



SBAOC Weekly Update

NEWS & PRAYER REQUESTS

- I am asking for prayer and possible help. Our church plant in Fremont is in need of a new roof. Insurance will not cover it since we've recently acquired the building and the roof is just plain worn out – not necessarily damaged. The need is critical. Needs to be done this summer. This is a \$30,000 job – no way we can swing that! Asking for prayer and a possible mission team to come and do the job. I know they are out there – just need the right connection. Thank you! Lyn Hansen, North Park Church, Columbus, Nebraska
- Please pray for Trevor Johnson (missionary to Papua) as he continues to have health issues.
- Mark your calendar! *Saved By Faith Youth Camp* will be June 15-19. Registration information will be available in February at www.sbfyckansas.com.

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.

I THANK GOD FOR THE CALL TO PREACH

By Allen Harrison

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE I have been involved in the ministry of the gospel for over fifty-one years. What a joy it has been, even with an assortment of difficult times along the way. I only wish I could do it all over again and again. Thank you, Lord, for calling me to preach! What a privilege it has been and still is.

I did not always feel that way about preaching. As an extremely shy teenager, I could not understand why the Lord would be pressing upon me a concern about preaching. It didn't make any sense at all and this controversy with Him continued for some time. One day, without warning, my desires were radically changed. I wanted to preach, even though I knew little of what was involved in the ministry. Looking back, I see the gracious hand of our sovereign God overruling my obstinate reluctance and giving me new desires that were not natural for me. The sovereignty of God was very evident at the very beginning of my ministry, even though I could not have discussed it in any understandable manner. I knew it was true in my experience, I would later see it clearly in the Scripture.

God's sovereign providence had already been revealed in some earlier

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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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"I firmly believe that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and self-seeking and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Ghost will come and fill every corner of our hearts; but if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and self-seeking and pleasure and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God; and I believe many a man is praying for God to fill him when he is already full of something else."

Moody also spoke movingly of the work of the Spirit in the believer's life. "The work of the Spirit is to impart life, to implant hope, to give liberty, to testify of Christ, to guide us into all truth, to teach us all things, to comfort the believer, and to convict the world of sin."

D. L. Moody

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experiences in my family. My oldest brother was killed in flight training in the early months of World War II. He was in a building on the airbase when two planes collided overhead. The trajectory of their fall brought them down on that particular building. As a young boy I could not believe it was a sheer "accident." God had to be involved, but no one had ever taught me about His providence, especially the hard providences! A few weeks before the end of the war, my other brother's plane was shot down on a bombing mission over Tokyo. It was not his regular time to fly, nor his regular plane and crew. He was a substitute bombardier on that mission. Out of thirty planes in the group only one was lost that night, the one he was on. Again, was this "incredible bad luck" or the sovereign purpose of an all wise heavenly Father? My family believed God was in control, even though the pain was so great. Still, God's sovereignty was not explained to me from Scripture. That came years later.

While a student at Baylor University I was told of a church in Waco where they sold good books to students at discount prices. I walked down to the Tabernacle Baptist Church and was greeted by the pastor, Dr. A. Riley Copeland. He asked if I had any "pink tracts." Well, I had given away many tracts but none of them had been pink! He filled my hands with tracts written by A. W. Pink (I had not heard of him before). Returning to the dorm I began to read these messages and realized I had never heard this truth preached. But I knew it was true. There was too much Scriptural emphasis on the greatness and grace of God. Soon I bought Pink's *The Sovereignty of God* and my life was never the same! I still have, and read, that old red hardback copy I bought nearly fifty years ago. No, it is not for sale!

In those days, a Baptist ministerial student in Texas was expected to attend Southwestern Seminary. While at Baylor I had learned about Dallas Theological Seminary and I really felt that is where I should get some great training for the ministry of the Word. That was their emphasis. I did spend a very profitable year at Dallas but at the advice of Dr. Criswell I transferred to Southwestern and eventually got a degree there. Dr. Criswell said, "Son, if you are going to work with Southern Baptists you need to go to one of our seminaries. But while you are at Dallas get all you can, you may not get it later!" While at Dallas my friends and I wrestled with the issues of limited atonement, etc. Dr. S. Lewis Johnson was a great help in solving some of those questions that kept us up into the wee hours of the mornings. The doctrines of grace were becoming very precious. I did not yet know that the background of my denomination had been almost totally Calvinistic (a word I was feeling more comfortable with). I kept wondering why I had not heard these wonderful truths about the grace of God in the preaching I had heard all my life. Good men had been used of the Lord to help in my spiritual journey, but these great doctrinal truths had not been a part of their public ministry.

I pastored two rural churches while in Baylor and Seminary. Those dear people will have special rewards for helping train this young preacher with their counsel and patience. My first full time ministry was in the Rio Grande

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

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>

**2020 Saved By Faith Youth
Camp—**June 15-19. Webster Conference Center, Salina, Kansas. <https://www.sbfyckansas.com/>



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

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Valley of South Texas. I attempted to be an expository preacher. The study was a great help to me and there was some evidence of the Lord's blessing. However, I was beginning to see that not everyone in our Southern Baptist life was as excited about the doctrines of grace as I was. A few debates came up over Scriptures that some of the folks had never thought about too carefully. A dear older lady in that South Texas congregation was a great encouragement. She had formerly been a Presbyterian and gave me her copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith. I still have it. But I did not know until later that our Baptist forefathers had found that wonderful document to be a helpful guide in formulating our early confessional statements. Why had I not heard that long before?

As, time passed, I became increasingly concerned that methodology should correspond to theology in my ministry. Did I really believe that God sovereignly saves sinners through the work of the Holy Spirit applying the truth of the Word? Was I responsible to secure some sort of response to the truth preached? I came to see that both Scripture and experience indicate that my responsibility is to clearly set forth the truth of the gospel and look to the Lord alone to produce the results. This is easy to say, but the task of altering popular methodology to correspond to biblical theology can be challenging. Belief and practice, however, must come together.

It was while pastoring the First Baptist Church, Ozark, Missouri that I came to the place where conscience would not allow me to continue with the traditional altar call system. Having seen it done all my life, having practiced it myself (with growing reservations), I reached a point in my thinking that something must be changed! I had not read anyone else's thoughts about this matter, but felt there must be many people likewise troubled about this practice and the apparent problems it produced. But again, why were we not hearing of the need of having theology and methodology "in sync"? Could it be that our theology had become such an indefinite matter that we were trying to cover our lack of convictions by the use of psychological and emotional appeals that resulted in comfortable statistics? I only knew that I had to make some drastic changes.

With some trepidation, I shared with our congregation in Ozark a list of reasons why I could no longer give a traditional altar call. The Scriptures did not justify it, church history did not provide a sound basis for it, and I had seen too many people spiritually and emotionally injured by its use. Amazingly, the congregation accepted the changes suggested and many expressed their encouragement and agreement. I felt as if a very heavy weight was lifted. I could preach more freely and urge people to respond to the Lord. If they desired to remain after a service they could express their spiritual concerns with me, some of our deacons, or any Christian present. It was no longer a rigid form of response that was required. One lady told her unsaved husband, "You can go to church now, listen, and get up and walk out. No one will embarrass you." He had some bad experiences with altar calls before. She was right, he could come, listen, think, and leave, if he so desired. Anyone should be able to do that without feeling manipulative

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pressure upon his emotions. When someone says, "I understand you do not give an invitation," I usually reply that I do give about a thirty-five or forty minute invitation! The message from the Word is the invitation. But I have not given an altar call since 1968. Convictions and practice should go together.

No, there have not been great numbers respond in my fifty-one years of preaching the gospel. I have never pastored large congregations nor preached to great numbers of people. But the Lord has given evidence of His gracious work in the lives of some, perhaps (and probably) more than I have been able to discern. I have a note in my Bible that always encourages me: "Heaven will be the best and safest place to hear the results of our labors." I like that. I believe that.

It is great to preach without depending upon pressure—psychological or emotional—to move people to respond to the truth of the gospel. I really do think the matter of the altar call is one of the most important issues for us to deal with in our local churches and in our denomination. We have seen some encouraging things happen among us in recent years. Wouldn't it be something if we really saw a great change in some of our methods of dealing with people that would indicate we really do believe in the sovereignty of God? Our statistics would probably look a bit different, but we could learn to live with the honesty!

Looking back over a half century of ministry my heart overflows with gratitude. I am still amazed that I have had this incredible privilege. To have the opportunity of preaching the gospel of the grace of God is, outside our own salvation, the greatest gift God could give a human being. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul writes, "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts." This verse is sort of a summary of how I see the ministry. It is a gracious gift from God and it is to be carried out in view of our accountability to Him—not regarding success, but faithfulness. It may be a lot more successful than we yet know. Or, possibly, a lot less. He knows and that is enough.

There is a lot to discourage ministers of the gospel today. Hasn't there always been? Paul's testimony to the Corinthians helps us deal with discouragement. In 2 Corinthians 4:1 he writes, "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart." The minister of the gospel is first of all a man

who has "received mercy"—mercy in his own soul, and added mercy for the task of telling others about His mercy. Since this is true, we do not lose heart. We do not throw in the towel! We do not easily give up this greatest of all opportunities, this preaching, this telling the old, old story whether anyone seems to be listening or not. We must be passionately committed to this one central task—the faithful ministry of the Word of our sovereign and gracious God.

Young preachers, don't lose the passion in your ministry. Be zealous and earnest to make the truth of the gospel known. Thirty, forty, fifty years from now, when you sit down and reflect upon the faithfulness of God to you, your family, and the people in your care, may you also be filled with an indescribably sense of thanksgiving. Just think of it, God called you to be a preacher. Not that really is amazing grace!

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**FOUNDERS
MIDWEST**
25th Anniversary

Union with Christ



Dr. Greg Gilbert Dr. Bob Curtis Dr. Curtis McClain Dr. Terry Chrisope

February 25 & 26, 2020

**First Baptist Church of Fenton
650 Oakwood Drive
Fenton, MO 63026**

You can find more information at:
<http://sbfcmw.com>.

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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