

First I'm going to state the facts and then give my opinion on the matter. The mosque really isn't a mosque. It's a cultural center with one prayer room inside for accessibility for daily prayers. Secondly, the "mosque" isn't actually built on Ground Zero, but two blocks away (there is though, a mosque four blocks away from Ground Zero that actually pre-dates the World Trade Center).

Here are some facts leading up to this controversy:

During the Bush administration, this particular area of New York was rezoned, allowing the idea of a cultural center to be built near the Ground Zero site. The cultural center was not only petitioned for a year ago, but was also approved. It wasn't until a far right blogger heard this news, labeled the cultural center as a mosque, and then distorted the location to incite anger. I do understand the argument about the disrespect that the victims of the 9/11 must feel having an Islamic anything built nearby but here is why I believe we must allow it. So many people see this "mosque" as disrespectful, yet in this country we still have many states, cities and high schools in the South displaying the Confederate flag. Now I do know that the Civil War was fought over states rights and not slavery, but still, the flag is a symbol of that time period of slavery and racism for African Americans. Yet no one seems to care if this symbol of hate is insensitive to African Americans. Now most (white) southerner's claim that the flag is "heritage not hate", and that it's not supposed to represent a time when slavery had run rampant but that's literally the only imagery that this icon brings to mind.

Another good comparison would be a swastika, an originally that symbol was an ancient symbol for luck. Yet you really don't see this symbol adorning houses claiming it means luck because of the modern association this symbol has earned with the Nazis.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see"

— Henry David Thoreau

Now I'm not so naïve as to think that there won't be some Muslims who enjoy the fact that this building is two blocks away from Ground Zero but at the same time, this is America, we have built ourselves upon a dream of idealism and equality. We can't just defer this dream when others ideals don't suit us. These are the moments that define us and what we as a nation stand for. Just two administrations ago it was easy for us to be respectful of others and to not trample upon the constitution. Times were good: we were strong prosperous, and respected. Now we face in this country a complete 180 and we are looking for someone to blame. Like Germany after World War I, we need a scapegoat, and it seems to be that Muslims in this country have sadly drawn the short end of the stick.

In the end, the true argument isn't if it should be built there or not, but do we respect the constitution and the basis of what our government is built upon, or do we give in to our fears. I personally see no reason why the cultural center shouldn't be built. Honestly, if they wanted to build the world's largest mosque I really wouldn't care, it's their right as Americans. Yes, I do know that to many people who lost their family members it's hurtful, but on the other hand, not just non-Muslims died that day. Many people (not the bombers) who died that day were Muslim.

Instead of seeing the differences between peoples' religion and skin color, we need to acknowledge that Americans of all types died that day. They died for this country, and now to

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change this country out of anger or hate is spitting upon this country and what those people died for on that ill-fated day.

“Every great truth begins as a blasphemy.”

— George Bernard Shaw