

In the Fray: The Battle for Marriage

✖ Anderson Cooper is one of the class acts on cable news. He is bright, personable and very thorough as a journalist. Therefore, on occasion I will compare the coverage of major stories on CNN with both the network news outlets and Fox News. Although I have always liked Cooper's personal style, I often disagree with his slant on the news.

As I flipped through the channels last Friday night, I was offended by the content of the show. It seemed to me that overt propaganda was masquerading as news on Cooper's 360° show. As I have already stated, typically my concerns with Cooper are minor and I hardly ever resort to fussing at the screen. Well, this particular segment got me riled up.

Let's start with the back story. Eleven-year old Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover was found hanging by an extension cord on the second floor of his Springfield, Mass., home last week. His mother, Sirdeaner Walker, said that her son had been taunted and threatened by classmates at the New Leadership Charter School for weeks. Walker described how her 6th grade son had been targeted by students, calling him gay, making fun of his clothing and threatening to kill him. The mother had continually asked for school officials to step in to mediate on her son's behalf every week over the course of the last six months.

In a recent incident, Walker said that a girl began to threaten Carl when he had bumped a TV with his backpack, which in turn bumped into the girl.

Featuring Carl's unfortunate death was appropriate. Sirdeaner Walker had no doubt hoped to give her son the best education money could buy. She concluded that the gay accusation was the

straw that broke the camel's back, causing the child to plummet into an emotional abyss. Ms. Walker said that the administration's only attempt to solve the problem was to have Carl and the girl eat lunch together for a week – to try to dispel the conflict between them. But this obviously did not produce positive results.

When I heard about the death, I naturally empathized with the mother's plight. Unfortunately, Cooper's interview with the bereaved mom did not stay with the facts of the case. His producers seized the opportunity to preach the gospel of radical gay inclusion through out the program. As the program went on, I suddenly saw a familiar face – Mel White, president of SoulForce, a radical gay activist group. This organization has led sit-ins and protests in Bible schools and mega-churches around the country. In fact, Mel's group came and worshiped at our church last Memorial Day. White immediately went into his typical song and dance. He accused mainstream, evangelical churches of preaching bigotry. Next, he blamed ministers for misinterpreting the scriptures, and stated unequivocally that the religious culture of the nation is most responsible for the prejudice against gay people.

All of those comments may have been appropriate, if evangelical or Catholic ministers had figured prominently in young Carl's life. They did not. What ensued was a gross example of yellow journalism. White depicted this unfortunate hazing incident as though it were the most heinous hate crime since the beginning of the last century.

Cooper's show turned into a "bash-conservative-evangelical-churches" session without any warning. White's diatribe was patiently affirmed by Cooper and reiterated by the boy's mother. During this season of renewed gay marriage activism, I cannot help but think that radical gays believe that they are going to be rewarded for their support of the Democratic Party in November. I am expecting a deluge of laws, court rulings and protests all designed to push America into the center of

the gay community's will.

It is time for Christians around the nation to understand that behind the so-called gay rights movement is a desire to silence biblically faithful Christians. Stories like Carl's will be immortalized and told like the story of Matthew Shepard. You remember Matthew, the young gay college student who was murdered in Wyoming. Everyone forgot to tell us he was a drug dealer and hung out with a variety of unsavory characters.

While once again, I am sorry for his family's loss, I resent the fact that the church was presented as the ultimate villain in a story that should have had specific personal bad guys held accountable for their reprehensible behavior. Instead of just blame and just punishment, gay activists launched a propaganda campaign greater than that of the Soviet Union in the cold war, scapegoating the biblically faithful church.

SoulForce and other groups use the Shepard story to attempt to muzzle the message of the church by labeling it as homophobic and bigoted. They consistently declare that all they want is their civil rights. Unfortunately, their understanding of civil rights sometimes abridges the sacred, religious or conscience rights of others.

How could this be used against the church? In San Francisco a few years ago, lawmakers pondered whether billboards targeting the religious conversion of gays were a hate crime or not. In other cases our children could be forced to learn about things in same-sex relationships against our will. Some churches could be prosecuted because they hold a biblical view on sexuality. In addition, doctors and other professionals could lose their jobs because of their stand against gay marriage.

I am hoping that all the news outlets in the nation return to truly fair and balanced coverage of the news. Last I want to encourage you to be aware of the PR campaigns in which gay

activists are engaged. This is especially important, as many states are currently debating the question of gay marriage and human rights. For Christians, this means we must certainly follow the admonition of Christ to, "Watch and pray."

Harry R. Jackson Jr. is senior pastor of 3,000-member Hope Christian Church in the nation's capital. Jackson, who earned an MBA from Harvard, is a best-selling author and popular conference speaker. He leads the High-Impact Leadership Coalition.