

Campolo asks Baptists, “Which Jesus should we preach?”

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Campolo asks Baptists, “Which Jesus should we preach?”

By Jim White and Robert Dilday

Virginia Religious Herald

ATLANTA—Author Tony Campolo challenged Baptists from across North America to examine which Jesus they preach—the one who incarnates American values or the one who incarnates God.

Campolo, professor emeritus at Eastern University near Philadelphia, and children’s advocate Marian Wright Edleman headlined a Jan. 31 morning plenary session at the New Baptist Covenant convocation. The session explored the devastating effects of poverty in America and around the world.

“We’ve got to get our values straightened out,” Campolo said.

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| Tony Campolo |
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Christians called to tear down walls, not build them, South Texas pastor says

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‘Incarnation’ is key for Baptists engaging policy, speakers stress

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Christians should become involved in transforming public policy, a diverse group of Baptists heard Jan. 31, because Christ first set the example by transforming the world and bidding Christians to follow.

“God believed in incarnation so much that he hasn’t given up on it yet,” said Suzii Paynter, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Christian Life Commission. “It didn’t end with Jesus. It continues.”

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| Suzii Paynter (Photo by Joel McLendon) |
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Paynter and two other Baptists engaged in social advocacy spoke in Atlanta on the subject of faith and public policy at one of a host of breakout sessions during the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant meeting Jan. 31.

Individual, church response crucial to alleviating poverty

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Individual, church response crucial to alleviating poverty

By Carla Wynn Davis

CBF Communications

ATLANTA—Breaking the cycle of poverty begins with taking seriously the Bible, people in need and the church's call to respond. And speakers reminded participants at a Baptist gathering that addressing poverty isn't optional for Christians and churches who are serious about following Christ.

These ideas, along with motives and models for alleviating poverty, were explored by panelists Jan. 31 during the "Breaking Cycles of Poverty" special interest session at the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant in Atlanta.

“I have begun to wonder whether we can follow Jesus without addressing poverty,” said Tom Prevost, who works with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s rural poverty initiative in 20 of the poorest U.S. counties. “I’m not even sure it is possible.”

• [See latest photos](#) and the latest [video clips](#) from the New Baptist Covenant Meeting. [\(And go here to see our complete coverage of the event\).](#)

“Incarnation” is key for Baptists engaging policy, speakers stress

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Christians called to tear down walls, not build them, South Texas pastor says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

ATLANTA—Christ came to tear down walls that divide people, a South Texas pastor told Baptists at a prophetic preaching conference. So, he asked, can Christians find any real security in a fence built along an “imaginary line” to separate two nations?

“Jesus didn’t come to build walls. He didn’t come to build fences. He came to tear them down,” said Ellis Orozco, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen.

Silence, shame and stigma— the unholy trinity of AIDS

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Silence, shame and stigma— the unholy trinity of AIDS

Tony W. Cartledge

Baptists Today

ATLANTA—Churches must recognize the spread of HIV/AIDS as a justice issue and overcome pervasive stigmas about the disease if they are to live out the gospel in their communities, panelists told Baptists in Atlanta.

The issue is plagued by “an unholy trinity of silence, shame and stigma,” said Raphael Warnock, pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Warnock was among the panelists who participated in a special interest session on “The HIV/AIDS Pandemic” during the New Baptist Covenant celebration Jan. 31.

Baptists called to combat ignorance about religious liberty

February 2, 2008

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Baptists called to combat ignorance about religious liberty

By Jeff Huett

Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

ATLANTA—In an increasingly pluralistic culture, ensuring religious freedom for all requires more education about religion, further understanding about the proper relationship between church and state, and an emphasis on the historic Baptist principle of religious liberty, said a panel at the New Baptist Covenant Celebration.

Cheryl Townsend-Gilkes, professor of Sociology and African-American Studies at Colby College in Waterville, Me., suggested that the very definition of religious liberty in America “fosters and sustains tremendous religious and cultural diversity.” However, she warned, “the tremendous religious and cultural diversity sometimes challenges our commitment to the separation of church and state.”

North American Baptist plan to work together on disaster relief

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North American Baptist plan to work together on disaster relief

By Steve DeVane

Biblical Recorder

ATLANTA—The 30 Baptist organizations in the North American Baptist Fellowship plan to form a network to coordinate disaster relief efforts.

Terry Raines, disaster relief coordinator for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, announced the initiative Jan. 31. He made the announcement during a special interest session on responding to natural disasters that was part of the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant.

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Gore Urges New Covenant Baptists to Take Up Mantle of Creation Care

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Gore Urges New Covenant Baptists to Take Up Mantle of Creation Care

Bob Allen

Baptist Center for Ethics

ATLANTA—Former Vice President Al Gore challenged 2,500 fellow Baptists at a Thursday luncheon with prophetic zeal to take up the mantle of reversing global warming.

Speaking to a luncheon crowd at this week's New Baptist Covenant Celebration, Gore recalled words of an old Sunday school teacher who taught the purpose of life is to glorify God.

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| Former Vice President Al Gore speaking at the New Baptist Covenant meeting in Atlanta, Ga. |
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Churches can provide significant response to health care needs

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Churches can provide significant response to health care needs

By Carla Wynn Davis

CBF Communications

ATLANTA—When Jimmy Lewis was pastor at First Baptist Church in Morrow, Ga., he and another local pastor had a dream—to meet the growing unmet health needs in the county.

Six months later, with the help of volunteers and donated resources, he helped open a free health clinic.

Seminary president suggests

practices to nurture capacity for the sacred

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Seminary president suggests practices to nurture ‘capacity for the sacred’

By Jennifer Harris

Missouri Word & Way

ATLANTA—Seminary president Molly Marshall urged Baptists to recognize the Holy Spirit as “God’s nearness to us.”

“The Holy Spirit is God’s means of formally indwelling us. And the Holy Spirit is our means of communion with Christ and access to God. So when I speak about the Spirit of the Lord, obviously I’m going to talk in a Trinitarian context,” said Marshall, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kan.

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Panelists, participants explore interfaith relationships

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Panelists, participants explore interfaith relationships

By **John Pierce**

Baptists Today

ATLANTA—Three Baptist leaders known for building ecumenical and interfaith relationships faced the issue of how to relate to persons of other faiths while holding to their own Christian convictions.

One panelist, pastor Gerald Durley of Providence Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, referenced a “Peanuts” comic strip in which the character Sally brags about convincing a boy in her class to agree with her religious convictions—after she hit him with her lunchbox.

Workshop challenges New Covenant Baptists to seek peace

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Workshop challenges New Covenant Baptists to seek peace

By **Bob Allen**

Baptist Center for Ethics

ATLANTA—Humans are caught “in an inextricable network of mutuality” that requires nations to overcome differences to work together for peace, Baptist ethicist Paul Dekar said Thursday at a special-interest session on peacemaking at the New Baptist Covenant Celebration in Atlanta.

“There is no great technique that is going to bring peace,” said Dekar, evangelism and missions professor at Memphis Theological Seminary. “We bring peace when we begin living peaceably with our neighbors.”