

# Event 2 of 2

Spencerville SDA Church | Saturday, October 6, 2012

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The afternoon presentations featured

- Nicholas Miller (Andrews)
- Claudio Consuegra (Family Life Ministries, NAD)
- Henry Jackson, Jr. (NOM)
- Roy Gane (Andrews)
- Bill Knott (Adventist Review; preached morning sermon)
- John Graz (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, GC)

## Nicholas Miller

**Miller:** The November referendum is not simply a local law but is part of an international context. He recited three situations:

- (a) In Canada, a pastor who wrote an anti-gay letter in the newspaper was arrested and fined for human rights violations and required never to write publicly on the subject again.
- (b) In Sweden a man's arrest for presenting the "biblical view of homosexuality" was overturned, but the case had a "chilling effect" on biblical teaching because it is viewed as bigotry.
- (c) In Denmark the Lutheran church has been instructed to conduct other-sex and same-sex marriages.
- (d) In California, the new law makes reparative therapy illegal for minors.

[Miller did not note that Canada includes sexual minorities in laws against hate speech, but the U.S. has no law restricting hate speech. He did not explain that Sweden's approach to sexuality—including heterosexuality and sex education—is far more open than the U.S. approach or the Seventh-day Adventist approach. He did not explain that Denmark laws on free speech are radically different than U.S. laws on free speech, and that Denmark has an established state church and so is entitled to make regulations for its state church, whereas the U.S. has no establishment of religion and no state church. He did not explain that the new California law makes it perfectly legal for churches to "pray" for minors and treat adults as they've always done, but only restricts licensed counselors from performing change therapies on minors. Unlicensed counselors—most pastors—remain free to perform change therapies, just not under state authority. He did note that SDA church policy is that "special training is required" to deal with homosexuality. He did not explain what that training entailed.]

Miller offered a dark vision of the future at the hands of "radical gay activists." He recapped the traditional view of the Great Controversy: the church has expected attacks on Sabbath worship as a sign of the End. Miller revised this tradition and described the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment, the Family Commandment, as the peak of the Decalogue. He described it as the only other positive injunction in the Law and a representation of God's divine authority (first 4 commandments) flowing through the heterosexual family into society (last 5 commandments).

Miller ascribed the “challenge on the two institutions from Eden” to Satan. He then argued that the state can enforce the second half of the 10 Commandments, and that Christians have the responsibility to “speak” on “the family.” He credited “science” with the finding that “children do better with their biological mother and father” and told attendees that “we need to stand up.” The implication is that same-sex couples with or without biological or adopted children are not true families.

Miller also defined homosexuality as “sexual excess” and something abhorred by nature.

### **Claudio Consuegra—Family Ministries Director, NAD**

**Consuegra:** Stated that the divorce rate has declined in the last few years and that heterosexual cohabitation has increased in this “age of relativism.”

Claimed “studies have shown” that homosexual men and lesbians have higher rates of domestic violence and divorce than heterosexuals. Claimed that “evidence indicates” that “committed gays”

- Have shorter long-term relationships than heterosexuals. He cited a Netherlands average relationship length of 1.5 years for men
- Do not share values of monogamy versus promiscuity; that male homosexuals have 100s-1,000s of partners in their lifetime
- Regard monogamy in relationships as “oppression”
- Lack the capacity for commitment and “research shows” only 4.5% of gays value long-term commitment
- Do not enter into legal arrangements when they are available. Cited Vermont, Sweden, and Netherlands as examples, and declared that homosexuals and lesbians don’t enter into lifelong relationships by choice.
- Only a few have children; few choose to build households and their biological children come from prior heterosexual relationships; do not have stable homes
- Have a greater risk of disease than heterosexuals—both gay men and lesbians. Gay men continue to be at highest risk for HIV despite open education.
- Have a higher risk for mental health and suicide, even in the Netherlands where the laws are supportive.
- Report higher rates of domestic violence, that 90% of lesbians report verbal aggression and 31% report physical aggression, and this is double the rates among heterosexuals. This finding was credited to the US Department of Justice.

Claimed that children will suffer with promiscuous gay parents. Consuegra did not share his “research” sources except for the DOJ study; all panelists accepted and promoted his claims as fact.

[Compare with the full text of the Dutch study: <http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/Articles/000,003.htm>]

Consuegra said he had once “ministered” to AIDS patients and believed “ministry” to gay members was important while he rejected “the notion of gay marriage.” He believes that gay marriage denies the validity of the bible and involves questioning the bible’s clear teachings about marriage. He claims that every society has decided that marriage as “traditionally defined” is important.

## **Harry Jackson, Jr.—National Organization for Marriage-affiliate**

Jackson dropped the names of Barry Black and Wintley Phipps to establish a connection with the audience. He is the spokesman for a coalition of 1,200 churches called the High Impact Leadership Coalition. This coalition, amongst other things, participates in deliberately violating the IRS restriction on endorsing specific candidates from church pulpits in an event called Pulpit Freedom Sunday. Jackson explained his intent to do just that on Sunday October 7. The audience seemed responsive to this.

Jackson believes that marriage has changed across the culture. The High Impact Leadership Coalition is responding to that. And “gay marriage” has negative spiritual effects.

He told the audience that the challenge to marriage cuts across denominational lines, which is why his friends the Dobsons have organized national prayer days. This election is going to be so significant because of marriage-related ballots in Wisconsin, Maryland, Washington, and others. He argued that the issue is about the bible and faith, not about presidents or rights to change the institution of marriage.

To audience approval, Jackson said that people needed “three dictionaries” to dispute the clear reading of the bible he held in his hand. He invited the audience to clap for Consuegra’s “facts” and “research.”

He referenced the Congressional Black Caucus, presenting them as people who, unlike him, have elevated their ethnic identity above their Christian identities: “You can be Black If you want to; I’m Christian!” he said.

He blamed “radical gay activist groups” for the fact that 8yos may be taught about non-hetero family structures, and that a Massachusetts father concerned about this was arrested. He glossed over the issue that the father refused to leave the school before getting the name of “someone to talk to” about his daughter’s class.

Jackson explicitly told the audience to vote “no” on the Maryland amendment and not to opt out of the election by not voting at all.

He also said that US President Obama “claims to be Christian” and that Romney, being a Latter Day Saint (Mormon), “is not Christian at all,” so Christian voters should not use either candidate as the reason to choose how to vote. Voters should “vote marriage and family” and use the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family resources to help them decide who to vote for.

Jackson referenced the Maryland Family Alliance, an organization lobbying against marriage equality in Maryland; the director Derek McCoy has known Jackson for 20 years, and worked in California against Proposition 8 for more than a year. Jackson credits the MFA director for the churches’ collaboration against “gay marriage” and told Spencerville congregants that Proposition 8 would not have passed without McCoy emphasizing churches’ commonalities and encouraging them to trust each other because “we need all hands on deck.”

Jackson reviewed polls from the LA Times that say support for marriage equality has increased; NOM doesn’t believe these results because it believes pollsters underestimate “the Christian vote.”

Jackson asked members to turn to 1 Kings 18:20-22 (the Carmel showdown), while telling them that the US Supreme Court will consider DOMA in its 2012-2013 term. NOM believes the referendum and federal election outcomes can indicate that “a remnant [of the public] believes [heterosexual] marriage is worth fighting for.” Jackson was clear that a vote for Obama would not send this message because his party has an “anti-marriage platform.” Jackson stated that on Sunday October 7, he would endorse a specific candidate because that candidate was “pro-life,” “pro-family,” and “pro-Israel.”

He described the showdown between Elijah and Baal as a model of today: abortion as a type of human sacrifice, and homosexuality as a type of idolatrous immorality, both aspects of Baal worship. The implication is that LGBT and their allies are modern representatives of Baal worshippers. Jackson closed his presentation asking whether Americans have chosen Baal worship and how long the audience would “halt between two opinions.” He left the platform to applause.

## **Roy Gane**

Gane continued the Baal worship theme based on his studies of the Near East. He explained that nature religions were rational and evidence-based but the “written Word of God [the Bible he held up] gives us a map for interpreting nature.”

He reviewed what “nature teaches” with reference to Romans 1 and Deuteronomy 10:13; describing the bible as the “manufacturer’s handbook” and treating polygamy as the next part of the “confusing” slippery slope that will become available if LGBT people are accepted.

Gane noted that though the Old Testament included a theocracy and capital punishment, the New Testament did not provide for capital punishment—but 1 Corinthians 5 shows that God is in charge of the church. Gane repeated his statement from the previous night that disfellowshipping allows “us” to hand “them” over to Satan, and that epistle is relevant because it includes a form of sexual immorality that’s in the same Leviticus chapters as prohibitions on male-male sex acts.

Gane also repeated his statement that “Jesus was the friend of sinners” is an acknowledgment that “those people” were sinners. Marriage, he argued, was about protecting children, not justice for individuals or their self-fulfillment.

He described the Ferguson/Guy/Larson book as “advocacy,” while the new Andrews book describes “timeless condemnation” of same-sex sexual behavior. He also criticized his former mentor Rabbi Jacob Milgrom who undermined that condemnation from a Jewish perspective. He nevertheless distinguished between orientation and lust or sexual behavior. “Those people” might experience no deliverance in this life, but still “my grace is sufficient for you” so “go and sin no more.”

He closed by reviewing an Ellen White quote in *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*: [God’s] forgiveness transforms the heart and is a creative act, so “all things are possible.” Gane believes he has felt “anger” from audiences when he has offered his “plain reading” of the bible, but it’s not his design, it’s God’s design, so he’s not responsible for it. Nazi Germany is where political correctness ends. This movement is not about imposing religion on others, but “trying to protect our young people... we’re protecting America!”

## **The Book**

While the panel members took their seats, Miller advertised the Andrews University book again, and traced it from Proposition 8 (2008) to the Andrews conference (2009). It includes theological, ethical, psychological, psychiatric perspectives, and testimonies from “current and former homosexuals living in purity... We have testimony of living in God’s will.”

### **Question 1: Voting on issues rather than for candidates?**

Jackson told the audience that this is what voters should do, that he’s not voting for Obama or “his agenda,” and that his personal criteria are “life, [heterosexual] marriage, and Israel. He claimed that he has received death threats for his advocacy, and Miller told him he must be doing something right.

### **Question 2: Church stance on the referendum?**

Miller promoted voting against Maryland’s Referendum 6.

### **Question 3: What is the church doing to educate members worldwide or youth and children?**

Knott told attendees that a GC committee is looking at homosexuality and “alternative sexual practices,” church statements, and ways to clarify church education. There will be an international congress in Bangkok and Knott believes the church is “quite proactive” internationally.

Re. Youth, Knott believes “not enough” is being done given cultural and media influences. He would like the church’s teaching to be part of the church school curriculum so that the culture doesn’t win the battle.

### **Question 4: Is the SGA film an attempt to drive acceptance of LGBT people?**

Gane told attendees **Yes**, it was. He also told them that he knows the filmmakers and knows that they’re concerned about the pastoral nurture of LGBT people. Gane said that the church needed to talk about divorced and single people too, and that homosexual people “have a tough time” receiving from the church. He recapped his Friday comment about the view of gay people that moves swiftly from abomination to fear about contamination. Again he did not refute this reasoning at its root.

His view is that the movie’s value is in showing sincere Christians and asking what “we” are doing for them. But its omission is in not showing “overcoming by grace” and therefore the impression is that it is ok and there is no “escape.” Gane believes that true compassion would move LGBT people from “false security” and acceptance is “deadly dangerous.”

### **Question 5: What should the church do about cohabiting heterosexual members?**

Miller reiterated that the church’s stance on referendum 6 was to oppose it. He then deferred to the non-Adventist NOM representative for an answer on how churches should respond.

Jackson told people to encourage “those kinds of people” to get married, and “lovingly encourage people to obey the scriptures” if they are “living in sin.”

### **Question 6: What do you say to a homosexual Adventist?**

Knott: the critical thing is to maintain God's standard, and embrace them "as persons, not embracing their lifestyle." Knott shares that he has relatives and acquaintances who are in that position; "stay in dialogue with them" he says, and don't let them believe that Christianity equates with judgment.

### **Question 7: Shouldn't the church be using the term "sexual preference" instead of "sexual orientation"?**

Miller: We know enough from psychology that there are homosexuals who do not want their orientation, though the science is uncertain, no "gay gene" has been found, and there seems to be a mix of genes, biology, and nurture (pre-and post-natal) causes. Nevertheless, since [the church has declared] it is a sin, the root does not matter.

Miller compared tendencies to homosexuality and his personal genetic predisposition to alcoholism. He also linked homosexuality and pedophilia.

### **Question 8: What about Sodom and Gomorrah?**

Gane recapped his preferred explanation and emphasized the attempted gang rape of angels perceived as men. So for Gane, homosexuality is a "symptom of utter godlessness" and "a very bad sin in the bible"—but shouldn't be isolated.

Jackson claims that the "antichristian" part of the gay movement often includes people that went to churches and weren't helped, so discourages people from using the S&G story "to bludgeon people."

### **Question 9: Don't "these people" have their rights?**

Miller: criminalization is not the best response, and nor are openly intrusive governments—but Miller does not consider marriage a civil right. He believes a small minority are "insisting" on state approval even though "they" [allegedly] have different values regarding longevity, fidelity, and monogamy than heterosexuals do.

According to Miller, the S&G story teaches that non-heterosexuals are universally rejected. "Demons couldn't have come up with a better plan" to attack marriage.

### **Summary from John Graz, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department**

So far 21 countries worldwide recognize same-sex civil unions, and 11 countries recognize same-sex marriage. The 11 countries include 8 in Europe and Argentina, South Africa, and Canada. Graz notes that the South African government and constitution moved ahead of the people's will in respecting sexual minorities. Legislation is pending in Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. [The church is lobbying against this legislation in the United Kingdom.]

END.