christians alive?

Funny how the UN rushes to defend Islam's holy book, yet is strangely reluctant to condemn groups like Hamas who use its "holy" teachings to go on a killing spree against Jews. Strange also that the Vatican considers an ideology that the current Pope has rightly condemned as violent (though he did subsequently backtrack) has the right to respect and protection.

Personally, I am against burning books, as it harks back to primitive and barbaric times in our history, and sadly not just ancient history: the Nazis were notorious book burners, as were Muslims during the outrage against the publishing of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses" and the Danish cartoon incident.

The level of indignation at this proposed book burning, tacky though the Pastor's proposal may be, far exceeds the indignation expressed at the many Islamic acts of real violence against people, not just books.

Simon Mann raged:

The plan to burn 200 copies of the Koran at Mr Jones's Dove World Outreach Centre brought protests by Muslims around the world and a rebuke from President Barack Obama, who urged the pastor to abandon a "destructive act" that could cause "serious violence" for US troops in

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Afghanistan.

The issue has turned the spotlight on a creeping intolerance in America, with the sombre commemoration of the ninth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in danger of being overshadowed by the controversies over the mosque and the Koran burning.

The anniversary this year coincides with the end of the holy month of Ramadan when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr. But the festival is being marred by charges of Islamophobia as Americans in at least 10 states protest against planned mosques and Muslim centres.

Harvard University's David Gergen said he regretted Mr Obama getting involved.

"I think we've all been sucked in involuntarily into a freak show," he said, describing Mr Jones as "not just a lunatic" but also "a jerk [for having] put the country through this". [\(source\)](#)

Funny how this academic feels free to attack the Pastor as a lunatic and a jerk, but has no harsh words for Imam Rauf, despite his radical roots or the fact that the siting of the mosque near Ground Zero is a provocation and a symbol of Islamic triumphalism,. And note how justifiable dismay at the proposed mosque is inevitably termed "creeping intolerance" and "Islamophobia" in the mainstream press. Make no mistake: Cordoba House isn't simply a community center designed to reach out to other faiths in order to heal wounds, but is a symbol of a jihadi victory over an infidel country, and an affront to the families of the victims.



Strange also how Muslims are always victims. Daniel Pipes has long documented how Islamist organizations in the West are quick to label crimes as anti-Muslim hate crimes as part of their effort to make Muslims feel under attack and to paint themselves as Muslims' protectors. For an insight into the motives of groups such as CAIR (which closely associated to Islamic Councils in Australia), it is instructive to read Ryan Mauro:

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Islamists try to undermine and delegitimize their opponents by placing blame upon them for hate crimes. For example, a 2008 CAIR report attributes an alleged increase in hate crimes — "alleged" because the claimed increase is wholly contradicted by FBI statistics — to "Islamophobic rhetoric in the 2008 presidential election" and people who are "profiting by smearing Islam." CAIR's 2009 report takes aim at the anti-Islamist film *Obsession*, a *bête noir* among promoters of the hate crime narrative.

Islamist groups also use the fear created by their publicizing of alleged hate crimes and anti-Muslim sentiment to try to mobilize the community into opposing counterterrorism programs. CAIR started down this path a decade and a half ago, when it described the prosecution of World Trade Center bomb plotter Omar Abdel Rahman and the arrest of Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook as hate crimes.

Similar tactics remain in play. In February 2009, the American Muslim Task Force and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) condemned the FBI after a story broke about the use of an informant in a mosque. They accused the government of an anti-Muslim conspiracy, saying that the informant was paid to "instigate violent rhetoric in mosques," and threatened to end outreach efforts with the FBI. Then, in October 2009, a Michigan-based, pro-terrorist imam named Luqman Ameen Abdullah, who had been preparing his followers to wage war against the U.S. government, opened fire when the FBI tried to arrest him for criminal activity. Abdullah died in the shootout, but CAIR and the Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA) are attempting to attribute his demise to foul play.

These groups assume the worst of the FBI's intentions and try to make the Muslim community feel as if it is threatened by its own government committing state-sanctioned hate crimes.

While real anti-Muslim hate crimes deserve the harshest of condemnation, claims about anti-Muslim hate crimes always should be taken with a grain of salt. CAIR and other Islamist groups thrive off of convincing Muslims that they are under constant assault from roving bigots and an oppressive state. Individual Muslims then feel empowered to fabricate hate crimes in order to paint themselves as victims.

For Islamists, the fear, isolation, and suffering of the Muslim community are nothing more than weapons to enhance their own prestige and pursue their political agenda. ([source](#))

Interestingly, most people who oppose the proposed book burning seem a bit confused as to why it is so repugnant. For a breath of moral clarity, it is instructive to read Dr. Mark Durie's rationale for why it is ill-conceived. Here are just some of the points:

The National Association of Evangelicals has urged cancellation of the burning because:

God created human beings in his image, and therefore all should be treated with dignity and respect. The proposed burning of Qu'rans would be profoundly offensive to Muslims worldwide, just as Christians would be insulted by the burning of Bibles.

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Kiran Chetry in another interview suggested to Jones that he would have the blood of American soldiers on his hands.

This Quran burning ritual is a bad idea, but not because it shows disrespect to Muslims, nor because Jones will have 'blood on his hands'.

Re disrespect.

It is unhelpful for the NAE to demand that Christians must respect Islam for the sake of Muslims' sensibilities. If someone believes the religious ideas or beliefs of others are bad, it is wrong to demand that the person must show respect towards these ideas or beliefs. Bad and harmful beliefs do not deserve respect, no matter how ardently they are held. The assumption that if you reject someone's beliefs, you are attacking or offending the person who holds them is also a very, very unhelpful idea. People should be free to disagree with or vehemently reject the beliefs of others without being accused of hatred.

Re blood guilt.

If some people rise up and kill others on the basis of a Koran burning incident - or any other incident which is believed to insult Islam – then the only people who will have blood on their hands will be the killers. Opposition to Islam's teachings does not and never will justify acts of violence by offended radical Muslims.

These two ideas, i) that if you attack Islam, you are attacking Muslims; and ii) that criticism of Islam justifies violence – these are very bad ideas, bad for freedom, bad for justice, and bad for peace...

Yet I do oppose the Quran burning. The best explanation, from a Christian perspective, for opposing this reckless act, has come to me, not from Christians, but from Ahmadiyyah Muslims. It is found in a statement Love for All, Hatred for None – A Peaceful Message to the World Burning Scriptures – A Biblical Teaching?

The Ahmadiyyah response begins by citing Jesus' words from the sermon on the Mount:

But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ... (Matthew 5:44-45)

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The Ahmadiyyah statement then goes on to point out that Jesus taught meekness, showing mercy, peacemaking, forgiving others, not judging others, and repentance, citing Matthew 5:5, 5:7, 5:43-45, 6:14-15, 7:1-2, 11:25, and 9:10-13. It points out that burning is an action of destruction and hatred, and this is not in accordance with the message of the New Testament: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (Romans 12:17-18).

It is sad that some Christian leaders, in their rejection of the foolhardy and dangerous Quran burning proposal, have fallen into the trap of appeasing the sentiments of Muslims, instead of standing up for Christian principles of love and grace. [\(source\)](#)

Durie manages to eloquently yet simply shine a light on a morally confusing situation.

So at this time when we remember the victims of 9/11, let us never forget the ideology behind this great tragedy and blot on world civilization.