

Power, Reason and the Building of Churches

By

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I had an interesting experience listening to talk radio today. A caller was sarcastically castigating Sarah Palin for asserting that the right to do something does not necessarily make something the right thing to do. She was evidently referring to the triumphal mosque about to be built six blocks from the site of the World Trade Center.

The caller's argument seemed a little muddled to me, and was further obscured by his attempts at ironic humor. It did seem, however, that he was insisting that the right to do something really *does* make something the right thing to do, and that construction of the mosque is a necessary, proper, nay compulsory exercise in religious and philosophical tolerance.

I couldn't agree more.

I've been obsessing over this very argument since the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Here was an opportunity to show our tolerance and understanding to a young man distraught over the unfortunate, but necessary, gassing and cremation of 17 children under ten years old at the Branch Davidian complex near Waco two years earlier. His action in bombing the Murrah Building was misguided, perhaps even wrong, but can anyone claim that he or she fails to understand the anguish that drove him to this desperate act?

Since that time, I have been trying to find a church might address problems like this. Some of my fellows and I have discovered a church organization that seems remarkably well organized, and should serve well as a model for the church we're trying to build. Allow me to point out that I don't agree with every point of this church's [doctrine](#). However, that doctrine is well and clearly stated, and we hope to be able to achieve a similarly organized doctrinal expression for our own church. We also admire the [Constitution and Bylaws](#) of the church, which appear to be exceptionally well drawn for this organization as well.

Once founded, our church can get to work on this whole question of tolerance and the necessity of doing anything one has a right to do. By this means we will be able to achieve the standard of tolerance and love ordained by God and our faith.

Our first project will be to build a church within sight of the Oklahoma City Memorial. At the entry to our church, which will face the memorial itself, we will erect a titanium statue of

Timothy McVeigh (to resist vandalism), smiling and waving – respectfully, and with all five fingers, of course – at the site where the Murrah Building once stood. This will remind passersby that we have the right to the free exercise of our religion, just like everybody else.

After this beginning, we plan to erect churches in Dallas, where our statue of Lee Harvey Oswald will perpetually smile and wave over Dealy Plaza, and in Los Angeles where a statue of Sirhan Sirhan will silently salute the Ambassador Hotel just across the lot.

In Memphis, James Earl Ray's statue will hail the Lorraine Motel, now the National Civil Rights Museum. There was some bickering among the board members over this plan, as Mr. Ray had recanted his confession, and some of us took this as a sign of innocence. We think now, however, that enough time has elapsed to preclude any ill will or legal action from his family.

We're not really sure where we'll go after that. Time, however, should provide us with new and ever more spectacular incidents to commemorate. In the meantime, these four projects should keep us busy and provide work for otherwise idle hands to do.

We haven't selected a new name yet, but are leaning toward The Church of Triumph and Celebration. We won't be accepting new members until we establish our 501c(3) status, which shouldn't take all that long – After all, our government doesn't tax Muslim mosques; why should they seek to tax us? Until our leaders actually consummate the process of fully bestowing our right to worship as we see fit, we strongly recommend that you consider joining another fine Christian group such as [this one](#) to keep you properly oriented and occupied.

God bless you and keep you in these perilous times!