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## UPDATE: Two Perham exchange students are kicked out of church

Perham, MN (WDAY TV) -- Two exchange students attending school in Perham, Minnesota say they were kicked out of a church there when they questioned a nationally known speaker who says "Islam equals terrorism."

By: [Kevin Wallevand](#), WDAY

### Two Perham Exchange Students



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Perham, MN (WDAY TV) -- Two exchange students attending school in Perham, Minnesota say they were kicked out of a church there when they questioned a nationally known speaker who says "Islam equals terrorism."

The boys were kicked out of the Assembly of God church in Perham during a question answer period following a speech by Walid Shoebat. Shoebat says he is a former terrorist, and claims to be an anti-terrorism expert. He now calls Islam the devil and tours the country speaking to churches and schools - even collecting fees from Homeland Security.

CNN has exposed Shoebat, calling him a fraud. Today, the DC based Council on American-Islamic Relations contacted WDAY and said it is calling for a meeting with Assembly of God church leaders in Perham. hopes of strengthening interfaith relations and promoting understanding.

The two teenagers are Muslim, and attended the event featuring Walid Shoebat, a Muslim turned Christian.

Fikri, from Indonesia, and Elshan, from Azerbhjan, came to the United States as exchange students. Their home right now is Perham, Minnesota and host Mary Anderson. When the students heard that Walid Shoebat was speaking at a public forum at Assembly of God in Perham, they wanted to go.

Shoebat is known as a former Muslim, now Christian, speaking out against Islam.

Elshan Mirzazade - Perham Exchange Student: "Our message is not to argue with him, but to say to people that what he says is wrong."

The boys heard what they say are mistruths and distortions coming out of Shoebat. So, during question and answer time they questioned Shoebat, and quickly were told to leave.

Fikri Rahmat - Perham Exchange Student: "I would conclude in my mind that he got mad because maybe he was afraid of the truth. One of his companions came to us and said, 'Out, Out,' rudely to us."

Elshan Mirzazade: "They ushered us out and asked us to leave and we said, 'OK, OK.' So when I was leaving, I shouted, 'Good way of promoting peace, bravo, bravo.'"

Dirk Currier is the pastor of Assembly of God in Perham.

Dirk Currier - Assembly of God Pastero: "Nobody was kicked out because they were Muslim."

He says the boys were asked to leave when emotions escalated.

Dirk Currier: "The dialogue wasn't a dialogue. It was turning into kind of a shouting match"

Mary Anderson - Host Mother of Boys: "I thought I was sending my boys to a house of love, and I am disappointed that hate was being taught there."

But the two boys did their homework and found Shoebat's credibility and so-called expertise on terrorism has been questioned for some time.

CNN and others have investigated Shoebat's claims; Homeland Security has given Shoebat grant money for anti-terrorism speeches around the country. The investigation questions Shoebat's claim that he was a former PLO terrorist. Family and friends say he claims this for personal gain. The boys hope others will learn from their experience, unfortunate as it was.

Both exchange students are here as part of a special international program that educates Americans about other cultures and religions, and helps international students learn about life in America.

**UPDATE:** The two exchange students who were asked to leave a church there after questioning a guest speaker. The two boys, who are Muslim, attended a gathering open to the public that featured a controversial Muslim-turned-Christian. The Washington, DC based Council on American-Islamic Relations contacted WDAY today.

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