



The qualms with Pastor Rick Warren

By: *Bambi Weavil* - January 7th, 2009

THE HEATED PROP 8 DEBATE

One of the most fiery topics within the gay community right now regards President-Elect Barack Obama's decision to allow Pastor Rick Warren of the evangelical Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, to lead the invocation for his upcoming presidential inauguration on January 20th, 2009. This has angered many of Obama's gay supporters because Warren proved to be a major force in passing Proposition 8 during the November election. Prop 8 eliminates the rights of gay people to marry in California. National organizations, such as Human Rights Campaign, **the National Religious Leadership Roundtable and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, have issued Web statements asking Obama to reconsider; however, Obama has held his stance on wanting different viewpoints to be represented.

In our ongoing OutImpact poll, available at www.outimpact.com, we are asking visitors whether they agree that Rick Warren was a bad choice by Obama. Currently, 61 percent have voted yes, while 39 percent disagree. "I see this as an opportunity for the gay community to shine a spotlight on people who discriminate against people based on their sexual preference," Lynn Casper, co-founder of Be Your Own Queero (www.beyrownqueero.com), asserts. "It just shows that they are the dividing forces in our country, and that their closed-minded views will soon be the minority."

OutImpact's political columnist, Chardon Moore, expressed in her latest Wake UP! column, "Obama's Brilliant Manipulation," that his desire to be "everyone's president" is part of this decision: "Obama knew that choosing Rick Warren would anger the left. More importantly, it would anger a relatively small section of the left—the gays and their allies. He knew that we would be vocal about our discontent, and would demand that Obama rescind his invitation. He also knew that he would refuse to do so. This refusal gives Obama legitimacy with the conservative right: It shows that he's willing to stand up to the far left while embracing the far right. Our outrage played right into his well-orchestrated plan. We've been played, ya'll."

How can the gay community work together with our supporters when our elected leader makes a decision that we don't agree with? The effort to bring this to Obama's attention was the appropriate first step; however, this outrage should be part of a larger effort to continue to fight for equality, against injustice and channel respect for the contributions and fundamental rights of gay Americans in our local and national community. We're not always going to agree with Obama's decisions because he's out to appeal to more than the strong base that got him elected. I'm not saying our bruised feelings aren't justified either; many people took this decision personally.

No matter who leads our country in prayer, ultimately, it's our responsibility to be the change we want to see in government and within our great nation. The synergy that is needed in Wilmington between organizations, leaders, businesses and volunteers is an example of building a community that celebrates diversity and bringing an even greater, positive result together. I'm eager to be part of driving that change and synergy—and Obama's being elected into office gave me the faith and hope that equality for all is a goal that is obtainable regardless.