

## Imani Metropolitan Community Church of Durham

### Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Palm Sunday April 5, 2009  
"Once Upon a Tree"  
an Easter Cantata by Pepper Choplin

Easter Sunday April 12, 2009  
Worship Service  
Rev. Phil Matthews

Location: 305 E. Trinity Ave. Durham NC

Join US! Palm Sunday, April 5th at 2:45pm for a Musical Presentation of Pepper Choplin's "Once Upon a Tree" performed by the Imani MCC Music Team. Also Join us on Sunday, April 12th at 2:45pm for Easter Worship Service. Please Call 919.286.7394 for more info or visit [www.ImaniMCC.org](http://www.ImaniMCC.org)

## Editor's Note

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

### N.C.'s religious right: Digging their own graves



In the past few weeks we've seen North Carolina's religious right (I like to refer to them as "Rabid Righties") praise and laud a proposed state constitutional amendment that would discriminate against LGBT people and jump, scream, yell and holler over proposed pieces of legislation that would offer safety — physically, mentally and otherwise — to Tar Heel youth, regardless of sexual orientation and gender-identity.

The Rabid Righties have been steamrolling the American Promise as they head across the state pushing through local, municipal resolutions in support of a state constitutional amendment banning *any* civil recognition of relationships between adults other than those of married, one man-one woman couples. In most counties and cities, these insidious resolutions have passed unanimously. Only one county, that I know of, has had the cajones to defeat the resolution presented to them.

Groups like Return America, led by radically anti-gay Winston-Salem pastor Ron Baity, the teetotaling Christian Action League and NC4Marriage, a coalition run by the N.C. Family Policy Council (although they won't openly admit it), are vying for their chance to make North Carolina just like all our other Southern neighbors. North Carolina, thank God, remains the only state in the southeastern U.S. without an anti-gay amendment.

But all this clamoring and rabid, frothy-mouthed insanity is beginning to have an effect opposite of what I can only imagine Baity, the Action League and NC4Marriage actually desire.

Since *Q-Notes'* last print issue, two key pieces of legislation were finally introduced in both houses of the General Assembly. The first, the School Violence Prevention Act, would protect students from harassment and bullying regardless of sexual orientation and gender-identity, among other enumerated categories. The second, the Healthy Youth Act, would repeal the state's miserably failed "abstinence-only" sex ed courses and replace them with a much better, more useful, instructive and educational comprehensive curriculum.

These bills aren't new. Moderate and progressive legislators have been introducing them for years. This session, though, the community, state and media are paying more and more attention to the safe schools and sex ed bills. The Rabid Right is to blame.

Their duplicitous lies about the effects of the bills are getting the media's attention. In turn, community members and voters (who *overwhelmingly support* both bills) are speaking out and turning to their elected officials, urging them to vote for and co-sponsor them. It looks as though the right is digging their own grave.

Ian Palmquist, executive director of EqualityNC, agrees that the religious right is

doing our side a huge favor.

"I think we've seen moderate legislators who could go either way on our issues really get sick and tired of the negative attacks on our community from the religious right," Palmquist told me. "I actually think that some of

the rhetoric that they've been spouting can work to our advantage."

It is time for North Carolina to move into the 21st century and forget the backward, harmful legacy of anti-gay hatred and bigotry. Legislators and conservative activists who stand against the safe schools bill really only do it for one reason: they don't want queer kids protected. And, there's really only one reason to not want the LGBT kids protected — these folks believe they shouldn't be.

Rabid Right leaders like Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of NC4Marriage (and the attorney at N.C. Family Policy Council), have said the safe schools and sex ed bills will open the door to having children taught that gay relationships are acceptable. Although that's really not the intention of the two bills, I really don't mind if that's the outcome.

The current abstinence-only education is a joke — teens are getting pregnant by the bus load and straight and gay kids are getting infected with life-long and sometimes



N.C. state Rep. Rick Glazier stands with fellow members of the N.C. General Assembly at a press conference introducing the School Violence Prevention Act in the House and Senate.

Photo Credit: EqualityNC

deadly diseases because they aren't being taught how to protect themselves and they aren't receiving the fair, equitable and safe acceptance and support they need from mentors and school leaders.

While the right is worrying about sin and eternal damnation, young people in this state are making horrible, ignorant and preventable choices now — choices that will impact their lives here on earth long before they reach those pearly or fiery gates. I don't think God's gonna mind if we give them the tools to protect themselves as they grow, make mistakes and *live* to make better ones.

North Carolina's rabid, deceitful religious bigots need to get their heads out of the sand and into reality. If they really cared about this state's children, they'd be spending more time pushing for these two bills and less time fighting to write discrimination into a document created to ensure equality and justice. Instead, they're too busy worrying about their own agenda.

Our state motto challenges us "to be, rather than to seem." I'm telling our dear religious right to cool it and *to be* real Christians — caring and working for the outsiders and marginalized — rather than to only seem so under their false veneer of "because the Bible says so" bullshit. ▀

## Drink 'till You Drown

Night Owls  
of Gastonia  
704.866.7333

# Wednesday Nights!

All Dance  
Beach Party

**\$15.00 ALL YOU CAN  
DRINK HOUSE DRINKS**  
Bar Opens at 10pm

Bar Staff Reserves Right to Refuse Service to Over Intoxicated Individuals