

Christians to Proclaim 'God Has a Better Way' at Gay Pride Event

Homosexuals will not be the only ones expressing their views at Charlotte, N.C.'s Pride Charlotte event on Saturday. From noon until 3 p.m., hundreds of Christians from the greater Charlotte area plan to attend the city's gay pride event wearing red T-shirts that proclaim "God has a better way."

Since 2006, Charlotte's annual gay pride event has met on private property outside of the city center, but this year there has been a concerted effort to bring the LGBT message to the heart of the city.

"Charlotte's LGBT community is coming out loud, proud and strong, expressed homosexual Matt Comer, editor of . "Though it isn't the first time we've done so, we're reclaiming now after years of silent (and, I'd say, willful) subjugation our rightful place in the public square.

"But this year, the Charlotte LGBT community's virtual closet will be opened again. ... This is the year, my friends, when Charlotte's queers rise up and say: 'We demand equality. We demand it now.'"

Dr. Michael Brown, the director of the Coalition of Conscience and one of the organizers of the God Has a Better Way event, feels that Comer's call for a very public, loud and proud, political, social and even religious statement calls for a response.

"When 'Charlotte's queers rise up'—to quote the words of Matt Comer—proudly carrying their message of social transformation, we feel the obligation to respond with a message of biblical morality and Christian love, in a totally peaceful, non-

disruptive way.”

Brown, author of *A Queer Thing Happened to America*, also questioned whether the local gay community has really been in a “virtual closet.” He noted that: “gay activist groups working in the city have been sponsored by the major banks and businesses and even the local power company. And the gay community is fully protected by the law against discrimination and harassment and violence, just as their heterosexual neighbors are protected.”

Brown noted that there are preschools in Charlotte where the teachers are not allowed to use terms like “boys and girls” (so as to avoid making a gender distinction) and where 4-year-olds are read books like “Heather Has Two Mommies,” while the Charlotte Mecklenburg School District lists “gender identity expression” as a special category in its non-discrimination list, thereby opening the door for a boy to come to school dressed as a girl.

Charlotte’s gay community has also been very vocal in its commitment to fight a statewide, same-sex marriage ban, and Brown believes that this political issue will also be a major part of the Pride Charlotte event.

Christians will be traveling from as far away as Orlando, Fla., to attend the God Has a Better Way event, and they will be joined by other national family leaders, including attorney Matt Barber, associate dean of the Liberty University Law School. An outreach concert, featuring testimonies from several ex-gays, will follow at 7 p.m. in Marshall Park.