

Islam's influence on American culture continues to grow

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Last week, the Thomas More Law Center (TMLC) announced that it had filed a Public Records Request with the Bernard Township Committee in New Jersey.

The request was made on behalf of a resident that had called out what he believed to be illegal secrecy regarding a special meeting that was to be held by the committee.

The meeting was to have taken place on a late Friday afternoon, but was cancelled because it had been called without proper notice to the public.

Richard Thomas of the TMLC stated, "Based on the timing of the meeting late in the day on Friday, the meeting agenda, and discovery that resolutions approving the settlements of both the DOJ and the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge (Islamic Society) lawsuits had already been filed with the Township clerk, it is probable that a decision had already been secretly made and that the scheduled meeting was just a formality."

The Township had denied the Islamic Society's application for a permit to build a mosque.

Per TMLC's announcement, "TMLC represents several Bernard Township residents who were served with intrusive and harassing subpoenas by Islamic Society attorneys. Their only involvement was to make public comments at a public Township hearing. They were nonparties to the lawsuit, had never had an official role in the Township and had no authority to deny the Islamic Society's permit request. Nonetheless, the subpoenas demanded the production of emails, voice mails, text messages and social media posts concerning Muslims, Islam or anything to do with Muslim worship. The subpoenas clearly infringed upon their First Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of association. The only purpose of the subpoenas was to punish residents who dared to oppose the Islamic Society's request."

Other reports indicate that the Islamic Society claimed that the Township "kept moving the goalposts by using ever-changing local requirements to effectively deny this religious community the same access as other faiths" to prevent the mosque from being built, and that a Township staffer stated that local officials had made "discriminatory comments" about Muslims.

Thompson also stated in the TMLC announcement that "The Township Committee knows that its motivations for disapproving the proposed zoning changes were completely proper and were not animated by hatred for any person or group. Unfortunately, the tactics of intimidation waged by the Islamic Society and the deep-state Department of Justice attorneys, appointed by former Attorney General Eric Holder to carry-out his left-wing agenda, may have taken their toll... We filed this open records request to obtain the settlement agreements that we believe have already

been tacitly agreed upon by the parties. In doing so, we hope to shine a light on the dark tactics employed by the Islamic Society, its attorneys, and deep-state attorneys within the Justice Department.”

Because of the circumstances surrounding this case, and its long-term potential for how Islam will be treated in the future in the United States, this is a case that we should all be watching.

I have long been an advocate of RLUIPA, the law that has helped so many churches overcome discrimination by municipalities, but I have also said that it is a two-edged sword and warned that it could be used to benefit Islam in this country as well. According to a New York Times report written in December of 2016, RLUIPA “was intended to protect all religious faiths. 11 of the last 13 cases brought by the Justice Department – including three in the last month – have involved Muslims.”

Writing about issues involving Islam is difficult, so before I do so any further in this article or any subsequent articles, I would like to say this. We should always be willing to call out the truth about Islam, but as Christians our overwhelming desire should be to bring them to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. If that is not possible, then we are to live at peace with them as much as we can. That is what the Bible teaches us about those who do not accept Him.

By the same token, there is no excuse for any American to be ignorant about Islam or ignorant about Christianity. It makes it completely impossible to be objective or to be wise about how our system of freedom works and how to handle the enormous numbers of Muslims who are coming here.

The fact is that most Muslims only want to live in peace, and that is why they come to America. However, Islam has historically spread either through subtle invasion or by the sword, or both in that order. Until we come to grips with this and find a constitutional solution, there can only be strife and likely danger ahead. More on this next week.



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