

Ohio Muslims say terror arrests won't stir anger

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOLEDO, Ohio—Doctors, business owners and religious leaders who make up this industrial city's thriving Muslim community say they're not worried about a backlash against them after terrorism charges were leveled against three residents who share their religion.

"Other places are worse but Toledo's good," said Ahmad Rachidi, 44, an insurance salesman. "The Arabic community here is big, a few thousand, and they're involved in everything."

In other cities, terror arrests in the U.S. and attacks overseas have triggered vandalism, hate mail and attacks against Arab-Americans.

Mosques in Florida and Missouri were targeted by vandals two years ago after the beheadings of two American businessmen in the Middle East. Anti-Muslim signs popped up in a New Jersey

neighborhood where one victim had lived.

"Anytime there's a watershed event we see hate crimes peak," said Arsalan Iftikhar, legal affairs director for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations.

It would be unusual for there not to be some backlash, he said. "The longer a Muslim community has been around in a certain area, the more integrated and accepted they become in the general fabric," he said.

Because Muslims in Toledo helped authorities in the investigation, that should go "a long way in changing attitudes," Iftikhar said.

Shock, sadness and anger ripped through the community last week when the government accused Wassim I. Mazloum, 24, Marwan Othman El-Hindi, 43, and Mohammad Zaki Amawi, 26, of plotting to kill U.S. soldiers overseas and harboring or

concealing terrorists.

All three lived in Toledo within the last year. They have all pleaded not guilty.

Those in the Muslim community said the arrests have not led to any general anti-Muslim sentiment so far and they're hopeful it will stay that way.

There are about 6,000 Muslims in Toledo. The Arab-American community that produced actor Jamie Farr and entertainer Danny Thomas has been rooted in the city for generations.

Many of those living here today are second and third generation Arab-Americans whose parents and grandparents migrated to the city along western Lake Erie to work in its auto and glass factories.

"We have judges, we have lawyers, we have doctors," said John Shousher, an Arab-American businessman who

Pastor in King's 'Jail' letter dies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—A former pastor of First Baptist Church of Birmingham who was one of the eight white clergy the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed in his "Letter From Birmingham Jail" died last week. He was 89.

The Rev. Earl Stallings, a native of Durham, died Thursday in Lakeland, Fla., where he'd been living in a retirement center, according to his son, Jim Stallings.

He was pastor of First Baptist Church 1961-65 and angered many in his all-white congregation by allowing blacks, including civil rights leader Andrew Young, to attend a Sunday worship service after King's April 12, 1963, arrest.

King's letter detailed his

argument for racial equality and the immediate need for social justice. He directed the letter to white moderate clergy, chastising them for trying to delay his 1963 demonstrations in Birmingham.

At one point in his letter, King mentioned Stallings specifically: "I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a non-segregated basis."

Stallings risked being fired by his congregation for allowing the black worshippers, said Samford University historian Jonathan Bass said.

He also gave a sermon

called "Pilate's Bowl," in which he accused white Christians of forgoing their moral duty. "He said they had washed their hands of responsibility for racial justice in Birmingham," Bass said.

However, like many moderates in Birmingham at the time, Stallings felt King should delay his planned demonstrations.

That prompted King's letter, addressed to them, although they never actually were sent copies.

"This is the most important document of the civil rights era and their names are attached to that," Bass said.

Funeral services are planned for 3 p.m. Sunday at First Baptist Church in Wauchula, Fla.

Land at heart of family history

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEAUMONT, Texas —The stories that families tell about themselves become the framework upon which their children build their lives.

One Beaumont family rose from the bondage of slavery to produce entrepreneurs, educators and a minister who pastored a Vidor church.

Charles Jones remembers sitting raptly at grandmother Bertha Lee's knee as she told him stories about her grandparents and their progress in life from slaves to landowners.

For the 62-year-old retired school counselor, his heritage was something to live up to.

"I would never let her see me do anything wrong," Jones said of his beloved grandmother.

It's a legacy he strives to pass on to his two sons, who love hearing the family stories almost as much as he enjoys telling them.

At the heart of his family's history lies a plot of land where the ancestral saga took root after the drifting days of slavery when blacks couldn't

put down firm roots lest the vicissitudes of fortune sell them away at a whim or a stronger emotion.

Of the land his great-great-grandparents bought when they married in Beaumont not long after the Civil War, all that remains today is a cemetery.

The Anthony Cemetery, on Pine Street at Gill, has been in Charles Jones' family for more than a century. It began as a family plot.

Jones' great-great-grandmother Margaret Fagin Chance Anthony was born of a Seminole/African-American mother into slavery in about 1809, at best estimate.

Her owner, who also was her father, taught her reading, writing and music, alongside his wife's children. However, when he died, the first thing his wife did was sell Margaret, then about 16, to Charles Chance, who brought her to Texas.

After the Civil War, Chance provided Margaret and her two children with a wagon, a team of horses, money and the name of a lawyer friend

in Beaumont.

Her husband-to-be, Jack Anthony, also an educated former slave, came to Beaumont, where he went to work for the same lawyer.

The two bought land in North Beaumont, where they thrived, becoming community pillars.

They raised horses and Jack Anthony ran a lucrative tannery.

Because there were no schools for black girls at that time, Margaret Anthony began her own.

"Grandma built a lean-to to educate a lot of community kids," Jones said.

Margaret's daughter, Lottie, died after the birth of her fifth child, Bertha, in 1890. Bertha was raised by her grandmother.

Bertha, unlike her grandmother and daughter, was content to be a housewife. Bertha Lee was a cultivated woman who had attended finishing school and was musically gifted. Among other talents, she was an excellent seamstress and cook.

2 gay finalists for Calif. bishop

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have formed a separate network of dissenting churches, opposes same-sex relationships. Conservatives believe the Bible forbids gay relationships.

"If the Episcopal Church had any intention of repentance, candidates would clearly adhere to the authority of Scripture, affirm the apostolic faith, and commit to the immediate cessation of ordination/consecration of noncelibate homosexuals as well as the blessings of same-sex unions," according to a letter on the group's Web site opposing candidates for presiding bishop of the church, not the California position.

Canon David Anderson, the

group's president and chief executive, considers the California nominees in defiance of church principles and said American church leaders who accept same-sex relationships "need to repent" and reconsider their decision.

The Rev. Paul Zahl, the dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, said if Perry or Taylor is chosen as the new bishop, it's a "definitive thumbing of the nose at the worldwide church."

He said hundreds of the 2.3 million Episcopalians already left the church after Robinson was consecrated and "for those who are still hanging in there, this election would be the final straw. That's no judg-

ment on the individuals, but on the principle."

But others say the church has been rife with conflict since its very beginning and the question of who to accept into the church is nothing new. "There's always been a plurality of voices," said the Rev. Ian Douglas, a professor at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Taylor simply wants to be considered because of his qualifications, not his sexual preference.

"People will be asking who the Holy Spirit is leading them to elect and who has the capacity to be the next bishop," he said from his Seattle church.

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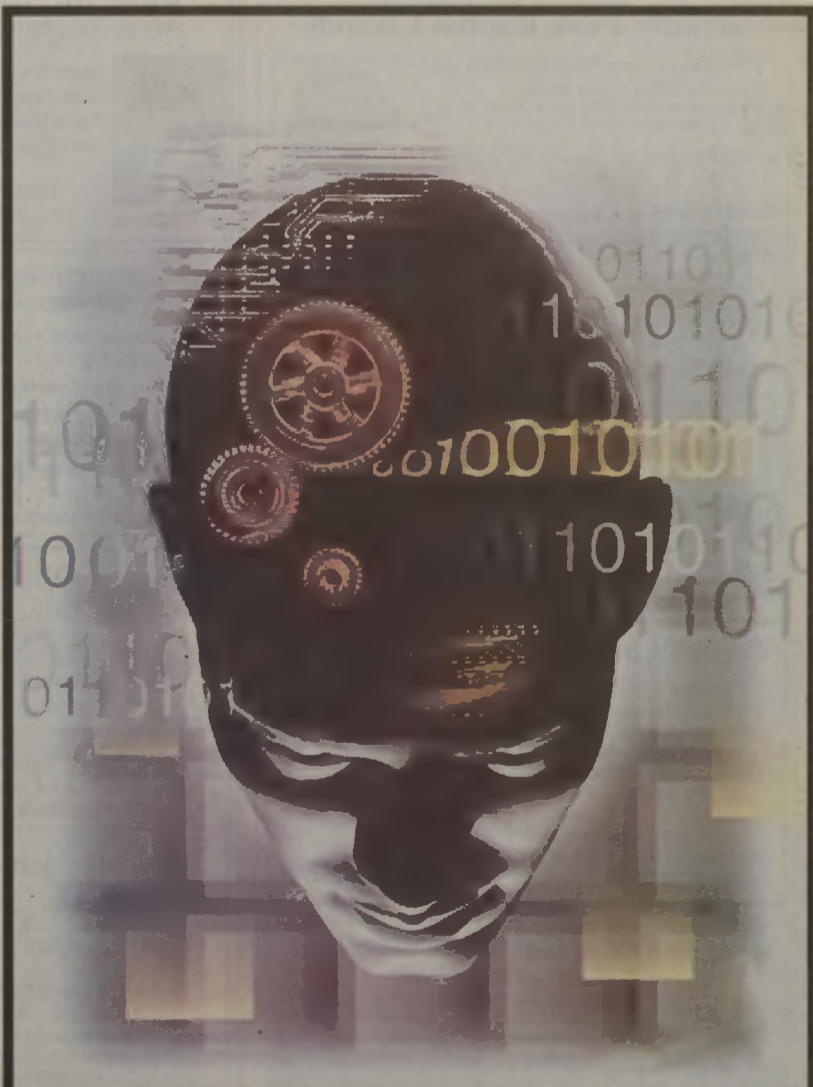
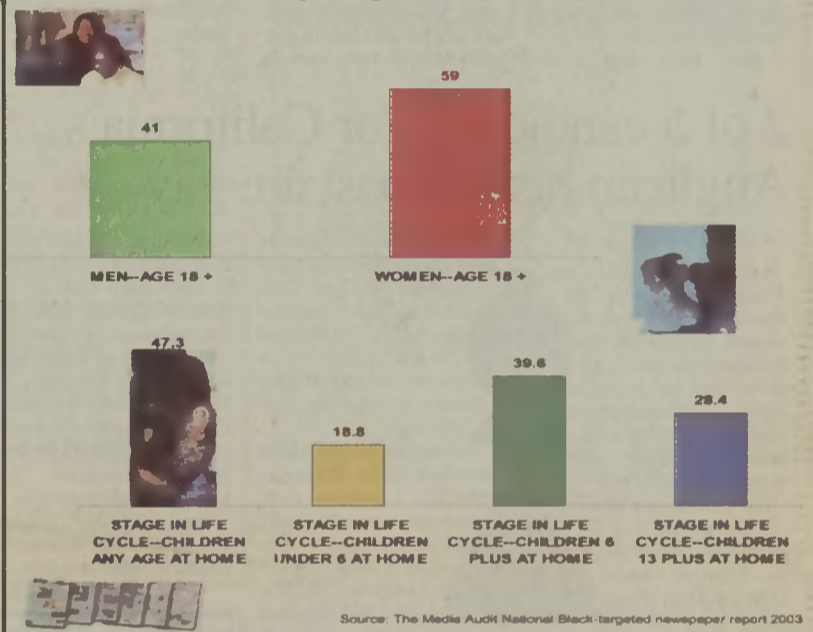
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