

Lifestyles

Topics:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Columnists:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Published: Jul 06, 2007 12:30 AM

Modified: Jul 06, 2007 05:22 AM

Blunt talk, sharp words

A talk show host's frank discussions draw criticism and listeners

JAYMES POWELL JR., Staff Writer

It's "Pleasure Principle Thursday" on the Michael Baisden radio show, and the host is talking about sex. Or the lack thereof. "Do you understand the question of when I say is it just healthy for women to shut their bodies down? It's not meant for you all not to have sex," Baisden insists to a caller.

The caller answers, or tries to, "You're right, I agree that you want to share your body, you want to --"

"Hold on," Baisden jumps in, as he often does. "I'm going somewhere with this. How does that affect a woman ... when you're a sexual woman and you're not having sex? Come on now!"

It's talk like that that makes Robert Cooper seethe.

"The show is inappropriate for the hours that it's on, and I think he's really going toward a particular group of people. He has issues with Christians; he asks questions just to stir up something," Cooper, 55, says as he cut hair recently in a barbershop in Raleigh's Tower Shopping Center. "I don't think what he's doing is really trying to uplift black people. I cut him off a long time ago."

Tune into WFXK Foxy 107.1/104.3 FM from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and you'll hear what has Cooper and other listeners talking. Since its Triangle debut, Baisden's show, billed as "grown folks' radio," has polarized, engaged, enraged and attracted listeners.

Unlike the show formerly in that slot -- WFXK program director Cy Young's quieter, gentle-humored show -- the Dallas-based, syndicated Baisden (whose show also goes by "Love, Lust & Lies") talks

about everything from cheating husbands to African-Americans who date across the color line. The weekly "Pleasure Principle" talk could include details on the best way to please your partner. Another recent show had a plea for students to call in and say whether their teachers dress too provocatively.

It's no wonder Baisden calls himself "the Bad Boy of Radio."

Still, folks are tuning in. Just two years old, the show is on in 54 cities, and in the Triangle, it has become the third-highest rated radio program, according to Arbitron, drawing about 78,000 listeners per week.

Sean Ross of New York-based Edison Media Research says Baisden has connected with listeners by mimicking the styles of other black radio hosts -- such as Tom Joyner (whose syndicated show airs on Foxy on weekday mornings) or New York's also provocative Wendy Williams -- who don't play much music but discuss social topics.

Unlike Joyner, Ross says, Baisden focuses more on relationship and sex talk.

Baisden has taken off because "it was the first time anyone had heard relationship talk at that level on urban radio. It was something completely fresh and different than a few years ago," Ross says.

Not just frank talk

Not that Baisden's show is all about sex. He's also a motivational speaker who tries in many ways to empower the black community, some say.

Shawn Sampson of Raleigh is the co-founder of The City Commentary, an alternative African-American business publication circulated in the Triangle. He says Baisden recently had black entrepreneurs call in to promote their companies on the radio. Sampson did, and now his phone won't stop ringing.

"I called in myself, and I've been getting e-mails from all over. Virginia, Maryland -- all because they heard me on the show. He's been blowing up businesses left and right; I know from personal experience," Sampson says. "[The Baisden show] is a net positive and excellent thing because I don't see anybody else doing it."

Sampson, originally from New York, says he understands why people in this more conservative region may object to the program. But he says people should take Baisden for what he is.

[Next page >](#)

Staff writer [Jaymes Powell Jr.](#) can be reached at 829-4556 or jaymes.powell@newsobserver.com

© Copyright 2007, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of [The McClatchy Company](#)

