

Responses to Paris attacks are not black and white



BY ALAA ABDELDAIEM
editor-in-chief

I am not Charlie Hebdo. I have never insulted anyone's religion, prophet or holy book, nor do I approve of others doing so. I don't believe free speech should be used as a means to insult the most beloved human being to me, nor should it be a cover to insult any prophet or religious figure. I do not approve of the publishing of any vile racist cartoons drawn by Charlie Hebdo or any other magazine.

But I'm also not a terrorist.

I believe in principle. There is no justification for the cold-blooded murder of 12 people in Paris, regardless of their actions. I value life. I believe in responding to the evil insults against my prophet with education and mercy.

And I don't blame the faith of Islam for the horrendous attack, either. The vigilantes guilty of the attacks in Paris know nothing of my religion. If they had, they, too, would have believed in peaceful response. They wouldn't have thought they could "avenge" the prophet by spilling innocent blood.

The issue is not black and white. I don't have to approve of the Charlie Hebdo cartoons to be an advocate of free speech. Having the right to do something does not make doing it right. There are lines that, for the sake of maintaining order and having decency, cannot and should not be crossed. Freedom of speech isn't a pass to depict blacks as monkeys and Arabs as bulbous-nosed characters, both of which the magazine publication did.

And I don't have to be blaming my religion to condemn the violence. Too often am I associated with the actions of such extremists. I could—and should—refuse to defend myself for actions neither I nor the religion of Islam are responsible for.

Instead, I choose to preach the very teachings of my religion by denouncing the criminal acts committed in my name. My prophet was abused and harassed during his time as well, but not once did he retaliate with hate and violence. It was peace and love he preached, and it's the same peace and love I attempt to share with you today.

Because I am not Charlie, nor am I a terrorist. I'm a Muslim American that believes in human rights and justice.

I'm a follower of the man who was sent as a mercy to the worlds.



CARTOON BY COLLIN RAISER

View: Let 2015 be the year of true change

We can't start over. Despite the common belief, a new year doesn't mean a new beginning, a fresh page. Things happened in 2014 that cannot be undone.

But that doesn't mean that things can't change. In his "I Have a Dream" speech, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of transformation and building his ideal society, a society where justice and equality were given to all, where the nation united for the common good.

Five decades later, it's clear that we still have a ways to go.

It's true; gas prices began to plummet at the end of last year. For the first time in six years, a gallon of gas is nearly \$2. But, besides cutting spending from our own pockets, what else have we accomplished when it comes to energy? Emphasis must now be placed on limiting resource depletion, and a push for advancements in clean energy in 2015 must be made for there to be real progress.

Yes, a plan has been put into place to make community colleges free, a step towards providing all with an equal opportunity at education. But free education doesn't promise higher graduation rates. This year should be used to continue the push to give citizens the resources they need for a better education and a promising future.

And yes, we've been urging the state for a boost in school funding for ages, and Indiana House GOP leaders pledged to do just that in 2014. But if the Munster school board is still forced to cut 50 staff positions due to an \$8 million deficit, it's clear that efforts to improve the system must be taken beyond simple urges.

It's up to our generation to truly make 2015 a year of change, to learn from our past to build for the future King himself dreamt of. Because that's what New Year's resolutions are about: identifying the problem and finding the solution. We've taken note of our problems, and another chapter of our lives is over.

It's time to write a better ending.

editorial



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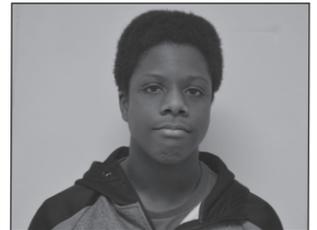
speakup

What foods do you wish were offered for lunch?



Jayme Gunter
freshman

"I want real (Hispanic) food. They should serve things like burritos and Spanish rice. It's good to try new foods."



Samuel Swope
sophomore

"We should have bacon burgers for lunch. We already have normal burgers, so we should add variety and try different types of burgers."



Angie Swanson
junior

"BLTs should be at lunch. I'm a picky eater, and the school doesn't have that many options for picky eaters like me."



Jacob Balko
senior

"Chicken Alfredo should be offered for lunch because it's an Italian delicacy and it really fills you up."