

God, Gays and an Obscure County Clerk in Kentucky



As of this writing, God has not weighed in in the case of Kim Davis, the county clerk in Kentucky who says her Christian faith won't allow her to issue marriage licenses to gay couples – and was sent to jail for violating a federal judge's order to do just

that.

Ms. Davis, who doesn't care what the U.S. Supreme Court had to say about gay marriage, believes that God's law trumps the Constitution, which, by the way, she swore to uphold and protect.

Here's Ms. Davis' thinking on the matter: "To issue a marriage license which conflicts with God's definition of marriage, with my name affixed to the certificate, would violate my conscience."

But there's a simple way around all of this, if only Ms. Davis were not such a coward. All she had to do was quit her job and find one that doesn't involve duties that violate her conscience. But that would have been inconvenient.

If she had quit her government job and not had enough money to pay her rent and buy food and pay her other bills, that, dear Jesus, would have shown how seriously she takes her precious conscience. But instead she wanted to both soothe her conscience and collect a check each week from the government. Kim Davis may be many things, but a profile in courage is not one of them.

There was, of course, a much easier way out for Kim Davis. All

she had to do was allow her associates to issue the marriage licenses and the federal judge would never have cited her for contempt. But that, too, would have violated Ms. Davis' conscience so she refused.

And now she sits in jail. Good!

An editorial in the Wall Street Journal makes an interesting point about the case that runs under the headline, "My Old Kentucky Double Standard." It quotes President Obama's spokesman, Josh Earnest, as saying, "The success of our democracy depends on the rule of law, and there is no public official that is above the rule of law."

He's right of course. But here's where the double standard comes in. As the Journal explains it: "We don't recall President Obama insisting on 'the rule of law' when his then Attorney General, Eric Holder, announced in 2011 that he wouldn't defend challenges to what was then the law – the Defense of Marriage Act signed by President Bill Clinton – in the courts. Nor did we hear about upholding the law when mayors such as Gavin Newsom in San Francisco issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples in defiance of state laws.

"Officials such as Messrs. Holder and Newsom were as guilty as Ms. Davis of elevating personal preferences over the law. Yet they were lionized by those now holding up an obscure Kentucky clerk as a national villain."

This is a legitimate point which correctly hammers liberal hypocrisy. But in the end it comes down to "Oh yeah, well the other guys do it too," which is not much of an argument and which is why the Journal acknowledges that the federal judge's principle – "that Americans, and especially government officials, do not get to pick which laws and orders they will follow – is certainly right."

I have long thought that there are more than a few conservative Christians in this country who talk a good game

about law and order but would toss the whole system out in a heartbeat if they could replace it with a Christian theocracy. I don't know Ms. Davis but I wouldn't be surprised if she were one of those people.

And as with almost everything, there are political implications attached to the Kentucky case. Several conservative Christian Republicans who want to be president have stated their support for Kim Davis. This will please some members of the GOP base but I suspect it will turn away a lot more. Most Americans – including most Americans who take their faith seriously – understand how our system works. We are a nation of laws, which is something they point out whenever they believe Barack Obama breaks them.

As I say, so far God has not weighed in. Best we can figure he has not come to Ms. Davis' defense. If He does, I'll write an update.

Senator, “Do You Have a Personal Animosity Against Gay Americans?”



A reporter in Texas recently asked GOP presidential candidate Senator Ted Cruz this question: “Do you have a personal animosity against gay Americans?”

Why would a reporter ask a Republican, running for president, such a question? I don't know the reporter so I can't say with certainty, but it wouldn't shock me if he were trying to start trouble; if he were trying to trip up the senator into saying something negative about gays and getting some national publicity for himself in the process. But there's another reason, I think, for the question. There's no hiding the fact that some conservative Christians – *not a majority, maybe only a fringe* – do indeed have animosity against gays. And since Ted Cruz is a conservative Christian ...

So how did Ted Cruz answer the question? With a question of his own for the reporter.

“Do you have a personal animosity against Christians, sir? Your line of questioning is highly curious. You seem fixated on a particular subject. Look, I'm a Christian. Scripture commands us to love everybody and what I have been talking about, with respect to same-sex marriage, is the Constitution, which is what we should all be focused on. The Constitution gives marriage to elected state legislators. It doesn't give the power of marriage to a president, or to unelected judges to tear down the decisions enacted by democratically elected state legislatures.”

When I heard that, I wondered why Senator Cruz didn't simply say, “Of course I have no animosity toward gays. Next question.”

It might be because he and a lot of other conservative Republicans running for president live in fear of what the well-organized organizations of the Christian Right might do if they answer the question the “wrong” way. The reporter may have been trying to be needlessly provocative, but still, can't a Republican simply say “No” when asked if he has animosity toward gay Americans?

But on the question of gay marriage, Senator Cruz thinks the

decision should be left to the states. The Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court will soon tell us if they agree with the senator or if a majority believe that gay marriage is a fundamental civil right that can't be overridden by the states.

This question has come up before in our country. So let's take a brief trip down memory lane. On June 12, 1967 the Supreme Court ruled that states could not forbid interracial couples from getting married. At the time laws banning interracial marriage were fairly common. Seventeen states, all in the South, had such laws on the books.

But the Supreme Court threw out every one of those laws, ruling that, "Marriage is one of the "basic civil rights of man, fundamental to our very existence and survival." The vote was 9 to 0.

I'm sure that Senator Cruz, and others, would argue that banning *interracial* couples from marrying is not the same as not allowing *gay* couples to marry. For what it's worth, I disagree. They both involve fundamental civil rights, the way I see it.

But since Ted Cruz almost certainly does see a difference, I hope some reporter asks him what he thinks the difference is. Does he think that while race is not a choice, homosexuality is?

And since the senator brought religion into the discussion – "Look, I'm a Christian," he told the Texas reporter – it might be worth noting that religion was also deeply-rooted in the thinking of southern legislators and judges back when interracial marriage was illegal.

The case that went to the Supreme Court in 1967, started in Virginia, where a judge named Leon Bazile said this in upholding the state's ban on interracial marriage:

“Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.”

Change *race* to *sex* and you hear the same arguments from conservative Christians today. They’re against same-sex marriage, they say, because God is against it. (Trust me on this: I get truckloads of emails from angry viewers whenever I tell Bill O’Reilly I’m for same-sex marriage. Almost all quote, directly or indirectly, some portion of the Bible to make their case.)

Maybe gay marriage is not the same as interracial marriage. As I say, when it comes to the law I think it is, but I’m not one of the justices on the high court. So we’ll see soon enough.

One more thing: The interracial couple in Virginia did not attend oral arguments before the Supreme Court, but the husband in the case, Richard Loving, gave his lawyer a note. This is what it said:

“Tell the Court I love my wife, and it is just unfair that I can’t live with her in Virginia.”

Looking back, decent people can clearly see how unjust those racist laws were. Though I suspect there are still a few who think interracial marriage is not only morally wrong but should also be illegal. As for gay marriage, I understand the sentiments of opponents. Their opposition to same-sex marriage doesn’t automatically mean they’re bigots, though unfortunately (based on the emails they send me) some are.

But one thing is clear: They are on the wrong side of history. No, not the way racists were on the wrong side of history decades ago. But they are on the wrong side of history, nonetheless.

America is changing whether they like it or not.

Paula Deen Out – Alec Baldwin In

☒ Up until a week ago, I didn't know anything about Paula Deen except I always thought she had great hair. I've never seen her show, I don't subscribe to her magazine and I don't have any of her cookbooks. After last week, and her admission that over two decades ago she used racial slurs, her network and a number of other corporations abandoned her like rats on a sinking ship. Whether she'll have a "comeback" after her apologies, I don't know.

I probably wouldn't have written about Paula Deen. I figured she must have ticked off somebody because unlike her cookware, she's apparently not Teflon-coated. I decided to write about her after I read about despicable Alec Baldwin's recent rant on Twitter.

He apparently got very upset when George Stark, reported that Baldwin's wife, Hilaria, was tweeting during James Gandolfini's funeral. Well, this didn't sit very well with Baldwin and in his tweets, he called the guy a "toxic little queen," a "bitch," and said that he'd "put my foot up your ... ass, George Stark, but I'm sure you'd dig it too much."

Well, of course, when the you know what hit the fan, and the

news got out, he back tracked and said these weren't rants against Mr. Stark's homosexuality. Baldwin had the audacity to explain his use of the words "toxic little queen" had nothing to do with Mr. Stark's sexual orientation. "[T]he idea of me calling this guy a "queen" and that being something that people thought is homophobic...a queen to me has a different meaning. It's somebody who's just above. It doesn't have any necessarily sexual connotations. To me a queen... I know women that act queeny, I know men that are straight that act queeny, and I know gay men that act queeny. It doesn't have to be a definite sexual connotation, or a homophobic connotation. To me those are people who think the rules don't apply to them. This guy could blatantly lie, I mean blatantly lie about my wife on the internet and there are just no rules that apply to him, but that's outrageous to me." Of course, he didn't explain why Mr. Stark would "dig" having Baldwin's "foot" in private places.

Anderson Cooper saw through Baldwin's b.s. and said, "Why does #AlecBaldwin get a pass when he uses gay slurs?" If a conservative talked of beating up a 'queen' they would be vilified."

So, despite his history of verbal and emotional abuse of his daughter and his removal from an airline in 2011 for refusing to close down his electronic device, he landed and kept a starring role on a popular tv show. Even after his current homophobic rant, I saw his puss on one of his stupid Capital One credit card commercials this weekend. So he gets a pass for his vile words spoken just a few days ago, but Paula Deen loses everything for something she said over twenty years ago. I don't get it.

The hypocrites at GLAAD are giving Baldwin a pass on the whole matter. "Alec Baldwin is making it clear that the intent behind his tweets does not excuse his language, especially at a time when there were 11 incidents of violence against gay men in New York City just last month. As we all work to end

such senseless acts of violence, allies like Baldwin are right to use these moments to reinforce support for the community and LGBT equality.” What a load of crap. Would they have taken the same position if a conservative had done the same? I’d bet big money they wouldn’t.

Again, it’s all about who’s saying it. Back in April, I read about gay novelist Bret Easton Ellis who claimed he was barred from attending the GLAAD Media Awards which planned to give Bill Clinton the Advocate for Change Award (yes, the same President Clinton who signed the DOMA bill back in 1996 which the Supreme Court found last week to be unconstitutional). According to Mr. Ellis, GLAAD “banned” him from entering the premises of the dinner after learning a guest planned on bringing him as a date. He claimed GLAAD was furious because of his tweets about the show Glee, Modern Family, The New Normal and tweeted that actor Matthew Bomer was not qualified to play the protagonist in a 50 Shades of Grey movie because he’s openly gay. “I don’t care how good an actor you are but being married to another man complicates things for playing CG,” he said, adding, “Okay I’ll say it. Matt Bomer isn’t right for Christian Grey because he is openly gay. He’s great for other roles but this is too big a game.”

What I do know is that the above photo is absolutely right. You can have two people saying exactly the same thing – one will be shunned and ridiculed but the other will be given a pass. “Absolute proof that the words spoken do not cause offense but who is speaking the words causes the offense.”

I don’t get it, but if you do, God bless you.

What Would Jesus Say About Adam and Steve?

✘ There's something about gays that bothers a lot of conservatives. They may deny it but that something is that they're gay. And we can thank the Bible for that.

I thought about this after the recent Supreme Court decisions on gay marriage, which, you may have noted, did not go over well with many conservatives.

Let's first acknowledge that reasonable people may disagree on gay marriage. So supporters of same sex marriage need to be careful not to throw the word "bigot" around too loosely. After all, if opponents of gay marriage are automatically bigots then President Obama was a bigot. Remember, he was against same sex marriage until he was for it. And the same goes for Bill Clinton who signed the Defense of Marriage Act into law – a law that effectively deemed the only marriage recognized by the federal government is between a man and a woman.

But let's get back to my conservative friends, many of whom say the real debate is not about gay marriage so much as it is about states' rights. They don't want to federal government deciding matters that should be left to the people in the states. I'm all for states' rights, but not in all cases. We didn't let the states of the Deep South decide if blacks should be able to vote. States can decide how much sales tax they can levy. They can't decide who can sit at the lunch counter and who can't based on skin color. Nothing is exactly the same as race in America, but to me, civil rights for gays is in the same ballpark as civil rights for blacks.

Another argument I've heard over and over again since the Supreme Court decisions is that gays should not be allowed to

marry because the main purpose of marriage is pro-creation. Frankly, I can't understand how anyone with a modicum of intelligence can make this argument. Have they thought about the heterosexual couples who are allowed to marry even though they don't want to have children? Have they thought about the young couples who are unable to have kids? How about older men and women who want to marry but can no longer have children? Should we also put all of them into a special group that is not allowed to marry?

Then there's the slippery slope argument. If we allow gay marriage, this argument goes, then we'll have to accept all sorts of other marriages. What if Lenny wants to marry a goat? All I can say is I'll worry about that later.

Perhaps conservatives should consider the conservative argument for same sex marriage. Yes, one exists. Aren't conservatives always telling us they favor commitment over random hook-ups? So let gays marry and be committed to each other. Conservatives tell us they like personal responsibility. So let gays marry and be responsible for each other, especially in times of need. Let's say a gay man is sick and the hospital costs are mounting. Who do conservatives want to pay the bill – the marriage partner or the federal government, which they usually despise?

But for most conservative opponents of gay marriage these arguments don't amount to much; they're all distractions. Because whether they acknowledge it or not, they're against gay marriage for just one reason: religion.

The Bible tells them that homosexuality is wrong and that's enough for the true believers. But no one is suggesting that the church perform, or in any way accept, gay marriage. Why not let the state recognize same-sex marriage and let the church do whatever it wants?

Or better yet, why not drastically change the way we all look

at marriage. Let the government acknowledge *only* civil unions, for gays *and* straight couples. And let the church or the synagogue or the mosque sanction only the kind of marriage they want. If a particular religion believes homosexuality is a sin, that religion should not sanction homosexual marriage. Pretty simple.

But religious conservatives will never accept this, because to them marriage is a holy sacrament and homosexuality is an abomination. The two can never co-exist. God, they believe, would never approve of any plan that puts gays and straights on the same legal footing.

There's a lot of good to be said about religion. People of faith do a lot of good things for poor people and others who need help. But I'm afraid religion can also make people closed-minded; it can keep them locked in their old ways as the world around them moves forward. It can make them forget that it was Jesus who aligned himself with those society shunned? It was Jesus who was on the side of the "outcast." I wonder how Jesus would feel about a marriage between Adam and Steve.

The polls show that more and more younger people are accepting gay marriage and also rejecting religion (for many reasons besides same-sex marriage). The Church knows this but won't compromise on its principles. Neither will the supporters of same-sex marriage.

On this issue, religious conservatives are on the wrong side of a very powerful force. They are on the wrong side of history. The French writer Victor Hugo said it best: "All the forces in the world are not so powerful as an idea whose time has come."

The Sense in Being a Conservative Supporter of Gay Marriage



Earlier this week, commentator Meghan McCain (daughter of U.S. Senator John McCain) received a lot of online attention after expressing her thoughts on Mark Sanford's special-election victory over opponent Elizabeth Colbert Busch.

In reaction to Sanford's recapturing of his old seat in Congress, McCain tweeted: "Any Republican that voted for Mark Sanford in South Carolina but is against gay marriage is an unbelievable hypocrite."

I know her reasoning is a bit tough to follow, so I'll explain it: McCain is an outspoken supporter of gay marriage. Her implication was that people who oppose gay marriage (on the grounds that it defies the *sanctity of marriage*) are hypocrites for voting for someone who cheated on his wife (because there is no clearer violation of that sanctity than infidelity).

Conservatives had a lot of fun tormenting McCain over her statement. Many quickly and correctly pointed out (albeit in highly sarcastic terms) that her logic would *only* make sense if applied to *single-issue* voters whose single-issue was their opposition to gay marriage on the grounds of protecting traditional marriage.

Now, there *might* be a handful of voters who would fall into

that narrow category, but I kind of doubt it. And I'm not even sure Sanford campaigned on an opposition to gay marriage in the first place. Even if he did, I don't see the relevance to McCain's point.

I think it's safe to conclude that Miss McCain just made a thoughtless, dopey statement – one that, in my opinion, is pretty representative of her political commentaries on a number of issues.

Unfortunately, I believe her statement was also representative of how a *lot* of people approach the issue of gay marriage. Many seem to believe that an endorsement of a candidate is also an endorsement of their views on gay marriage. I have a few liberal friends who even told me prior to the 2012 election that they *couldn't* vote for Mitt Romney because he opposed gay marriage. That position makes no sense to me, and it never has.

As I've mentioned before in my columns, I support gay marriage. Yet, I've never factored that stance into my evaluation of a political candidate. Why not? Because it's completely irrelevant. Politicians don't get to define marriage. State-wide elections on specific changes to marriage laws do. And I don't see that changing anytime soon. Even if the Supreme Court decides to do something groundbreaking with its ruling on California's *Proposition 8*, I can't imagine a scenario in which representative government will *ever* play a role in this decision.

So if you're voting for a candidate based on their stance on marriage, whether it be a local congressman or the president of the United States, all you're doing is voting on someone's personal opinion and not an actual policy. You might as well be voting for them because they like the same television show that you do. Yet, somehow, this issue has been used successfully for years by politicians on both sides of the aisle.

Now, maybe it's different if you're of the opinion that anyone who opposes gay marriage is a bigot, and you can't possibly vote for a bigot. But if that were the case, anyone who voted for either Barack Obama or John McCain in the 2008 was voting for a bigot. I just don't put a lot of stock in that charge. Assuming bigotry is narrow-minded. There are good, fair-minded people on both sides of the issue.

I feel that the distinction between a candidate's opinion and the policies they can enact is an important one that people should consider. Individual voters have a far greater say on the future of gay marriage than politicians do. Someone like me has the choice to vote for the legalization of gay marriage in my state of Colorado, while also voting for political candidates who (regardless of their *opinion* on gay marriage) will pursue a smaller government, pro-growth policies, reducing the national debt, a strong military, personal responsibility, and other fundamentals that I believe are important.

Now, on the topic of the issue itself, here's why I believe it makes perfect sense for a conservative to support gay marriage (hopefully I'll come across as more coherent than Meghan McCain did):

Along with the distinction I described above (a candidate's opinion vs. the policies they can enact), I believe that there is another important distinction that people should think about. That distinction is the one between legal marriage and the spiritual commitment of marriage. To me, they are two very different things.

Legal marriage, as in the state legally recognizing the contract of marriage between two people, is technically just a civil union. That contract has nothing to do with spirituality or religion. It's the beliefs, commitments, and relationships that people *bring* to their marriages that define how they are recognized within a particular faith. In other words, a

government's definition of marriage is not God's definition of marriage. I don't think anyone can honestly make the case that it is. So when people cite the words of the Bible or other religious views as their reason for why gay marriage should not be permitted, I just can't figure out that argument. After all, atheists get married all the time, and no one seems to care about that. Why isn't religion invoked when it comes to them?

It's true that the Bible states that homosexuality is a sin, but I've always found it interesting, as a Christian, that it is *specifically* described as such only twice. If you compare that with acts described as sins far more extensively in the Bible – including ones that each and every one of us commit on an almost daily basis – I just can't figure out why homosexuality is such a stickler for so many people.

Some people oppose gay marriage in the interest of preserving the family structure in our society, which is what former presidential candidate, Rick Santorum (along with many other social conservatives) is big on. I respect that viewpoint, but disagree with it.

The way I see it, that stance actually falls more in line with liberalism than it does conservatism.

After all, conservatives are the ones who typically believe that the freedom of individuals needs to be defended and promoted. They believe in letting people live their lives the way they see fit, out from under the thumb of government, as long as they're not infringing on other people's rights or creating a public safety concern.

Liberals, on the other hand, believe in reining in the freedoms of individuals for the sake of perceived benefits to society. They're the ones who are always trying to save people from themselves, and rationalizing their actions by insisting that what they're doing is for *the greater good*. Liberals are

the nannies and busybodies, like Michael Bloomberg, who think they know what's best for everyone else and impose their will on the public through policies.

So, with same-sex marriage not being a public-safety concern, and not infringing on other people's rights (it certainly doesn't affect my marriage to my wife), I don't see why a pro gay-marriage stance is anything but consistent with conservative principles.

Call me crazy... And I'm sure several of you will.