## Valley Muslims faced test of faith

ow Valley Muslims view the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the tumultuous decade that followed.

Azra Hussain Scottsdale President and founder Islamic Speakers Bureau of Arizona



n 9/11. I did not want to sit at home weeping and watching the news, so I spent that day volunteering in

the high-school office to help out the overwhelmed administrative staff handle scared and sometimes hysterical parents calling or coming in to take their children

When I got home that day, I received my very first of many phone calls from concerned friends.

It was from a Jewish friend, Stacy, and she was checking to make sure we were OK.

A few days later I got another call from a Christian friend, Kerry. She left me a voicemail message saying that if we felt unsafe in our home that we were to move into her house and stay with her and not to I'm all hopes that Americans will keep even consider arguing about it.

Their pure hearts reached out to comfort and protect a friend, neighbor and fellow human.

In the past 10 years this nation has seen all sorts of hate rhetoric, but those who wish to divide and destroy this nation of pure hearts will be the only losers.

There are more people like Stacy and Kerry in the "land of the free and the home of the brave" than there are hate-mongers.

Anas Hlayhel Chandler President Arizona Chapter Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

The terror attacks of

Sept. 11, 2001.

changed all of us forever. In the days

following the tragic event, Muslims, like

all other Americans, mourned the tragic

loss of innocent lives. After all, 9/11 hap-

pened to all of us and did not spare any reli-

gion or ethnicity (there were approxi-

Still, Muslims became suspects in the

eyes of many fellow Americans. Many

Muslim schools and mosques received

threats of retaliation. That was the imme-

diate challenge. But the years that ensued

brought greater challenges. Islam entered

the national debate arena and the place of

Islam-hate literature was on the rise and

Muslims in America was under question.

self-acclaimed so-called experts on Islam

were spewing misconceptions about the

faith. In the past couple of years, several

new mosques were protested and lawmak-

ers in more than 20 states introduced legis-

lation that could result in discrimination

debate about Islam has not ceased. At its

core, this debate is about our will as a na-

tion to preserve religious freedom in the

face of terrorist threats. It's a difficult test.

choosing principle over fear.

And now 10 years after 9/11, the national

mately 32 Muslims who died on 9/11).



**Ahmad Daniels** Phoenix Transformation facilitator and life coach

s an African-American who happens to be Muslim, I have the events of 9/11.

Yet, as a board member of the Arizona Interfaith Movement, monthly columnist for the Muslim Voice newspaper and facilitator of diversity and cultural-competency workshops, I have met Muslims whose Middle Eastern appearance has resulted in their desire to remain anonymous, if not invisible, so as not to bring unsolicited attention to themselves.

hear or read of a Valley Muslim apologizing for some heinous act performed by a Muslim, such as the Foot Hood shooting. Underwear Bomber, Shoe Bomber, etc.

This is usually hastily followed by a press release and a Muslim professing the "non-violent nature of Islam."

My recommendations: fewer interfaith dinners, curtailing of meaningless apologies and the initiating of a series of nonthreatening, non-blaming, experiential workshops in which political correctness is left at the door and the hard questions are asked and answered.

The absence of disingenuous niceties and the removal of shielding masks would be of great benefit to all and could very well be the start of genuine interfaith relations and community bonding.

personally not experienced any change resulting from

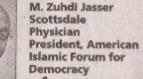
I admit to being saddened each time I

Our greatest weapon in this fight to the from our foundational principles of universal religious Our greatest weapon in this fight is the strength that comes freedom, a weapon our enemy cannot use."

M. ZUHDI JASSER

against Muslims.

President of American Islamic Forum for Democracy



s we commemorate

the events of 9/11,

many of us will turn to our faith and our connection to God to pray for those who were lost, for those that remain and to pray for the security against all those who seek to harm us. Despite Mayor Bloomberg's myopia in keeping faith from the official ceremony at Ground Zero, faith has been integral to the events of 9/11.

Faith was the impetus for the attack, faith was the instrument for healing and faith is the only hope we have to defeat the ideology that attacked us 10 years ago.

Yet, today we remain paralyzed from dissecting faith from threat because of a pathological fear of offending someone in our divisive American political dynamic. Faith has become a window dressing while our Islamist enemies embrace it. We flounder in political correctness to the detriment of our national security.

Sept. 11 was the most crippling enemy salvo in that ideological war. Make no mistake. It, however, was one of merely thousands. Our security will not triumph until Muslims can decouple the faith of Islam from the theo-political threat that is Islamism (political Islam). We are not at war with Islam, but we are at war with Islamism. Ten years later we have yet to even muster an offense against that ideology.

We must step beyond political correctness and empower reform-oriented, liberty-minded Muslims whose identity is tied to Americanism and our Establishment Clause rather than Islamism, shar'iah and victimhood. Our greatest weapon in this fight is the strength that comes from our foundational principles of universal religious freedom, a weapon our enemy cannot use.