



Special Edition: What Others are Saying

The Loving Decision

This is an edited version of an article from "The Last Word,"
Newsweek, November 24, 2008.

Anna Quindlen

She begins, "One of my favorite Supreme Court cases is *Loving v. Virginia*, and not just because it has a name that would delight any novelist." Quindlen then reviews the facts of the case. In 1958 Mildred Jeter (Black) and Richard Loving (White) got married in Washington, D.C., but were arrested in the bedroom of their Virginia home and charged with a felony for breaking that state's miscegenation (sometimes anti-miscegenation) law (prohibiting interracial marriage; the root word means to mix). In 1965, during a subsequent appeal, Virginia trial court Judge Leon Bazile, who heard their original case, refused to reconsider his decision. Instead, he defended racial segregation, writing:

"Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, 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."

The Virginia State Supreme Court invalidated the original sentence (that the Lovings leave Virginia and not return for 25 years), but upheld the state law. Finally, in 1967, the US Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Loving v. Virginia* that:

Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival.... To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes, classifications so directly subversive of the principle of equality at the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment, is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations. Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not to marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State.

The Supreme Court in 1967 also condemned Virginia's anti-miscegenation law as "designed to maintain White supremacy".

Quindlen then fast-forwards to election day 2008 when propositions in several states to outlaw gay marriage were successful. She notes the millions of dollars given in California by LDS and the Knights of Columbus in behalf of that effort. "When I was a small child I always used to picture God on a cloud, with a beard. Now I picture god saying, 'Why does all the worst stuff get done in my name?'" She then reviews current legislative and court maneuvering, and sees the future of this issue as a "two steps forward, one step back" process. Further, "Of course if the issue in *Loving* had been put to the people, there is no doubt that many would have been



delighted to make racial intermarriage a crime. That's why God invented courts."

"After all, this is about one of the most powerful forces for good on earth, the determination of two human beings to tether their lives forever. The pitch of the opposition this year spoke to how far we have already come – the states in which civil unions and domestic partnerships are recognized, the families in which gay partners are welcome and beloved."

"The last word here goes to an authority on battling connubial bigotry. On the anniversary of the *Loving* decision last year, the bride wore tolerance.

Mildred Loving, mother and grandmother, who once had cops burst into her bedroom because she was sleeping with her own husband, was quoted in a rare public statement saying she believed all Americans, "no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry." She concluded, "That's what *Loving*, and loving, are all about." 📌

Crosses to Bear

Reprinted from *Dialogue*, Volume 42, no. 1, Spring, 2009

Craig Watts

When I come home to my parents' house in Utah each year; I inevitably find myself thumbing through a recent issue of *Dialogue*, a last bastion of Mormonism for me as a gay Mormon before leaving the state, the country, and then the church, a decade and a half ago.

It's always a pleasure to find one or two familiar voices of compassion still carrying the *Dialogue* torch, most recently, Robert Rees and his essay on "The Goodness of the Church"....Rees writes that churches "create a home for us, let us in. When they fail to let all of us in (including the homely, the heretics, and the homosexuals), they fail in their fundamental purpose."

My niece will be married in the Provo temple later this week; and, again, I will be on the outside, not only for the ceremony but for a part of her that doesn't quite know how to include me in her life. In Utah Valley, having a gay uncle, no matter how distant, becomes her cross to bear.

I hear from my parents about the official Mormon campaign against gay marriage in California and feel confused. When the gay community moves in the moral directions you would think the church would encourage (that is, committed relationships manifested in marriage), the Church raises the rhetoric against us to new heights. They not only say they want us on the outside, but by denying us marriage, they seem to want us to slide deeper in non-Church directions.

📌 *Continued on next page.*

Family Fellowship

Family Fellowship is a volunteer service organization, a diverse collection of Mormon families engaged in the cause of strengthening families with homosexual members. We share our witness that gay and lesbian Mormons can be great blessings in the lives of their families, and that families can be great blessings in the lives of their gay and lesbian members. We strive to become more understanding and appreciative of each other while staying out of society's debate over homosexuality. We seek to put behind us all attitudes which are anti-family, which threaten loving relationships, and which drive family members apart. All who can support these goals are welcome to contribute to this newsletter. However, the views expressed here belong only to the individuals who express them.



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Some might see as a threat the dawning realization that gay people are no less morally responsible in their choices than they themselves are. But after two decades on the outside, I still have hope that my Mormon community will take this opportunity to reach across the barrier that the church is building and demolish it with an embrace of welcome.

No matter how we currently draw our lines in the sand, we are all in this together and for the duration. As Rees points out: "The church is us; it is no better or no worse than we are (and that includes "you" and me), for the church is what we make it."

Craig Watts
Beijing, China 🇨🇳

Let Me Worship as I Am

This is an edited version of an article from "My Turn,"
Newsweek, June 2, 2008.

Jimmy Doyle

Jimmy writes, "In October 2005 I took the soup. To an Irish Catholic, 'taking the soup' means going to the other side, turning Protestant. During the famine years, one could get a bowl of soup if one sat through a Protestant service, which meant automatic excommunication in those pre-ecumenical days. So the slang was born, implying desertion of the One True Church in order to make life easier."

"I suppose what I took wasn't soup, but it was comfort. I took a life steeped in the mystery and rhythm of the church along with what I hoped was a life with the integrity of being an open, practicing gay man. When I turned to the Episcopal Church, I saw a Christianity that was alive and evolving, one that delighted in difference and saw God's creation in many things, including women and openly gay men serving as priests and bishops. I saw a chance to get past the separation and sanctimony of the more vocal Christian presence in American society, and a challenge to get to the more nuanced and tricky teachings of Christ - loving your neighbor and all that. I hoped to live and worship as I was created, not as I was condemned."

Jimmy then says that the "smells and bells" at St. Thomas the Apostle Church made him

feel at home. He goes on to describe taking classes in the Anglican faith, and after six months being received into the communion in a high mass, "attended by friends and my partner, with not a dry eye in the house. The healing I felt as I stood before the assistant bishop and reaffirmed my faith was, without a doubt, of the Spirit." On the day Jimmy "took the soup" there was a coincidental visit at his church from Gene Robinson, the first openly gay and partnered bishop elected to an Episcopal bishopric. "I found his presence at my reception ceremony to be a special postcard from my Savior, if you'll forgive my self-centeredness and cheesy metaphor."

"As my partner's Mormon mother would say, I have a testimony. I was created by God, who works through all of his creation, and I've been gay as a handbag since birth. I wanted to wear my sisters' chapel veils at 2, had a crush on Hoss from 'Bonanza' at 4 and have always known that god loves me and Jesus had lessons for me. And I am called to be Episcopalian and part of the Catholic faith, sure as Joan of Arc was called to her mission, although I'm not in drag. And I have faith that I will stand in front of the altar of God and commit my life to the man I love, with smells and bells and without secrecy. It is right to stand before God as I am, and speak my own truth. And I am grateful to have a model of simple, elegant defiance in the bishop from New Hampshire who happened to come to mass at my church one day." 🇺🇸

Noteworthy

Family Fellowship Forum

Sunday, March 29 at 5:00 p.m.
Social Science Auditorium
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT

Speakers will be Terry S. Kogan and Cliff Rosky from the University of Utah Law School. They will address the subject of the current legal cases across the country related to GLBT issues.

Please come and invite other interested friends, neighbors, and family members.

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