

America: Oh, My God

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

With the shorthand “OMG” (oh, my God) becoming a huge cliché, it might be worth taking a look at how Americans are seeing the Almighty these days — that is if they are looking at all.

A recent Gallup poll indicates that just 31 percent of Americans worship publicly on a weekly basis, while 43 percent rarely go to a church, synagogue or mosque.

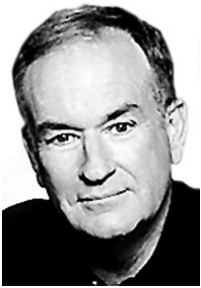
Growing up under the heavy hand of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, it was drummed into me that attending weekly Mass was not an option. It was a must to avoid eternal damnation, which was not a prospect filled with many positives. Hellfire was perpetual, and no parole would be offered.

And so I went to Mass and was even an altar boy, memorizing a variety of Latin prayers that basically said Jesus was a good guy and everybody should avoid offending him. Not a bad message, so I really had no beef — unless I was assigned to the 6:30 a.m. service. Was Jesus even up at that hour?

Today, only 24 percent of American Catholics attend weekly Mass, and so Lucifer must be very busy expanding accommodations. There are many reasons for this, but two stand out.

First, Mass is often deadly dull. Sometimes the priest is from Botswana, and you can't understand him. Other times, you can understand the padre, but 20 minutes on the Corinthians can be challenging, if you know what I mean. It would be great if priests, ministers, rabbis and imams would spice it up a little.

The second reason that churchgoing is in decline is that we are living in a narcissistic time when self-



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gratification has largely replaced the golden rule of treating others as you want to be treated.

Far be it for the public schools to teach this, but the USA was founded on basic Judeo-Christian principles. Don't take my word for it. Take a trip to Washington, D.C., and tour the Supreme Court building. There you will see a sculpted copy of the Ten Commandments on the wall.

But why? Moses wasn't an American. He didn't cross the Red Sea into Delaware. The reason the commandments are on display is that the Founding Fathers based the American legal system on honesty and on the avoidance of doing harm to others — the basic tenets of the commandments.

But many secular Americans, including the ACLU, would dismantle the Supreme Court display if they could. We are now in the age of anti-religion, where pious folks are looked upon as odd. Religion is a bad thing to the secular-progressive. It's too judgmental and stands in the way of unfettered abortion, gay marriage and other sacred causes of the S-P movement.

Faith-based organizations such as the Catholic Church should be fighting against secularism, but they rarely do. Instead, they are on the defensive, as scandals and apathy have devastated organized religion. The Gallup poll reflects that.

But for me, a sinner, it is worth an hour a week to think about things of a spiritual nature in order to try to improve my life. I even turn off my cellphone. In pursuit of a higher calling, it is just not needed.

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."

I Admit I (Heart) Introverts

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Media Services

It's not just a women's issue.

Granted, that's how many of us are framing last month's decision by Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo! Inc., to end telecommuting and require all employees to report to the office. It ignited a firestorm of controversy over whether Mayer, a working mother herself, has backstabbed the sisterhood. Columnist Kathleen Parker called it the latest iteration of the "mommy war."

But there's another reason we should be debating Mayer's policy: some people simply work better alone.

My colleagues are rolling their eyes now, so let me rush to provide full disclosure. I've worked mainly from home for more than 20 years, going into the office just enough that they don't give my desk away. I don't do it because it's more convenient. I don't do it because I hate the commute. I do it because I'm an introvert.

The word is not a synonym for "shy," though as a boy, I was that, too. But where shyness is an outsized fear of other people's disapproval or of social embarrassment, to be an introvert is to be inward turning, more at home in small, intimate groups than large, boisterous ones. It is to prefer the quiet to the loud, reflection to exhortation, solitude to socializing.

For years, I struggled with that, wondered why I prefer the rainy afternoon spent watching old movies or reading a book to the sunny afternoon at a backyard barbecue watching people do the electric slide. Then, last year, I chanced upon a book, "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" by Susan Cain. It was the first time anyone had ever explained me to me. Turns out I'm not the only one. Turns out introversion is perfectly normal.

Except that our culture is biased toward extroverts. It's a bias reflected both in Mayer's decision and in the taggirls she has received from the likes of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. He argues, as she did, that collaboration — "synergy" is the buzzword — produces the best results. This is conventional wisdom in American business. Indeed, Cain notes that per person



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square footage in offices has shrunk by over half since the '70s in the belief that "open space" floor plans that force people together facilitate teamwork and, thus, productivity.

For some of us, it probably does. But not for all. The savvy CEO will understand this, will realize that the alone space is where introverts find the stuff that powers their best work and will — wherever practical — accommodate that.

And, as Cain points out, quiet people, left to their own devices, have produced rather significant moments in culture, science and politics. Her list of their contributions includes: the theory of relativity; "1984," "Schindler's List," Charlie Brown, Google and the Montgomery bus boycott.

All that said, I have a sinking fear that after this column, I'll never be invited to another backyard barbecue again. Good friends, please invite me; I'll even bring the banana pudding. But at the same time, please forgive me if I leave early.

As Cain notes, it is not that the introvert doesn't enjoy the company of others. Rather, it's that after a certain point, it leaves him feeling physically drained. That's who I am — less Bill Clinton than Al Gore — and I've given myself permission to stop fighting it.

Marissa Mayer may or may not be a traitor to modern mommyhood. But she has certainly bought into the one-size-fits-all mentality that says productivity and creativity are found when colleagues meet at the water cooler — and only there. She is wrong and I am proof.

This week, I'll go into the office to make sure my desk is still there. I'll kibitz with my friends. But when it's time to get down to work I'll slip on the noise-canceling headphones, block out the world and seek what people like me always, instinctively seek: a quiet and alone inner space where it is possible to simply, finally... Be.

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our MC and Bill Bobzin and Bruce Teachout for donating their auctioneer services.

Thank you to those people "behind the scenes" who once again came through for us: Dr. Wayne Kindle and Yankton High School, Andy Henrickson and Mount Marty College, Pam Kallis, and Randijo Devine for their generosity and attitude of "all hands to the wheel."

Thank you to our sponsors: Minerva's Grill and Bar, Best Western Kelly Inn, Kolberg-Pioneer, Ann Smith Interiors, Cathy Becker with Modern Woodmen, Burger King, Lisa's Package Liquor, Hy Vee, Yankton Chamber of Commerce, Western Office Plus, Boller Printing, Fryin' Pan, Scott Kooistra and KYNT, and Subway. Their efforts were essential in our fundraising success.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the people and businesses who donated items, services, and activities to the live, silent and dessert auctions. We hope that we have remembered to thank everyone who contributed and sincerely apologize if we have omitted anyone's name! The world truly is a stage full of generous people who love to have a little fun and raise a little money to help keep community theatre alive in Yankton.

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS Rallies Reflect Democracy In Action

CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (March 3): They made the trek to Pierre a second time this past weekend, just as they did in January. A group of 60 people this time turned out to rally peacefully here at the state Capitol in support of the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. That's a smaller group than at the Jan. 19 rally, when supporters estimated that about 150 people showed up, but it's still impressive — that a few dozen people from all across South Dakota would travel to Pierre in winter to speak out on behalf of the Constitution.

It speaks well of the importance of our Bill of Rights and also of the role of guns in American culture and American tradition. We are not that far from the frontier in this state. But it also speaks to something even more fundamentally important to our country, and that is the tradition of democracy itself.

Of course what's behind the rally is that there are attempts afoot in some states and perhaps in Washington to try to restrict access to some types of assault-style firearms and large-capacity ammunition clips after mass shootings in 2012 in Connecticut and elsewhere.

One of the organizers of this past weekend's event told the Capital Journal he doesn't think those efforts will succeed as long as responsible gun owners speak out publicly about their Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

Even the smaller showing of supporters at Saturday's event does not bother the organizers. They attributed the smaller turnout to the distance involved in getting to Pierre from other parts of the state, and they said the next step for Second Amendment supporters will likely be to hold rallies in other large communities around South Dakota.

No matter what your view of assault weapons and large-capacity ammunition clips, that is admirable. It shows that people are valuing the promises, as well as the process, they have been given in America's founding documents. It's this show of democracy at the grass-roots level that America needs to see on other issues. It's a good model for us all.

Work Ethic Camp: Winners, Losers

MCCOOK DAILY GAZETTE (Feb. 27): The debate over Sen. Mark Christensen's bill to allow work-camp inmates to work for nonprofit groups has been a good introduction of Sen. Ernie Chambers to those who may be new to the state, or those who became politically aware during his term-limited absence from the Unicameral.

Chambers made good his vow to filibuster for as long as necessary to kill LB52, brought to the floor on behalf of McCook area nonprofits and other organizations who have enjoyed being part of the rehabilitation process the Work Ethic Camp offers.

Unfortunately, Chambers was able to wear Christensen down to the point the Imperial senator withdrew his bill, and first managed to attach an amendment that bars nonprofit groups from participating if they discriminate based on sexual orientation.

That's essentially a non-issue, but one that gave Chambers his first small victory against the bill and left Christensen scratching his head.

Chambers is at least consistent in his disdain for corrections and law enforcement, and his willingness to do what he thinks is right to stand up for those who are incarcerated or otherwise disadvantaged. But we wonder if he has ever talked to someone who has worked with WEC offenders, or any of the offenders themselves. In our experience, the offenders appreciate a chance to get away from their prison facility to take part in constructive activities designed to build up self-esteem and self-confidence.

It turned out that Chambers' ego was the winner in the current legislative battle, and Work Ethic Camp inmates are the losers.

THE VIEWS PAGE

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initial editorial represents the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, March 11, the 70th day of 2013. There are 295 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 11, 1888, the Blizzard of '88, also known as the "Great White Hurricane," began inundating the northeastern United States, resulting in some 400 deaths.

On this date: In 1513, Giovanni de' Medici was proclaimed pope, succeeding Julius II; he took the name Leo X.

In 1861, the Constitution of the Confederate States of America was adopted by the Confederate Congress in Montgomery, Ala.

In 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln removed Gen. George B. McClellan as general-in-chief of the Union armies, leaving him in command of the Army of the Potomac, a post McClellan also ended up losing.

In 1930, former President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

In 1942, as Japanese forces continued to advance in the Pacific during World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur left the Philippines for Australia. (MacArthur, who subsequently vowed, "I shall return," kept that promise more than 2 1/2 years later.)

In 1959, the Lorraine Hansberry drama "A Raisin in the Sun" opened at New York's Ethel Barrymore Theater.

In 1965, the Rev. James J. Reeb, a white minister from Boston, died after being beaten by whites during civil rights disturbances in Selma, Ala.

In 1977, more than 130 hostages held in Washington, D.C. by Hanafi Muslims were freed after ambassadors from three Islamic nations joined the negotiations.

In 1985, Mikhail S. Gorbachev was chosen to succeed the late Soviet President Konstantin U. Chernenko.

In 1993, Janet Reno was unanimously confirmed by the Senate to be attorney general.

In 2004, ten bombs exploded in quick succession across the commuter rail network in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people and wounding more than 2,000 in an attack linked to al-Qaida-inspired militants.

In 2011, a magnitude-9.0 earthquake and resulting tsunami struck Japan's northeastern coast, killing nearly 20,000 people and severely damaging the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station.

Ten years ago: A U.S. Army helicopter crashed near Fort Drum in upstate New York, killing eleven soldiers. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leader of Turkey's governing party, was named prime minister. After a four-day walkout that cost New York City \$10 million, Broadway musicians settled the first strike on the Great White Way in nearly 30 years.

Five years ago: The top U.S. military commander for the Middle East resigned amid speculation about a rift over U.S. policy in Iran; Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that Adm. William J. Fallon had asked for permission to retire and that Gates agreed. Democrat Barack Obama beat Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Mississippi primary.

One year ago: Sixteen Afghan villagers — mostly women and children — were shot dead as they slept, allegedly by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, in an attack that reignited fury at the U.S. presence in Afghanistan following a wave of deadly protests over Americans burning Qurans.

Today's Birthdays: Media mogul Rupert Murdoch is 82. ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson is 79. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia is 77. Musician Flaco Jimenez is 74. Actress Tricia O'Neil is 68. Actor Mark Metcalf is 67. Rock singer-musician Mark Stein (Vanilla Fudge) is 66. Singer Bobby McFerrin is 63. Movie director Jerry Zucker is 63. Actress Susan Richardson is 61. Recording executive Jimmy Iovine is 60. Singer Nina Hagen is 58. Country singer Jimmy Fortune (The Statler Brothers) is 58. Singer Cheryl Lynn is 56. Actor Elias Koteas is 52. Actor-director Peter Berg is 51. Actor Jeffrey Nordling is 51. Actress Alex Kingston is 50. Country musician David Talbot is 50. Actor Wallace Langham is 48. Former U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., is 48. Actor John Barrowman is 46. Singer Lisa Loeb is 45. Singer Pete Dinklage is 44. Actor Terrence Howard is 44. Rock musician Rami Jaffe is 44. Actor Johnny Knoxville is 42. Rock singer-musicians Joel and Benji Madden (Good Charlotte) are 34. Actor David Anders is 32. Singer LeToya is 32. Actress Thora Birch is 31. TV personality Melissa Rycroft is 30. Actor Rob Brown is 29. Actor Anton Yelchin is 24.

Thought for Today: "Death destroys a man; the idea of Death saves him." — E.M. Forster, English author (1879-1970).

FROM THE BIBLE

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:4. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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YOUR LETTERS

Great Gala

Lynn Becker, Lelia Elder, Michele Leibfarth, Kathryn Reimler, and Becky Tasa
Theatrical Gala Committee

The 2013 Theatrical Gala Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the businesses and people who helped to make our Feb. 16 Gala, "All the World's a Stage," such a wonderful event.

To our director Terry Winter; Chris Hilson as David Letterman; Mike Hilson, Jay Gilbertson, Tom Zoss, Mark Johnson and Ted Powell as the Late Show Band; our eternal gratitude for the time and energy they put in to make the show a success. To our performers: Sandy Hoffner, Brady Muth, and Tyler Muth as Paula Deen and sons; Janet O'Hara as Patsy Cline; Dan Johnson as Dr. Oz; Maggie Downing as Carly Rae Jepsen; Matt Becker as Johnny Cash; Keith Goeden and Eric Duhachek as the Pawn Stars; Jacob Fokken as Justin Beiber; Lynell Carter as Whitney Houston; Mary Milroy as Queen Elizabeth; Maggie Youngberg as Bonnie Raitt; Lisa Carlson as Chrissie Hynde; and Jason Pasco as Tom Jones. You all were fearless and fabulous! Thank you to Jim Reimler as