

# OPINION

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## Our Constitution allows citizens to run for President; it does not tell them how to vote ■ Advocate Publisher Sam D. Kennedy



By Sam D. Kennedy  
Advocate Publisher

The quick reaction to any statements of fellow candidates and the talking heads of TV, demonstrate a failure of our schools and some of our better universities to fully educate the little rascals. I sometimes wonder if they have heard of the Persian Empire and its history and achievements. Or could it be that they are only concerned with their own learned comments instead of listening to what was actually said and done?

Case in point is reaction to Ben Carson's comments about an Islamic President. Fiorina, most TV pundits, and other candidates blasted, Carson for saying that he said he would not allow an Islamic to be President, a right protected by the Constitution. Had they been listening, they would know that he said he would not vote for one, a right our Constitution gives him.

Some people refuse to vote for a Baptist. They waste too much water in drought years. And then there are those Episcopalians who consume alcohol right there in church. You can't be too careful in choosing the right religion for a President, and I'm glad that Ben takes it seriously.

That he singles out an Islamic vote as a

"no, no", is not remarkable considering recent lessons from the Middle East and the past history of spreading the word of Islam by the sword (although let's face it, the Christians have a bit of that in our background as well).

If you are as old as I am, you will remember when a

lot people in the South, and a good bit of the rest of our nation, thought a Roman Catholic should not be President. That did not mean that a Catholic could not run for President or be elected President, but only that they would not vote for one. I was only few years old when Al Smith got beat, primarily because he was Catholic.

But there was a definite prejudice against his candidacy at the time.

In John Kennedy's bid for the Presidency, I was a local campaign manager for Kennedy. His charm, and the fact that the South was still solidly inclined to vote for Democrats, let him overcome that obstacle and win the race. It was a watershed victory.

During the campaign I was constantly told that a Roman Catholic's first allegiance would be to the Pope and a Papist should never be allowed to become President. Kennedy got elected and I am grateful that he did and that that time is past.

But frankly, I still do not foresee a time when I would vote for an Islamist. Times have changed but I have never heard of a Methodist spreading the word with a sword. For the moment I go along with Carson in that **I would not vote for an Islamist**, but I would accept him, or her, as our President if that were the will of the electorate.

That is our way. It is the law in this country, and it is still the best system in the world.



cristina caglecartoons.com

## I love a pope who can laugh ■ By Emily Weathers Kennedy; Guest columnist

Every night for the past several days when my mother and I have had our daily chat, we have talked about the leader of the Church who has taken the world by storm as he has visited Cuba and the United States. My mother has watched coverage of Pope Francis' visits on the television, listening to his every word. I have merely watched online clips and have also hung onto what he has said, wondering how in the world to encapsulate this man's affects on humanity within one column.

He is head of the Roman Catholic Church, yet non-Catholics and even non-religious people have lauded the very essence of his Pontificate from the beginning when he chose, as his name, Francis, after Francis of Assisi, champion of the poor and downtrodden. He has eschewed Vatican digs, red Prada pope slippers, and means of transportation afforded to heads of state. Instead he has traveled in common vehicles and flown on public airplanes. Not since Pope John Paul II has the world seen a pope in touch with the people he leads, the faithful. Not since Pope John XXIII and Vatican II has the world witnessed someone who is willing to breathe life back into an old and stuffy institution abandoned by millions in the last few years.

Pope Francis has reached down even deeper than his predecessors to kindle in the faithful and former faithful a spark

of hope, a recognition of humanity that sometimes gets lost in the dogmatic rhetoric of the Vatican. Francis reminds people of the simple yet powerful words of the Lord, the mercy that somehow became obscure in the Church's preoccupation with social issues like homosexuality, contraception, and abortion.

There is Cuba, a country now not so isolated after Pope Francis facilitated a new relationship between that country and the United States. He reminded the world that Cuba's people should no longer be pawns in political issues but should be recognized as people separated from their families and left behind in a changing world.

Regarding the gay faithful, Pope Francis has said: "If they accept the Lord and have goodwill, who am I to judge them? They shouldn't be marginalized. The tendency [to homosexuality] is not the problem...they're our brothers."

He called on the world to help the poor instead of demonizing them and chastised the greedy pursuit of money when it tramples the wellbeing of others.

He is taking action against priests who abuse children and the bishops who shelter them from their accusers.

He is calling our world to action to respect God's gift of our planet and stop the human and natural causes of climate change that destroy it. (Politicians have chided him to leave science issues to scientists. Ironically, Pope Francis has a

degree in chemistry.)

It is doubtful Pope Francis will stray far from the Church's traditional teachings and doctrines. But the fact that he is speaking to those marginalized, left out for whatever reasons, gives hope as does the fact that he is opening discussions within the hierarchy to re-think the Church's stance on issues. In October at the meeting of the Catholic Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis is calling for a discussion about the manner in which divorced and remarried Catholics (with no annulment) are kept from sacraments.

As I watched video clips of the Pope as he greeted crowds along American streets, I was proud to see this humble man being treated as the "rock star" beacon of hope he is. He just may be the one who will make the world kinder, more merciful, and more mindful of others with their differences and their struggles.

He laughed as he held a woman's baby dressed like the Pope in the popemobile and kissed it, sending word to the mother that she has a good sense of humor and he does too. I love a pope who can laugh. Yes I do.

Emily Weathers Kennedy is a freelance writer, blogger, artist, photo stylist, and decorator. Her work is online and in product catalogs. Emily lives with her husband, 4 dogs, and 1 cat and writes from their farm in Loretto, where she was born and raised.

## Corker reacts to Pope Francis's address to Congress

Senator particularly pleased to hear the Pope's message about the fight to end modern slavery

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) released the following statement after attending His Holiness Pope Francis' address to a joint session of Congress:

"It was an honor to welcome His Holiness Pope Francis to our nation's capital today and hear his historic address to Congress," said Corker. "His address was one of hope and unity, and I was particularly pleased to hear his message about the fight to eliminate modern slavery. As Pope Francis conveyed, ending modern slavery will not come easy. It will require cooperation from people of all faiths,

backgrounds, and nationality. But together, we can end it. I remain committed to efforts to fighting slavery and human trafficking, which is a heartbreaking reality for the more than 27 million people enslaved today in more than 167 countries, including our own."

During his address to Congress, Pope Francis said, "In this land, the various religious denominations have greatly contributed to building and strengthening society. It is important that today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard, for it is a voice of fraternity and love, which tries to bring out the best in each person and in each society. Such cooperation is a powerful resource in the battle to eliminate

new global forms of slavery, born of grave injustices which can be overcome only through new policies and new forms of social consensus."

On February 26, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously passed The End Modern Slavery Initiative Act of 2015, which will charter a 501(c)(3) non-profit grant-making foundation based in Washington, D.C.

"The End Modern Slavery Initiative Foundation" will fund programs outside the United States that:

- \*Contribute to the freeing and sustainable recovery of victims of modern slavery, prevent individuals from being enslaved, and enforce laws to punish individual and corporate perpetrators of modern slavery;
- \*Set out clear, defined goals and outcomes that can be empirically measured; and
- \*Achieve a measurable 50 percent reduction of modern slavery in targeted populations.

In addition, a number of advocacy groups and faith-based institutions have issued support for the effort including, the Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking (ATEST), International Justice Mission (IJM), United Way Worldwide, Freedom House, Rotary International, the End It Movement, and Circle of Friends, Inc., among others.

## Are you kicking yourself for ignoring footgolf?

■ TYRADES By Danny Tyree



If a sport can make my bookworm wife raise her eyebrows and keep an open mind, it must really have potential.

According to the Sept. 21 "Time" magazine, she's not alone; the country is being swept by a new hybrid sport called footgolf, which is essentially the same as traditional golf, but with regulation No. 5 soccer balls instead of golf balls, 21-inch-diameter cups (as opposed to 4.25-inch-diameter golf holes) and the player's feet in place of golf clubs.

(Limited space prevents me from exploring the other hybrid sports waiting on the sidelines to rejuvenate the athletic world: sports such as Knee Boxing, Cranium Bowling, Lip Lacrosse and Backside Badminton. All of these would presumably be sponsored by Knuckle Sandwiches and Elbow Macaroni.)

Footgolf arrives not a moment too soon. According to the National Golf Foundation, golf has lost five million players over the past decade. (Older players keep progressing from "tee time" to "eterni-tee time.") 643 courses closed in the United States between 2006 and 2014.

Yes, many millennials think of traditional golf as prohibitively expensive, complicated and boring. They just don't "get" golf, as evidenced by exchanges such as "What's your handicap?" "This course's Wi-Fi sucks, that's what." Municipalities and other golf course owners have been desperate to find other revenue streams; some have been public relations nightmares. ("YOU ask why there's suddenly a 10-story condo on the fairway. WE ask why can't people accept that brick is the new water hazard?")

Families are making fun memories on the growing number of footgolf courses. College students are bringing dates. Even I am excited, although I'm probably better suited to a sport employing Indiana Jones-size boulders and the broad side of a barn.

The golf industry is embracing footgolf, but many individual duffers are less welcoming. They see the golf course as

being designed for the sober, solemn dignity of traditional golf. You know, the sort of dignity that comes from playing with clients or upper management. ("I have to confess, boss; I've been blinking too loudly. Let's just forget your last four strokes.")

To be fair, soft-hearted golfers are probably just worried about the fate of caddies if footgolf expands. Caddies will simply have to learn to adapt. ("I think this hole calls for a size 8 Odor Eater.")

Luckily, there seems to be ample room for footgolf and traditional golf to co-exist. According to the World Golf Foundation, 36 percent of footgolfers are now more interested in going on to play traditional golf. Of course the golf industry must proceed very delicately in capitalizing on this statistic, or we'll wind up with cringe-producing slogans such as "Footgolf: Tiger Wood's Favorite Gateway Drug."

No, really, it takes great finesse to induce a footgolfer to decide "I'm having a great time as it is, but I'm thinking about upgrading to a sport that takes more time, brings more aggravation, costs a lot more and stirs memories of ancestors who cooked with sheep stomachs. If only someone would guarantee that playing golf will also double my capital gains tax and require quarterly colonoscopies, we could seal the deal right now!"

If you've already discovered the joys of footgolf, play on. If you haven't, check for the course nearest you.

If you're still holding out, perhaps you would prefer the hybrid aquatic game Armpit Marco Polo. ("Marco!" "Ffftttt!" "Marco!" "Ffftttt!")

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