

What? Evangelicals Come Against Franklin Graham's Views on Islam

After five members of our military were killed in cold blood—and two others wounded—on our own soil in an act of domestic terrorism in Chattanooga, evangelist Franklin Graham dared to say what many in America were thinking:

“We are under attack by Muslims at home and abroad. We should stop all immigration of Muslims to the U.S. until this threat with Islam has been settled. Every Muslim who comes into this country has the potential to be radicalized—and they do their killing to honor their religion and Muhammad,” Graham said.

“During World War II, we didn’t allow Japanese to immigrate to America, nor did we allow Germans. Why are we allowing Muslims now? Do you agree? Let your Congressman know that we’ve got to put a stop to this and close the floodgates. Pray for the men and women who serve this nation in uniform, that God would protect them.”

The elder Graham stayed out of politics, but the once-prodigious son is known for his bold commentary. Some of his fellow evangelicals are up in arms over these comments from Billy Graham’s son.

“Harsh” and “unhelpful” were the words Carl Medearis, an international expert in Arab-American and Muslim-Christian relations, used to describe Graham’s words.

Meanwhile, Helen Lee, associate editor at InterVarsity Press, had one question for him: “This is Christian witness?” Lee’s colleague, vice president and director of Campus Engagement for InterVarsity USA Greg Jao, said he “strongly” rejects Graham’s idea.

And Brian Zahnd, an author and pastor of Word Life Church, said Graham's remarks were nothing short of "xenophobia." Even Chick-fil-A's general manager for leadership development, Tim Sweetman, came against Graham, saying his remarks were "despicable" and the opposite of Christian love and American freedom.

"Franklin Graham said really awful things about Muslims," Lynne Hybels, of Willow Creek Community Church, tweeted. "If he knew the Muslim men and women I know, he would never say such things."

Yet, many Americans are likely to agree with Graham. Americans view Islam as a threat to their own nation's religious liberty almost as strongly as they consider it a danger to religious freedom internationally, new research shows.

Although most persecution occurs overseas, 39 percent of American adults say Islam threatens religious freedom in the United States—almost as many as the 40 percent who see Islam as a global threat, a survey by Nashville-based LifeWay Research finds.

"Most recent headlines regarding Islam don't paint a picture of religious freedom—so we should not be surprised by the strong minority that considers Islam a threat to religious freedom," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research.