



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 call us at 785-456-8513 or email the information to spurgeonassociation@gmail.com.

THE HEALTH OF CONFESSIONAL CHRISTIANITY

By Tom J. Nettles

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM excommunicated organized doctrine for about six decades of the twentieth century. Baptists, as a testimony to their belief in the clarity and infallibility of Scripture, must recapture with candor and honesty the love for consistent, coherent truth that characterized the days of beginning and development. John Spilsbury, pastor of the first Particular Baptist church that arose in seventeenth-century England, reasoned from Scripture that formation of a local church required a confession of faith. Apart from a confession of faith, no covenantal commitment could exist as the foundation for constituting a visible congregation. Only in this way can a group know if they share a common experience and have been shaped by the truth of God's Word toward the same end. Covenanting individuals should know if their goals in worship, witness and teaching are the same. Adherence to a confession demonstrates a necessary unity.

Even when he had reduced his doctrinal expectations to a minimum, John Smyth still gave witness to a confession of faith as the basis for his willingness to unite with others and consider them his brothers in Christ. Although he maintained to the end that true Christians and the openly wicked should not mingle in one congregation, he would no longer call true believers, though they might be in impure churches, Antichristian. He stated

The articles of Religion which are the ground of my salvation, are these, wherein I differ from no good Christian: That Jesus Christ, the Sonne of God, and the Sonne of Marie, is the Anointed King, Priest, and Prophet! of the church, the onlie mediator of the new

(Continued on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Health of Confessional Christianity	2-5
Comments on our Purpose Statement.....	2
Conferences.....	3
Contact Us	6
Pulpit Supply.....	6
Prayer Meetings	6

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.

“He doth not bid us take a taste of all sins and vanities, as Solomon did, to try them: for they are tried already; but that we should set the Word of God always before us like a rule, and believe nothing but that which it teacheth, love nothing but that which it prescribeth, hate nothing but that which it forbideth, do nothing but that which it commandeth, and then we try all things by the Word.”

Henry Smith

“That God should be kindly disposed to a world that hates him so as to bring the gospel of good news to them all is gracious, and that he should go further and actually apply that gospel in such a way as to rescue men and transform them is marvelous.”

Erroll Hulse

(Continued from page 1)

Testament, and that through true repentance and faith in him who alone is our saviour, wee receive remission of sinnes, and the holie ghost in this lyfe, and there-with all the redemption of our bodies, and ever las tinge lyfe in the resurrection of the bodie: and whosoever walketh accordinge to this rule, I must needs acknowledge him my brother: yea, although he differ from me in divers other particulars.

Though minimal in its content, Smyth still expected a clear expression of a distinctive view of Christ, repentance from sin and faith in Him, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection of the body.

Confessions never have substituted for the Bible but have been useful expressions of biblical truth. These expositions have been used to declare faith, to test its existence in others, and to encourage study of the Bible. Confessions serve to organize and extend biblical exposition. All expressions of doctrine in a confession must have root in biblical exposition. Next, these separate expository truths find fuller expression in their synthetic organization into a biblical "doctrine." All that the Bible has to say about God's dealing with sinners in a gracious way to restore them to Himself may be organized into the biblical doctrine of salvation. Texts from Genesis to Revelation would be included in this doctrine; the organized presentation of it would not detract from biblical truth but would give powerful expression to it.

Not only exposition and synthesis, but internal connection should characterize a useful confession. Synthesis connects Scriptures on the same subject with each other to form a doctrine. These doctrines then must be described in such a way as demonstrates that unbroken streams of truth flow into a mighty river of truth. Each developed doctrine plays its part in giving expression to the one faith expressed in the whole of divine revelation. The doctrine of sin may not be separated from the doctrine of redemption which in turn flows from the doctrine of the work of Christ which cannot be understood in its fullness apart from Christ's person. All of these point to the wisdom and purpose of God and the flow of all history to that great confession of all creation, "Jesus is Lord," a history shattering shout which will give glory to God even as he speaks to some, "Depart from me you evildoers, I never knew you," and to others, "Come you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Confessions are man-made documents. No final authority may be claimed for them, therefore, and they may be altered as new understandings arise or new challenges call for the organized expression of a biblical truth. The doctrine of creation has called for the addition of new affirmations in light of the challenge of scientific materialism. Technology and the sexual revolution call for confessional statements about the biblical view of sexuality, the origin and value of life and the nature of the family. Providential events often cause the church to give new energy to understanding the Bible's view of a topic not

(Continued on page 3)

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Springfield Bible Conference—
October 11-13. Faith Bible
Church, Springfield, IL. Theme:
The Glory of Christ. Speakers:
Phil Johnson, Thomas Schreiner,
Curt Daniel. Faithbibleonline.net

2019 KNCSB Annual Meeting—
October 14 & 15. Parkview
Baptist Church, 803 W. 18th St.,
Lexington, NE 68850. For more
information contact Peg Davis at
pdavis@knscsb.org.

**Reformation Weekend
Conference—**October 25-27.
Trinity Baptist Church, Wamego,
KS. The SBAOC annual business
meeting will be held on
Saturday, October 26.

**Southeast Founders
Conference—**December 5-7.
Grace Baptist Church, Cape
Coral, FL. Speakers: Tom Ascol,
Jared Longshore, Tom Nettles,
Tom Hicks. Theme: Law &
Gospel.



Check out the
"SBFYC Official"
YouTube channel to
watch the 2019
sessions.



THE SPURGEON CENTER
for Biblical Preaching at Midwestern Seminary

Making visible the *life, legacy and library* of
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

www.spurgeon.org

5001 North Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, Missouri 64118

(Continued from page 2)

envisioned by generations before us. All the skills of synthesis, inference and coherent arrangement called for by the production of a confession are valuable in creating a position on these new challenges.

Certain themes of the Bible, however, emerge as intentionally central to its message and must be confessed in any generation. Their expressions in confessional terms do not await a lengthy providential provocation. The doctrines of God, creation, mankind, sin, redemption, the person and work of Christ, judgment, heaven and hell bear so heavily on the central purpose of Scripture that they have appeared as items of confession from the beginning. Their clarity has been increasing through the centuries and some aspects of their confessional history may be considered so profoundly enunciated that little change may be expected or even tolerated. Reaffirmation of these clearly defined doctrines must be a part of true reformation.

Baptist history has not been short on such confessions or high confidence in their usefulness. Individuals, churches, associations and larger denominational structures have produced confessions. John Smyth, John Spilsbury, Thomas Collier, Andrew Fuller, John Gill, John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes, Isaac Backus, John Leland and others have produced personal confessions of faith which they were glad to publish to the world to show their agreement with other Christians and to define a specific stance which they felt they could relinquish only under the guilt of the blood of souls.

Churches established confessions by which they would define their mission and discipline their membership. William Stokes wrote an essay on creeds that the Midland Association published in its two-hundredth anniversary history. Stokes, from Birmingham, argued that "it is not enough, therefore, that a man declares that he believes the Bible." Christian communities have not only a right, but an obligation, to ask in what sense he believes the Bible—as a Socinian, an Arian, or a Pelagian? Creeds not only have declared the faith of Christian communities but have served "to test and expose the character of dishonest men, who, under the plea of believers, entered the church to pollute its doctrine and to divide and scatter its members." Creeds then, as they should be now, were used against "the agents of the wicked one" who had crept into the church. "The orthodox creed was employed by the Church to correct the mischief by excluding the men."!

Stokes recognized that some opposed the formulation of creeds. He believed that they were misled and confused two essentially different things, "the voluntary declaration of religious belief by Christian men, with the imposition of a creed by the civil magistrate." This misunderstanding has implicated "the liberty of the one act, in the appropriate condemnation of the other." What Christian would not be delighted to confess his faith to the world to set his witness in the open air and light for all to investigate? Those who have departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, with a few notable exceptions, maintain "an equivocal reserve" to make public such confession "under the pleas of adherence to the Scriptures." Stokes asked his readers to contrast the two

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

ways.

But who are most to be admired,-those who surround their profession with this mysterious reserve, and who in too many instances lead along an unknown path until it is too late to escape from the gloomy labyrinth? The advantages of an open-hearted honesty in a matter of such moment, are far too great to be bartered for the dry sentimentality of the Arian, or the frigid, genteel, but Christless morality of the Socinian party; and when it is remembered that our forefathers set the example with bonds, imprisonment, and death, as the penalty of their fidelity; surely it is not too much to expect that we rigidly adhere to a pattern so noble.²

Stokes wanted the Confession of 1689 used as a foundation for Bible study. He wanted all Baptists "to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the confession of 1689, by carefully examining the whole of its doctrines, with every passage of Holy Scripture which is adduced in their support." Later Stokes affirms, "No human system of doctrines and precepts can be more scriptural than this, and none more expressive of the nature and design of the Lively Oracles." To reach that point of conviction, therefore Stokes recommended a thorough and systematic approach to the study.

Let each member, laying his Bible before him, take the confession, statement by statement, paragraph by paragraph, and read seriously every passage of Scripture to which reference is made, and be earnest in seeking to know the mind of Christ in the words he is reading. This should not be done with haste, nor with a light and trifling spirit, but with seriousness, with gravity, and above all with fervent prayer for that blessed Spirit who "helpeth our infirmities." It should be done in the spirit of those who know they are living for eternity, and that above all other things it is necessary for them to understand what they are about-what they are required to believe and obey-and how they are to act,-in order to have a solid confidence in the world to come. Every man is bound to know on what he is building his hope for eternal life, and to ascertain with precision, whether, what he takes for truth is

really "the truth as it is in Jesus."³

When Alexander Campbell made war against Baptists as "tyrannical ... In converting their own little confessions and covenants into creeds of excommunicating power and efficiency," many Baptists resented his insinuation that Baptists acted as medieval inquisitors or minions of the Star Chamber by opposing his doctrine. Affirming only the authority of Scripture as the "bond of union and communion" and resisting any characterization as creedalists, the editor of the *Western Baptist Review* nevertheless affirms the same lofty witness to truth as does William Stokes. "Suffice it to say," the editor opines,

That we know of nothing in the scriptures or in common sense, that requires the churches to be gagged, to prevent their proclaiming to the world, in this way, what they believe to be the great truths of our religion-that requires them to conceal their light under a bushel. And it is well known that churches, by publishing creeds, have stayed the injurious influences of slander and misrepresentation Indeed, unless a church is ashamed of her doctrine, we can see no good reason for her shrinking from its publication. Truth needs no concealment and seeks none. It seeks the light and the day. It shuns coverts and hiding-places, and stands on the mountain top to be seen and known of all men.⁴

Fullness in a confession of faith, however, should not inhibit the reception of new converts into church membership. A credible testimony of a saving work of grace gives babes in Christ joyful entree to the community of believers. The minimum of truth couched within a credible conversion testimony, however, does not suffice for the standard to which the babe should grow.

B. H. Carroll said, "The minimum of entrance qualification into the church can never be made the limit of the church creed, and especially cannot be made the limit of examination for ordination to the ministry."⁵ Associations adopted confessions and expected their member churches to abide by the truth as there expressed, openly to propagate it through preaching and teaching, and joyfully to conform to its expressions and its implications as long as

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

they maintained the association's fellowship. Denominational structures have flourished or faltered in proportion to their willingness to give open adherence to a healthy confession of faith. An unwillingness to confess a body of definite truth often betrays a spiritual sickness unto death already at work. Even in his day, Carroll observed that denominational institutions were "passing into the hands of infidels and semi-infidels" due to the "absence of definite articles of faith to be subscribed by either teacher or trustees."⁶ A true reformation must recapture the willingness as well as the historical and biblical aptitude to embrace a strong confession of faith. Again Carroll expresses with power and clarity the ultimate goal of confessing Christianity.

A Christian's creed should enlarge, and not diminish, up to the last utterance of revelation in order that each article might be transmitted into experience.

A church with a little creed is a church with a little life. The more doctrines a church can agree on, the greater its power, and the wider its usefulness. The fewer its articles of faith, the fewer its bonds of union and compactness.

The modern cry: "Less creed and more liberty," is a degeneration from the vertebrate to the jellyfish, and means less unity and less morality, and it means more heresy. Definitive truth does not create heresy-it only exposes and corrects. Shut off the creed and the Christian world would fill up with heresy unsuspected and uncorrected, but none the less deadly." ...

This body of truth, constituting the creed of the church, is held as of inestimable value, and was ready to pronounce anathema against an angel from heaven who would preach any other gospel. It is a radical mistake to say that these New Testament articles of faith were few and simple. They touched, among other things, the nature, being, attributes, and offices of the triune God; the Holy inspired Scriptures, the church with its polity, terms of membership, officers, ordinances, and mission; the whole plan of salvation from election, foreordination, and predestination to glorification;

the family; the citizen, the whole of this life, and the whole of the life to come; the ministry of angels good and the opposition of angels bad; and the final judgment.

Particularly they touched the personality of the Messiah, his preexistence and deity, his emptying himself of his heavenly glory and prerogatives to assume in his first advent the body of his humiliation, in order to his vicarious expiation of sin on the cross, his going in his spirit after death to make the atonement in the holy of holies; his second advent to earth in order to assume his body of glorification, and his ascension and exaltation to the throne of the universe as a royal priest; his sending of his vicar, or vicegerent, the Holy Spirit, to accredit, infill, endue with power, and to abide with his church on earth; his third advent to assume his mystical body, the glorified church, to raise the dead and judge the world.

Broad as is the forgoing statement, it does not include all the clearly defined articles of the New Testament faith

Very solemnly I would warn the reader against any teaching that decries doctrines, or which would reduce the creed of the church into two or three articles.⁷

Reformation and Confession cannot be separated.~

Notes:

1 William Stokes, "Essay on Creeds" in *The History of the Midland Association of Baptist Churches from its Rise in the Year 1655 to 1855* (London: H. Theobald, 1855), 10, 11, 13.

2 Ibid., 15.

3 Ibid., 15, 16.

4 Editor, "An Explanation of the Use of Creeds Among Baptists," in *Western Baptist Review*, vol 1, no. 3 (November, 1845), 140, 141.

5 B. H. Carroll, *Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews*, in *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, ed. J. B. Cranfill (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973 reprint of Nashville: Broadman Press, 1948), 149.

6 Carroll, "Safeguards of the Seminary" in *The Baptist Standard*, January 13, 1910.

7 Carroll, *Ephesians*, ... , 140, 145, 146.

The Founders Journal, Summer 2002, wwwFOUNDERS.org

**SPURGEON
BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION
OF CHURCHES**

**PO Box 155
Wamego KS 66547**

Phone: (785) 456-8513

Email:
spurgeonassociation@gmail.com

Contact Us:

Administrative Council:

J.W. Glidewell
Moderator
Phone: (785) 772-1176
jwglidewell@gmail.com

Tony Mattia
Corresponding Secretary
Trinity Baptist Church
Wamego, Kansas
Phone: (785) 456-3796
spurgeonassociation@gmail.com

Ken Jorgenson, At Large
kjorg@hotmail.com

Robin Jackson, At Large
jacksonrobin@gmail.com

Bill Ascol, At Large
bascol@sbcglobal.net

Paul Walker, At Large
pastorpaul@elmavenuebaptist.org

Lyn Hansen, At Large
pastorlyn@insidenp.com



WWW.SBAOC.ORG

MEN AVAILABLE FOR PULPIT SUPPLY

Kevin Berens
Colby, Kansas
Email: berens.kevin@gmail.com
Cell Phone: 785-332-7184

Nathaniel Penland
Lawrenceville, Georgia
Email: n8penland@gmail.com
Phone: 678-925-7024

Tim Lambert
Lindsborg, Kansas
Email: tlambert@smokyvalley.org
Phone: 785-614-3651

Bake Ottogy
St. Louis, Missouri
Email: bakeottogy@gmail.com
Phone: 636-467-7446

Brad Richardson
Lawrence, Kansas
Email: richbud@hotmail.com
Phone: 785-766-7268

John Grove
Ocala, FL
Email: trsjwg@gmail.com
Phone: 352-286-5494

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