Faith Digest: Americans love, ignore Bible

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Americans love the Bible but don't read it much. More than half of Americans think the Bible has too little influence on a culture they see in moral decline, but only one American in five reads the Bible on a regular basis, according to a new [Barna Group survey](#) from the American Bible Society. More than three-quarters of Americans—77 percent—think the nation's morality is headed downhill. Almost a third of respondents said moral decline was a result of people not reading the Bible, while 29 percent cited the "negative influence of America" and one in four cited corporate corruption. The survey showed the Bible still is rooted firmly in American soil: 88 percent of respondents said they own a Bible, 80 percent think the Bible is sacred, 61 percent wish they read the Bible more, and the average household has 4.4 Bibles. If they do read it, the majority—57 percent—only read their Bibles four times a year or less. Only 26 percent of Americans said they read their Bible on a regular basis—four or more times a week. Younger people also seem to be moving away from the Bible. A majority—57 percent—of respondents ages 18 to 28 read their Bibles less than three times a year, if at all. The Barna Group conducted "The State of the Bible 2013" study for American Bible Society, using 1,005 telephone interviews and 1,078 online surveys with a margin of error for the combined data of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Tutu wins Templeton Prize.

Desmond TutuDesmond Tutu, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his battle against apartheid, won the 2013 Templeton Prize for his work in advancing the cause of peace and the spiritual principles of forgiveness. Following years of activism against apartheid and after national elections in 1994 elected a black majority government, Tutu headed South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, charged with examining the sins of apartheid and fostering reconciliation between the nation's black and white citizens. Tutu is the second Nobel laureate to win in as many years; the Dalai Lama received the 2012 Templeton Prize. The award will be presented at a May 21 ceremony at the Guildhall in London. The $1.7 million prize has been the world's largest annual monetary award for the past four decades. Previous high-profile winners include evangelist Billy Graham in 1982 and the late Mother Teresa in 1973. Sir John Templeton, an investor and philanthropist, established the prize to honor living individuals who have "made exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension."

Millennium Development Goals underscored. With fewer than 1,000 days left to meet the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, religious leaders from the G-8 countries are pushing heads of government

to renew their efforts to meet the anti-poverty benchmarks by 2015. The goals are eight development targets established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 and include targets on reducing extreme poverty, improving child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS. Eighty religious leaders from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States endorsed a letter that said, "Meeting the targets is possible but only if governments do not waver from the moral and political commitments made over a decade ago." The letter focused on the need for tax reforms, free trade and business transparency in order to strike at the underlying causes of poverty. It also called on all G-8 countries to fulfill an existing commitment to devote 0.7 percent of their national incomes to aid.

Epoch Awards honor unsung heroes. Epoch Awards is seeking nominations to recognize otherwise-unheralded achievers in six categories, including global missions innovators who are tackling issues of poverty, sex trafficking, HIV/AIDS, the need for clean water, homelessness and discipleship, among other matters. Awards include grants totaling $50,000. Nominations end May 30. To make a nomination, click here.