

# Ameircan religious leaders call for healing

By D.R. Barnes

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
WASHINGTON (NNPA)—Area religious leaders and religious leaders around the country soundly denounced the terrorist attacks that shook buildings and communities in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania last week.

Some cautioned President Bush to take "the moral high ground" in his response, and many are trying to understand the reasons behind the attacks against thousands of innocent people.

Some wonder why American's safety and security is now being threatened.

"This is an incredible human tragedy that we all share," said the Rev. Wallace Smith, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Northwest Washington, D.C. "This should make us more sensitive to the violence and lost lives others around the world live through constantly."

Thousands of people died and hundreds more were seriously injured when hijacked airplanes destroyed the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan and the west wing of the Pentagon in Arlington, Va.

Hijackers commandeered four domestic planes carrying more than 250 passengers and crashed in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The Rev. Grayland Hagler, pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church in Northeast D.C., struggled with mixed reactions. "We were devastated and will continue to be by the number of casualties," he said. "But why are we taken so off guard? Why are we surprised? American weapons are being used against the Palestinians in Israel.

Our own refusal to participate in the World Conference on Racism and not denounce what's keeping us apart is evidence of America's arrogance."

When we wreak havoc in other places, we call it 'collateral damage.' Lives are lost, and we still go on with

the world.

Nothing changes.

It may be politically incorrect, but in the words of Malcolm X, the chickens have come home to roost."

Smith characterized President George Bush's first message to the nation following the crashes as "language or recrimination that is unhealthful."

He opened the Chapel of Hope at Shiloh Baptist Church, located on Ninth and P streets recently for a 10-hour prayer vigil for people who need a place for moral assessment, and personal reflection.

"It's at times like this, we need to ask ourselves, 'Where are the violent places in me?'"

Hagler said he also planned a special memorial service for the victims.

The Rev. Robert Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches and the Rev. John L. McCullough, executive director of Church World Service, offered a joint statement appealing to people of all faith to "reach out to one another."

We especially urge churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship to join in prayer and practical help."

They also warned against "the temptation to retaliate against innocent people."

Most fearful of reprisals are members of the Muslim community, who experienced more than 200 reported cases of harassment, threats and actual violence following the Oklahoma bombing in 1995.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, called on Muslims nationwide to "offer whatever assistance they can to help the victims of terrorist attacks."

For security measures, the Council suggested those who wear Islamic attire stay out of public for the immediate future, and requested additional police at mosque entrances and parking areas during prayer times.

The American Muslim Council released a statement

condemning the violence and offered to "join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators. No political cause could ever be assisted by such immoral acts," they added.

Leaders of the American Muslim Political Coordination Council recently held a news conference outside George Washington University Hospital to encourage Muslims to donate blood for the victims of the attack.

Muslims from around the Washington area were there

to donate their blood.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson joined with interfaith community leaders to mourn for the victims of the attacks. "We all had friends and family members in the building or nearby," Jackson said in a statement.

"We come together to pray for the bereaved, to encourage volunteers to the rescue and to give blood. We must turn to each other, and not turn on each other like we did after Pearl Harbor and Oklahoma City. Faith, not fear is what is needed in this hour."

The NAACP, through its Religious Affairs Department, called on religious and secular leaders of all faiths to pray for the nation last Friday, Saturday and Sunday. "In times like these, which try our souls, let not our hearts be troubled, neither let us be afraid," said the Rev. Julius C. Hope, NAACP Director of Religious Affairs.

Please pray to give light to the families that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Please guide our feet to the way of peace."

President Bush, in his re-

marks from the Oval Office, quoted from Psalm 23. He said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil, for 'you are' with me."

Smith also urged, that "As hard as it is to understand, God has this in his hands."

And Edgar added from Psalm 23, "we are promised God's care even 'in the presence of our enemies.' May God guide us in these days of pain."

D.R. Barnes writes for the Washington Informer

**WELLS FARGO**

The Next Stage®

## What's next? Free money?

FREE CHECKING AND FREE ONLINE BANKING



Wouldn't that be nice? Until then, you can open a Wells Fargo Free Checking account and say goodbye to monthly service fees and hello to unlimited automated phone banking, unlimited check writing, a credit card with no annual fee\*, no-fee Wells Fargo® ATMs and the most locations in Nevada, many with drive-up lanes. Plus you get free online banking at wells Fargo.com, the leading Internet bank. It's like having your own 24-hour financial center. And if you sign up now, you get 2 free months of Online Bill Pay. So visit a Wells Fargo banker today to open a checking account and find out how you can get free online banking.

© 2001 Wells Fargo Banks. Members FDIC.  
\* Subject to credit qualification.

**Mikey's & Mr. Bigz**

**FREE Video Games**  
Dreamcast N64 + PSX  
651-6665

**Fubu + Kani + Pelle Pelle**  
Gators & Suits  
sizes up to 74

Rated XXX Large  
631-1901 + 452-9908

**Three Phat Locations**