

## Religion shouldn't be forcibly shared



UmmeKulsoom Arif

"Have you met Jesus?"

It had started as just another Thursday in Barnett Hall when a fellow Truman student approached me. She introduced herself, we talked about our majors — and then she asked if I was a Christian.

I've already mentioned in a previous article that I am, in fact, a Muslim and am pretty proud of it. So I smiled and shook my head, told her the truth and prepared to go on my way. Until she asked the million dollar question stated above.

I won't go into Islamic history here, but at the time I nodded and explained to her that Jesus is one of the Muslim prophets. She then went on to ask if he was the "right" Jesus, which resulted in a 15-minute argument because I was too polite to walk away.

You're probably thinking, "But Umme, why didn't you just say you were a Christian when she asked and end the conversation then?"

How was I supposed to know what would happen? And why should I have to hide my faith? I did that enough in the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, and I'm tired of pretending Islam is something to be ashamed of. Regardless of what you believe is the "true" faith — truth might in fact be no faith at all — asking someone to pretend to be something they're not just to avoid conflict is kind of a jerk move. Sure, I could have made a sarcastic comment when she asked if I'd met Jesus and made her angry, but I'm too polite around strangers.

And now you're asking, "But Umme, why did you stand there and continue to argue with her?" Because I'm a polite moron. But those are the wrong questions to ask. This is the real question — why is it okay to try to convert someone who absolutely is uninterested?

Here's the deal with converting to a religion — you have to do it with full conviction, not to appease your parents or to get someone to stop badgering you about converting. If you're converting to a religion, it's necessary to believe what you're doing is right.

I'm not here to spark a debate about the legitimacy of various religions, but telling me the faith I follow is going to get me damned to hell is not how you make friends or convert anyone. There's a reason many people don't like it when Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons knock on the door. No one likes it when religion is forced on them, regardless of whether or not they grew up in that religion. It just turns the religion, which should be a very austere and important aspect of a person's life, into a farce.

This applies to atheists, too. A lack of faith is well and good, but telling me my faith is stupid and I'm stupid for believing in "an invisible sky fairy," as God sometimes is called, is rude, insensitive and makes you no better than the raging fundamentalists who — I'm sure — infuriate you greatly.

I'm not saying we all need to hold hands and sing, but silent acceptance still is a wonderful thing. Please don't try to save my soul, and I'll return the favor. Be proud of your faith — or your lack of faith. But don't try to drag an innocent bystander along.

*UmmeKulsoom Arif is a junior creative writing and justice systems major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## Define success as present happiness



Sarah Muir

The main reason students decide to go to college is the pursuit of success, that intangible idea of attaining wealth, prestige and goals. However, in this pursuit we often forget, overlook and even waste the time in between. I propose we stop chasing success and instead start looking for meaning in the present.

Success is not bad, but the attitude of "success before anything else" can cause problems. We all probably know a student who studies or works too hard — or maybe you are that student — in pursuit of getting this job, or getting into that school. While hard work is admirable, there is something to be said about developing a balance.

Too often success is something in the future and to get there we sacrifice the present. The truth is, the only certainty is the present. There's no telling what tomorrow will bring or what will change during the future. Even if I land my dream job I could lose it within a year. Success is transient. Knowing everything will pass makes it aw-

fully hard to give away the present just to gamble for the future.

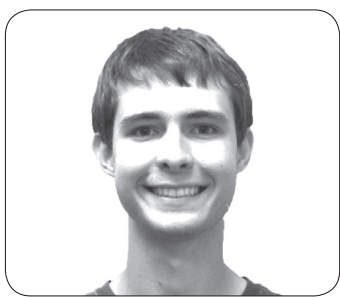
This is not just a problem for hardworking college students. This is a wide-spread problem in America. According to an October 2014 CNN article, Americans are wasting vacation days and working more and more. Work is only a part of our time on Earth, yet more people are allowing it to become a majority of their life all in the name of finding success.

We should think of success as more than a good job and nice things. As cliché as it sounds, you won't be thinking so much about all the time you spent working when you're on your death bed. The experiences you have and share with other people, and participating in projects larger than yourself, is what will matter. These ideas seem clear during moments when life seems to hang in the balance, but the lessons easily are forgotten after those moments have passed.

We should strive to balance working toward the future and living in the present. Don't live your life unhappily because you think once you achieve a personal goal it all will be better. You have to make the most of every stage of life, even the ones that seem to be nothing more than periods of transition. Don't let college fly by as just a step toward future success. Learn to find meaning and happiness in the present. It could be all we have.

*Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.*

## Casual prejudices can lead to horrors



Conor Gearin

I overheard a discussion among a group of students about the economic cost of our society supporting people with disabilities. I was disturbed to hear them arguing the costs of supporting such people are too high and, economically speaking, we would be better off not doing so.

After thinking of the people with disabilities I know, my next thoughts were about Truman State's past.

Harry Laughlin graduated during 1900 from the First District Normal School, a past name for Truman, according to Pickler Memorial Library's online biography. He joined the school's faculty during 1907 to teach agriculture.

Laughlin dreamed bigger than Missouri, however. Applying the strategy of horse-

breeding to humans, he argued the United States could breed its population to be more physically and mentally fit by forcibly sterilizing those deemed "degenerate."

This program, known as eugenics, gained followers throughout the United States and overseas. With Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, Laughlin became the first superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office. He wrote a detailed plan, "Eugenical Sterilization in the United States," which over 30 states passed into law. After listening to Laughlin's testimony about the "low grade" of immigrants in the U.S., Congress passed a law restricting immigration during 1924.

Nazi Germany was impressed, too. During 1933, Adolf Hitler's government based its own sterilization laws closely off of Laughlin's plan. Not content with this level of cooperation, Laughlin strove to improve relations between German and American eugenicists during the years before World War II, according to a 1981 article in the "Journal of the History of Biology."

Pickler Memorial Library maintains Laughlin's papers from the Eugenics Record Office from 1910-1939. In great detail, the files document Laughlin's categorizations of our country into racial and mental groups of his own design.

Eugenics not only is against human rights, but is founded on a misunderstanding of population genetics, according to a 1995 article in the journal "Nature." As it turns out, it would take centuries to remove negative traits from the gene pool through selective breeding. But the authors of the article argued this flaw does not matter — before anything else, the system is wrong on moral grounds.

It seems to me at a university that once counted a famous eugenicist among its faculty, students should be extra cautious not to fall into similar views.

Science historian Randall Bird and biologist Garland Allen reviewed Truman's Laughlin archives extensively to write their 1981 article in the "Journal of the History of Biology." They noted that whenever his views were challenged, Laughlin always searched for statistics to back up his claims.

This reminds me that in this context, "economic" arguments make no sense. Stopping medical, educational and social services to all white, non-disabled people would save enormous amounts of taxpayer money — can't they fend for themselves, after all? Strangely, I rarely hear white people arguing for this action.

The best argument against eugenics is not number-based, but moral and logical. No matter the supposed cost of supporting an underprivileged group of people, what is the social and moral cost of stopping support to that group entirely?

Furthermore, any argument seeking to define groups as able versus disabled ignores the instability of those categories. Where do we draw the line? Furthermore, if a person begins life without disabilities and then is injured, do they lose their able status and move into the disabled category? In this way, a proponent of this system could also become its victim.

I am not alone in calling for caution about new versions of Laughlin's views. Garland Allen warned a new eugenics was taking hold — through anti-immigration politics and immoral cost-benefit analyses of who deserves healthcare according to a 2001 commentary in the journal "Science."

We have a duty to understand the mistakes throughout our history and to guard ourselves against repeating them. This duty starts on the level of semi-serious discussions with friends.

*Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## AROUND THE QUAD

### Are there inhumane practices happening in the U.S. right now?

The first thing that comes to mind is animal abuse.

**Lauren Jin**  
Sophomore



Not any specific ones. As a whole, we don't treat people correctly.

**Brendan Murphy**  
Junior



Our culture has such a demand for meat that animals aren't considered living beings.

**Maggie Campbell**  
Sophomore



The only thing I can think of is Ferguson. There's a lot of racial issues.

**Anusha Cherupalla**  
Sophomore

