

Campaign Tour Promotes Jesus for President

Author Shane Claiborne said his goal is to endorse the values of Christ



[] In the midst of one of the nation's most gripping presidential elections, a maverick evangelist is campaigning for a candidate whose name isn't even on the ballot.

Through his Jesus for President tour, which begins this week, author Shane Claiborne said he hopes "to provoke the Christian political imagination" and cause churchgoers to rethink how their faith influences the world around them. "People see [the U.S.] as a Christian nation and yet it doesn't always look a lot like Jesus," said Claiborne, who co-wrote *Jesus for President* with theologian Chris Haw.

The tour will take Claiborne and Haw to 23 cities from June 23 through July 23 in a bus powered solely by fuel made from used vegetable oil. Claiborne, a founding member of The Simple Way, a Philadelphia-based community, said his goal is not to endorse a particular political party. "We're asking readers to endorse the values in the gospel of Jesus, and that gospel is good news to the poor," he said. "Jesus wasn't offering the world a better empire, but a different kingdom altogether."

Though his message is often controversial, Claiborne resonates with younger Christians who are often looking for ways to demonstrate social justice in a consumer-driven culture. Greg Russinger, president of JustOne, a Christian advocacy and relief organization based in Oregon, encouraged pastor Bob Harper to host Jesus for President at Ventura Vineyard Church in California. "I think among young people, there has been a massive swerve toward realizing that this is beyond right or left, this is beyond Republican or Democrat. I think people are wanting to know who is going to help solve the human dilemma." —**Suzy Richardson**