



March 13, 2013

To all whom it should concern:

I have had the great honor and privilege of officiating legal marriages for same sex couples in the State of Connecticut since it became law in 2008. And, I would like to share with you now the wedding of one such couple.

Although the two gentlemen (intentional use of the word) love in Florida, they contacted a Metropolitan Community Church here, in Connecticut, to have a ceremony that would honor and legally recognize their longstanding committed relationship, as they said "before one of us passes." Believing that Florida would not enact marriage equality for the foreseeable future, the couple decided to marry in Connecticut where equality already exists. The concern about timing was very real to these gentlemen as both are in their 70's. Since one of the couple had lived in Connecticut for much of his life, it was a 'home coming' of sorts and an easy choice to marry here.

One gentlemen's son and long term girlfriend were the witnesses. Father and son had been estranged for years over father's same sex relationship, so it was quite moving and healing when the son agreed to stand alongside his father as a witness. During the ceremony, the couple chose to play a song that spoke to the opposition and harm done to same-sex couples; which ended with a commitment to live the truth and love forever "no matter what." As the song played, son took father's hand and then each reached out until the four stood there on the altar hand-in-hand, a heart-warming symbol of love, healing, support, and solidarity against a world that seeks to divide. No longer were *they* divided.

My eyes, along with the four, filled in that moment. And, I saw clearly the power of love and love at work. Love is a precious gift from God that transcends gender and societal norms and carries the power to make us and our relationships whole, it unleashes our full potential, and creates hope that leads to dream new possibilities. It also mends our divisions, heals brokenness, redeems and restores souls. We do not choose this gift; rather, God calls us together to receive. Are we to judge God's choice by privileging the gift for some? Doing so doesn't just marginalize the couple; it minimizes us all by relegating us to mere categories of difference. Oppression is as harmful to the oppressor as it is to the oppressed. This harm ripples, affecting *all* relationships and unraveling the very fiber of society along with our deeper sense of humanity. What seems like a simple matter carries profound consequences.

Marriage equality can be seen as both a divine and a social good. Beyond a divine gift, marriage equality leads society with justice and fairness as its compass; which is integral to a moral and productive nation. Marriage equality ensures that relationship commitments may be made legally binding, conferring benefit as well as responsibility. And, marriage equality ensures the wellbeing of our nation's children, by providing security and safety. Lastly, equality is imbedded in the Declaration of Independence that cites the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Clearly, it is a contradiction to believe that all men are created equal with 'unalienable rights' that are then ignored, with prejudice, to exclude.

Although this matter has now reached majority opinion among our citizens, as history has proven consistently, **civil rights** must be granted on its own merit and not by popularity. Therefore, I implore that we, as a fair and just country, do what is good and right by affirming with Supreme Court ruling that DOMA and Prop 8 are unconstitutional in its legalizing discrimination against same-sex couples. This will provide the gateway to federal-level full marriage equality and legalizing the right for all to marry the one they love; a gift endowed by our creator, as the unalienable right that it is. We can and must stop this divisiveness, beyond the altars in the states that affirm legal marriage equality.

With hope that justice and equality will prevail, yours in faith,

The Reverend Aaron L. Miller, Pastor

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