



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. Our speakers will be Pastor Bill Ascol and Pastor Brandon Rhea. See page 2 for more information.

MEDIEVAL MISTAKES

Sinclair Ferguson

ALTHOUGH PROVOKED BY THE INDULGENCES peddled by Johannes Tetzel, the very first proposition which Luther offered for public debate in his Ninety Five Theses put the axe to the root of the tree of medieval theology: "When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'Repent,' he meant that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance." From Erasmus' Greek New Testament, Luther had come to realize that the Vulgate's rendering of Matthew 4:17 by *penitentiam agite* ("do penance") completely misinterpreted Jesus' meaning. The gospel called not for an act of penance but for a radical change of mind-set and an equally deep transformation of life. Later he would write to Staupitz about this glowing discovery: "I venture to say they are wrong who make more of the act in Latin than of the change of heart in Greek!"

Is it not true that we have lost sight of this note that was so prominent in Reformation theology? We could well do with a Luther *redivivus* today. For a number of important reasons evangelicals need to reconsider the centrality of repentance in our thinking about the gospel, the church and the Christian life.

One of our great needs is for the ability to view some of the directions in which evangelicalism is heading, or perhaps more accurately disintegrating. We desperately need the long-term perspective which the history of the church gives us.

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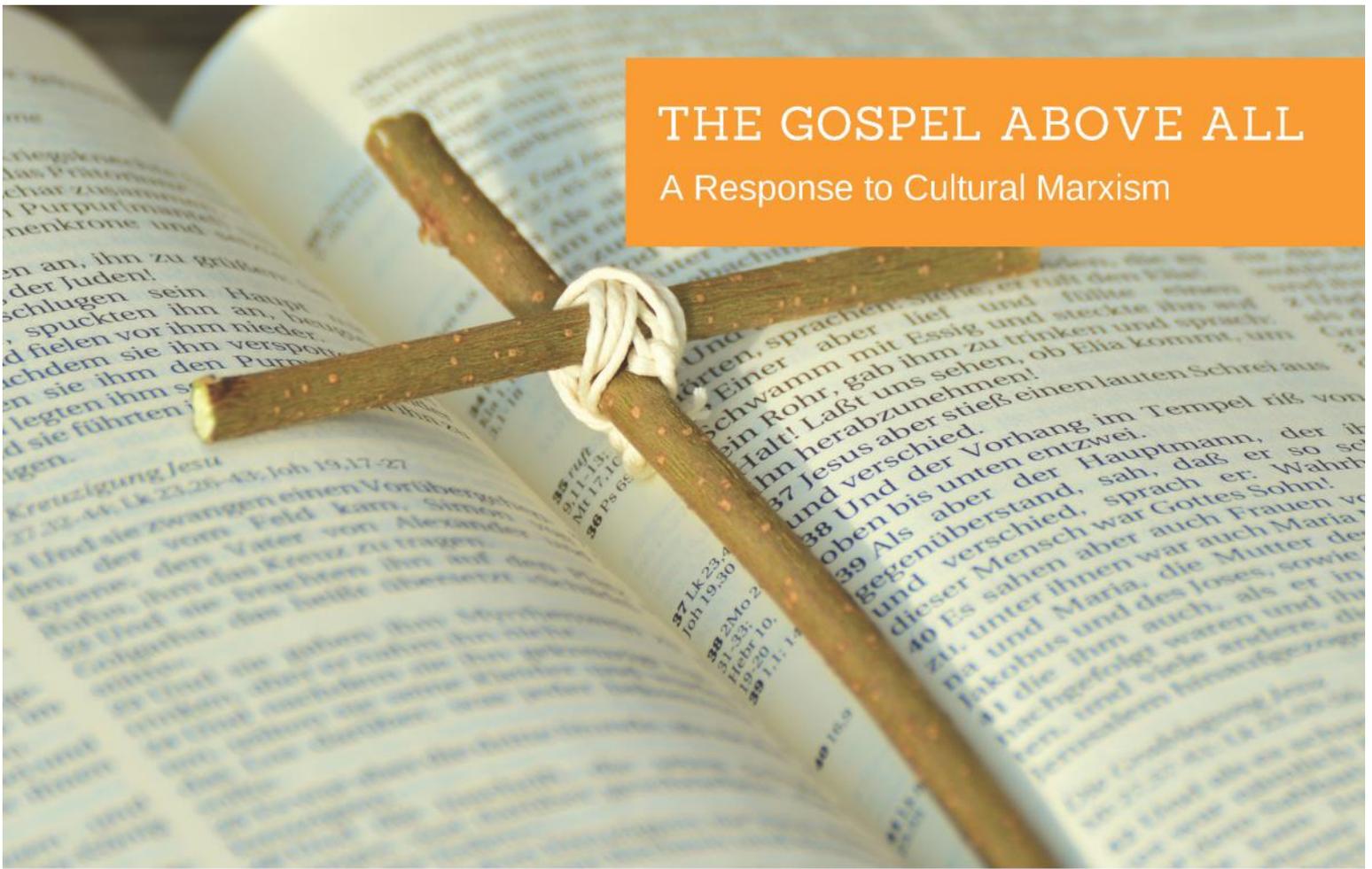
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PURPOSE STATEMENT:

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



THE GOSPEL ABOVE ALL

A Response to Cultural Marxism

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, 1:30 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.

“When I seem to you at any time to be intoxicated as it were by the hurry, the business, or the dissipation of life, spare not the best offices of friendship; recall me to that sobriety and seriousness of mind, which become those who know not when they may be called away: place before me the solemn triumphs of which you have been a spectator, and animate me to press forward in emulation of so glorious an example. To die the death, we must indeed live the life, of Christians. We must fix our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. We must endeavor habitually to preserve that frame of mind, and that course of conduct, with which we may be justly said to be waiting for the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know not any description of a Christian which impresses itself so forcibly as this on my mind.”

*The Life of William Wilberforce,
1838*

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Even within the period of my own Christian life, the span between my teenage years in the 1960s and my forties in the 1990s, there has been a sea-change in evangelicalism. Many "positions" which were standard evangelical teaching are now, after only three decades, regarded as either reactionary or even dinosauric.

If we take an even longer-term view, however, we face the alarming possibility that there may already be a medieval darkness encroaching upon evangelicalism. Can we not detect, at least as a tendency, dynamics within evangelicalism which bear resemblances to the life of the medieval church? The possibility of a new Babylonian or (more accurately, following Luther) the Pagan Captivity of the Church looms nearer than we may be able to believe.

Consider the following five features of medieval Christianity which are evident to varying degrees in contemporary evangelicalism.

1. Repentance

Repentance has increasingly been seen as a single act, severed from a lifelong restoration of godliness.

There are complex reasons for this—not all of them modern—which we cannot explore here. Nevertheless, this seems self-evident. Seeing repentance as an isolated, completed act at the beginning of the Christian life has been a staple principle of much of modern evangelicalism. It is sad that evangelicals have often despised the theology of the confessing churches. It has spawned a generation who look back upon a single act, abstracted from its consequences, as determinative of salvation. The 'altar call' has replaced the sacrament of penance. Thus repentance has been divorced from genuine regeneration, and sanctification severed from justification.

2. Mysticism

The canon for Christian living has increasingly been sought in a 'Spirit-inspired' living voice within the church rather than in the Spirit's voice heard in Scripture. What was once little more than a mystical tendency has become a flood. But what has this to do with the medieval church? Just this. The entire medieval church operated on the same principle, even if they expressed it in a different form: the Spirit speaks outside of Scripture; the believer cannot know the detailed guidance of God if he tries to depend on his or her Bible alone.

Not only so, but once the 'living voice' of the Spirit has been introduced it follows by a kind of psychological inevitability that it is this living voice which becomes the canon for Christian living.

This view-inscripturated Word plus living voice equals divine revelation—lay at the heart of the medieval church's groping in the dark for the power of the gospel. Now, at the end of the second millennium we are on the verge—and perhaps more than the verge of being overwhelmed by a parallel phenomenon. The result then was a famine of hearing and understanding the Word of God, all under the guise of what the Spirit was still saying to the church. What of today?

3. Sacred Powers

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

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. "The Pretenders: Unmasking the Tragedy of Unregenerate Church Membership." truechurchconference.com

Midwest Founders Conference 25th Anniversary— "Union with Christ". February 25 & 26, 2020. First Baptist Church of Fenton. Speakers: Dr. Greg Gilbert, Dr. Curtis McClain, Dr. Terry Chrisope, Dr. Bob Curtis. Register online at: <http://sbfcmw.com>



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

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The divine presence was brought to the church by an individual with sacred powers deposited within him and communicated by physical means.

Today an uncanny parallel is visible wherever cable TV can be seen. Admittedly it is no longer Jesus who is given by priestly hands; now it is the Spirit who is bestowed by physical means, apparently at will by the new evangelical priest. Special sanctity is no longer confirmed by the beauty of the fruit of the Spirit, but with signs which are predominantly physical.

What we ought to find alarming about contemporary evangelicalism is the extent to which we are impressed by performance rather than piety. The Reformers were not unfamiliar with similar phenomena. In fact one of the major charges made against them by the Roman Catholic Church was that they did not really have the gospel because they lacked physical miracles.

4. Spectators

The worship of God is increasingly presented as a spectator event of visual and sensory power, rather than a verbal event in which we engage in a deep soul dialogue with the Triune God.

The mood of contemporary evangelicalism is to focus on the centrality of what 'happens' in the spectacle of worship rather than on what is heard in worship. Aesthetics, be they artistic or musical, are given a priority over holiness. More and more is seen, less and less is heard. There is a sensory feast, but a hearing famine. Professionalism in worship leadership has become a cheap substitute for genuine access to heaven, however faltering. Drama, not preaching, has become the 'Didache' of choice.

This is a spectrum, of course, not a single point. But most worship is to be found somewhere on that spectrum. There was a time when four words would bring out goose-bumps on the necks of our grandfathers: 'Let Us Worship God'. Not so for twentieth-century evangelicals. Now there must be colour, movement, audio-visual effects, or God cannot be known, loved, praised and trusted for his own sake.

5. Bigger means better?

The success of ministry is measured by crowds and cathedrals rather than by the preaching of the cross and the quality of Christians' lives.

It was the medieval church leaders, bishops and archbishops, cardinals and popes, who built large cathedrals, ostensibly *Soli Deo Gloria*-all this to the neglect of gospel proclamation, the life of the body of Christ as a whole, the needs of the poor and the evangelism of the world. Hence, the 'mega-church' is not a modern, but a medieval phenomenon.

Ideal congregational size and specific ecclesiastical architecture thankfully are matters of indifference. That is not really the central concern here. Rather it is the almost endemic addiction of contemporary evangelicalism to size and numbers as an index of the success of 'my ministry'-a phrase which can itself be strikingly contradictory. We must raise the question of reality, depth and integrity in church life and in Christian ministry. The lust for 'bigger' makes us materially and financially vulnerable. But worse, it makes us spiritually vulnerable. For it is hard to say to those on whom we have come to depend materially, 'When our Lord Jesus Christ said "Repent!" he meant that the whole of the Christian life is repentance.'

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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