




Intolerance And Injustice In The Name of God

In the land of the free, how is it possible for one group to step up and use threats against a bookstore chain to prevent one poet from selling and reading his work? Just as author/poet Patrick Jones was preparing to launch his latest book of poetry Darkness Is Where The Stars Are, Waterstones Bookstore in Cardiff, Wales withdrew its contract to host the event which was to include book signing and reading by Mr. Jones. Allegedly, Stephen Green, National Director of Christian Voice based in the UK, contacted the bookstore and advised that his organization would stage a demonstration unless Mr. Jones' book was removed from the shelves and the book launch did not take place. On November 12, as Mr. Jones and his publisher, Cinnamon Press, were preparing to attend the launching they were advised by Waterstones that the event had been cancelled.

Mr. Green claims that this book should not be sold as he and his organization find it to be "blasphemy, disgusting and perverted". Mr. Green stated that Mr. Jones e-mailed him some of the poems which were included in the compilation, which Mr. Jones denies. After Waterstones cancelled the book launching, while leaving the books on the shelves, Mr. Jones was forced to hold the launch in the street. Many of Mr. Jones' fans and others poured into the street to have their books signed and to hear from the author. Furthermore, AM Peter Black and AM Lorraine Barrett have invited Mr. Jones to read his work on December 11th in an Assembly Government meeting room to which Mr. Green is not invited. It appears that Mr. Jones has had a successful launching of his latest book and will have opportunity to read to those who would like to listen.

Apparently, Mr. Green and Christian Voice feel it their duty to rid Britain of sin; and in their eyes, Mr. Jones' book is sin. For centuries,




poets and writers have found their voice in the work that they produce just as painters use canvas and sculptors use clay. If one takes what is in their heart and soul and puts it on paper, how can the voice be stifled? Allegedly, in the name of God, Christian Voice made threats to a bookstore. In the name of God, Mr. Green was prepared to carry out said threats. In the name of God, one man's voice and heart could have been snuffed out.

Across the ocean in another part of the free world, on October 25th, four teenage girls were driving home after cheerleading at a high school football game in Scott County, TN. Rainy weather and the infamous East Tennessee fog were principal factors in the accident which took the lives of the four teens, a grandmother and an unborn child. Just prior to the funerals for the four girls, Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, KS made it known that they would descend upon the small town of Huntsville, TN to protest at the funerals claiming that the four girls died for the sins of Tennessee.

Westboro Baptist Church, widely known for protesting funerals and homecomings of soldiers returning from the war, staged a campaign stating "God Hates Tennessee". The church's website holds numerous claims to which God hates. Therefore, the organization has taken it upon themselves to protest and let the world know exactly what god hates. As a precaution, Scott County, TN closed schools for the day of the funeral and law enforcement in surrounding areas were prepared to step in should the protest get out of hand. Amidst the heightened security, the protest did not take place. In the name of God four teens died as a result of the sins of one state. In the name of God one church set out to protest the funeral of four innocent lives.

In a day of such vision and awareness how can so many be so blind as to speak for God and use the name of God to start wars, cause death and incite uprisings. No matter the religion or nationality, what you



believe in or what you don't believe in; the outcome is still the same. One organization claims to be the voice of God and takes that power to try to stamp out sin in Britain. One organization claims to be the voice of God and goes about stating that God hates the United States. There are many other groups, sects and organizations that make similar claims regardless of who they look to as their God. However, there are only two addressed here. It seems that there are a lot of people today speaking for God and the number far exceeds the prophets listed in the bible. There is not one part of the world not affected by these self-appointed mouth pieces.

Anywhere that someone or some group is not happy they find a way to justify their anger and ill will by claiming to be appointed by God to destroy whatever it is that has caused their irritation. Can we justify everything we do by one simple yet complicated phrase? Every statement we make and every practice we keep should always be proven out in facts. With the internet and wide access to many historical documents and archives it is relatively easy to study and gain the facts that we need to correctly justify our lives without causing harm to anyone else.

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