



# We Know Not What We Do

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Media Services

She was with her father, who was sitting in a mini-van in Chicago on the night of March 11 when someone opened fire. Doctors worked 17 hours trying to repair what a bullet had done to her body, but to no avail. She died the next morning. Her funeral was about two weeks ago. She was 6 months old.

Antonio Santiago was 7 months older when his mother put him in a stroller and took him for a walk in their Brunswick, Ga., neighborhood. Sherry West says they were accosted by two teenagers demanding money. She told them she didn't have any. West says they shot Antonio in the face and killed him. This happened two days after Jonylah's funeral.

An Associated Press reporter was on hand a day later as the boy's father tried to comfort his child's mother. "He's all right" Luis Santiago told her, smiling for her benefit. "He's potty training upstairs in heaven."

Which is, of course, the very foundation of faith, the belief that even tragedy will work ultimately for the good, that in the end, the bitterest tears transmute to the greatest joy. That is, in essence, what is commemorated this Easter week. It marks the morning when, we Christians believe, a carpenter turned itinerant rabbi overcame death itself, rolled a stone aside and walked out of his own tomb.

In the King James Bible, in the book of Matthew, the rabbi — Jesus — is quoted as saying, "Suffer little children and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

When I was a kid, that always confused me. I wondered why children were commanded to suffer. But, as later translations confirm, the word was used in its old English sense, meaning: to permit or allow. Let the children come to me, He is saying, for they are the essence of grace. Love the children.

Two thousand years later, a singer named Marvin Gaye turned that command into a stark plea: Save the children.

As a nation, as a people, we have failed at both.



Leonard PITTS

Nearly 100,000 people will be shot this year according to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. Seventeen thousand will be younger than 19. So almost 5,000 kids have been shot since the Newtown massacre in December, the one that was supposed make us finally get serious about gun violence.

That toll speaks unflattering volumes about our seriousness. As does a Politico report that support is softening for laws that would expand background checks and impose other common-sense restrictions on gun ownership. A Florida state legislative panel just voted to support a bill allowing teachers to bring guns to school. Once again, the nation endorses the Orwellian logic which would "solve" the problem of too many guns by adding more guns.

How do you suppose we would explain that to Jonylah or Antonio? Which of the gun lobby's inane platitudes would we use to justify our failure to keep them safe? Jonylah, guns don't kill people; people kill people. Antonio, the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun ... Sigh.

This year as every year, foes of abortion publicly mourn the loss of babies who could have been. But they — we — remain silent on the loss of babies who actually were, who died because we could not get our act together, because ours is a nation that does not simply enable private gun ownership, but that worships and fetishizes it to the point where sensible restriction — even sensible conversation — seems impossible.

As a result, we are a nation where what happened to Jonylah and Antonio has become grimly, sadly ... routine. That fact alone starkly illustrates the insanity to which we have devolved, and the challenge that faces faith this Easter week.

We keep crying the bitter tears. We are still waiting for the joy.

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# Hey, Isn't That The Spring Bunny?

BY BILL O'REILLY  
Creator Syndicate

Because this is the holiest week of the year on the Judeo-Christian calendar, it might be useful to look at how theology is faring in the age of secularism.

As you may know, there is a movement in America to remove the word "God" from the currency, to replace the word "Christmas" with "winter" and to replace the word "Easter" with "spring." On Long Island, where I live, one school is running a "spring egg hunt" with a special appearance by the "Spring Bunny."

Of course, this kind of stupidity is insulting to Christians, but it's been going on for years. Committed secular folks feel no shame or fear whatsoever in attempting to diminish Christian celebrations.

But those same people would never intrude on Ramadan, because they fear reprisal. And you very rarely hear the anti-religious loons go after Jewish traditions, because the Jews have powerful organizations that will respond quickly to anti-Semitic behavior.

It is, however, a different story in the Christian precincts. Here, there is no organized resistance to attacks despite the fact that about 80 percent of the U.S. population describes itself as Christian.

Perhaps the lack of response to assaults on Christian tradition can be attributed to the "turn the other cheek" mandate that the theology espouses. But more likely, it's because the Christian community is complacent. Unlike Jews and Muslims, they generally don't feel a sense of urgency when their faith is attacked.

Recently at Florida Atlantic University, communications instructor Dr. Deandre Poole ordered his stu-



Bill O'REILLY

dents to write the name "Jesus" on a piece of paper, drop the paper to the floor and stomp on it. Poole contended the exercise was necessary in order to develop "critical thinking."

Ryan Rotela, one of the students and a Mormon, refused the order. He was quickly disciplined by the university and removed from the class.

After my TV program began investigating the situation, FAU quickly reversed their decision, apologized to Rotela and allowed him to continue in the class without answering to the instructor, who, incredibly, is a Democratic Party official in Florida.

What struck me about this case was the lack of outrage by the Christian community in Florida. Rotela's story was reported in the local media, but nothing really happened until it got to the national level.

There is no question that secular forces in America feel emboldened and are pushing the anti-religion envelopes as far as they can. They know the media are largely behind them, and they also have seen little pushback from Christian leadership. So why not demand that the Easter Bunny be rechristened? Why not attack public manger displays? What's the downside?

While contemplating the resurrection of Jesus this week, American Christians might want to resurrect themselves. Because if the anti-Christian movement continues and does not see opposition rising up, in 20 years the spring bunny will be placing spring eggs into a spring basket everywhere.

The Easter Bunny? Extinct.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

## YOUR LETTERS

### Put Prayer Back Into Schools

**Robert L. Renner, Rapid City**

I am out to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people. As of today, I have not read or heard of anyone having a solution to this problem.

I am out to address my idea to the people of South Dakota and perhaps to this nation. "Let's Put PRAYER

back into our public schools." I am hoping to have this message reach our governor, legislators, our US senators, our Congress woman, all the mayors of South Dakota, all clergy, and all concerned citizens of South Dakota. But I need your help!

Let us all step up to the plate, and that plate is Jesus Christ.

## WRITE US

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# Whiteclay Beer Sales Show A Drop

**RAPID CITY JOURNAL (March 26):** Alcohol is not allowed on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Yet, only a few miles away from Pine Ridge, millions of cans of beer are sold each year in Whiteclay, Neb. — most of which are illegally smuggled into the reservation.

Regular protests have been held in Whiteclay because of the amount of beer sold in its liquor stores and the unsolved deaths of two Native Americans in Whiteclay in 1999. Whiteclay has a population of 14 people and sold about 4.9 million cans of beer in 2010.

Activists say that the beer sales in Whiteclay are contributing to the high rate of alcoholism on the poverty-stricken reservation and have called for closing the liquor stores in the tiny Nebraska town that lies just outside the reservation boundaries.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe last year filed a federal lawsuit that sought \$500 million in damages from the Whiteclay stores, their distributors and big-name beer manufacturers. A judge dismissed the lawsuit, saying the tribe didn't have a legal case.

Efforts to curtail beer sales through the Nebraska legislature likewise have gone nowhere. A bill introduced this year that would have increased the state's beer excise tax by 5 cents a gallon to help law enforcement, including better policing in Whiteclay, was killed in committee earlier this month.

Despite these defeats, there is some signs of progress. A report by the Nebraska liquor control commission showed that Whiteclay beer sales continued to fall last year, with 3.9 million cans of beer sold. That's a drop of about 1 million cans of beer since 2010.

Activists have attributed the decline in beer sales to increased awareness of Whiteclay and the efforts of Pine Ridge residents to discourage drinking. It isn't enough to make alcohol illegal on the reservation, attitudes toward drinking have to change if progress is to be made to reduce or eliminate the damaging effects of excessive alcohol consumption on the reservation, where one in four children are born with fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Nearly 4 million cans of beer sold in one year in one tiny Nebraska town is still a lot of beer. But the trend toward less beer smuggled into the Pine Ridge Reservation from Whiteclay is heading in the right direction.

# Keep Public Records Public

**LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR (March 22):** The *Journal Star* has no intention of publishing the names or residences of people with handguns.

Our opposition to Sen. Bill Kintner's LB293 "which would cut off public access to all information regarding handgun permit applications and registrations" is not based on the specific information that the bill would conceal. It is based on an attempt to conceal any public information.

Public records of all sorts are the receipt, the proof-of-purchase for taxpayers. They are how we all can measure and hold accountable the government we elect and pay for. They are important enough that everything the government does is considered public record unless it is specifically and legally exempted.

For those who argue that handgun ownership is a personal and private matter, to the extent that complies with current law, we agree. That's why we've never published information pertaining to it. The public record contains lots of sensitive and personal data, and as fellow private citizens, too, members of the news media are judicious in what we publish.

Kintner's bill is rooted in the actions of a New York state newspaper, which published the names and addresses of all registered handgun owners in its reading area shortly after the Sandy Hook school shootings. It was a rash, reckless and irresponsible decision with possible personal safety ramifications for those listed. And it wasn't a very good public relations move, either.

Similar data has been available for 20 years in Nebraska, and it's never been misused by the media or the public.

If the National Rifle Association can claim that the dangerous and deadly actions of a single irresponsible gun user shouldn't impinge on the rights of the many law-abiding and responsible gun users, then it's reasonable to say that our citizens shouldn't be deprived of public information because of a single irresponsible abuse of the public record halfway across the country.

For those handgun owners truly worried about their security, the Legislature created an avenue in 2006 whereby concealed-carry permits are exempted from the public record.

As a state, we've given great consideration to our gun laws. We continue to do so. The records LB293 aims to seal off are the best means for our citizens to understand how and how well our laws are being enforced. Looking at these records broadly, citizens could see how effective the process is at screening applicants and applying current laws.

Our opposition to LB293 isn't about the guns. It's not really about the media. And it certainly isn't about publishing lists of handgun owners (see above). It's simply about keeping the public record public.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Monday, April 1, the 91st day of 2013. There are 274 days left in the year. This is April Fool's Day.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On April 1, 1789, the U.S. House of Representatives held its first full meeting in New York; Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania was elected the first House speaker.

**On this date:** In 1853, Cincinnati, Ohio, established a fire department made up of paid city employees.

In 1912, the city of Branson, Mo., was incorporated.

In 1933, Nazi Germany staged a daylong national boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.

In 1939, the United States recognized the government of Gen. Francisco Franco in Spain, the same day Franco went on radio to declare victory in the Spanish Civil War.

In 1945, American forces launched the amphibious invasion of Okinawa during World War II.

In 1962, the Katherine Anne Porter novel "Ship of Fools," an allegory about the rise of Nazism in Germany, was published by Little, Brown & Co. on April Fool's Day.

In 1963, New York City's daily newspapers resumed publishing after settlement was reached in a 114-day strike. The daytime drama "General Hospital" premiered on ABC-TV.

In 1972, the first Major League Baseball players' strike began; it lasted 12 days.

In 1976, Apple Computer was founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne.

In 1983, tens of thousands of anti-nuclear demonstrators linked arms in a 14-mile human chain spanning three defense installations in rural England, including the Greenham Common U.S. Air Base.

In 1984, recording star Marvin Gaye was shot to death by his father, Marvin Gay Sr. in Los Angeles, the day before his 45th birthday. (The elder Gay pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter, and received probation.)

In 1992, the National Hockey League Players' Association went on its first-ever strike, which lasted 10 days.

**Ten years ago:** American troops entered a hospital in Nasiriyah, Iraq, and rescued Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who'd been held

prisoner since her unit was ambushed on March 23. A Cuban plane hijacked the day before with 32 people aboard landed at Key West, Fla., where the hijacker surrendered.

**Five years ago:** The Pentagon made public a legal memo dated March 14, 2003 that approved the use of harsh interrogation techniques against terror suspects, saying that President George W. Bush's wartime authority trumped any international ban on torture. (The memo was rescinded in December 2003.) Top executives of the country's five biggest oil companies told a skeptical Congress they knew record fuel prices were hurting people, but argued it wasn't their fault and that their huge profits were in line with other industries.

**One year ago:** A coalition of more than 70 partners, including the United States, pledged to send millions of dollars and communications equipment to Syria's opposition groups. Myanmar's democracy icon, Aung San Suu Kyi, was elected to her country's parliament. Former Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid died at age 77. Taylor Swift won her second consecutive entertainer of the year award at the Academy of Country Music Awards.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Jane Powell is 85. Actress Grace Lee Whitney is 83. Actress Debbie Reynolds is 81. Country singer Jim Ed Brown is 79. Actor Don Hastings is 79. Actress Ali MacGraw is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rudolph Isley is 74. Reggae singer Jimmy Cliff is 65. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito is 63. Rock musician Billy Currie (Ultravox) is 63. Actress Annette O'Toole is 61. Movie director Barry Sonnenfeld is 60. Singer Susan Boyle (TV: "Britain's Got Talent") is 52. Country singer Woody Lee is 45. Actress Jessica Collins is 42. Rapper-actor Method Man is 42. Movie directors Albert and Allen Hughes are 41. Political commentator Rachel Maddow is 40. Tennis player Magdalena Maleeva is 38. Actor David Oyelowo is 37. Singer Bijou Phillips is 33. Actor Sam Huntington is 31. Actor Matt Lanter is 30. Actor Josh Zuckerman is 28. Country singer Hillary Scott (Lady Antebellum) is 27.

**Thought for Today:** "A caval don non si guarda in bocca." (Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.) — Italian proverb.

## FROM THE BIBLE

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1 Corinthians 1:25. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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