

Mosque of conquest?

Exclusive: William Federer shares many examples from Islam's history of subjugation

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Muslim groups are proposing a 13-story \$100 million mosque in the most prominent spot in America – the heart of downtown New York City near the World Trade Center site.

Is this mosque a sign of America's tolerance, or is it a sign of Muslim conquest?

The past may hold answers:

In 630, Muhammad led 10,000 Muslim soldiers into Mecca and turned the pagans' most prominent spot, the Ka'aba, into the Masjid al-Haram Mosque.

In 634, Rightly Guided Caliph Umar conquered Syria and turned the Christians' most prominent spot, the Church of Job, famous for being visited by Saint Silva in the fourth century, into the Mosque of Job.

In 637, Caliph Umar conquered Hebron and turned the second-most prominent spot in Judaism, the Cave of the Patriarchs, into the Ibrahimi Mosque. (This was repeated by Saladin in 1188.)

In 638, Muslim generals Amr ibn al-As and Khalid ibn al-Walid conquered Gaza and turned the prominent fifth-century Byzantine church into the Great Mosque of Gaza.

In 638, Caliph Umar conquered Jerusalem. In 691, Caliph Al-Malik ordered the Dome of the Rock built on the most prominent spot in Judaism, the Temple Mount, followed by Caliph Al-Walid building the Al-Aqsa Mosque there in 705.

In 651, Muslims conquered Persia and turned Zoroastrian temples in Bukhara and Istakhr into mosques.

In 706, after Muslims took Damascus from the Byzantine Empire, Caliph Al-Walid turned the prominent Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist into the Umayyad Mosque.

In 710, Gen. Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Pakistan, defiled the prominent Sun Temple in Multan, which housed the great idol "sanam," and erected a mosque.

In 784, after the conquest of Spain, Emir Abd ar-Rahman turned the prominent Visigothic Christian Church of Saint Vincent into the Great Aljama Mosque of Cordoba.

After the conquest of Egypt, Caliphs al-Mamun (813-833) and al-Hakim (996-1021) turned prominent Coptic Christian churches and Jewish synagogues in Cairo into mosques.

In 831, Muslims conquered Palermo, Sicily, and Asad ibn al-Furat turned the prominent Church of Saint Mary of the Assumption into the Great Mosque of Bal'harm.

In 1193, Muslims conquered Delhi, India, and Qutbuddin Aibak turned the Red Citadel in Dhillika, the most prominent spot of the last Hindu rulers, into the Qutb Minar Mosque.

From 1250-1517, Mamluk Muslims controlled the Golan Heights and used the ancient Synagogue of Katzrin as a mosque.

In 1387, Turkish Muslims conquered Thessaloniki and turned the Katholikon Monastery and the Church of Aghia Sophia, which housed the relics of Saint Gregorios Palamas, into mosques, as Symeon of Thessaloniki recorded:

“The greatest number of the buildings of the churches fell to them, of which the first was the Holy Church of the Savior. ... These were trampled underfoot and the infidels rejoiced in them. ... Most of the religious buildings in the city were despoiled, while altars were demolished and sacred things profaned.”

On May 29, 1453, Sultan Mehmet II conquered Constantinople and turned the great Byzantine church, Hagia Sophia, into the Ayasofya Mosque. The largest church in Christendom for a thousand years, the church's four acres of gold mosaics were covered with whitewash and Quran verses.

In 1458, Sultan Mehmet II conquered Athens and turned the Greeks' most prominent spot, the Parthenon on Acropolis hill, into a mosque. When Venetian Gen. Francesco Morosini drove the Muslims out in 1687, a cannonball hit the gunpowder stored in the mosque, blowing it up.

In the 15th century, Ottoman invaders turned Saint Clement's Macedonian Orthodox Monastery in Plaosnik, Balkans, into the Imater Mosque.

From 1519-1858, Muslim Mughal rulers gained control of India and turned over 2,000 Hindu temples into mosques, including demolishing the Temple of Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Rama, and replacing it with the Babri Mosque.

India's Mughal Muslim ruler, Jahangir (1605-1627), wrote in Tujuk-i-Jahangiri:

“At the city of Banaras [was] a temple. ... I made it my plea for throwing down the temple ... and on the spot, with the very same materials, I erected the great mosque.”

In 1543, Hayreddin Barbarossa's 30,000 Muslim troops wintered in Toulon, France, and turned the prominent Toulon Cathedral into a mosque.

In 1570, under Sultan Selim II Khan, Muslims conquered Paphos, Cyprus, and Gov. Mehmet Bey Ebubkir turned the prominent Christian church into the Great Mosque of Paphos.

In 1571, Muslims invaded Famagusta, Cyprus, and turned Saint Nicolas Cathedral, a rare Gothic church, into the Lala Mustafa Pasha Mosque, and Saint Sophia Cathedral in Nicosia, constructed in 1228, into the Selimiye Mosque.

In 1588, Sultan Murat III turned the Eastern Orthodox Church of Saint John the Forerunner in Constantinople into the Hiram Ahmet Pasha Mosque.

In 1781, after having conquered the Old City of Acre, Ottoman Muslims turned the Roman Catholic church built by Crusaders into the Jezzar Ahmet Pasha Mosque, where a hair from Muhammad's beard is preserved.

In 1923, Muslims expelled Greeks from Turkey and turned Orthodox churches into mosques.

In World War II, Nazis allied with Bosnians and turned the prominent Artists' Gallery Museum in Zagreb, Croatia, into a mosque.

In the 1950s, Muslims expelled Jews from Arab lands and turned synagogues into mosques.

Algerian Muslims warred against French colonial rule till France pulled out in 1962, after which the Cathedral of St. Philippe was turned into the Ketchaoua Mosque. Violence against Jews caused 30,000 to flee and the Great Synagogue of Oran was turned into the Mosque Abdellah Ben Salem.

In 1974, Turkish Muslims invaded northern Cyprus, and prominent Greek Orthodox churches were turned into mosques.

In 1981, Muslim immigrants to the Netherlands converted Amsterdam's historic Catholic Sint-Ignatiuskerk into the Fatih Mosque, and a synagogue in The Hague into the Aksa Mosque.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Muslim terrorists attacked the most prominent spot in America, the World Trade Center. In less than 10 years, the number of mosques in New York City has skyrocketed to over 140.

In light of history, reasonable citizens have a right to question if the mosque proposed at Ground Zero is a sign of America's tolerance, or a sign of Muslim conquest?