

Mosque Takes Over Pentecostal Church as Pastor Prays to Allah

Christian clergy helped a Muslim mosque open in a Pentecostal church.

"It's open faith; we're brothers," Ali Mohammad, an organizer of the mosque, tells North Carolina's *News & Observer*.

The Muslims are stripping the church of its Christian roots, including removing any crosses and handing them over to pastors in the area.

When they opened on Saturday, Christian clergy, including Pastor Jim Melnyk of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, participated in the ceremony. Other pastors from Methodist and Baptist congregations were also present.

"I see it as an important statement of community, that we take each other's faiths seriously," Melnyk says. "I want to acknowledge how important it is to build bridges in the community when we're living in a time that is so anxiety ridden and there's so much mistrust going on in the world around us. It's important when we can find common ground and share our community."

But Melnyk's participation is not just a gesture of neighborly compassion.

"Christians, Jews and Muslims are all people of the book, and we all claim what the Hebrew Scriptures call the Abrahamic faith," Melnyk tells WND. "We call it the Old Testament, and Muslims also claim the Bible."

He says he personally worshipped "Allah" during the service.

“Obviously I’m a Christian, and I would not live comfortably within the full teachings of Islam, but I can recognize where we share teachings, and recognize the call to treat one another mercifully, and as the one God treats us mercifully, and that translates equally into Christianity as well as it does Islam,” Melnyk says.