



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 SBAOC annual business meeting will be held at Trinity Baptist Church on Saturday, October 26, at 8:00 am in conjunction with the Reformation Weekend Conference. Trinity is located at 16655 W Hwy 24 in Wamego, Kansas.
- Reformation Weekend Conference—October 25-27 at Trinity Baptist Church. The theme for the weekend is *Christ Above All* and our speakers will be Pastor Bill Ascol and Pastor Brandon Rhea. See page 2 for more information.

BOOK REVIEW

Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1807 ed. A. D. Gillette. Published originally, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851. New printing, Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002. Designated as a Tricentennial Edition, ed. Terry Wolever. Includes expanded and new indices; 546 pp. plus xxiv pp. of preface materials. ISBN 1-888514-14-0.

Reviewed by Tom J. Nettles

Baptists of all persuasions should welcome this beautiful volume. The external dimensions are seven inches by ten and one-fourth inches. The gold stamping on the cover and the spine is tastefully done and designates the volume as a part of "The Philadelphia Association Series." The text block is sewn and the headbands contribute aesthetically with a blue and white checkerboard pattern. The endsheets continue the color theme with a rich marbled blue and white appearance. The paper is acid free and the print is friendly.

Content features especially prepared for this edition include several helpful tools. A detailed Table of Contents gives a quick view of the chronological development of issues at the associational meetings. Other preface material include an introduction by Terry Wolever, a short glossary of terms, maps and lists of the constituting churches for 1757 and 1807. The

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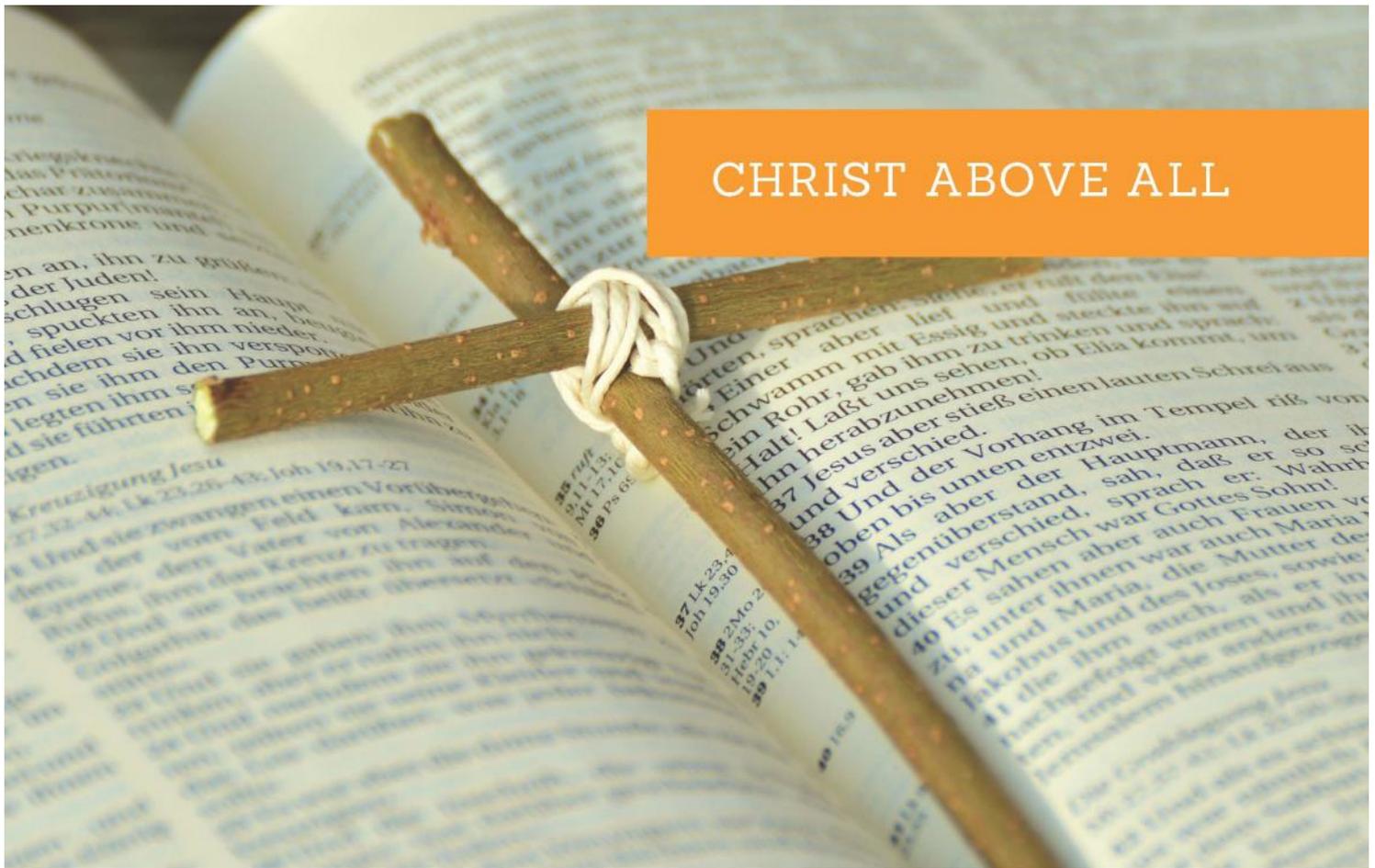
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PURPOSE STATEMENT:

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



CHRIST ABOVE ALL

REFORMATION WEEKEND CONFERENCE

With Pastor Bill Ascol and Pastor Brandon Rhea

Trinity Baptist Church, 16655 W Hwy 24, Wamego, Kansas
October 25-27, 2019

SESSION TIMES:

FRIDAY @ 7:00 PM

SATURDAY @ 10:30 AM, 1:00 PM, & 7:00 PM

SUNDAY @ 10:30 AM

Recommended Lodging: Wamego Inn & Suites - 785-458-8888

Registration is free. Please email trinitybaptistwamego@gmail.com
if you are attending for planning purposes. Thank you!

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.

“Every true Christian ought to be a man of prayer. All his views, all his affections, all his desires, hopes, and joys, ought to be constantly mounting on the wings of devotions and flying before him into heaven. Every rub that he meets within this thorny wilderness, every outward combat, every inward struggle ought to make his groans and prayers rise incessantly, as memorials before that throne from which he expects aid and deliverance. Without this, he is only a nominal, not a real Christian...If [he is] not addicted to prayer, [he] is a man without any interest in Christ, without hope, and without God in the world.”

—John Smith

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middle of the book, between 198-199, contains eight pages of high quality glossy paper with photographs and engravings of people, churches and artifacts. The indices include a massive index of persons (469-494) with more than 1200 names. An index of churches mentioned in the *Minutes* is equally exhaustive and helpful. The subject index covers pages 505-536 and a Scripture index filling double column pages covers from 537-545. Another small index lists biblical persons mentioned in the *Minutes*. I have tested the usefulness of these indices. They make the book very accessible for research.

Even apart from these added attractions, the *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association* is a volume every Baptist should have. Its churches were heirs to a matured Baptist theology and ecclesiology; the *Minutes* show its growth and theological stability for a century and how these theological ideas played their role in the lives of the churches. The doctrinal consistency from the earliest years and throughout the century makes an impressive and encouraging challenge to the insecure, minimalistic theological scene of today. When enlightenment rationalism bullied its way into American colleges and many American pulpits, William Staughton, in 1800, would acknowledge that they lived "in an age when thousands are treating the doctrines we maintain as unintelligible, and the duties we practice as irrational." Nevertheless, the congruity between the human mind, the realities of nature and the Spirit's working provided unassailable evidence that "He who formed the mind is the author and finisher of our faith." Not to any "fancied internal light, any capricious impulses, which may be supposed to supersede the necessity of scriptural instruction" did he point them, but to the "operations of sovereign grace, which include the regeneration and sanctifying of the heart, strong consolation in trouble, and lively hopes in death" (352). In 1804, Burgess Allison could remind the churches, important are the doctrines of grace with which it behooves you to be acquainted; various are the divine truths necessary to be exhibited to the Christian's view, and many are the duties requisite to be inculcated and warmly recommended to practice." He expressed the persistent intent of the association, under the unerring leadership of the Spirit of wisdom, to be that "we should press one and another of those doctrines and duties upon your notice, that we may stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" (397). William White, in 1803 could speak confidently of the "Calvinistic scheme, (which we believe to be founded on the word of God,)" and exhort his hearers to "become exemplary for purity of doctrine, zeal in his service, and uprightness in your lives" (384, 391). The final circular letter in the volume, William Staughton's presentation of the qualifications for gospel ministry, urged a knowledge of "the doctrines of grace, and of the 'law of the house of the Lord.'" The *Century Sermon*, preached by Samuel Jones in 1807, contained his admission that a historical presentation of this sort is "dry" and falls short of requiring the fervency, devotion and pathos which divine truths "not only allow, but require." He then set forth a catena of doctrinal subjects that would inflame passion within both speaker and hearer:

To speak of the deplorable state of man under the wrath of God, and the sentence of condemnation; to display the unsearchable riches of the grace and love of God in the way of recovery and salvation through Jesus Christ; to describe the work of the Spirit in taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us, his work of conversion and sanctification; to paint the awful process

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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.

True Church Conference—
February 20-23, 2020. Speakers:
Justin Peters, Tom Nettles, Tom
Ascol, David Miller, Jono Sims, &
Jeff Noblit. Theme: The
Pretenders: Unmasking the
Tragedy of Unregenerate Church
Membership.
truechurchconference.com



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

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in the great day, and finally the irrecoverable perdition of the ungodly, and the glory and felicity of the righteous; these are subjects that will admit, and even call for animation. Here the preacher may well glow with ardor, and the hearer feel an interest. These subjects, when accompanied with divine power, will melt the affections, bow the will, and mend the heart.

For one hundred years the Philadelphia Association had maintained a stable consistent witness to the truths originally present in the founding churches. This phenomenon most likely is explained by the operations of confessional theology in the association. The charting of this provides another interesting aspect of this volume. The first mention of the confession comes in 1724 on a query concerning the fourth commandment, "whether changed, altered, or diminished." The answer states, "We refer to the Confession of faith, set forth by the elders and brethren met in London, 1689, and owned by us" This answer indicates that the confession already operated as a doctrinal guideline for the Association at that time. Again, in 1727, the Confession of Faith is referenced on a question concerning marriage. A query concerning church membership in 1735 was answered by referring to the Confession of Faith, chapter xxvii. In 1742, the Association voted to reprint the Confession and annex a short treatise on church discipline to it. The next year, 1743, an event occurred which gives a clear example as to how seriously the Association took their confessional arrangement. Was the Confession merely descriptive or did they consider it prescriptive for those professing to be in good standing in any of the churches of the Association? Consider the following narrative.

Tuesday, the house met according to appointment, at 8 o'clock, A M., to consider further the affair begun yesterday, touching the differences at Montgomery. After some time spent in debate thereon, brother Joseph Eaton stood up, and freely, to our apprehension, recanted, renounced, and condemned all expressions, which he heretofore had used, whereby his brethren at Montgomery, or any persons elsewhere, were made to believe that he departed from the literal sense and meaning of that fundamental article in our Confession of faith, concerning the eternal generation and Sonship of Jesus Christ our Lord; he acknowledged with grief his misconduct therein, whether by word or deed. We desire that all our churches would take notice thereof, and have a tender regard for him in his weak and aged years, and in particular, of that great truth upon which the Christian religion depends; without which it must not only totter, but fall to the ground; which he confesses he was sometimes doubtful of. Our brother Butler, gave his acknowledgment, written in his own hand, in the following words:—"I freely confess that I have given too much cause for others to judge that I contradicted our Confession of faith, concerning the eternal generation of the Son of God, in some expressions contained in my paper, which I now with freedom condemn, and am sorry for my so doing, and for every other misconduct that I have been guilty of, from first to last, touching the said article, or any other matter" (47, 48).

Requiring public repentance by written statement and oral confession concerning divergence from an article in the Confession of faith seems to be very close to a prescriptive use of the confession as regards the terms on which the churches were united. It is prescriptive, however, not because the Confession holds independent authority, but in its relationship to the arrangement of biblical revelation. In reading the *Minutes*, one does not receive the impression that the Confession rose to the level of an authority. The members of the Association

argued for, and conducted themselves throughout, as persons under the sole authority of Scripture. The Confession, however, gave prominence to leading doctrines of the Bible around which a constellation of other biblical teaching revolved. A denial of the Confession equaled a denial of a clear biblical truth distilled from many places in Scripture and upon which many other teachings depended. In this particular case, "the Eternal Generation of the Son" has such prominence in their thinking that they called it "that great truth upon which the Christian religion depends; without which it must not only totter, but fall to the ground." The biblical material that leads to a doctrine of the Trinity demands an eternal Father/Son relationship which also makes necessary the personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit. To deny the eternal generation of the Son meant throwing away the doctrine of the Trinity and rearranging all the Scriptures that lead inevitably to that teaching. In addition, this would severely compromise the concept of the eternal covenant, the nature of the incarnation, the atonement, justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, sanctification and mortification of the flesh by the Spirit, the efficacy of the Father's electing grace in committing to the Son the work of redemption for the elect, the sealing of this work to the elect by the Spirit, and a host of other biblical nuances that depend on an attitude of reverence and worship for the Holy Triune God.

The denial of the article involves much more than just neutering a complex concept. One cannot reject a doctrine as unessential to Christian faith solely because it seems on the surface to be too complex, too metaphysical, beyond the capacities of a mere child. Many truths, in fact most truths, about God are so, and the most mature know that they are but children in the presence of God. With no embarrassment and with undiminished faith, Christians confess that large portions of divine revelation, which is given us for our understanding, exceed our present understanding and will challenge our highest spiritual and mental capacities as long as we are in this world. Much can be understood, however and that which in our present state of perception seems to probe the deepest into the eternal essence we should be loath to relinquish. .

Baptists of the Philadelphia Association believed that the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son held such a status in the system of God's gracious revelation. Relationships within the Godhead as revealed in Scripture demanded it. They had no desire to go beyond Scripture, but every instinct of their piety demanded that they leave no biblical truth as a matter to be negotiated away. Denial of eternal generation questions the whole foundation of revealed truth and eternal redemption as well as "the foundation of all our Communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him" (Confession II, 3).

The *Minutes* give us even more on this issue of confessions and serve as their own explanation of the importance of this doctrinal recantation for the peace and unity of the brethren and churches. In October, 1773, Abel Morgan proposed that the general letter to the churches consist of "observations and improvements of some particular article of faith, contained in our Confession, beginning with the first, and so on in order, unless occasion require the contrary" (136). This information appeared in the records for May, 1774, as an explanation for Morgan's circular letter on article one on the Holy Scriptures. In October 1774 Samuel Jones wrote an exposition of article two entitled "Of God and of the Holy Trinity." Jones affirms the wording of the confession and sets out "to remove some difficulties attending it, so far as the mysteriousness of the subject will admit." When he arrives at the point of exploring the relationship between the Father and the Son, Jones writes "It remains, then, that he was the only begotten Son of God by eternal generation. After listing several supportive biblical passages, he proposes the question, "If he was the Son of God by generation as to his divine nature, how could he be co-equal and co-eternal with the Father?" His answer dipped into historic analogies and arguments by affirming that of necessity father and son must exist simultaneously, even as mind and thought, or sun and light. The relationship in these is not of temporal priority but of consequential priority, order of nature. "As the Father exists a Father from eternity, so does the Son a Son." Humble recognition of both revelation and continuing mystery must color our treatment of this subject.

Thus, dearly beloved, we have endeavored to set before you this essential article of our faith in as clear a manner as the narrowness of our limits, and the mysteriousness of the subject, would permit. But let no one presume to think that he can by searching, find out the Almighty to perfection, nor vainly inquire where the Lord has not revealed. Let us rather be humbly thankful, that the Divine Majesty has condescended to make such wondrous discoveries of his being and perfections.

Expositions of the Confession of Faith continued through article XXII in 1798 after which the designated ministers addressed a series of special subjects. A compilation of these letters, synthesized with other selections from the *Minutes*, would make a highly useful body of divinity. A large number of other letters contains rich and affectionate pastoral advice and admonition and provides a worthy exercise in edifying and devotional reading.

Quite helpful also is the first-hand look at the operation of Baptists during the years prior to the Revolutionary War and during the early days of the new nation. Particularly in the '60's and '70's do we find mention of petitions for relief of persecution and civil disabilities placed on dissenters, especially Baptists, in the colonies where established churches pursued their favored status with repressive zeal. A

committee of grievances was appointed in 1774 to cooperate in relief efforts to oppressed Baptists and to aid in petitioning for relief. Subsequent to the Revolutionary War, numbers of statements about the blessings and opportunities of religious liberty checker the narrative. The Circular Letter for 1797 concerns "Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience." Thomas Memminger, after a sparkling exposition of Christian liberty and its concomitant implications for a call to holiness and truth, gives one paragraph to liberty of conscience but is mainly interested in the liberty Christians have to be free from all "commandments, doctrines, or ordinances, unless founded upon, consistent with, and springing out of his word, which alone is truth" (329). The Century Sermon contained some observations on the state of religious liberty and remarked, "Having been persecuted and oppressed, suffered imprisonment and alienation of property; it is but reasonable to expect, we should be very jealous of our religious liberty, which indeed is the case." Persecution for cause of conscience is "so horrible: to invade the rights of the Deity, to compel people to obey man rather than God, to do what they verily believe they ought not, and to pay for what they never had, nor wish to have; every feeling of the moral sense, to go no farther, rises against it" (461).

Some of the most interesting statements about religious liberty concern its impact on the sincerity and success of the rising interest in missions. These *Minutes* give a highly interesting insight into the missionary impulse of these Baptists. Even before Carey and company arose, and before the arrival of William Staughton, who was a student that attended the organizational meeting of the Society, the missionary zeal of these Regular Baptists is clear. In 1773, having benefited from the visitation of several ministers from the Philadelphia Association, the Quekuky (Kehukee) Association in North Carolina solicited "the continuance of correspondence and MISSIONS." In that same year, "the usefulness of a travelling minister on this continent appearing more manifest by trials," the Association appointed John Gano as a "messenger of the churches" and voted to defray his expenses, twelve pounds as he reported the next year. In 1799 they proposed a general conference composed of Baptists from all the associations "as may seem most subservient to the general interests of our Lord's kingdom" (343). The next year, they accepted a proposal "to invite the general committee of Virginia and different Associations on the continent, to unite with us in laying a plan for forming a missionary society, and establishing a fund for its support, and for employing missionaries among the natives of our continent" (350). In 1801, after reading letters from Carey at Serampore and Dawes among the Hottentots the note was made, "This Association exult in every prospect of the success of the gospel, and wish the

missionaries God speed" (360). The Circular Letter of that year gave an intriguing view of the relation of missions to those churches that had no political power vested in their advancement. Baptist growth in the newly formed nation demonstrated this. The exponential increase in Baptist churches showed that "the sovereignty of God in this progress of gospel truth is great, teaching us that Christ's kingdom needs no support from union with the governments of this world; that the more distinctly the line is drawn between them the better." (363). The lack of connection that Baptists have with governmental power makes their missionary success more likely and thus their obligation greater.

William Rogers constructed the circular letter for 1806 on the subject of missions. His first point expanded several principles on which missions proceed: a deep conviction of the fallen nature of man, the total inability of all persons to save themselves, in Christ is the fullness of salvation that sinners need, the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth, and the work is to be effected by the ministry of the Word. His second point gave a history of missions from the apostolic age to the present. Rogers mentioned every example at his disposal, including Jesuit missions, the fourteen missionaries that went from Geneva to America, with the most prominent example coming from the English Baptists, Carey, Marshman, and Ward. "We wish them every one success, so far as truth is maintained," Rogers wrote, "In the name of the Lord God of Sabaoth!" The final point held forth the promise of success. When it will happen, we don't know; but that it will happen is certain. "The object of the missionary societies, beloved brethren, is great. greater [sic] indeed than the Reformation itself." The reformation aimed to overthrow the beast. Missions aims to destroy the dragon, "from whom the beast derived its power. The season may soon come when,

Europe and Asia shall resound,
With Africa, his fame;
And thou! America, in songs
Redeeming love proclaim.

Many other interesting ideas could be mentioned that are in the pages of the *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*. The use of catechisms, the nature of church discipline, the theory of associations, biographical material and personal theologies all have an abundance of raw material in these pages.

Both form and content make this a compelling book to purchase and own. It will wear out neither on the outside or the inside. A careful study shows that confessions, Calvinism, religious liberty and missions live happily together and nurture one another when rightly held and practiced with a view to the exaltation of the divine glory.

**SPURGEON
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WWW.SBAOC.ORG

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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