

Student Handout: Speaking Openly and Sending a Message

Directions: In your small group (or as a class) view the two news segments below and discuss the questions that follow.

Video Clip/article Title: **Church's Quran-Burning Pledge Rankles U.S. Diplomatic, Military Officials** http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/religion/july-dec10/quran_09-07.html. Watch just the news report. For more analysis, click <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11254419>

Discuss the following questions:

- Reverend Terry Jones of the Dove World Outreach Center threatened to burn copies of the Quran. What was his reasoning for conducting this demonstration?
- Why did General David Petraeus believe this action was dangerous to American troops abroad?
- Identify the rights in question in this case:
 - The rights of the Church:
 - The rights of Muslims:
 - The rights of American military personnel abroad in Muslim countries:
- If carried out, how do you think such an act would be interpreted by Muslims in the U.S. and around the world? Should Americans care what Muslims think about acts such as these? Explain.
- Why do you think U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley characterized the book burning as un-American? Do you agree or disagree and why?
- Is the act of expressing one's opinion by burning or defacing a symbol like a Quran, a Bible, or a nation's flag a violation of someone else's rights? Explain.

Video Clip/article Title: **Supreme Court Weighs First Amendment Limits in Military Funeral Protest Case** http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/july-dec10/supreme1_10-06.html. For more analysis, click http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/july-dec10/supreme2_10-06.html.

- What is the reason the Westboro Baptist Church conducts protests at military funerals?

- What is the position of Albert Snyder, the father of Marine Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder, whose funeral was the target of Westboro Baptist Church's protest?

- Explain Margie Phelps' legal argument supporting her view that the Church's protest is constitutionally allowed.

- Explain Albert Snyder's argument for banning the protests at military funerals like his son's.

- Identify the rights in question in this case:
 - The rights of the plaintiffs, Albert Snyder and his family
 - The rights of the defendants, the Westboro Baptist Church

- Do you think this is a case of harassment, which is not protected by the First Amendment, or public political speech, which is? Explain.

- How is this case similar other speech cases where things are said that are abhorrent, but allowed under free speech protections? How is it different?