SCENE 1:
(A pastor, Brandon, is working at his desk. A sign reads: "Circa 1850". A church secretary, Abe, enters.)

SECRETARY (ABE): Pastor, there's a couple here to see you. They want to get married.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Do they have an appointment?

SECRETARY (ABE): Uh, no, sir.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Hmmm. (Looks at pocket watch) When is my next appointment?

SECRETARY (ABE): You're having lunch with the bishop at noon.

MINISTER (BRANDON): He can wait! (Minister laughs, secretary doesn't.)

SECRETARY (ABE): Uh, sir, this couple, is, uh, well, they're Negroes, sir. Runaways, I expect.

MINISTER (BRANDON): I see. Send them in.

SECRETARY (ABE): Yes, sir. (He exits, then returns with the couple.)

GROOM (EDGAR): Thank you for seeing us, pastor. I'm Edgar. This is Diane.
MINISTER (BRANDON): I'm glad to meet you.

BRIDE (DIANE): How do you do?

MINISTER (BRANDON): How did you get here?

GROOM (EDGAR): By the Underground Railroad.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Are you in danger?

GROOM (EDGAR): Some. If they find us.

MINISTER (BRANDON): What is it you wish?

BRIDE (DIANE): We want to be married!

MINISTER (BRANDON): I'm afraid there isn't much I can do for you. The law is clear.

GROOM (EDGAR): Reverend, we heard there's a minister in Massachusetts that was marryin' coloreds.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Well, it isn't me. I wish I could.

BRIDE (DIANE): But pastor, we love each other!

GROOM (EDGAR): We want to have children! The church's blessing is important to our people.

BRIDE (DIANE): And to us!

MINISTER (BRANDON): But there's a law against it. State law. Abe, bring me the Dred Scott ruling.

SECRETARY (ABE): Yes, sir. (returns with law book)

MINISTER (BRANDON): Ah, yes, you see, it says here in the *Supreme Court ruling*, "The Constitution of the United States recognizes slaves as property, and pledges the Federal Government to protect it. They are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and
privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States."

GROOM (EDGAR): Pastor, we came to you because we heard you were very caring.

MINISTER (BRANDON): I try to be. But my hands are tied in this matter. I could get in trouble for even discussing it with you.

GROOM (EDGAR): Pastor, if you think the law is wrong, why do you uphold it?

MINISTER (BRANDON): It's more than just the law of the state. It's complicated. The Bible says, "Slaves, obey your masters."

GROOM (EDGAR): You say that's God's word, but we believe we are already a couple in the eyes of God. You're forcing us to live in sin!

MINISTER (BRANDON): The church is slow to change in these matters. So is the state. You'll just have to wait. It won't be that many more years.

BRIDE (DIANE): Years?? (They look at each other in pain.)

MINISTER (BRANDON): I wish I could help you now. I hope you'll come to me again someday when the time comes.

GROOM (EDGAR): We'll have to wait and see...

**SCENE 2:**

(A pastor is working at his desk. A sign reads: "Circa 1900". A church secretary enters.)

SECRETARY (CAROLE): Pastor, there's a couple here to see you. They want to get married.

MINISTER (ABE): Do they have an appointment?

SECRETARY (CAROLE): Uh, no, sir.

MINISTER (ABE): Hmm. (looks at pocket watch) When is my next appointment?
SECRETARY (CAROLE): You're having lunch with the bishop at noon.

MINISTER (ABE): He can wait! (Minister laughs, secretary doesn't.)

SECRETARY (CAROLE): Uh, sir, this couple, is, uh, well, they're mixed, sir.

MINISTER (ABE): I see. Send them in.

SECRETARY (CAROLE): Yes, sir.

(She exits, then returns with the couple.)

GROOM (BRANDON): Thank you for seeing us, pastor. I'm Brandon. This is Diane.

MINISTER (ABE): I'm glad to meet you.

BRIDE (DIANE): How do you do?

MINISTER (ABE): How did you get here?

GROOM (BRANDON): By the B & O Railroad.

MINISTER (ABE): Are you in danger?

GROOM (BRANDON): Some. We've been exiled from our community and we get spat on in public.

MINISTER (ABE): What is it you wish?

BRIDE (DIANE): We want to be married!

MINISTER (ABE): I'm afraid there isn't much I can do for you. The law is clear.

GROOM (BRANDON): Reverend, we heard there's a minister in Ohio who was marrying interracial couples.

MINISTER (ABE): Well, it isn't me. I wish I could.

BRIDE (DIANE): But pastor, we love each other!
GROOM (BRANDON): We want to have children! The church's blessing is important to our parents.

BRIDE (DIANE): And to us!

MINISTER (ABE): But there's a law against it. State law. Carole, bring me the state codebook, please.

SECRETARY (CAROLE): Yes, sir. (returns with law book)

MINISTER (ABE): Ah, yes, you see, it says here, "This code forbids any person from joining in marriage any white person with any Indian, Negro, or mulatto, and subjects the party who shall offend in this respect, to imprisonment, not exceeding six months, in the common jail, or to hard labor, and to a fine. § And it declares the marriage to be absolutely null and void."

GROOM (BRANDON): Pastor, we came to you because we heard you were very caring.

MINISTER (ABE): I try to be. But my hands are tied in this matter. I could get in trouble for even discussing it with you.

GROOM (BRANDON): Pastor, if you think the law is wrong, why do you uphold it?

MINISTER (ABE): It's more than just the law of the state. It's complicated. The judge said, (he reads:) Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay 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."

GROOM (BRANDON): You say that's God's word, but we believe we are already a couple in the eyes of God. You're forcing us to live in sin!

MINISTER (ABE): The church is slow to change in these matters. So is the state. You'll just have to wait. It won't be that many more years.

BRIDE (DIANE): Years?? (They look at each other in pain.)

MINISTER (ABE): I wish I could help you now. I hope you'll come to me
again someday when the time comes.

GROOM (BRANDON): We'll have to wait and see...

SCENE 3:
(A pastor is working at his desk. A sign reads: "Circa 1950". A church secretary enters.)
SECRETARY (DIANE): Pastor, there's a couple here to see you. They want to get married.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Do they have an appointment?

SECRETARY (DIANE): Uh, no, sir.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Hmmm. (looks at pocket watch) When is my next appointment?

SECRETARY (DIANE): You're having lunch with the bishop at noon.

MINISTER (BRANDON): He can wait! (Minister laughs, secretary doesn't.)

SECRETARY (DIANE): Uh, sir Š this couple Š is Š uh, well, they're divorcees, sir.

MINISTER (BRANDON): I see. Send them in.

SECRETARY (DIANE): Yes, sir. (She exits, then returns with the couple.)

GROOM (ABE): Thank you for seeing us, pastor. I'm Abe. This is Carole.

MINISTER (BRANDON): I'm glad to meet you.

BRIDE (CAROLE): How do you do?

MINISTER (BRANDON): How did you get here?

GROOM (ABE): By the subway.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Are you in danger?

GROOM (ABE): Some. Carole's ex-husband used to beat her.

MINISTER (BRANDON): What is it you wish?
BRIDE (CAROLE): We want to be married!

MINISTER (BRANDON): (To Abe) Has your ex-wife remarried?

GROOM (ABE): No.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Then I'm afraid there isn't much I can do for you. The law is clear.

GROOM (ABE): Reverend, we heard there's a minister in Massachusetts who will marry divorced people.

MINISTER (BRANDON): Well, it isn't me. I wish I could.

BRIDE (CAROLE): But pastor, we love each other!

GROOM (ABE): We want to have children! The church's blessing is important to our parents.

BRIDE (CAROLE): And to us!

MINISTER (BRANDON): But there's a law against it. Church law. Diane, bring me the Book of Discipline.

SECRETARY (DIANE): Yes, sir. (returns with book)

MINISTER (BRANDON): Ah, yes, you see, it says hereŠ "No minister shall solemnize the marriage of a divorced person whose wife or husband is living and unmarriedŠ"

GROOM (ABE): Pastor, we came to you because we heard you were very caring.

MINISTER (BRANDON): I try to be. But my hands are tied in this matter. I could get in trouble for even discussing it with you.

GROOM (ABE): Pastor, if you think the law is wrong, why do you uphold it?

MINISTER (BRANDON): It's more than just the law of the state. It's complicated. In the Gospel of Mark, Christ says, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces
her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." [Mark 10:11-12]

GROOM (ABE): You say that's God's word, but we believe we are already a couple in the eyes of God. You're forcing us to live in sin!

MINISTER (BRANDON): The church is slow to change in these matters. So is the state. You'll just have to wait. It won't be that many more years.

BRIDE (CAROLE): Years?? (They look at each other in pain.)

MINISTER (BRANDON): I wish I could help you now. I hope you'll come to me again someday when the time comes.

GROOM (ABE): We'll have to wait and see...

SCENE 4:
(A pastor is working at his desk. A sign reads: "Circa 2000". A church secretary enters.)
SECRETARY (EDGAR): Pastor, there's a couple here to see you. They want to get married.

MINISTER (CAROLE): Do they have an appointment?

SECRETARY (EDGAR): Uh, no, ma'am.

MINISTER (CAROLE): Hmmm. (looks at pocket watch) When is my next appointment?

SECRETARY (EDGAR): You're having lunch with the bishop at noon.

MINISTER (CAROLE): She can wait! (Minister laughs, secretary doesn't.)

SECRETARY (EDGAR): Uh, sir Š this couple Š is Š uh, well, they're two gay men, ma'am.

MINISTER (CAROLE): I see. Send them in.

SECRETARY (EDGAR): Yes, ma'am. (He exits, then returns with the couple.)

"GROOM" (BRANDON): Thank you for seeing us, pastor. I'm Brandon. This is Abe.
MINISTER (CAROLE): I'm glad to meet you.

"BRIDE" (ABE): How do you do?

MINISTER (CAROLE): How did you get here?

"GROOM" (BRANDON): BART.

MINISTER (CAROLE): Are you in danger?

"GROOM" (BRANDON): Some. Abe is HIV positive.

MINISTER (CAROLE): What is it you wish?

"BRIDE" (ABE): We want to be married!

MINISTER (CAROLE): I'm afraid there isn't much I can do for you. The law is clear.

"GROOM" (BRANDON): Reverend, we heard there's a minister in Vermont who will marry gay men.

MINISTER (CAROLE): Well, I can't. I wish I could.

"BRIDE" (ABE): But pastor, we love each other!

"GROOM" (BRANDON): We want to adopt children! The church's blessing is important to our community.

"BRIDE" (ABE): And to us!

MINISTER (CAROLE): But there's a law against it. Church law. Edgar, bring me the Book of Discipline.

SECRETARY (EDGAR): Yes, ma'am.

"BRIDE" (ABE): (Wide-eyed) Discipline??

"GROOM" (BRANDON): (loud whisper) Not THAT kind of discipline!!

MINISTER (CAROLE): (Edgar returns with book) Ah, yes, you see, it says here: "Ceremonies celebrating homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers nor conducted in our buildings."
"GROOM" (BRANDON): Pastor, we came to you because we heard you were very caring.

MINISTER (CAROLE): I try to be. But my hands are tied in this matter. I could get in trouble for even discussing it with you.

"GROOM" (BRANDON): Pastor, if you think the church law is wrong, why do you uphold it?
MINISTER (CAROLE): It's more than just church law. It's complicated. In Leviticus 18:22, the Bible says, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

"BRIDE" (ABE): But ---

"GROOM" (BRANDON): (interrupting Abe) You say that's God's word, but we believe we are already a couple in the eyes of God. You're forcing us to live in sin!

MINISTER (CAROLE): The church is slow to change in these matters. So is the state. You'll just have to wait. It won't be that many more years.

"BRIDE" (ABE): Years?? (They look at each other in pain.)

MINISTER (CAROLE): I wish I could help you now. I hope you'll come to me again someday when the time comes. (The lights begin to fade as she repeats the phrase)

Š when the time comesŠ when the time comesŠ

(The lights dim to an eerie "timeless" glow. The "Circa 2000" sign is removed. Edgar and Diane, dressed once again as the slave couple, emerge from the dark, as if out of a time warp. They are singing.)

SLAVE BRIDE AND GROOM (EDGAR AND DIANE):

Wade in the water

Wade in the water, children

Wade in the water

God's gonna trouble the water

SLAVE GROOM (EDGAR): The time's come, pastor.
MINISTER (CAROLE): Yes. It's past time.
(The two couples kneel, each couple with their heads together, in front of
the minister. She lays her hands over them, one hand over the bowed
heads of each couple.)
MINISTER (CAROLE): Almighty God, I ask your blessing
(Music rises. Her voice becomes inaudible and fades out as the lights
blackout.)