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Extremism Has No Race

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Media Services

"I know this sounds racist, but ..."

So goes the subject line on last week's email from Bill, a reader. It seems Bill has an idea. Given that "all of the radical terrorists have been Muslims," he wants the government to mount a program to surveil every follower of Islam who immigrates to these shores. We are, claims reader Bill, "faced with a population who swears an oath to God to kill Americans — not Canadians, not Mexicans, but Americans." It is, he says, "time we protect ourselves."

Well.

For our purposes today, we will ignore the fact that Islam is not a race, so animus toward Muslims is not, strictly speaking, "racist." Bill's point is clear enough. And his anger is understandable, coming as it does after the Boston Marathon bombing and the savage butchering of a British soldier by Islamic extremists. Predictably, the U.K. has suffered a rash of right-wing demonstrations and attacks on mosques ever since Lee Rigby's death. One suspects that there'd be no shortage of sympathy for Bill's suggestion — and for measures even more draconian — both there and here.



Leonard
PITTS

But I find myself thinking about white boys.

Consider: This nation's recent history is stained by repeated acts of school violence. From Newtown, Conn., to West Paducah, Ky., to Santee, Calif., to Eugene, Ore., to Conyers, Ga., to Pearl, Miss., to Jonesboro, Ark., to DeKalb, Ill., to Littleton, Colo., we have seen scores of people killed and injured. The violence has been random, large scale and indiscriminate, identical to terrorism except that it has no political motive. And the profile of the assailants is virtually always the same: white boys and young men from suburban, small-town or rural communities.

Small wonder Chris Rock got such a huge laugh when he joked about diving off the elevator when two high school age white kids got on. "I am scared of young white boys," cracked Rock in 1999.

If, then, the reasoning is that we are entitled to de-

mand extra scrutiny of people who meet a profile associated with random violence, can we expect arguments for the mass surveillance of young white boys any time soon? Of course not. You won't even see random school shootings framed in racial dimensions by the media, even though those dimensions are glaringly obvious.

White boys are a known — and a norm. Indeed, many of those in media and elsewhere who decide how perceptions will be framed were once young white boys themselves. So it's easy for them to recognize the unfairness and absurdity of tarring America's 16.8 million white males, ages 15 to 24, with the actions of a few.

But Muslims are different, right? For most of us, they are not a known or a norm, but an Other. And so, some of us are perfectly comfortable using the actions of a few of them to tar all 1.6 billion.

Look, I don't blame reader Bill for his frustration or his anger, nor for wanting to interdict Muslim extremism. I'll grant that in too many nations in the Islamic world, extremism is too little challenged and is, indeed, encouraged. I'll also grant that most of the terror that racks this planet is the work of Muslim extremism, and we must be energetic and creative in ferreting out that extremism on our soil.

But the key word in all of that is not Muslim. It is, "extremism," i.e., the willingness to do anything in furtherance of a goal. Extremism is what we ought to fear, regardless of the cause it serves. Even if that cause is our own national security.

The moment we fail to understand that, the moment we become sanguine about this idea of holding the many responsible for the crimes of the few, is the moment we betray what we purport to hold dear.

Even reader Bill seems to understand that, if only obliquely. "I know this sounds racist," he says.

Yeah. Well, you know, Bill, there's a reason for that.

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A Wrong Against The Right

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

Once again, graduation time is upon us, and a new study by the *Los Angeles Times* says plenty about the state of higher education in America. The paper looked at the invited commencement speakers for 150 colleges and universities. There are just four conservative speakers, as opposed to at least 69 liberal speakers.

In fact, Newark (N.J.) Mayor Cory Booker, a very liberal guy, has as many campus addresses as all elected Republicans combined.

There is no shortage of intellect or accomplishment on the right. The reason few conservative speakers are invited is that college administrators are frightened by radical-left students and faculty. Last month, Karl Rove's speech at the University of Massachusetts was disrupted, and so was the address by Sen. Rand Paul at Howard University. Nobody wants a graduation ceremony turned into an ideological circus, and that's what often happens when perceived conservatives are invited to speak on certain campuses.

Last year, I headed up a benefit for the It Happened to Alexa Foundation at Boston University, where I received a master's degree in broadcast journalism. As a freshman, Alexa Branchini was raped in a BU dorm and had to withdraw from the school. She eventually founded, with her parents, an organization to help victims of violent crime. I felt the campus of Boston University would be the perfect place to hold a fundraiser for this fine charity. How wrong I was.

A number of far-left professors and administrators, including a university vice president, boycotted the event. The school did little to promote it and essentially folded under the pressure of zealots. It was an absolute disgrace and an insult to Alexa and her family.



Bill
O'REILLY

That tells you all you need to know about the mentality of fanatical college professors and the cowardly administrators who enable them.

There is no question that liberal indoctrination is a fact of life on most American college campuses. Tenure means never having to say you're sorry or you're wrong. And, overwhelmingly, tenured college teachers are liberal. They dominate and intimidate their students. If you go up against them, your grade often suffers. There is a tyranny in higher education that is gravely harming this nation.

When a distinguished medical doctor and author such as Ben Carson has to withdraw as a commencement speaker at Johns Hopkins University because some loons don't like his conservative point of view, you know there is trouble in River City. And little is being done about it.

It is long past time to call out America's colleges, especially those funded by taxpayers, and demand that they be fair in their hiring practices and speaking forums. I give a nice annual donation to Marist College, where I obtained a degree in history, because it is fair. But I've stopped giving to Boston U. and to Harvard (where I received a master's in public administration), because those schools are not fair. All college grads should evaluate their contributions.

That's the only way the liberal higher-education stranglehold will be broken. Many of those pinhead professors espouse socialistic tenets — but, believe me, they want the money. The goal of higher education should be to champion the airing of all honest viewpoints. Nothing less is acceptable.

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."*

Customer service is totally hit or miss. I approached the chief of staff of the Sioux Falls VA with very serious concerns, and he went so far out of his way to help me and always with utmost respect and genuine human decency. Other times you call someone and get "this is jane at such-and-such place; how can I direct your call?" And I tell them "you can start by assuming the customer pays your salary." And that if you were to call me, I won't answer the phone in that manner.

When someone in "customer service" is polite and professional, I'm going to mention that to their boss. When they're rude insulting and unconcerned — I'm going to mention that to their boss. And whenever I am less than courteous and respectful — let me know. I'll either apologize or try to correct that bad behavior next time I talk to someone.

This is serious stuff, folks. Be nice, be responsive to peoples' concerns. Because nobody wants to put up with mean rotten people in customer service positions.

The Press & Dakotan



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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Bible Course Not Needed In School

RAPID CITY JOURNAL, Rapid City (May 26): Superintendent Tim Mitchell is asking the Rapid City Area Schools Board, in response to a non-binding resolution by the 2012 South Dakota Legislature that encourages the academic study of the Bible in public schools, to consider a Bible curriculum, or at least a policy on teaching about religion.

We're asking them not to.

We already expect our overextended and underfunded school system to do so much. In addition to making students proficient in reading, writing, math, science, language, and other basic educational tasks, we expect schools to teach music, art, foreign languages, health and physical education, too. Then we ask them to nurture the social and emotional health of students in their care, as well, by providing counseling, guidance and a host of other social services and mental health help in the school setting.

Must they also now take responsibility for providing the "content, characters and narratives of the Bible" for students?

We think not.

At least, not in a separate, semester-long course devoted entirely to examining the Bible's influence in the culture, literature and art of the world, and, more specifically, its role in the writing of the constitution of the United States. It would be a colossal undertaking of time and effort just to reach agreement on what to teach in such a curriculum and which works of literature and art to include in any such course syllabus. It would be virtually impossible to reach meaningful consensus, given the inherent limitations of a high school curriculum, on more intangible things, such as what role did the Bible and the religious beliefs of America's founding fathers play in the framing of the U.S. Constitution and our democracy. Just as there are many differing interpretations of the creation story in the Book of Genesis, there are many perspectives on the spiritual beliefs of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and other founding fathers. Which ones should we teach?

Opening that can of worms, when our school budgets are struggling with tangible things such as overcrowded kindergarten rooms and disappointing high school graduation rates, just doesn't make any sense to us. We want public schools to teach English literacy, not biblical literacy.

If a literature course needs to examine the Biblical references found in a Shakespearean play or the Christian themes of a Flannery O'Connor short story, by all means, talk about them. If an American government class needs to put the concept of religious liberty into context for a chapter on the First Amendment, great. Those are appropriate classroom discussions, and we would hope that those are already happening in our school system today. But we don't think those are lessons that should take an entire semester to impart.

We don't believe that biblical literacy or biblical interpretation is the job of the public education system. That type of religious understanding and formation is best left in the homes and churches, where parents can choose what religious beliefs to impart to their children.

A public school class that is 100 percent devoted to teaching about the Bible and its impact on our culture is simply rife with too much potential for abuse and the school board would be wise to avoid it.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By **The Associated Press**

Today is Monday, June 3, the 154th day of 2013. There are 211 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died at age 81, ending a relatively brief but highly influential 4 1/2-year papacy; he was succeeded by Pope Paul VI.

On this date: In 1621, the Dutch West India Co. received its charter for a trade monopoly in parts of the Americas and Africa.

In 1808, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was born in Christian County, Ky.

In 1888, the poem "Casey at the Bat," by Ernest Lawrence Thayer, was first published in the *San Francisco Daily Examiner*.

In 1937, Edward, The Duke of Windsor, who had abdicated the British throne, married Wallis Warfield Simpson in a private ceremony in Monts, France.

In 1943, Los Angeles saw the beginning of its "Zoot Suit Riots" as white servicemen clashed with young Latinos wearing distinctive-looking zoot suits; the violence finally ended when military officials declared the city off limits to enlisted personnel.

In 1948, the 200-inch reflecting Hale Telescope at the Palomar Mountain Observatory in California was dedicated.

In 1962, Air France Flight 007, a U.S.-bound Boeing 707, crashed while attempting to take off from Orly Airport near Paris; all but two of the 132 people aboard were killed.

In 1963, a Northwest Orient Airlines DC-7 military charter en route from McChord Air Force Base in Washington state to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska crashed off Annette Island with the loss of all 101 people aboard.

In 1965, astronaut Edward White became the first American to "walk" in space during the flight of Gemini 4.

In 1972, Sally J. Priesand was ordained as America's first female rabbi at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1983, Gordon Kahl, a militant tax protester wanted in the slayings of two U.S. marshals in North Dakota, was killed in a gun battle with law-enforcement officials near Smithville, Ark.

In 1989, Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, died. Chinese army troops began their sweep of Beijing to crush student-led pro-democracy demonstrations. SkyDome (now called Rogers Centre) opened in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Ten years ago: World leaders closed out a summit in Evian, France, by pledging

to rebuild Iraq and combat the threat of nuclear weapons in Iran and North Korea. Arab leaders pledged to renounce terror and help end violence against Israel, standing in solidarity with President George W. Bush at a summit in Egypt. Sammy Sosa was ejected in the first inning of Chicago's 3-2 win over the Tampa Bay Devil Rays after umpires found cork in his shattered bat.

Five years ago: Barack Obama claimed the Democratic presidential nomination in a long-time-coming victory speech, speaking in the same St. Paul, Minn., arena that would be hosting the Republican national convention in September 2008. Astronauts installed a 37-foot-long Japanese lab at the international space station.

One year ago: A Dana Air MD-83 jetliner carrying 153 people crashed on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria, killing everyone on board and at least 10 people on the ground. George Zimmerman, the former neighborhood watch volunteer charged with killing Trayvon Martin, surrendered to police and was booked into a central Florida jail two days after his bond was revoked. The River Thames became a royal highway as *Queen Elizabeth II* led a motley but majestic flotilla of more than 1,000 vessels to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Tiger Woods birdied three of his last four holes to win the Memorial, closing with a 5-under 67. Olivia Culpo, a 20-year-old cellist from Rhode Island, won the Miss USA crown in Las Vegas.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Alain Resnais is 91. TV producer Chuck Barris is 84. The president of Cuba, Raul Castro, is 82. Actress Irma P. Hall is 78. Author Larry McMurtry is 77. Rock singer Ian Hunter (Mott The Hoople) is 74. Singer Eddie Holman is 67. Actor Tristan Rogers is 67. Musician Too Slim (Riders in the Sky) is 65. Rock musician Richard Moore is 64. Singer Suzi Quatro is 63. Singer Deneice Williams is 62. Singer Dan Hill is 59. Actress Suzie Plakson is 55. Actor Scott Valentine is 55. Rock musician Kerry King (Slayer) is 49. Rock singer-musician Mike Gordon is 48. TV host Anderson Cooper is 46. Country singer Jamie O'Neal is 45. Singers Aniel and Gabriel Hernandez (No Mercy) are 42. Actor Vik Sahay is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer Lyfe Jennings is 40. Actress Nikki M. James is 32. Tennis player Rafael Nadal is 27. Actress-singer Lalaine is 26. Actor Sean Berdy (TV: "Switched at Birth") is 20.

Thought for Today: "Nothing is done. Everything in the world remains to be done or done over." — Lincoln Steffens, American investigative reporter (1866-1936).

FROM THE BIBLE

Unto you is born this day ... a Savior who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11.
Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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