

'Moral Monday' expands to a week of social justice action across U.S.

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(RNS) The Moral Monday movement, birthed by activists who protest the actions of the North Carolina General Assembly, will expand to 12 states Friday (August 22) in a Moral Week of Action.

The Rev. William J. Barber II, president of the NAACP in North Carolina and organizer of the Moral Monday movement, announced that Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wisconsin would join up.

Each state is mobilizing social justice activists and clergy to call out governors and state legislatures for "regressive attacks" on the people Jesus called "the least of these," Barber said in a press call Tuesday (August 19). Last year, more than 1,000 people were arrested during a series of Moral Mondays in North Carolina.

The objective is to push for the politicians to "repent and reform," he said. But the marchers will have a daily theme promoting positive actions, not only decrying current policies, he said. Each state sets its own program, but most emphasize the same issues as North Carolina. After each rally there, participants will fan out to register voters.

How much civil disobedience North Carolina officials can expect depends, said Barber, on how officials answer a letter sent earlier requesting changes on policies affecting wages, voting rights, access to health care and more.

Several state organizers on the press call detailed similar programs with local twists. For example, Alabama NAACP President Bernard Simelton said the state's Moral Week will emphasize calls for a living wage and for Medicaid expansion.

"We know Democrats and Republicans can come together," Barber said, if they can turn away from "extremism that is hijacking the political process."