

Pacific School of Religion

MEDIA ADVISORY | July 12, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Pacific School of Religion | Contact: Kap Stann, director of communications, 510/849-8239

Christian seminary applauds DOMA decision and reissues call for full marriage equality for same-sex couples

Berkeley, CA—As the public awaits the decision of US District Court Judge Vaughn Walker in the Perry v. Schwarzenegger case (which will rule on whether or not Proposition 8 violates the United States Constitution by denying gay and lesbian couples equal protection under the law), the president of Pacific School of Religion, the executive director of the seminary's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS), and other clergy applauded Judge Joseph L. Tauro's July 8, 2010 ruling in Boston that the federal Defense of Marriage law (DOMA) violates the Constitutional right of married same-sex couples to equal protection under the law and reissued a call for marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples in the state of California. Their comments and contact information for further discussion follow:

“The progressive Christian community all over the country is hopeful that the decision the court will make in this important matter supports the rights of civil marriage equality for everyone.”

Rev. Dr. Hubert G. Locke, acting president, Pacific School of Religion.

Contact: hlocke@psr.edu; 510/849-8223.

Bernard Schlager, executive director of CLGS, said that when the California Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage in May of 2008 “it ruled that the California Constitution provides a fundamental right to marry that should be extended to same-sex couples. The passage of Proposition 8,” Schlager notes, “reflected a mean-spirited and dangerous attempt to deny this fundamental right to marry to some citizens based on prejudice that is often cloaked in religious language. As an organization founded on and grounded in biblical values of justice and inclusion, CLGS will continue to work for the right to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples in California and throughout our country. In fact, our faith compels us to do this work.”

Contact: bschlager@clgs.org; 415-328-9955.

Rev. Dr. Karen P. Oliveto, pastor, Glide Memorial Methodist Church, San Francisco: “It is our hope that justice will prevail over fear, as this country moves closer to living out its core values of liberty and justice for all. We know that the power of love is unstoppable. One day soon, the laws of this nation will reflect the vision of those who founded it and we will reside in a country where freedom, liberty, and justice is enjoyed by every citizen, no matter one's sexual orientation. We look forward to celebrating this important decision with LGBT couples and their families, knowing that where love is, God is there also.”

Contact: koliveto@glide.org, 415/336-4007.

Rev. Roland Stringfellow, coordinator, Coalition of Welcoming Congregations of the Bay Area: “In the months and years following Judge Walker's verdict, leaders in the progressive faith

movement will need to take to heart our role in helping our culture understand that being a person of faith does not mean you are against marriage equality. The sacred texts we all adhere to compel us to honor faith and family. We support gays and lesbians in being welcomed into faith communities and in their desire to marry and provide a safe and loving environment for their children. It is our duty as progressive faith leaders to reach out to other people of faith who may not share this point of view and speak lovingly and kindly to them to show we will have stronger communities when no one is excluded or made to feel less than.”

Contact: rstringfellow@clgs.org, 260/515-6943.

Rabbi Alan Bennett, Temple Israel, Alameda, CA: “More than five thousand years of Jewish history have taught us that baseless hatred is the most destructive force on earth. No matter whether that hatred comes from religious or secular authorities, it cannot, by its nature, serve the common good. Mutual respect, based simply on one’s humanity, is the real basis and foundation of the love encouraged by every religious tradition. And it is that love that can, and often does, lead to healthy, strong, committed relationships.”

Contact: allen@allenbbennett.net, 415/821-6036.

The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry, founded at Pacific School of Religion in 2000, provides training and education to help faith communities that work for full inclusion of same-sex couples in religious celebrations of marriage. A number of faith traditions currently bless same-sex relationships, including Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the United Church of Christ, the Metropolitan Community Churches, some congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), some Episcopal churches, and some Baptist churches. The web-based CLGS Marriage Project (www.clgs.org/marriage) is designed to assist religious communities in these important efforts.

A multid denominational Christian seminary in Berkeley, California, Pacific School of Religion has been preparing bold leaders for historic and emerging faith communities since 1866. PSR’s graduates are known for innovative ministries of compassion and justice around the world—in urban and rural parishes, on city streets and college campuses, in the arts, public policy, and many other fields. PSR is a member of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), an interfaith consortium of seminaries and institutes in the Bay Area. For more information, please visit: www.psr.edu.