

Doc,

It's been a long time since we broke bread together in MacKay Hall, but I still remember how much I respected you as someone whose views might be a bit more conservative than mine but who was willing to discuss things with openness, thoughtfulness, and a sincere compassion for your colleagues, even if you didn't agree with them. Looks like you haven't changed at all in that regard. :)

Just wanted to say that I appreciate what you've written here. Even in your disappointment, you still bear witness to God's unconditional love that is at the heart of everything we both believe. Not everyone on your side of this issue has been so gracious. So I just want to commend and thank you as your brother in Christ.

I know that your positions on homosexuality in general, and marriage equality in particular, are well considered and based on many, many years of study, thought, discussion, and prayer. And I respect those positions and concede that even when interpreted in the light most favorable to my position, certain scriptures do seem to support your position more than they do mine. Indeed I have to pull back and try to get a meta-perspective on scripture as a whole, and rely largely on the fact that we don't seem to have anything from Jesus on the subject, AND acknowledge that biblical writers were a product of their own culture, and cultures change, and what's culturally acceptable changes, including what was culturally acceptable in terms of marriage, even within the span of our own scripture. It takes all of these things, and then some, for me to be able to believe, with humble confidence, that God is okay with me being gay, and that love is love, and that God will bless folks who plight their troth one to another and seek God's blessing. But I don't expect everyone to have the same scriptural hermeneutic or be where I am on this issue. It's tough.

So I can't really challenge you in the arena of faith. It'll be a draw every time.

But in the arena of citizenship, I would like to challenge you a bit. Because in that context, I think the Supremes got this one right, mostly because it's hard to take the First Amendment seriously if the entire moral basis of an argument comes down to a certain set of religious beliefs. Or more accurately, a certain set of beliefs by a certain set of religious people, with whom many other people who practice the very same religion, as well as a whole bunch of people who practice another religion, or no religion at all, disagree. Where you and many others may see this as yet another example of how this country continues to fall away from the commands of God, many see this as an example of how this country continues to pursue the very ethical imperatives taught by Jesus (and other religious leaders). Where you see this as evidence of the decline of scriptural morality, many see this as an yet another defining moment in which the arc of our nation's history bends toward equality, justice, and fundamental fairness for all our people, especially for classes of people who have historically been disenfranchised for one reason or another, including religious reasons.

I can't speak for all my queer brothers and sisters, but I promise not to destroy the institution of marriage. :) Indeed, it is precisely because I value the institution so much that I write you today, and why

I'm delighted that now, the way is becoming clear for ALL people to be able to enter, as our liturgy so eloquently puts it, a "new way of life" -- that "must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly, (I add 'soberly,') and prayerfully."

Blessings to you, Doc, and a great big hug.

Greg