From the title above, I can see some dismissing this article or at the least rolling their eyes. Others are thinking this must be a mistake but the Reverend is too good looking for that. To the latter, I agree, you're right; I am too good looking for that.

Since South Parks' inception, it has pushed the boundaries on topics varying from the debacle of the 2000 election, to stem cell research and now in dealing with the most extreme levels of censorship. Since South Park's humble beginnings as a shock-value, foul-mouth show, it has become a mouthpiece of social commentary. It has won not only Emmy's for certain episodes and for the series overall but it has also been banned in Russia (yes, the country Sarah Palin can see from her house).

South Park recently experienced its 200th and 201st episodes in which all the celebrities South Park has made jokes on over the years were trying to sue the town. Through this, the celebrities' true intention becomes clear: to discover the power that the prophet Muhammad has to avoid people from making fun of him.

Through a chain of events, in the 200th episode, Muhammad wears a bear costume because the town fears that if he is seen they will be bombed by terrorist.

This is where the problem begins. Early on in South Park's 14-season history, they had in the past shown Muhammad along with other major religions deities as they joined together to fight evil. The group was known as the Super Best Friends, a parody of the 1970's cartoon show The Super Friends (Season 5, episode 3). Now in post 911, South Park has since censored the image of Muhammad and actually has made a point to draw attention to the hypocrisy of censorship by covering the character with a large black bar that says censored (Season 10 episodes 3 and 4). The hypocrisy stems from the fact that radical Islamist demonizes people who are Jewish by using offensive Nazi propaganda to "educate" their people about Jews.

Five seasons later, South Park tried to show the prophet Muhammad again but Comedy Central removed the scene, the message of the 2-part episode was to confront the issue of how people are living in fear of attack and that giving into the fear of terrorism we are allowing terrorism to work.

After the airing of the 200th episode, a group known as Revolution Muslim left what they called "predictions of the future" at the South Park web site. These "predictions" were threats to the creators of South Park, Matt Stone and Trey Parker, in which they referred to the death of Theo Van Gogh. Theo Van Gogh was a Dutch filmmaker who was creating a movie on the treatment of women within the Islam religion and he was killed for his criticisms by a radical Muslim group.

By episode 201, Comedy Central had such fear about the threats that they not only censored Muhammad's name during the episode but also the speeches at the end, which never once mentioned Muhammad's name but addressed the issue of people who used "intimidation and fear."

At the time I could understand the reasoning behind Comedy Central's move. Why show something if it could cause death and harm to people? I have now changed my views; radical Muslim groups are living according to a bastardization of their own religion, because of this, they have no real morals in which to live by. These radicals are going to cause harm no matter what we do and to submit to changing our ways to fit their mood is ludicrous. While people will

say it's just a cartoon and not worth risking the lives of others and I cannot deny that fact but the idea that people would kill over the cartoon is an even more deplorable act.
Another point is America not only finds its freedom of speech being subdued by people who have no concept that a person's voice must be heard, but more importantly, we find ourselves favoring and coddling one Religion more tan others. This is a direct violation of the constitution. We find ourselves constantly having to walk on egg shells out of fear of retribution of a minority or fringe group with the religion of Islam.
Now I do understand that it's offensive in Islam to show the image of Muhammad and Allah for that matter; everyone at one time or another finds offense to something someone else creates. During the rest of the episode, we see South Park making that point by showing Buddha snort coke and Jesus on a computer where it stated that he has an addiction to online porn. While both events are offensive, we see that in comparison, all that South Park wanted to do was show and image of a religious figure.
At this point, I have to say that it has now become our duty to show the episode in its entirety and the image of Muhammad unedited. Not only to stand up for the freedom of speech but to not allow ourselves, out of fear, to favor one religion over another. We find ourselves held hostage by hypocrites who put no value on life and will use any excuse to cause harm to others. My advice to radical Islamist is simple, first bend over and remove the stick — it's not a pedestal. Secondly, to quote the movie Dogma - "God must have a sense of humor, just look at the Platypus."
"All censorships exist to prevent anyone from challenging current conceptions and existing institutions. All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions and executed by supplanting existing institutions. Consequently, the first condition of progress is the removal of censorship."
— George Bernard Shaw

(The unedited episode is still not online, as other South Park episodes are, and the original episode with a fully seen Muhammad has also been taken off the web site.)

The Good Rev. James Ferda is a fiction writer who is irritated by the hypocrisy and inequity in humankind. He resides in Allen County, whereabouts unknown.