

“Like” Marriage Equality

by Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer
Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy

I moved away from my hometown of Union, Missouri to go to college and my vocation took me first to Southern California and then to Cleveland, Ohio. Except for occasional family reunions, for most of my adult life I haven't had a lot of close contact with the people I grew up with. One of the things I really appreciate about social media is the way it has helped me to be more connected to family and friends. I love seeing family celebrations and it has become an important way to learn about the concerns they face in their daily lives.

Social media not only keeps us connected to the events in the lives of family and friends, but we often come to learn about their political and religious perspectives, whether we like it or not. The other day I was browsing through some posts and came across a post about marriage equality from one of my cousins. I expected the post to have a very conservative, radically anti-gay position. In fact, there have been moments when I'll read a post that I find so offensive to my perspective that I'm tempted to “unfriend” them, but I don't. I figure they've probably felt the same way about my posts, and besides, I really don't want to lose the connection.

Sometimes we get to be surprised! I confess I did a triple take to make sure I understood the post; that it really did ask those who support marriage equality to “Like” it and that my cousin did actually click “Like.” But my eyes had not deceived me, there it was. My very conservative cousin posted for everyone to see that she supported marriage equality. Her witness is an important sign that the nation is ready for marriage equality.

This week the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral argument in the marriage cases from the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. They have asked plaintiffs' legal counsel to answer whether the constitution guarantees the freedom to marry for same sex couples and whether a same sex marriage performed in

one state has to be recognized by states that have not yet affirmed marriage equality. Many legal scholars believe the justices will also be grappling with whether the nation is ready.

The major polls suggest the answer is yes, the nation is ready for marriage equality. A February CNN/ORC poll revealed, “63% of Americans say that gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to marry and have their marriages recognized by the law as valid” (CNN.com). However, I believe the best indicator that the nation is ready, is that the degrees of separation to a person someone knows and cares about have essentially vanished for most Americans. The vast majority of Americans know and care about someone who is LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender). And, increasingly fair-minded Americans are willing to make known their support for marriage equality.

We’ll find out in June whether the Supreme Court agrees. In the meantime, there is no time like the present to give witness to equality on social media, and more importantly, directly to those you know and care about.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Schuenemeyer is Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy for the United Church of Christ.

LEARN

ucc.org/justice

DONATE

bit.ly/jwmnin

ARCHIVE

WJ
f

bit.ly/witness4justice

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.