Diversity Melting Pot of Marriage Equality

Historical Perspective

Marriage Equality for the lgbt community has been a topic from before the formal identification of the beginning of the Gay Liberation movement.

Slide 2
The Vision – past, present and future – ALL PEOPLE ARE CREATED EQUAL

Historical Views of Marriage
A look at the history of marriage in Western civilization, especially since the rise of Christianity, shows that it has, indeed, largely been between a man and a woman and designed, in large part, for the purpose of having children. At the same time, it's an institution that has constantly evolved in response to changing social and political forces.

55 types of marriages have been identified from traditional to non-traditional, from monogamous to pluralistic.

First recorded evidence of marriage contracts and ceremonies dates to 4,000 years ago, in Mesopotamia. In the ancient world, purpose of marriage was primarily to preserve power, acquire land, and produce legitimate heirs.

Slide 3
In ancient Rome, marriage was a civil affair governed by imperial law.

Slide 4
In 1215, marriage was declared one of the church's seven sacraments. As a general rule, today ministers of religion (e.g. rabbis or Christian pastors) are authorized in law to perform marriages. Marriage in the middle ages was considered too serious a matter to be based on love, a fragile emotion.

Slide 5
In the 17th and 18th centuries, when Enlightenment thinkers pioneered the idea that life was about the pursuit of happiness, they advocated marrying for love rather than wealth or status. The Industrial Revolution and the growth of the middle class in the 19th century supported this idea. As people took more control of their love lives, they began to demand the right to end unhappy unions.
Slide 6
For thousands of years, law and custom enforced the subordination of wives to husbands. But as the women's-rights movement gained strength in the late 19th and 20th centuries - with women being granted the right to own property, the right to vote, to have credit in their own names, to say no to sex with their husbands, to keep their last names if they wished - wives slowly began to insist on being regarded as their husbands' equals, rather than their property. "By 1970," said Marilyn Yalom, author of A History of the Wife, "marriage law had become gender-neutral in Western democracy." At the same time, the rise of effective contraception fundamentally transformed marriage. Marriage had become primarily a personal contract between two equals seeking love, stability, and happiness. This new definition opened the door to gays and lesbians claiming a right to be married, too.

Journey of American women for equality changed the face of marriage.

Slide 7
In the United States there have been three basic marriage models:

**Historic Judaic-Christian Marriage Model** – (views marriage as a very special gift from God that should be used for man's benefit.)

**Romantic Model of Marriage** – (marriage is optional and may therefore be impermanent.)

**Rationalistic Marriage Model** – (two people are drawn together by both love and common traits. Based on fidelity. One main goals is the pure happiness of the people involved)

In **Native American Indian cultures** marriage was neither religious nor civil, and they viewed gender (and sexuality) as a continuum.

For the American Indian marriage was not seen as permanent.

It was an economic institution in which men and women were equals.

Slide 8
In Upstate New York among the Native American societies, same-sex unions have taken the form of Two-Spirit-type relationships. According to anthropologist Brian Gilley, "In many tribes, individuals who entered into same-sex relationships were considered holy and treated with utmost respect and acceptance."
US Marriage Law

In the last 100 years marriage has changed immensely in the U.S. to include the legalization of
divorce as well as the use of birth control for married couples. In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

In at least 14 cases since 1888 and as late as 2003, the United States Supreme Court has ruled that marriage is a fundamental right.

The influences of the Iroquois nation in upstate New York, Susan B. Anthony, and Frederic Douglas had an intense long lasting and far reaching effect on changing the face of marriage. The desire for equality, justice, freedom to choose who to love, and the right to pursue happiness was deeply rooted in the diverse groups engaged in the fight for Marriage Equality in 2011.

Ralph will look at the involvement of the faith community in this struggle.