



NEWS & NOTES

■ A director for the Georgia chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union resigned after her two daughters were traumatized by encountering “three transgender young adults, over six feet [tall] with deep voices” in the women’s restroom. Maya Dillard Smith said, “My children were visibly frightened, concerned about their safety and left asking lots of questions for which I, like many parents, was ill-prepared to answer.” Smith has launched her own attempt to solve the transgender bathroom issue with a new website she calls Finding Middle Ground. The website features a video of a young black girl saying, “I don’t want him to be uncomfortable in the boy’s bathroom, either. I don’t want them to be uncomfortable anywhere. But what about me, too?” Smith said the ACLU is no longer an organization that supports all rights, but has evolved into a “special interest organiza-

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tion” that advocates only for “certain progressive rights.” The now former ACLU chief also charged that the ACLU tailors its activities to satisfy the progressives who are funding the group’s lobbying activities. FACT, 6/3; Breitbart, 6/2

■ A new study, based on a survey of more than 30,000 adults shows that acceptance of homosexuality has increased among all generations, with Millennials the most accepting. According to the data, the percentage of men who had sex with at least one other man increased from 4.5 percent to 8.2 percent between 1990 and 2014. From 1973 to 1990, the percentage of adults who believed “sexual relations between two adults of the same sex (was) not wrong at all” rose from 11 percent to 13 percent. But by 2014, the acceptance has risen to 49 percent of all adults and 63 percent of Millennials. These changes indicate “that American culture has become more individualistic and more focused on the self and on equality,” said study co-author Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University. AFP, 6/2

■ The American public believes that twenty-three percent of Americans are gay or lesbian, according to Gallup. In fact, only 3.8 percent of the adult population identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Denison Forum, 5/24

■ On Wednesday, Tenn. Congressman Marsha Blackburn sent letters requesting that the Department of Health and Human Services investigate potential violations of federal law by the fetal tissue research company StemExpress, a fetal tissue procurement business, and several abortion clinics. Her Congressional panel found that StemExpress and the abortion centers with which it contracted violated federal patient privacy and informed consent regulations. StemExpress employees were given access to confidential patient health information in order to streamline their workflow and thus maximize profits. StemExpress also didn’t follow these procedures when obtaining informed consent from abortion clinic patients, Blackburn wrote. “It takes financial advantage, obtains consent through coercion, and deceives the woman, all in violation of federal privacy laws,” said Blackburn. FACT, 6/3; LifeSiteNews, 6/1

■ Women who attend church services regularly are more likely to live longer, a 16-year study of nearly 75,000 women has shown. Women who attended church services regularly were found to be 33 percent less likely to die during the study period compared with those who never attended. Overall, the study found that the frequency of church attendance correlated to a lesser likelihood of death from a number

of diseases, including cardiovascular disease and cancer. Christian Headlines, 5/17

■ The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to hear an appeal asserting that the death penalty violates the U.S. Constitution’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment filed by a Louisiana man convicted of fatally shooting his pregnant former girlfriend. The Supreme Court left in place a September 2015 Louisiana Supreme Court ruling that rejected Tucker’s legal arguments and upheld his conviction and death sentence. In the U.S., 31 states have the death penalty and 19 do not. Reuters, 5/31

■ A first grader at an elementary school in California regularly shared encouraging Bible-based notes that his mother wrote with classmates during lunch. After a portion of a note was shared with the teacher, the student was told to stop distributing the notes and talking about religion. Eventually, the school district called law enforcement and a police officer showed up at the first grader’s home demanding he stop sharing the notes. FACT, 6/3

■ According to new school rules, National Honor Society students at a high school in Plano, Texas will not be wearing the customary NHS regalia at their graduation because doing so might make the other students feel bad. Meanwhile in North Carolina, the Wake County

School Board has given initial approval to do away with the designation of “valedictorian” because, as the chairman said, “competition has become very unhealthy.” FACT, 6/3

■ Retired Lt. General Jerry Boykin, an original member of Delta Force, won’t be allowed to speak at Monday’s prayer breakfast at Fort Riley in Kansas because the Military Religious Freedom Foundation complained that Boykin was a “homophobic, Islamophobic, fundamentalist Christian extremist.” Ironically, the announcement of the Delta Force hero’s talk was so popular that officials were concerned they didn’t have enough room. FACT, 6/3

■ A Catholic Cincinnati man, at his own behest, was given an unusual sentence: 12 consecutive Sundays attending the Morning Star Baptist Church, all 90 minutes of the service, with his program signed by the minister, whom he assaulted in January brawl outside a Cincinnati Cyclones game. The Week, 6/1

■ The Bible has been translated into every imagin-

able language for centuries, but this seems to be a first: a complete King James Version Bible, Genesis through Revelations, all using emoji as part of the text. Wash Post, 6/2

■ The film *Me Before You* that opened this weekend might sound like a romance film, but its core message is that suicide is the correct response to disability. Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is urging a boycott of the movie. FACT, 6/3

■ The Church of Scotland’s general assembly has voted to allow those in same-sex marriages or partnerships to be eligible for clergy positions in the Church. Also, the Church of Scotland will unite with the Church of England after a historic vote passed at the Scottish Church’s general assembly. It is thought that the Church of Scotland’s decision will have an impact on the Church of England’s stance on gay clergy in the near future. Christian Headlines, 5/23; RT, 5/25

■ Restoration has begun on an ancient tomb said to be the tomb in which Jesus was

I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation for, as I believe, the most enlightened men of it have participated in the amelioration of the philosophy of the age.” — JOHN ADAMS

Adams, the second President of the United States, wrote in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, “I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize man than any other nation.” The Six-Day War began on June 5, 1968, in which Egypt sent 80,000 troops and 900 tanks to attack Israel, but Israel destroyed 400 Egyptian planes, drove Syria from the Golan Heights and captured all of Jerusalem. PM David Ben-Gurion stated: “In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles.”

buried. It is located in Jerusalem's Old City where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is built over it. The restoration project, which is being undertaken through the combined efforts of the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian Orthodox churches, is estimated to cost \$3.4 million over one year to complete.

Christian Headlines, 5/31

■ Although Saudi Arabia is a predominantly Muslim country that is hostile to Christians, many in the country are converting to Christianity and receiving support for their faith online. There are now about 1.4 million Christians living in Saudi Arabia. Islam is the official state religion and those who reject it—whether Christians, atheists, or those of any other religion—are often severely persecuted. Despite these barriers to faith, the numbers of those choosing to put their faith in Christ are increasing.

Christian Headlines, 5/31

■ Two months after the Obama administration called out militant terror group Islamic State (ISIS) for committing genocide against Christians in Iraq and Syria, refugee data show those finding a safe haven in the

United States are not the ones suffering the most persecution. Of the 2,705 Syrian refugees who came to the United States this fiscal year, 97 percent are Sunni Muslims. State Department figures show 499 Syrian refugees have resettled in America this month, but not a single one was a Christian or member of another religious minority group targeted for genocide. Tempers flared during the hearing Monday as lawmakers noted the disproportionate numbers. Some compared the crisis in Iraq and Syria to Jewish persecution during the holocaust. World News Service, 5/31

■ Between 1,200 and 1,700 crosses have come down over the past two years in China's Zhejiang Province, where the repression of Christians has also seen churches demolished and pastors imprisoned. "What has been happening in Zhejiang is a test," said Fan Yafeng, an independent legal scholar in Beijing. "If the government views it as a success, it will be expanded." Broadening the campaign to regulate religion could backfire on Mr. Xi, with worshipers abandoning government-run churches in favor of underground con-

gregations, which typically meet unobtrusively in office buildings or homes. Take this policy nationwide, and China's government may be in for a massive showdown with a Christian community that outnumbers the Communist Party. American Interest, 5/28

■ A new report has revealed that nearly 46 million people live in slavery worldwide. The 2016 Global Slavery Index defines slavery as "situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception". The report reveals that slavery around the world is 28 percent higher in 2016 than just two years ago. The report also found that India has the highest number of enslaved individuals where more than 18 million people live in slavery. Human rights groups say thousands of people are trafficked and forced to work on fishing boats, where they can be kept for years without ever seeing the shore. Victims say those who are caught trying to escape can be killed and thrown overboard. Thailand, which is the third largest exporter of seafood in the world, has been accused of crewing fishing boats with Burmese and Cambodian men who have been sold and forced to work as slaves. Many victims say they were tricked by brokers who promised them factory jobs, and then put them on fishing boats where they were forced to work.

Christian Headlines, 6/2; BBC News, 5/31

A GROWING TREND, AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

When Muslims Meet Christ

by Eric Metaxas

The headlines are filled with bad news about the Muslim world in general—and Christian-Muslim encounters in particular. We see horrifying images of Christians kneeling before being decapitated, of kindly nuns executed, of believers by the tens of thousands forced to flee their homes as refugees to escape ISIS.

But as the late Paul Harvey used to say, you need to know "the rest of the story."

There are some good, very good, things happening in the Muslim world. First, not all Muslims hate Christians—far from it. As just one example, Sherry Weddell, writing in the National Catholic Register, recalls the treatment of one of her Christian friends who lived among Muslims after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. "She watched those terrible pictures from afar on the BBC, while being showered with apologies, sympathy and support from her local Muslim friends who had been close friends for years."

And while it's a common complaint that so-called "mainstream Muslim" groups aren't speaking out against Muslim terror groups, we need to give credit where credit is due.

In January, 200 international Muslim leaders released the Marrakesh Declaration, which calls for Muslim-majority nations to protect the freedom of religious minorities, including Christians. Earlier this month, another 300 Muslim leaders from about 30 countries gathered in Indonesia to denounce extremism.

All good! But as my colleague and BreakPoint editor at large, Stan Guthrie, has said, "We should never confuse our need for a peaceful and tolerant Islam with Muslims' need for peace with God through Jesus Christ." And that is where the news gets even better!

For the last several years, researchers have noted what happens when Muslims meet Christ—huge numbers of them are be-

coming followers of Jesus. According to some researchers, the number of Muslims who have switched allegiance from Muhammad to Christ has skyrocketed from effectively zero in 1960 to as many as 16 million worldwide today. That includes roughly 470,000 right here in the U. S., including Rima Fakhir.

J. Dudley Woodberry, a noted Christian scholar of Islam, cites five reasons Muslims are deciding for Christ: the lifestyle of Christians; the power of God in answered prayers and healing; dissatisfaction with the type of Islam they have experienced; the spiritual truth in the Bible; and biblical teachings about the love of God. Some of these things we can control; others are up to God alone. For instance, there are reports that Jesus is appearing to many Muslims in dreams and visions, especially to those who have little access to the Bible or Christians.

And even the awful news we see is being used by the Lord to draw Muslims to Himself. As David Cashin of the Zwemer Center says, "I have often referred to Islamic radicals as 'proto-evangelists' for the Christian faith." That dynamic has certainly happened in Iran, where thousands of Muslims left Islam for Jesus after experiencing the harsh faith of the mullahs.

Truly, as Joseph in the Old Testament said, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

Clearly, we Christians have a role to play in this ongoing story. "Significant numbers of Muslims are quietly looking for spiritual alternatives," Sherry Weddell says. "If you and I understand our mission as evangelizers and apostles, build relationships of trust, rouse spiritual curiosity through our lives, pray for and share our faith in Christ and his Church with the Muslims about us, we can play an important part in this unprecedented movement of the Holy Spirit."

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★NEW MOVIES

Quality Moral Age

<i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i>	PG-13	+4	-1	10+
<i>Out of the Shadows</i>				
<i>Popstar: Never Stop...</i>	R	+3	-3	OT/A
<i>Me Before You</i>	PG-13	+2	-4	T/A

A- Adult, T-Teen, OT- Older Teen

Film "Quality" is an estimate (+1 to +4) of appeal for the intended audience or age group. "Moral" rating ranges from extremely objectionable (-4) to very good (+4).
movieguide.org