

The following is a workshop summary from the “MAKING ROOM FOR ALL” CONFERENCE, held in Grand Rapids October 29-31, 2009

“Out of the Shadows and into the Light:
Confessions of a Former Gay Basher”

Presenter: Miguel De LaTorre

Reporter: Alice Apol

The session began with a vignette about “Tommy” (not his real name), a gay friend. De LaTorre wondered how a good Christian could be gay. He then said that he led Tommy to “convert” to heterosexuality. But Tommy’s orientation did not change. So he concluded that God was impotent to save Tommy or his church’s teachings against homosexuality were in error. So he had to move away from static concepts of homosexuality. He felt he had a prophetic mandate to question the church’s premise regarding homosexuality, to question the oppressive structures that benefit heterosexuals and oppress homosexuals. Christians must prophesy against oppression, just as white supremacists must speak for racial equality.

De LaTorre then highlighted other oppressions:

“Machoism” - Male domination of women

Racism – Against people of color

Homophobia – Prejudice against gays

All of the above groups are considered “inferior” compared to the dominant person who is male, light-skinned, affluent, and “straight.”

The speaker described his ministry to undocumented workers who come into the U.S.; he and others brought them food and water in the desert. They were willing to be arrested by the Border Patrol. He believes that civil disobedience (even defying the law) is necessary at times to do the right thing.

He concluded with the argument that the church needs LGBT members/people to save the church and create solidarity between Christ and the oppressed and called for confrontation with oppressive powers, not wait for transformation; education and transformation will follow.