



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.

PASTORAL PRIORITIES

ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES I face in my life as a pastor is maintaining a proper balance in my priorities. Every pastor has several roles which he must fulfill in order to remain faithful to his calling. He must be a student of God's Word. He must be a man of prayer. He must give leadership to the church. He must work hard to preach and teach the Word so that the people under his care are continually being formed by it into the image of Christ. He must do the work of an evangelist and he must give himself to personal work with individual members. All of this and more goes with the territory of serving Christ as an undershepherd of souls.

But every pastor is more than a pastor. He is first and foremost a disciple. Typically he also is a husband. And he will most likely be a father. In addition to this he may take on other ministry-related duties. How are all of these important roles to be fulfilled without sacrificing the best on the altar of the good? It is a daunting challenge under the very best of circumstances.

A question which I often ask people I counsel is this: "What, in order of priority, has God called you to be?" It is a clarifying question because it forces an evaluation of life on the basis of what is most important. From time-to-time I put that question to myself and find that it helps me fight the battle for balance in my life.

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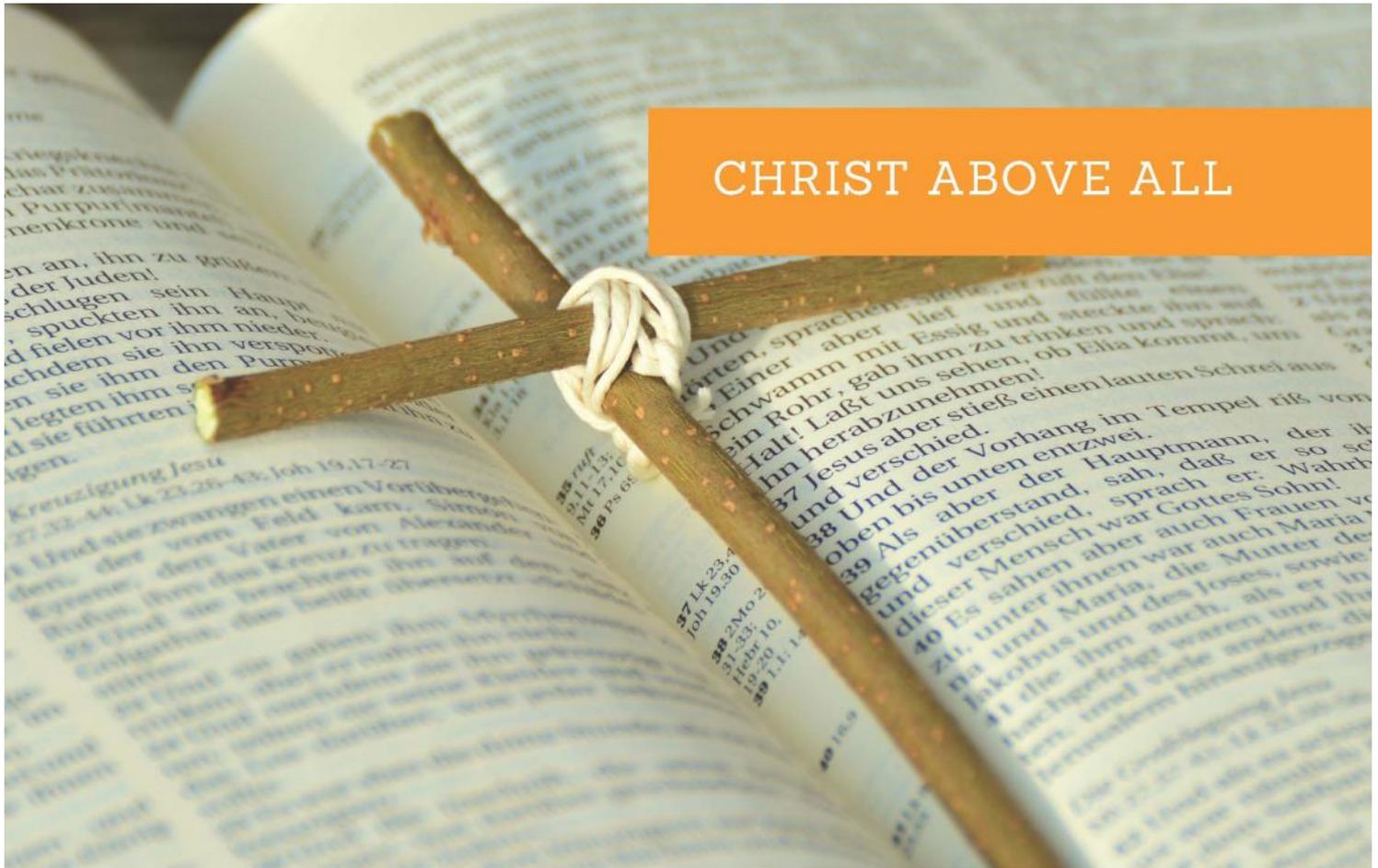
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PURPOSE STATEMENT:

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.

I believe that no man can have any evidence in his own soul that he doth conscientiously perform any ministerial duty toward his flock, who doth not continually pray for them. Let him preach as much as he will, visit as much as he will, speak as much as he will, unless God doth keep up in him a spirit of prayer in his closet and family for them, he can have no evidence that he doth perform any other ministerial duty in a due manner, or that what he doth is accepted with God.

—John Owen

Prayer is the longing of the soul to hold communion with the Most High, the desire of the heart to obtain blessings at His hands.

—Charles Spurgeon

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A Christian

What has God called me to be? First, He calls me to be a sincere, devoted follower of Jesus Christ. This is so basic that it is easy to take for granted and to forget about it. One great danger of the ministry is professionalism. A pastor can become very adept at doing his job. Like any other vocation, certain skills can be developed and polished in the gospel ministry. A pastor can become so proficient in his public ministry that others will regard him as very successful.

But where "professionalism" as a mentality takes over a pastor's outlook, his heart will inevitably begin to be neglected. And the heart is the primary tool of every pastor. If you are not loving God with all of your heart because you have neglected the basic responsibilities of discipleship, it does not matter how professionally "successful" you become. In reality, it is a sham.

Spurgeon tells of a pastor who "preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said that he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he never ought to enter it again."¹ Such compartmentalization of life may be acceptable in other professions but it is hardly agreeable with vital Christianity and much less with faithful pastoral ministry.

Many good men have been tripped up at this basic level. So guard your heart. Go to God's Word first and foremost as a believer. A pastor needs the very same things which he tells others that they need. He should follow the wisdom of Robert Murray M'Cheyne who noted, "It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."²

Paul told the Ephesian elders to "take heed to yourselves." When he repeats the admonition to Timothy he adds that doing this is an essential ingredient to "saving both himself and his hearers (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 4:16). Pastors must make it a matter of disciplined priority to read, meditate on and memorize Scripture. They must also pray for the work of the Spirit in their own lives. Anything less is spiritual malpractice.

A Husband

After being a Christian, God has called me to be a husband. Like many pastors, I am blessed with a faithful, godly wife. Donna and I take our covenant vows very seriously, which means that I am to have and to hold her above all others. Next to Jesus Christ, she is my top priority.

It is an awesome responsibility to be a husband. Jesus Christ in his relationship to the church is to be our model. Being the head of a household is a great challenge. A godly wife both needs and desires godly leadership from her husband. The call to be a godly husband includes providing such leadership. Christ calls a man to fight against the opposite and equally deadly errors of self-protecting passivity and self-serving authoritarianism in the way that he relates to his wife.

The pastor's wife may have the most difficult role in the whole church. She sees all of her husband's blemishes and shortcomings and yet must receive

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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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instruction in God's Word from him week by week. She lives in a fishbowl. Unrealistic expectations from the congregation can often add great stress to her life. Thoughtless comments, which may or may not be designed to hurt, can wound her deeply. If, in addition to these and other pressures, she feels that her own husband is neglecting her, the pressure can become too great to bear. As a husband, it is my responsibility and privilege to reassure my wife that she is more important to me than any other human relationship or responsibility which I have. I am called to nurture and cherish her, to help her fulfill her own calling as a woman of God.

Donna needs to know that she is more important to me than my ministry as a pastor. When this message is clearly and regularly communicated then those inevitable seasons of unusually high demands from the church are more easily weathered.

A Father

The third thing which God has made me is a father. Donna and I have six children, so I get a lot of practice at fatherhood. If pastors' wives have been singled out for special concern, pastors' kids have become proverbially notorious. Too often they are sacrificed for "the sake of the ministry." I remember sitting in my study as a young pastor listening to a retired pastor whose successful ministry was widely acclaimed. He spoke of many of the wonderful things he had experienced in the churches he had served. Then he added, "But I paid a high price for my success. My children did not get what they should have from their father and today have turned away from the Lord and the church."

As he wept I pondered. At that time my only child was barely a toddler. The draw of never-ending needs and opportunities to minister was tempting me to neglect my family for the sake of "my ministry." But, God reminded me that, in terms of priority, He calls me to be a father before He calls me to be a pastor. My children need to know that, next to their mother, they are the most important people in my life. My congregation also needs to know this.

A pastor can easily though unintentionally neglect his children out of a misguided notion that he must always be available to minister to other people. Under the best of circumstances there will be some disruptions in a pastor's home life. He is on call 24 hours a day. If a death or tragic accident involving one of the members occurs just before a pastor heads out the door to take his son fishing, his plans must necessarily change. Such demands are to be expected.

Because of this two temptations face every pastor who is a father. The first is to simply expect his child to understand his change of plans the same way that he does. A pastor knows that it is sometimes necessary to interrupt plans in order to minister the gospel of God's grace to hurting people. But, depending on his age, all his son knows is that he did not get to go fishing because somebody else needed and received his dad's time and attention. When these occasions arise, a father needs to talk to his son, sympathize with him and seek to make it up to him in a reasonable and intentional way.

The other temptation is to become so overwhelmed with guilt because he had to change his plans that the pastor allows his child to manipulate him into actions or decisions which he would not otherwise intentionally pursue.

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Parenting by guilt has become all-too-common in our culture, and pastors are unfortunately not immune to it. Pastors should intentionally carve out time in their schedules for their children and then guard it scrupulously. When plans affecting our children have to be changed because of ministry emergencies, we must be diligent in making it up to them.

A Pastor

The fourth thing which God has made me is a pastor. This is my vocational calling. This is what occupies the bulk of my time. I am constantly amazed that God has given me the privilege to serve Him in this way. It is the highest vocational calling in the world. My responsibilities as a pastor take precedence over any recreational activities or avocations. All that is involved in shepherding the flock of God, which the Bible spells out in a fairly comprehensive way, comprises my duty. In this, my most important tasks are to labor faithfully in the ministry of the Word and in prayer. Again, these must not be carried out simply on a "professional" level. Rather, they must be taken up in the midst of my own pursuit of holiness.

There is an inevitable loneliness that goes with being a pastor. Much of the work which must be done can only be done when a man is alone with His God. Without this intimate time with God, time spent with people will not be of much value. There are a thousand "aids" available to pastors today to enable them to skirt the hard work of study and prayer. "Powerful" sermons and "guaranteed" programs are regularly marketed to pastors with shameless bravado. A man with a little ingenuity, less integrity and ample finances can keep himself well-supplied with a constant stream of such resources. But he denies his calling by living off of the work of others rather than doing the work of the ministry himself.

A Helper

Beyond these four callings in my life, I also am involved in helping with other worthwhile endeavors. My work with Founders Ministries (editing the Founders Journal, publishing, etc.) and my involvement in my local pastors' conference and association are all important. But in terms of priorities all of these rank below the four things which I have mentioned above. By keeping this in mind I can save myself much heartache and confusion.

Maintaining Balance

How do these priorities work? Well, those who know me best can easily testify that I do not always practice what I have written here. Though my desire and intention is

never to deviate, I have repeatedly had to make mid-course corrections through the years. But that is the value of having clearly defined priorities. They provide a reliable map to make such adjustments.

Each priority builds on the ones that precede it. I want to be faithful in my work with Founders Ministries. But I cannot be--no matter how much good might be accomplished through my efforts--if I do that work at the expense of my pastoral responsibilities to Grace Baptist Church. Furthermore, I can be a faithful pastor without being involved in other ministries. But I cannot be a faithful pastor if I neglect the higher priorities of my wife and/or children. In fact, according to 1 Timothy 3:4-5, I am disqualified if such neglect characterizes my life. Nor can I be a faithful father if I fail my wife. On the contrary, one of the best things I can do for my children is to love their mother very well. And I cannot be a faithful husband if I neglect my relationship with Christ.

All of the priorities in my life can function with appropriate importance as long as I keep them in their proper place. But when a lower priority leaps above a higher, then I am setting myself up for a fall. It is spiritually disastrous to put my wife above my Lord, or my children above my wife, or my pastoral ministries above any of those three. It is no slight to the church that I serve that their place in my priorities comes after my devotion to Christ and family. On the contrary, the church gets more of what they need from me when I minister out of a conscious commitment to these priorities.

By remembering the priorities of these callings in my life, I am better able to establish and maintain balance in my obligations. Perhaps the most useful discipline to facilitate this balance is learning to say no. Spurgeon said that for a minister, learning to say no is of far greater value than learning Latin! He was right. No matter how much a pastor tries to do there will always be more to be done. Some good things which scream out for his attention should be left undone so that he can do what is better and best. When he has to make those hard choices, he should do so on the basis of the priority of his callings. Then he can take heart in knowing that he has acted in faith based on the claims which God has made on his life.

1 *Lectures to My Students*, reprint edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 17.

2 Andrew Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne*, reprint edition, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 258.

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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