



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 or call us at 785-456-8513.

PHYSICAL CARE FOR A PASTOR

Friendship by Brian Croft

(From *The Pastor's Soul: The Call and Care of an Undershepherd* By Brian Croft & Jim Savastio; pp. 125-130; Evangelical Press; www.epbooks.org)

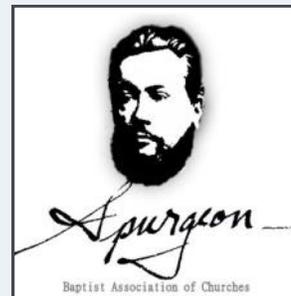
Charles Spurgeon is one of my heroes. I love so many of the same things about Spurgeon that others commonly love about him, such as his Christ-centered preaching, his wit, humor, courage, authenticity; boldness, brilliance, and ministry faithfulness, to name a few. However, the more I learn about this prince of preachers, the more I feel drawn to some of the lesser-known qualities of this larger-than-life figure. As a very young man, he was one of the few pastors willing to go into the homes of those infected by the plague in London and care for the sick and dying. He was uniquely transparent about his struggles with depression. And another lesser-known mark of Spurgeon I have come to admire was his close, intimate friendships with other men particularly pastors.

Iain Murray wrote a biography on Spurgeon's eventual successor, Archibald Brown. Brown pastored another large congregation on the other side of London from Spurgeon. There are a few moments in the book where Murray beautifully captures the sweet friendship that existed between Brown and Spurgeon. One aspect of Brown's suffering was the loss of two wives within a few years of the other. Brown later wrote about Spurgeon's care of him as he experienced the grief and despair of losing his second wife a few days previously:

Broken with sore grief, I went over to the Metropolitan Tabernacle. I could not preach but I thought I could worship, and how amazed I was to find that he had prepared a sermon on purpose for me ... As I turned round to come out at the close of the service, there was just one grip of his hand as he said, 'I have done all I can for you, my poor fellow.' I felt he had. I rode home with him that day, and had his loving fellowship as he sat with me during the afternoon. ¹³

Years later when Spurgeon was just a few weeks from his own death, he penned this final letter to Brown:

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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

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“The whole business of the Christian gospel is to bring us to God. To bring us to God so that we are made aware of God and God becomes real to us. That’s what it’s about. And that’s why Christ came. That’s why He died. Sometimes, perhaps, people misunderstand what a Christian really is. And that’s sad. So it’s important, I think, that we emphasize that He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God so that God becomes a real person in our lives and not just a theological proposition.”

Andrew Davis

(Continued from page 1)

Beloved Brother, receive the assurance of my heart-love, although you need no such assurance from me. You have long been most dear to me; but in your standing shoulder to shoulder with me in protest against deadly error we have become more than ever one. The Lord sustain, comfort, perfect you! Debtors to free and sovereign grace, we will together sing to our redeeming Lord, world without end.¹⁴

News of Spurgeon's death reached Brown in London one day after he died. In Brown's sermon that next Sunday, he emotionally spoke about his dear friend who recently went to glory:

He has been to me a very Elijah, and I have loved in any way possible to minister to him. Our roots have been intertwined for well nigh thirty years. Is it any wonder that I feel almost powerless this morning to think of him as a preacher, as an orator, as an organizer, or as anything except the dearest friend I have ever known.¹⁵

Spurgeon and Brown were spiritual giants of their day, pastoring two of the largest churches in all of England. And yet, they both knew there was something they needed to survive the rigors of ministry and the personal suffering of their life--friendship. Not just any friendship, but a close, personal, intimate, and sacrificial pastor-to-pastor friendship that regularly turned each other's gaze to Jesus.

This chapter seeks to persuade every modern pastor of this essential need. It is a need that is not simply rooted in enjoyment and companionship, but in the necessity to care well for one's soul and survive a long-term ministry. As a pastor seeking meaningful friendship, I am commonly asked two questions:

Should a pastor find friends inside, or outside, his own church?

Should a pastor seek friendships primarily with pastors, or those not pastors?

Let's consider these two common questions and then move to ponder how pastors can begin to seek the kinds of deep, meaningful friendships that are good for their souls.

FINDING MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS

Pastors should seek friendships both inside and outside the church. The church can be a lonely place if the pastor doesn't have friends of some kind within it. It is sweet to have fellow pastors and other leaders with whom the pastor serves to enjoy the fellowship of one another.

Comradery in the rigors of local church ministry is invaluable. And yet, the role of the pastor in a church can make it difficult to find relationships where he can be completely open, honest, and transparent in certain areas. It can be difficult to share all thoughts and opinions with people in your own church. Therefore, friendships outside a pastor's own local church are very helpful, even necessary. These provide a place of safety to talk about issues. It brings relational relief from the burden of always relating to others as the pastor. It produces an environment where church life is not the first conversation. It requires effort, but pastors are most helped by having friends inside, as well as outside his own local church.

Pastors should seek friendships with both other pastors and those who are not pastors. One of the most significant gifts from God to me as a pastor are other pastors. The ministry is a uniquely hard work and only a pastor knows what it is like to be a pastor. As a result, there exists a special fraternity of men who serve as pastors, which naturally creates bonds of friendship that can be deep and meaningful -like Brown and Spurgeon.

On the other hand, I have found a great deal of joy with friends who are not pastors, especially outside my church. One of my dearest friends is a Chick-fil-A

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

True Church Conference—
February 14-17. Grace Life
Church of the Shoals, Muscle
Shoals, AL. Theme: *Honoring the
Excellency of Jesus Christ*.
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](https://sbfcmw.wordpress.com)

Spring Bible Conference—
April 5-7. Covenant Baptist
Church, Broken Arrow, OK .
Theme: *The Glory of Christ*.
Speakers: Ron Crisp, Laurence
Justice, Curtis Knapp, & Robert
Walker. www.covenantbc.com

**Saved By Faith Youth
Camp—**June 17-21, 2019.
Webster Conference Center,
Salina, Kansas. Speaker: Dr. Jim
Orrick. Theme: *God Is Sovereign*.
For more information go to
www.sbfyckansas.com or email
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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owner and a layman in a very different church from mine. We enjoy a lot of the same things, but what I appreciate most about him is he is my friend because he loves me, not because I'm his pastor or for what I can give to him or do for him. Ultimately; this is what all pastors desire in friendship, someone to love them for who they are as a person, not for what they can do for them. Most of the pastor's relationships revolve around the care they extend to others. That is the call of a pastor. However, it can make finding open, honest, transparent, meaningful, mutually beneficial friendships hard to find.

PURSUING FRIENDSHIPS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

The most important way for a pastor to find a meaningful friendship is to pursue being the kind of friend he seeks. Here are three qualities that can make any friendship more meaningful, but I would argue they are particularly important for the unique relationship pastors have with others.

First, pastors need to be an example of a good, faithful friend. Too often it is hard for a pastor to know who wants him for who he is, or for what he can give them. I can relate to this dilemma as most people in my life love and appreciate me for what I can give them. This makes for very fulfilling ministry, but a challenge to find mutual and meaningful friendships. A pastor needs to take a risk and be that faithful friend to someone else with the hope it will be returned. Be there for others in friendship and it is in that space a pastor might find a true friend.

Second, pastors need safety in friendship. Pastors need a place to go where they are received just as their loving Savior receives them. That is, received in love, compassion, empathy, understanding, wisdom and truth. Pastors need a place where they can be open and honest in their struggles, sins, fears, temptations. We need a place where someone refrains from judging and fixing, and simply listens. We need a place to be sad, angry, hurt, and broken. We need another man to walk through the valleys and anguish of our complicated, pressure-filled lives. We need someone who will love us deeply, and yet point us to the One who loves us more than we can imagine and laid down his life for us. Look for those kinds of relationships, and the best way to find them is to be that open, compassionate, listener to another. One of the greatest gifts God has given me to minister to my soul is another safe pastor who desires this kind of mutual friendship.

Last, pastors need an unwavering commitment in friendship. We have all been hurt by someone who couldn't take the brokenness and baggage we brought into a friendship and it ends. We are left hurt, cynical, and guarded for the next time. This can be most dangerous for pastors as these kinds of open friendships already require an extra effort and carry with them a level of liability unique from others. Pastors are often rejected and criticized by church members who leave the church mad at something the pastor has done. This fear of rejection can easily be carried over into friendships even outside the church. Be a committed friend who will not be scared away by sins, brokenness, and the realities of our humanity. As you are that kind of friend where you embrace the brokenness of someone else and love them no matter what, it will probably be in that place of commitment you will find the same commitment of another.

In an amazing irony, the one who arguably needs a friend the most for the good of his soul finds it most difficult to find one--a pastor. Pastors also need those to care for their soul. It will take effort. It will require risk. Pastors will be tempted at times to think it is not worth it. Many pastors spend a lifetime in ministry with very few genuine friends. And yet, I want to urge you to seek them, not just for the unique enjoyment of pastoral friendships and companionship in a noble but lonely calling, but for the good it is to the soul.

¹³ Iain H. Murray, *Archibald G. Brown: Spurgeon's Successor* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2011), 98.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 144.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 145.

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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