


People of faith as ‘animals in a cage’

If you plan to be the keynote speaker before a group of award-winning journalists, be ready for some  challenging and unexpected questions.

That’s what Chris Cillizza discovered April 20 after giving a talk at the 2012 awards conference for the Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Press Association, held at the Four Point Sheraton BWI Hotel in Baltimore.

When the well-known [Washington Post political blogger](#) opened the floor to questions, one journalist asked how Cillizza’s personal faith influenced his reporting.

Cillizza, a Georgetown graduate, responded initially by speaking more broadly about how today’s journalists cover those who take their faith seriously - noting that he didn’t think “liberals in the press” were trying to organize a secret plan hostile to believers.

“But I do think that there is a skepticism that exists about people of deep faith,” he said. “I think it comes out sometimes in the language we (use to) cover them. The thing that bugs me is the whole ‘animal-in-a-cage’ way we can sometimes cover people of faith - like, ‘Hey, look what he says over there! It’s the evangelical voter!’”

Cillizza pointed out that a devout believer is not an uncommon person in America.

Then, realizing he really wasn’t answering the question about how faith might influence his own reporting, Cillizza said he himself is a “person of faith.”

“I was raised Catholic,” he said. “I like to think it doesn’t impact (reporting) all that much in a negative or a positive way. I mean, I am someone who believes, but - (just) like I try not to let what I think of certain politicians impact the way I cover things, I’d put (my faith) in that same basket.”

Cillizza, a regular contributor to MSNBC, said he tries to “make sure I’m giving enough attention and not treating people of faith like ‘other’ in my coverage.”

“I don’t know if that’s my own faith speaking as much as my frustration with the fact that that is sometimes how things get covered - not necessarily by the Post, but in general in national politics,” he said.

[Here’s how](#) the Catholic Review did in this year’s MDDC Press Association’s competition. Read “The Fix,” Cillizza’s political blog, [here](#).