

# Quran-burning pastor's former German church denounces him

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Berlin (RNS) A German congregation founded by the Florida preacher who has sparked global controversy with plans to burn Qurans on 9/11 says it has had nothing to do with the preacher since 2008, denouncing him as "violent and fanatical."

The Rev. Terry Jones has drawn international criticism with his plans to burn Qurans during services at his Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville on the ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

In the 1980s, Jones formed the Christian Community of Cologne, a charismatic Christian church in a heavily Catholic part of Germany that, at one point, claimed 800 members, reported dpa, the German Press Agency.

However, Jones was ousted from the church in 2008 over financial irregularities and personality clashes, according to the report. The church now has between 60 and 80 members.

"We are distancing ourselves from these actions and don't want to be connected to them," Stephan Baar, a church official, told dpa.

Other members also made it clear that they no longer wish to have contact with Jones.

"Thank God we no longer have anything to do with him," said Diana Breuel, who has been active with the church for six years.

Dpa cited church members who said Jones tried to run the Cologne church like a sect leader and applied psychological pressure on its members, subordinating all activities to his will.

"He wasn't the kind of pastor who did everything and took care of everyone," said Breuel.

Baar added: "He didn't project the biblical values and Christianity, but always made himself the center of everything."

In 2002, Jones was fined 3,000 euros by a German court for using the title of "doctor" under false pretenses. Members also said he was at the center of some financial irregularities. Since his departure in 2008, the congregation has had no contact to Jones.

Saying Jones was capable of "fanaticism," Baar said he doubts international pressure will get Jones to deviate from his Quran-burning plans. "Terry Jones is the kind of person who sees things through, if he thinks it's a task given him by God," Baar said.