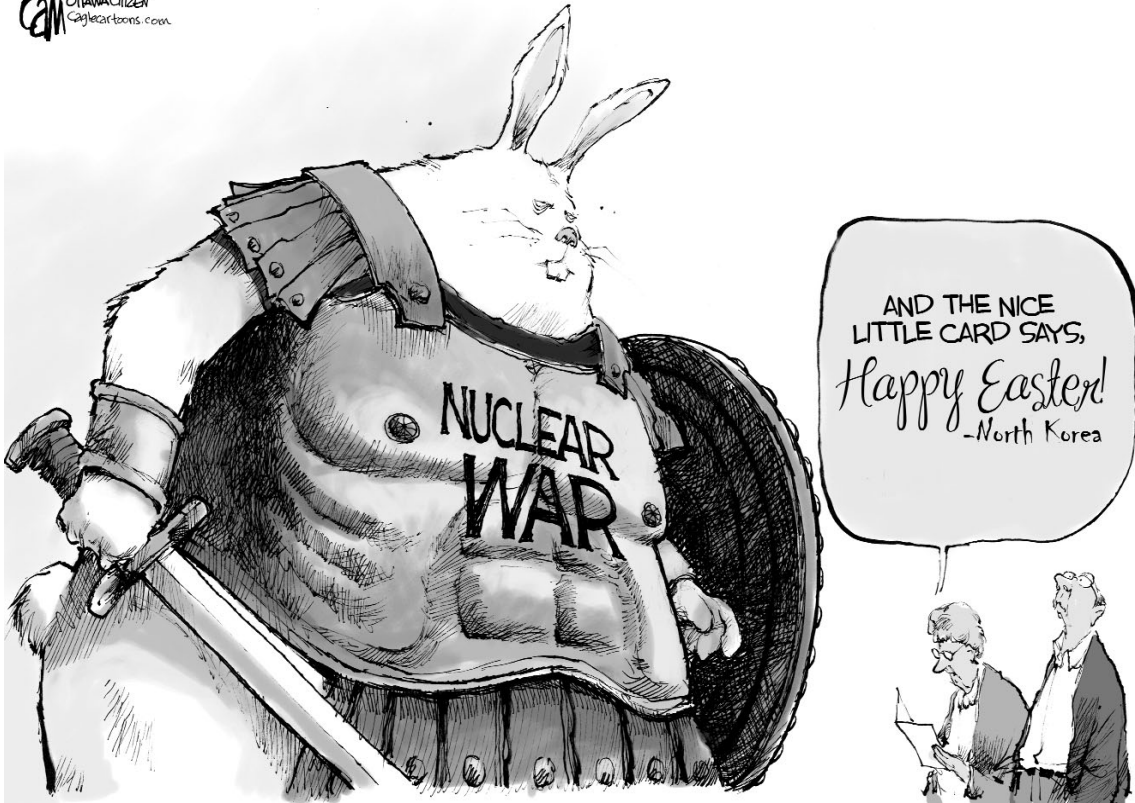


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Churches: Time To Fight!

BY MICHAEL REAGAN
CagleCartoons.com

You can't win the fight if you don't put on the gloves. A punch-drunk, old heavyweight boxer knows that's a truism, but not the churches of America. The Supreme Court heard arguments this week on the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in the state by a 52-47 margin in 2008 but has since been declared unconstitutional by federal courts. Fox TV, Rush Limbaugh and other talk-show pundits have weighed in, arguing the conservative — and moral — position that sanctifying gay marriage with the grace of the U.S. Constitution is not only wrong but a serious threat to the culture of this country. But those media outlets often speak to those who are already in the choir. That leaves a lot of other Americans who aren't hearing anyone preaching the conservative argument on gay marriage.

I don't expect the GOP to provide any leadership. Republicans are too busy cat-fighting with each other and making sure their presidential choice will be whooped by Hillary Clinton in 2016. And where in the heck are the churches on the issue of legalizing gay marriage? Where are the Protestants, Jews and Catholics? Have they lost their tongues? Their hearts and wills? Their institutional you-know-whats? Where's the moral outrage? Why aren't thousands of our pastors, priests and rabbis shouting from their pulpits? Why aren't they leading their congregations through the streets in mass protest? Why aren't their bishops appearing on the tube with David Gregory and Piers Morgan to defend the institution of marriage as a union of one man and one woman? Like the bank executives that are too chicken to stand up to the federal bullies in Washington, and like the energy company bosses in California who won't stand up to the Green Socialists in Sacramento, the



Michael REAGAN

churches cower in fear. Are they afraid to lose their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by engaging in political activity? Are they afraid to be derided as religious nuts and cultural Cro-Magnons by the liberal media? Or are our churches and their comfortable leaders simply no longer willing to fight for what is right? This fight over Proposition 8 isn't just about saying it should be legal in the eyes of government for two people of the same sex to get married in California. It's ultimately about changing the culture of the entire country; it inevitably will lead to teaching our public school kids that gay marriage is a perfectly fine alternative and no different than traditional marriage. There is also a very slippery slope leading to other alternative relationships and the unconstitutionality of any law based on morality. Think about polygamy, bestiality, and perhaps even murder. Churches should be in the vanguard of the fight to defend the culture against legalized gay marriage, not hiding in their pews. Sure, the mainstream liberal media will be against them and will ignore them as much as they can. But if the churches show up en masse — and make sure millions of their members' voices are heard — the media will be forced to cover them, and even the Supreme Court will feel the political wind. Meanwhile, as the High Court decides our fate, it's time for the churches to get engaged and start fighting for America, instead of wimping out. If it takes them giving up their 501(c)(3) status to start fighting for righteousness, then I'm all for it.

Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of "The New Reagan Revolution" (St. Martin's Press). He is the founder of the email service reagan.com and president of The Reagan Legacy Foundation. Visit his websites at www.reagan.com and www.michaelereagan.com. Send comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com. Follow @reaganworld on Twitter.

The Shocking Speed Of Evolution

BY KELLY HERTZ
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I suppose that, in the debate over gay marriage, I may be seen as a coward — but if I am, at least I'm a practical one. This debate has taken center stage with the U.S. Supreme Court this week. At stake has been California's Proposition 8, which banned gay marriage in that state, and the Defense of Marriage Act, a Clinton-era law that effectively declares that marriages between men and women are the only matrimonial vows that universally count. (It's somewhat more complicated than that, but you get the general consequence.) In the backdrop, support for the legalization of gay marriage has surged in the last few years. A CBS News poll issued Tuesday indicated that 53 percent of Americans now favor the legalization of same-sex marriages, up from 46 percent just last summer. A recent *Washington Post* poll put the support level now at 58 percent. And last fall, three states legalized gay marriage by popular vote, which had never happened before. These things suggest a definite momentum for change, and it's coming from the grassroots level. This is where my "cowardice" comes in, I guess; but it's also where I believe it's been justified. I've written a few editorials about gay marriage through the years, usually about federal efforts to pass a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman. (Thus, we would be inserting civil rights exclusions into the Constitution, which would be unconscionable.) On at least one occasion, however, I was contacted to support a gay marriage issue. I responded by saying no: This kind of change cannot be legislated from Pierre (or from Washington) down to the people, I argued; you cannot force it upon a reluctant public. The blowback would be disastrous. Instead, the change has to be demanded FROM the people; it has to be organic. It would then compel the lawmakers and the courts to catch up. So, when that moment screamed for a champion, I was quietly content to be a follower — a coward, if you will — because I believed the only way that kind of issue could effectively evolve toward a new status quo was when the public was ready. From the looks of things this week, that seems to be what's happening now. Frankly, I find it shocking. My shock is not that the change is apparently coming — I've always felt that it would inevitably arrive, just like the acceptance of interracial marriages — but that it's happening so quickly in a historical perspective. It was just in 2004 that several states across the country saw ballot initiatives



Kelly HERTZ

to reaffirm the traditional definition of marriage as a means of mobilizing social conservatives and/or evangelical voters for that fall's general election. Back then, the prospect of gay marriage even gaining broad-based traction seemed years and years away. But less than a decade later, we're contemplating cultural evolution and seismic shifts in attitudes toward gay rights that were unthinkable not so long ago. What's changed in these past 10-15 years to give this issue so much traction? There are some fascinating theories. A reasonable explanation is a generational shift, as younger people generally don't have the same aversions as their elders do to the concept of LGBT relationships. I also heard one analyst cite — quite seriously — the success of the television comedy "Will and Grace" a decade ago as being pivotal because that show comfortably mainstreamed homosexuality. President Obama's shift on the issue a year ago may well have been another defining moment, even though he made the move reluctantly after his hand was forced by an off-hand comment from the perpetually off-hand Joe Biden. Now, Obama has transitioned from measured reticence to being all over the issue, even mentioning the 1969 Stonewall riots, a milestone in the fight for gay rights (and an event that I'd never really heard of until Obama pointed to it), in his second inaugural address. Most Democrats today are lining up on the side of gay marriage, and even a couple of Republican lawmakers are opening their minds to it just a tad. (I foresee primary opponents in their futures, by the way.) Whatever the reasons, change is in the air. That being said, there are two points to bear in mind. First, the momentum that's been on display recently toward the acceptance of gay marriage belies one current mathematical snapshot of the U.S. landscape. There are 39 states that still say, by law, that gay marriage is illegal. Thus, there is still a long way to go, and the evolutionary road figures to get tougher. Second, it must also be admitted that this is an issue in which there is no going back. Once the legal and cultural standing of gay marriage has been accepted, the course cannot be reversed. The people simply won't allow it. I suspect the opponents of gay marriage understand that, and they will strategize accordingly — whatever that may entail. There is indeed still a long way to go on this issue, but the amount of ground that's been covered in just the last decade has been breathtaking. The road forward will indeed get harder. But it's said there is strength in numbers, and by that measure, it's clear that advocates for gay marriage and equality are getting stronger every day.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz

lead to low-income kids losing free school meals. South Dakota currently gets a bonus for efficiency and low-fraud for SNAP. Let our senators know we don't support this. Now is not the time to cut food for needy neighbors.

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION | WE SAY

Something Special



THUMBS DOWN to the news this week that the South Dakota Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament was leaving Yankton after a three-year run. Even though the tournament has done very well here, Special Olympic officials said they are moving the tourney to Pierre for three years in an effort to let other communities experience this great event. Pierre's centralized location is also considered a plus. Also, there were reports of concerns about the lack of available motel rooms in Yankton (which is not the first time this issue has come up in recent years and should provide some guidance in regards to planning for the future). Local organizers should be commended for the great job they did in making this event a success. We're sad to see it leave, but hopefully, it will return to Yankton again some day.

Stepping Down



A sad THUMBS DOWN to an understandable decision, as Sen. Tim Johnson this week he would not be seeking reelection in 2014. The Vermillion native has been a work-horse lawmaker since he was first elected to the state Legislature in the 1970s, and he has remained so on the federal level — and even after his brain injury in 2006 that has left him with physical impairments. Through all that, no one can begrudge him his desire to finally step away from the beltway and enjoy life. He's never been a flashy lawmaker, but he's been an effective one, as well as an approachable one. He will be missed when his long run in public office is finally completed.

Seasonal Disorder



THUMBS DOWN to confirmation of a fact that we already knew: This has been a pretty bad flu season. The *Pierre Capital Journal* reported this week that the number of confirmed flu cases, hospitalizations and deaths this season in South Dakota are about double what they were during the 2011-2012 flu season. State Epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger also noted that the flu vaccine that was available this season didn't really work as well as officials had hoped it would. So we've noticed, although we HAVE worse flu seasons. By the way, threat isn't even gone: The typical flu season usually runs from October through April or May. So the ride isn't over yet.

Something Smart



THUMBS UP to a great new smartphone app from the South Dakota Department of Transportation that allows travelers to access the latest road information in the state. The app, called SDDOT 511, offers the same information found on the SafeTravelUSA, including road conditions, road closures, construction updates and travel advisories. It also offers looks at images taken by roadside cameras stationed around the state. We've tried it out and it's pretty cool. If you do a lot of traveling around the state, it's well worth downloading. The free app is currently available only in Android format at the Google Play store, but an iPhone version is expected to be released later this year.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Should the Keystone XL Pipeline be approved?	
Yes	72%
No	24%
Not sure	4%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	570
The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.	

CURRENT QUESTION:

Who would you support in a hypothetical U.S. Senate race between Mike Rounds and Stephanie Herseth Sandlin?
To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Good Friday, March 29, the 88th day of 2013. There are 277 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 29, 1973, the last United States combat troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War. In an address to the nation, President Richard Nixon declared, "For the first time in 12 years, no American military forces are in Vietnam."

On this date: In 1613, King James I granted a charter officially designating the Irish city of Derry as "Londonderry."

In 1638, Swedish colonists settled in present-day Delaware.

In 1790, the tenth president of the United States, John Tyler, was born in Charles City County, Va.

In 1812, the first White House wedding took place as Lucy Payne Washington, the sister of First Lady Dolley Madison, married Supreme Court Justice Thomas Todd.

In 1871, the Royal Albert Hall in London was opened by Queen Victoria.

In 1882, the Knights of Columbus was chartered in Connecticut.

In 1912, British explorer Robert Falcon Scott, his doomed expedition stranded in an Antarctic blizzard after failing to be the first to reach the South Pole, wrote the last words of his journal: "For Gods sake look after our people."

In 1943, World War II rationing of meat, fats and cheese began.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage. (They were executed in June 1953.) The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The King and I" opened on Broadway.

In 1962, Jack Paar hosted NBC's "Tonight" show for the final time, although the network aired a repeat the following night. (Johnny Carson debuted as host the following October.)

In 1971, Army Lt. William L. Calley Jr. was convicted of murdering 21 Vietnamese civilians in the My Lai massacre. (Calley ended up serving three years under house arrest.) A jury in Los Angeles recommended the death penalty for Charles Manson and three female followers for the 1969 Tate-La Bianca murders. (The sentences were later commuted.)

In 1993, "Unforgiven" won the Academy Award for best picture as well as best director for Clint Eastwood; Emma Thompson won best actress for "Howards End"

and Al Pacino won best actor for "Scent of a Woman."

Ten years ago: In Iraq, a bomber posing as a taxi driver blew up his vehicle, killing himself and four American soldiers. A Turkish man who'd hijacked a Turkish Airlines flight the day before was persuaded by Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to release his 204 hostages after the plane landed in Athens, Greece. Michelle Kwan became only the third American to win five World Figure Skating Championships, after Dick Button and Carol Heiss, at the competition in Washington D.C.

Five years ago: Anti-American Shiite militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr ordered his followers to defy orders from the Iraqi government to surrender their weapons. Zimbabweans voted in an election seen as the biggest test of Robert Mugabe's 28-year rule. (Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai claimed victory, but the Election Commission ordered a runoff. Mugabe claimed victory in that contest, which was widely denounced as a sham.)

One year ago: A divided House approved a \$3.6 trillion Republican budget recasting Medicare and imposing sweeping cuts in domestic programs. Stanford routed Minnesota 75-51 to win the NIT title.

Today's Birthdays: Political commentator John McLaughlin is 86. Author Judith Guest is 77. Former British Prime Minister Sir John Major is 70. Comedian Eric Idle is 70. Composer Vangelis is 70. Basketball Hall of Famer Walt Frazier is 68. Singer Bobby Kimball (Toto) is 66. Actor Brendan Gleeson is 58. Actor Christopher Lawford is 58. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Earl Campbell is 58. International Gymnastics Hall of Famer Kurt Thomas is 57. Actor Christopher Lambert is 56. Rock singer Perry Farrell (Porno for Pyros; Jane's Addiction) is 54. Comedian-actress Amy Sedaris is 52. Model Elle Macpherson is 50. Movie director Michel Hazanavicius (Film: "The Artist") is 46. Rock singer-musician John Popper (Blues Traveler) is 46. Actress Lucy Lawless is 45. Country singer Regina Leigh (Regina Regina) is 45. Country singer Brady Seals is 44. Former White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs is 42. Tennis player Jennifer Capriati is 37. Actor Chris D'Elia is 33. Pop singer Kelly Sweet is 25.

Thought for Today: "Tolerance always has limits — it cannot tolerate what is itself actively intolerant." — Sidney Hook, American philosopher and author (1902-1989).

FROM THE BIBLE

There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. John 19:18. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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YOUR LETTERS

Defending SNAP

Mary Alice Halverson, Yankton

A bill to cut benefits for all SNAP (formerly food stamps) recipients is in the U.S. Senate. S458 could kick nearly 1 million persons off the program, and