

September 8, 2010

Pastor Terry Jones (forgive me for adding even 15 seconds to his all-too-long 15 minutes of fame) has decided that September 11th will be a good day to burn a copy of the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an. I offer my voice to concur that he is, of course, free to do such a thing in this country, but voices must also be raised in condemnation of such an abhorrent act. This is no different than the Nazis burning copies of the Torah; it is ignorance refined and power wielded with blatant abuse.

The Qur'an is no terrorist instruction manual. It has been the guiding light for millions through the centuries to cultivate a deeper relationship with God, and it continues to be so in this day. Can the reading of it be abused? Of course it can! The same can be said about the Bible. Look at history and weep over the multitude of terrible things that have been done in the name of Jesus Christ. We are dangerously naïve to think that Islam is the only religion to have some of its "followers" pervert the gracious message it is attempting to bring into the world.

Most offensive to me is Jones saying that Jesus would participate in burning the Qur'an. My Jesus loved and sat at table with those who differed from him. My Jesus broke down walls of cultural divide by staying in a Samaritan village. My Jesus sent Paul on his treacherous and rewarding missionary trips to the Gentiles. Burning the Qur'an would not even be the last thing my Jesus would do!

We have extraordinary freedoms in this country, but I do not agree with the way certain individuals choose to exercise them. The wisdom of freedom and the grace of religion, however, is to make a conscious decision to refrain from doing some of those things we may have the power to do. Religion has a voice here, and it is not emanating from Gainesville, Florida. Its voice must be raised from other mountaintops.

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