



# SBAOC Weekly Update

## NEWS & PRAYER REQUESTS

*If you have any news, prayer requests, or events that you would like to have included in this update, please email the information to [spurgeonassociation@gmail.com](mailto:spurgeonassociation@gmail.com) or call us at 785-456-8513.*

## PHYSICAL CARE FOR A PASTOR

*Eat* by Brian Croft

(From *The Pastor's Soul: The Call and Care of an Undershepherd* By Brian Croft & Jim Savastio; pp. 107-111; Evangelical Press; [www.epbooks.org](http://www.epbooks.org))

As a Southern Baptist Pastor, I try to attend the annual convention every year. It is important to be there, and I am able to see pastor friends I never see apart from this annual event. Besides, the Southern Baptist Convention always contains an unpredictability that is at times entertaining. For those unaware, this convention draws about 5,000-7,000 pastors and members of SBC churches all around the country. There is a portion of the convention that gives time for an open mic. In other words, anyone can get up on a mic and speak to a motion or issue. Anyone. As you might imagine, some interesting, sad, and contentious words have been said throughout the history of this denominational meeting.

One conversation on the open mic floor sticks out to me. It was a year where the older generation who had historically seen alcohol as a sin and destructive in every way was defending its position against a younger generation that didn't have the same conviction. In fact, the younger generation saw alcohol consumption as a gift from God if it was done responsibly and in moderation, citing no biblical command against alcohol, but against drunkenness. The conversation became intense and heated as one side spoke, then the other side responded.

It felt like it was about to get out of hand, until a young thirty-year old pastor went to the mic and said:

There is no one in this room that understands the devastating effects of alcohol like I do. I was raised by my dad. Single parent. He was an alcoholic. I had to take care of my dad as a child and

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### PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

*"If there is no church... should you not commence one?" C. H. Spurgeon*

## COMMENTS ON OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

*“We’re told in Isaiah 53—this is 700 years before the birth of Christ—that all of us have gone astray, we all need salvation, we’re all sinners. But think about this; the Lord laid on Him, Jesus, the iniquity of us all. God planned it. God determined to save us this way. There’s no other way for us to be saved, but He planned it so that we would live for Him and not for ourselves. When we see that Gospel, we have to reckon with whether or not we’ve believed the Gospel at all or we’ve just embraced it as just a, you know, man-centered, self-help, get out of hell free kind of ticket.”*

*Jordan Thomas*

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watched him drink himself to death when I was fourteen years old. I wish I could forbid the use of alcohol, but the Bible doesn't allow me to do that. I do not want to shout where the Bible is silent.

Then, he bravely went where no Southern Baptist dares to go...

This conversation saddens me. As I look around this room it appears an over-consumption of alcohol is not our major problem, but an enslavement and over-consumption of food.

And with those piercing words, the elephant in the room of the largest protestant denomination in the world was escorted into center stage. There exists a massive obesity issue in the SBC, particularly with the pastors within the convention. In the eyes of some, being extremely overweight is endearing in a pastor as it is a sign they are loved and fed well, as in a similar way being fat in certain cultures is a sign of wealth. Nevertheless, it is a significant problem and doesn't just speak to the eating habits of pastors, but to the state of their soul. This chapter will consider the pastor's eating habits and how those habits can and do affect his own soul.

### TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

Here's a gross generalization to make a point. There are ultimately two kinds of people in this world and how they deal with stress: Those who eat when they are stressed and those who don't eat when they are stressed. Food, and what we use it for, can be a very insightful gaze into the state of our souls. It is for me. I come from a long line of stress-eaters. Those who stress-eat cross the line of eating for enjoyment and providing nutrients for the body, to slide into that dangerous place of allowing food to be a means of comfort. I am convinced this is the main reason for the major obesity problem in America. As a result of the intense levels of stress pastors constantly endure, I am also convinced this is why so many pastors are overweight and unhealthy.

Let us also not miss the other side of this issue: those who avoid food to deal with stress. This soul exposure is more hidden because it doesn't parade as an obese, overworked pastor likely enslaved to food. Nevertheless, it causes a pastor to deal with the difficulties of the ministry in a way that is unhealthy for his physical body and ignoring the cry for help in his soul.

### CARING FOR THE SOUL

How does a pastor come to realize not just his eating habits, but how food exposes the activity in his soul? Here are four ways to consider.

First, grow in awareness. Self-awareness is the most important tool for us to grow. Without knowing what the real problem is, we cannot address it. First, become aware of your family history and how you were taught to view and consume food. Was food a reward? Was food something used for comfort in difficult times in your home? Then each of us needs to be aware of how we use food now. It was a profound truth for me to realize food was a means of comfort for me in stress and anxiety. Until that realization came from God, I would just eat too much and not know why. It also brought a helpful insight to the other side of the spectrum when I was caring for women in my church who were struggling with eating disorders. The first step is coming to the realization that the way we view

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### **Deep South Regional Founders Conference—**

January 24-26. Bethlehem Baptist Church in Laurel, MS. Theme: *The Doctrine of Sanctification*. Main Speaker: Conrad Mbewe. Go to [founders.org/events/](http://founders.org/events/) for information.

### **True Church Conference—**

February 14-17. Grace Life Church of the Shoals, Muscle Shoals, AL. Theme: *Honoring the Excellency of Jesus Christ*. [truechurchconference.com](http://truechurchconference.com)

### **Southern Baptist Founders Conference Midwest—**

February 26 & 27, 2019. First Baptist Church of Fenton in Fenton, MO. Theme: *Reformation in Today's Churches*. Speakers include Dr. Thomas Nettles & Dr. Owen Strachan. <https://sbfcmw.wordpress.com>

### **Saved By Faith Youth Camp—**

June 17-21, 2019. Webster Conference Center, Salina, Kansas. Speaker: Dr. Jim Orrick. For more info go to [www.sbfyckansas.com](http://www.sbfyckansas.com) or email [trinitybaptistwamego@gmail.com](mailto:trinitybaptistwamego@gmail.com).

### **Encouraged to Endure Conference—**

July 25-27, 2019. Second Baptist Church, West Frankfort, IL. Speakers: Joseph Mahlaola, Larry McCall, & John Snyder. Worship Leader: Tom Clay.

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and consume food can reveal much about our souls.

Second, keep a close eye on your weight. I once heard Pastor Al Martin address a group of pastors and he shared this simple, but important, truth for pastors: "What you eat and what is not burned off that day goes here, here, and here [referring to parts of his body]." My weight has become a very helpful gauge on how well I am doing with my battle to find comfort in food. When my weight goes up it could mean a number of things. What it almost always exposes is that I am under more stress and eating more as a result. The managing of my weight becomes a gauge of not just stress level but how I am coping with it. If a pastor is fifty to one hundred pounds overweight, the cause may be a great turmoil in the soul that cannot be ignored.

However, weight does not tell the full story. I once talked with a pastor who battled overeating, and yet was very skinny. He lamented how hard it was to battle overeating, and yet hear often, "You are too skinny. You need to eat more." Likewise, there are those who are overweight because of a thyroid or metabolism issue, not because they overeat because of stress. Despite these exceptions, our weight can tell us a lot about our souls. Keep an eye on it.

Third, care about your personal testimony. Keeping one's weight down and staying in shape becomes harder the older we get. I'm not suggesting a person who has a bit of extra weight and doesn't exercise as often as they wished they did is in danger of marring their gospel testimony. Nor am I advocating that we are to somehow pursue an attractive exterior for our message to be heard. We are all broken vessels being used in the Master's hands. But, for any Christians to appear utterly enslaved to any kind of substance, whether it be drugs, possessions, or food, risks harming their testimony of freedom we have in the gospel. This was the elephant in the room at the convention that particular year that got exposed. The gospel provides freedom from sin and the world in Christ and the power of that message can become confusing when it is shouted by a man who is one hundred and fifty pounds overweight and gets winded walking to the pulpit to preach. Self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit that needs to be born in our lives to affirm our testimony. The Apostle Peter calls all pastors to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3). Be mindful of your personal testimony.

Finally, find your comfort in Jesus. It is a powerful thing to realize the impact food has on the soul and that we use food as a means of comfort in this fallen world. But, the solution doesn't stop by mere awareness. Our souls are nurtured and cared for when we realize our comfort in the stress and difficulties of our ministries is not in food, but in Jesus. We have to own our pursuit or rejection of food before Jesus can come and provide the only lasting comfort in the sufferings of this world. What resonates with the Holy Spirit who resides in each of us as followers of Jesus, is that Jesus satisfies in a way the best food cannot.

Pastors, be honest with the place food has in your life. It took me thirty years before I was honest about it. It will always be a battle for me. I assure you, the soul will continue to languish in the pain and sadness that exists that food tries to cover. Remember, God's grace will meet you in that place of openness and honesty and will give you strength to walk in self-control and victory with the snares that food brings. It will create a space in your soul that will bring the relief and peace that you truly seek.

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## PRAYER MEETINGS FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND REVIVAL

- Fellowship Baptist Church in Onaga, Kansas—5:00 pm on Sundays
- Trinity Baptist Church in Wamego, Kansas—8:00 pm on Saturdays

*The Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches is an association of Southern Baptist Churches that are united to manifest the glory of God above all. We set out to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. As an association of churches we are bound in mutual covenant to strengthen and support one another - motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture - by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.*

*We are a non-geographic association seeking to include any like-minded body of believers so that together we might better fulfill the great commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our intent is to lean on His instruction and not our imaginations so that He is honored in all that we do. We welcome churches who adhere to the confessions of faith accepted by Southern Baptists throughout their history, including, but not limited to, the Second London Confession (1689) and the Baptist Faith and Message.*



Baptist Association of Churches