

## Nigerian places of worship attacked

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the town, throwing rocks and pillaging and setting fire to churches and attacking pedestrians, singling out students of the opposite faith. The mayhem continued until Wednesday morning, when police reinforcements were deployed.

Ten places of worship, mainly churches, and several vicarages and Christian-owned businesses were badly damaged during the rioting, a police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The police officer said at least one person was reported killed. Other witnesses spoke

of seeing at least five bodies on otherwise abandoned streets.

Mutual suspicions between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria have deepened since a dozen northern state governments began applying strict Islamic or Sharia law in the past three years, spark-

ing periodic bouts of sectarian violence.

More than 10,000 people have been killed in political, religious and ethnic violence in this country of 126 million since President Olusegun Obasanjo was first elected in 1999 ending more than 15 years of brutal military rule.

## How sincere are we in showing our thanks?

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that same-sex couples are legally entitled to wed under the state constitution.

• America has gone to war against Iraq out of fear of weapons of mass destruction. (Although no weapons of mass destruction have been found.)

• In Alabama the statue of the Ten Commandments

was moved from public property.

• The Federal Communications Commission has approved the use of the "F" word for use on any TV show or radio program, anytime day or night. The FCC said the word could be used whenever desired, as long as it is used as an adjective or expletive to emphasize an

exclamation, such as an insult. They said it couldn't be used in sexual situations.

It's funny that right after Sept. 11, 2001 that the President was quoting the Bible on television. Billboards and signs even on restaurant boards said things like "God Bless America." And God did bless America He allowed the country to continue to

move forward.

Unfortunately, I along with my country moved forward and thanked Him for his provision with total disregard to His Word.

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## Critics of Gibson film received hate mail

By Rachel Zoll  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Two scholars who have criticized Mel Gibson's film on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ said Thursday they have received hate mail in response to their comments.

Sister Mary Boys, a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York, said she has received harassing phone calls, hate mail by post and has saved about 85 e-mails from Gibson supporters.

Paula Fredriksen, a Boston University professor, said she had also been targeted, calling the missives "drive-by e-mail."

The women made the comments at a panel discussion about "The Passion of Christ" at a national meeting of the Anti-Defamation League. The organization's national director, Abraham Foxman, has been among the most vocal critics of the film, which is scheduled to be released on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25.

"If the debate triggers that kind of response, what response will the movie trigger?" Foxman said during the talk.

Gibson's spokesman, Alan Nierob, did not return a call for comment.

Many conservative Christians who have

attended private screenings of the film have called it the most powerful depiction they have seen of Jesus' final hours. But Foxman and others say the portrayal of Jews in the events leading to the crucifixion will promote the idea that they were collectively responsible for Christ's death.

Fredriksen and Boys were among a group of scholars who had read a script of the movie earlier this year and wrote a report warning that it contained historical errors and could spark anti-Jewish prejudice.

Gibson's representatives said the scholars had stolen the script — which the scholars denied — and that it did not reflect the final version of the film.

Boys said some of the e-mails she has received since then have questioned her faith, asking "Why have you turned on Jesus?"

One read: "You are the symbol of everything that is wrong with the Catholic Church." Some contained "hard-core anti-Semitism," she said.

Fredriksen said Gibson feels he is being persecuted by the scholars, but she said their intention was only to correct mistakes.

"He doesn't understand the difference between criticism and being attacked," she said.

## Poll: American public evenly split on whether gays can change sexual orientation

By Will Lester  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. public is evenly divided on whether gays and lesbians can alter their sexual orientation, with white evangelicals the most likely to think homosexuals can change, a poll released Tuesday found.

Most Americans, 55 percent, say they feel that homosexuality is a sin, while 33 percent do not. Nine in 10 highly committed white evangelicals and nearly three-quarters of black Protestants say homosexual behavior is sinful.

"Evangelicals are far more likely to say homosexuals can change, (Roman) Catholics and mainline Protestants fall in the middle and more secular people are most likely to say they cannot change," said Scott Keeter, a pollster with the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, which conducted the survey on attitudes about homosexuals.

The poll also found that opposition to gay marriage has grown since midsummer, with 32 percent favoring it and 59 percent opposing it. In July, 53 percent said they opposed gay marriage.

Massachusetts' highest court ruled Tuesday that same-sex couples are legally entitled to wed under the state constitution, but stopped short of allowing marriage licenses to be issued to the couples who challenged a ban on gay marriage. The Supreme Judicial Court's 4-3 ruling ordered the state Legislature to come up with a solution within 180 days.

The poll reinforced the finding that religious attitudes sharply affect feelings about gays. Those with a high level of religious commitment oppose gay marriage by 80 percent to 12 percent.

Four in five of those who say they would vote to reelect President George W.

Bush oppose gay marriage, while those who prefer that a Democrat win the presidency are evenly split on the question.

Younger adults were far more likely to say they favor gay marriage, while those between ages 20 and 30 were about evenly split. Opposition grew steadily as people's age increased. Among those in their 60s and 70s, opponents outnumber supporters by more than 4-to-1.

Americans with college degrees were closely divided on the question of gay mar-

riage, with 49 percent opposed and 44 percent in favor of allowing that option.

Roughly half those polled said they have unfavorable opinions of gays and lesbians. But the survey found widespread opposition to discrimination against homosexuals.

The poll of 1,515 adults was taken Oct. 15-19 by the Pew Research Center on behalf of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. The survey has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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When the Holy Spirit shines the Light (II Cor. 4:3-6) into your mind and heart and lets you see what a lost, ruined sinner you are, you wonder how you could be so wicked and not be in hell already. Seeing all this under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, you fall at the Feet of the Lord crying for mercy on the chief of sinners. The Holy Spirit shows you that you put Christ to death. Have you ever seen that you put Christ to death? I don't mean intellectually, but experimentally. Practically any church member will tell you that all are responsible for the death of the Son of God. But, has the Holy Spirit driven the Word home to your heart and let you see that you murdered the Son of God and no one is as guilty of this murder as you? It is one thing to acknowledge that all are responsible for the death of the Son of God, but it is altogether different when the Holy Spirit lets you see that you are the one responsible for the death of the Son of God. At the same time the Holy Spirit is growing a hunger in that sinner's heart for Christ, whom he has slain. And that is according to Zech. 12:10. And the poor sinner weighted down by his sins begins to long after Christ as One he must have or die. You come to want Christ above all others. And the Holy Spirit never offers Christ to a sinner until that sinner wants Christ above everybody and everything! And when He offers Christ to you, you gladly receive Him! You want Him only! That'll hold true 100%. Many of you have told me over the years that these doctrines I am teaching are not taught in the churches in the main. I realize that, my friends. Our church members, like the leaders, are just as worldly as they come. And I would not give you two cents a car load for the religious tommyrot in our churches today. The leaders do not know Christ.

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— Della Reese, Entertainment Legend.  
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