

WATCH: What's the Agenda Behind 'Believe Me' Church Culture Satire?

Whether you're a dyed-in-the-wool believer or an avowed atheist, you've probably noticed on more than one occasion that it's easy to poke fun at evangelical culture.

Director Will Bakke is hoping to cash in on that fact at the box office.

Hitting theatres September 26, *Believe Me* tells the story of Sam Atwell, a party-going college student, who, together with his zany friends, poses as a Christian and starts an evangelical charity to swindle churches out of donations.

The film, which seems to paint a surprisingly perceptive caricature of evangelical culture in a way few secular films do, at one point shows a commonplace concert-like worship service where a character is leading the congregation in mindlessly singing, "JESUS JESUS JESUS JESUS" (repeated 16 times, of course).

The trailer also shows the characters brushing up on Christian culture by studying the "four essential hand-raising techniques" during worship—a reference to the humor of Jon Acuff?

Though the plot of this secular movie is all about religion, the message is broader than the walls of the church. Blakke said in a recent interview, "The movie raises a lot of questions about the power of platforms. Why believe somebody just because he's on stage wearing a mic?"

"*Believe Me* is not a Christian movie," Blakke explained. "Christianity is the backdrop to the story, but there's no

hidden agenda or altar call at the end of it.”

Even more puzzling is the fact that Christian rapper Lecrae Moore is starring in the film as Dr. Darnall Malmquist.

The film also features a merchandise tie-in with a satirical Christian t-shirt line called “Cross Dressing.”

What do you think—will the film be helpful or hurtful to the church and the gospel message? Watch the trailer below.