

Americans' view of church is not the same for a mosque

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=4578>

America is just beginning to understand the threat that Islam really is. Nine years after 9/11 occurred, we are just now hearing discussion of Sharia law in the news, and we still have a population and a government that thinks Islam and Western civilizations can coexist with each other.

Because of our culture, it is difficult for Westerners to understand that Islam is not just another religion like Buddhism or Hinduism. So it is not surprising that many people, while repulsed at the idea that a giant mosque would be built at the fringe of Ground Zero, would also take the moral high ground and say that they would not be offended if it were built anywhere else. After all, mosques, temples, synagogues and churches are all places of worship, right?

This misunderstanding is indeed a problem, and one that stems in part from the interchangeable nature of the word "church" that has become part of our vocabulary. Even though the Bible clearly describes the church to be those who are believers in Jesus Christ, we routinely use the same word to describe the buildings where Christians meet.

In Western culture, churches, temples and synagogues are used for four basic functions: worship, education, fellowship, and service, and all are for the spiritual edification of the body of believers that use that building. Non-Muslims naturally, but erroneously, think of a mosque is used in the same way.

But in Islam, a mosque is not the same. While a mosque may be used for all the same functions as other places of worship, the comparison ends when we look at what the full purpose for a mosque really is.

Dr. Mark A. Gabriel, PH.D., in his book *Islam and Terrorism* described a mosque as follows: "...the mosque during the prophet Muhammad's time was not just a place of worship. It was also a place to store weapons and make military plans... a mosque in Islam is the center for worship, justice, war strategy and government. This is because Islam is both a religion and government... Prophet Muhammad made it clear to Muslims that the mosque isn't like a synagogue or a church. At his mosque in Medina (the second holiest site in Islam today), he planned his war strategy, held court and received visiting tribal leaders. It was like the Pentagon, the White House and the Supreme Court all in one place. The Islamic world was ruled from the mosque. When there was an order to fight, the announcement was made at the mosque. The rulers after Muhammad continued this practice. Throughout Islamic history you can see that all movements of Jihad came out of the mosque."

Mark Gabriel is not his original name, by the way. In 1987, he was an imam of a mosque in Giza, Egypt, and a teacher at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He wanted to believe that Islam was a religion of peace, but as he says in his book, "I went to every interpretation of

the Quran trying to avoid jihad and killing non-Muslims, yet I kept finding support of the practice.” When he eventually became a Christian, he was fired by the university, arrested and tortured by the Egyptian police, and even his own father attempted to murder him. When he came to the United States, he changed his name to honor his newfound belief in Jesus Christ. Gabriel also describes how jihad develops in three stages.

The first stage is the “weakened stage”, where the Muslim population in a particular area is small and has no power. The Quran says that they are to live in peace with unbelievers during this time.

The second stage is the “preparation stage” they reach when their population and influence has substantially grown. The Quran says that this is the time that they are to prepare themselves for war.

The third and final stage is the “Jihad stage”, during which the Quran says that they are to kill or subjugate all those who are unbelievers in Islam. Gabriel points out that Mohammad himself used this method for conquest and it has been done in this way ever since.

So why should we welcome mosques to this country? Can we really believe that they will never be used against us? Despite how we may feel and care about individual Muslims we know in our communities, we would have to ignore a substantial amount of history and current events to justify that belief.

It is a slippery slope indeed if we were to outlaw or regulate mosques on that basis, since the same principle of intolerance could be used on all other religions, including Christianity. But if we are to prevent Islam from invading this country, we must certainly find a way to prevent them from being used against us.

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Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972, rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net.

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