

Sweet-Talking the Christians

Ryan Mauro - FrontPage Magazine, March 15th, 2011

An Islamic extremist group that has given guerilla warfare training to some of its members is sweet-talking churches and law enforcement by holding events meant to honor Jesus and offer friendship. The group, Muslims of the Americas (MOA), held an event in February at its 36-acre Holy Islamville community in York County, South Carolina that received fawning press coverage that didn't even mention its radical leader in Pakistan, Sheikh Mubarak Ali Gilani.

The event on February 19 at Holy Islamville was expected to be attended by hundreds of Muslims of the Americas members from around the country with the purpose of celebrating Mohammed's birthday. Churches, local officials, the FBI and law enforcement were all invited to come see how peace-loving the group is. The Herald Online made no mention of Sheikh Gilani or the controversy surrounding the group but did say events had been held with churches for years. The local sheriff's department even sent a representative to attend and show support.

Holy Islamville and the other 22 Muslims of the Americas "villages" around the country have participated in outreach programs to win over the authorities. In 2004, FBI Special Agent in Charge Leslie Wieser spoke at the graduation ceremony of Holy Islamville's Muslim Scouts of America, which was also attended by two other FBI special agents, York County Sheriff Bryant and Mayor Eddie Lee. In August 2008, the FBI and New York State Police gave awards to the graduates of the Muslim Scouts of America graduates at the MOA's headquarters in Hancock, N.Y., called Islamberg. In 2005, a FBI Special Agent in Charge sent a "note of appreciation" to Islamberg that is published on the website.

These relations have continued despite irrefutable proof of the extremist beliefs of Muslims of the Americas and its leader, Sheikh Gilani. In 2009, the Christian Action Network released a documentary that included excerpts from a secret MOA videotape where Gilani tells the viewers about the guerilla warfare training available at the MOA sites. Footage is then seen of him training some recruits how to use guns, explosives and various guerilla warfare tactics. After the release of the film, a law enforcement source provided me with two more MOA tapes, one spouting anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and declaring America to be a Muslim country and the other showing female members at Islamberg in military fatigue learning guerilla warfare, including firing guns into a lake.

This evidence and Sheikh Gilani's extremist preaching is easily findable on the Internet but has not caused the authorities to second-guess their embrace of the MOA, especially at Holy Islamville. State Law Enforcement Division Director Reggie Lloyd says, "At this point we don't consider it something the public should be concerned about," stressing that they'd take action if a threat existed. A member of the compound, Ali Rashid, says, "We don't have any training camps, and we're not shooting any guns. I'm telling you Sheikh Gilani is not involved in terrorism."

However, the footage obtained indisputably shows the firing of guns on Sheikh Gilani's property in Islamberg. One neighbor said he has seen one of Holy Islamville's guards carrying an AK-47 and says he has heard gunfire at night. Another neighbor said she has seen AK-47s and M-16s being carried in a wooded area of the site. Rashid confirmed that there is gunfire but claims it comes from hunters in the surrounding area. The neighbors are emphatic that the gunfire comes from Holy Islamville and much of it is at night, casting doubt on the claim that it is the work of hunters.

The Christian Action Network has been provided with recordings of gunfire coming from Holy Islamville on Sunday, March 6, not longer after the outreach event. These recordings were taken right near Holy Islamville. Even if this gunfire truly does not come from site's residents, the MOA ideology should be enough to cause

anyone to be repulsed. Sheikh Gilani refers to Osama Bin Laden as a “Saudi activist” and preaches that the 9/11 attacks were part of a Satanist-Zionist conspiracy. He says he does not know of a single honest Jew and that “Jews are an example of human Satans.” Gilani’s followers view him as a divine representative of Allah whose every command must be followed. The group’s newspaper praised Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s speech at the U.N. where he asserted that 9/11 was an inside job by the U.S. government and he was favorably compared to the Mahdi. This is the group that, according to the Herald Online, had a camp for 300 Boy Scouts in 2006 at Holy Islamville alone.

York County, South Carolina isn’t the only place where MOA has been able to pull the wool over the eyes of Christians and local officials. On January 8, operating under the name of the United Muslim Christian Forum, MOA held an event to honor Jesus Christ in Binghamton that a spokesman claimed was attended by 500 Muslims and Christians, some coming from as far away as Pakistan and Venezuela. Binghamton Mayor Matthew T. Ryan sent a representative to attend who said “events like these enrich our community.”

At the same time as the UMC’s website showed off a photo of Mayor Ryan holding their sign, it also had a summary of a 2008 event that claimed the 9/11 attacks were an “inside job” by a coalition of international bankers and the governments of the U.S., U.K. and Israel. The website said that the attacks were “Stage One of getting the Western world, on behalf of the Jews, to go to war with the Arab world.” The event in January attended by Mayor Ryan’s representative also had Dr. Ali Mazrui as one of its speakers. He has claimed that elements of the Bush Administration secretly conspired with Israel to launch wars, which he said is “part of the emerging sadism of the United States, a readiness to hurt others abroad.” Unbelievably, Dr. Mazrui, who has also compared Israel to Nazi Germany, is the director of Binghamton University’s Institute of Global Cultural Studies.

The UMC also held a parade on March 14, 2010 in Binghamton to express admiration for Jesus Christ. A local news report said that 700 Muslims and Christians attended, with MOA members from even Canada and the Caribbean coming. An advertisement for the event asked attendees not to wear “military-style clothing.” These outreaches and events are a concerted effort by Sheikh Gilani and his followers to be casted in a different light. Gilani genuinely sees himself as a natural ally for some Christians, as in his words, “the Jews tried to murder Jesus, son of Mary.”

The success of the MOA’s outreach efforts is entirely because of negligence by those they embrace, including local officials. This information can quickly be discovered with little research. For the non-Muslim friends of the MOA, it is more important to look tolerant and open-minded than to confront unmistakable Islamic extremism.