

My Vision Of a Fully-Inclusive United Methodist Church
by
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My vision of a fully-inclusive United Methodist Church incorporates the GLBTQ community. It is time for a complete transformation of the church – the GLBTQ community needs to feel welcome and not ostracized by the Christian community. As our goal is to spread the radical news of Jesus Christ and gather believers together, we need to encourage others to join us instead of discouraging them. Churches have deteriorated and greatly suffered because of disputes over contemporary controversial issues. It is vital that we work together with all of God's people to live up to our name as United Methodists and unite with one another.

Although I am heterosexual, I am very much in support of the GLBTQ community. I have several close friends who are homosexual, and I try to support them in every possible way. I have conversed with several of them about the adversity that they face for being a minority. I imagine that it is very difficult to continually be condemned and to feel targeted because of one's sexual orientation. I often feel sickened when I think about the rancor and resentment that the GLBTQ community has to endure. Although animosity towards the GLBTQ community may always exist, I am cognizant of the fact that I can be an activist in my own way. I hope that with regards to my goal of making a difference in this world, I will be able to spread peace, kindness, and love to every person. I am a strong believer in the Lord, and I am deeply involved within my local church. Many people associate churches and God as "anti-gay." This is something that angers and saddens me at the same time, for I want to spread the word that there are Christians who support gays and believe they should be free to marry one another and

enjoy the privileges that heterosexual individuals enjoy. I strongly and deeply believe that God loves everyone despite their race, gender, disabilities, or sexual orientation. God made each and every one of us, and we all inhabit some of God's beloved qualities. Many times, people question how I can be a Christian while at the same time being an activist for GLBTQ rights. I have been criticized, looked down upon, and ignored because of my beliefs, but I refuse to change my beliefs in order to be well-liked or fit in with the status quo.

Members of the GLBTQ community often feel targeted and labeled as sinners who are unworthy of God's unconditional love. It is my goal to reach out to these people instead of denouncing their sexual preference and behavior. At times, it is tiring and difficult to constantly be questioned about my seemingly conflicting convictions, but I know that God has called me to stay true to who I am and what I believe. I understand that I do not face as much adversity as those do who are homosexual or have any other sexual orientations. However, it is important for all of us to help break the barrier and to extinguish the fear that exists of people in the GLBTQ community. I hope that in college, I will be able to get more involved in the GLBTQ community and become an active supporter. In this way, I will be able to give back to my church community, and the world at large, so that one day people of all sexual orientations will be accepted in society and in houses of worship.

Therefore, my vision of a fully-inclusive United Methodist church includes people of different races and ethnicities, marital status, cultures, and sexual orientation. I imagine everyone congregating together, praising the almighty God. No one would be focusing on the differences of those standing next to him or her, but instead on God's

reassuring love and acceptance. This church's congregation would embrace everyone who walked in the door and provide them with spiritual nourishment and the touch God's love. God honors those who love one another and smiles upon loving relationships where individuals respect one another whether or not they are from the heterosexual or GBLTQ community.