

TOGETHER: If Baptists were “too much like Jesus”

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Baptists across North America are saying with a clear voice that it is time for a “Jesus agenda.”

What does it mean to pursue a Jesus agenda?

Look at what Jesus did when the synagogue leaders gave the scroll of Isaiah to him and asked him to read. He could have chosen any passage, but he picked this one:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19 and Isaiah 61:1-2).



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

A Jesus kind of church and a Jesus people will put the priorities and passion of Jesus at the heart of their lives and work. They will ask, “Where would Jesus go, to whom would Jesus minister, and what would he say if he came to our town?” When we answer that question, we know where we need to be this week.

Those verses in Luke and Isaiah speak of Jesus’ mission to the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed. You can easily see a spiritual meaning in each phrase, but Jesus also clearly cared about those who were physically poor, captive, blind and oppressed.

We have that same two-pronged work today, allowing Christ to meet the spiritual and physical needs of those in need through those of us who have pledged to be his disciples.

Baptists from across North America [will gather in Atlanta](#) Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008, to say with a great voice, “We believe it is worth our lives to be Jesus people and for our churches to be Jesus kind of churches.”

We are ready to be about Jesus’ agenda:

- We want to be instruments of healing and liberty to the broken and

frightened.

- We are willing to share with and advocate for the hungry, thirsty, homeless, sick and incarcerated.
- We have good news, and it is clearly a sin if we keep quiet.

There has never been a Baptist gathering like the one that will be held in Atlanta. Not since 1845 have the Baptists of America gathered in one place, in a unified spirit, to answer a call to be about missions and evangelism, justice and righteousness. But at that time, there were only a few black Americans represented, and no Canadian, Mexican or Asian Baptists.

Now, 163 years later, Baptists of every language, race, ethnicity, national background, men and women, from North, South, East and West will gather with hearts yearning to be united around Jesus' agenda for the sake of a lost world. We will present to God an offering of praise that will give a new voice to our Baptist people and will draw people to Jesus because they see how these Christians love one another.

Right now, I ask you to begin praying for the Spirit of God to fall on this meeting and to circle those dates on your calendar and do all you can do to be there.

When Jesus read from Isaiah, he really kicked over a hornet's nest in his hometown. Wouldn't it be exciting if Baptists could stir up a hornet's nest today for being too much like Jesus?

We are loved.

Charles Wade is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.

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