



# The *Spirit* of Strawberry Baptist Association

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## Happy New Year

With the New Year on us, it is inevitable that we talk about New Year's resolutions and new starts and such. In that vein, I want you to consider Colossians 3:1-2

*“If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”*

These verses do not need a new year but are certainly appropriate. Set your minds, seek the things. Good words at any time, we need to be reminded to deliberately aim high. The truth of life is that we all get tired, worn down, have times of discouragement, wrestle with illness, apathy and struggle with temptation. So, times like New Year's are appropriate as semi-scheduled reorientations of life and goals. It is easy to get fatalistic, but the conditional nature of the commands in the letter to Colossae remind us that one of the most profound testimonies of the truth of the gospel is found in changed lives.

So, first **IF** you have been raised with Christ. The nature of salvation can be debated all day long, but at the end is a very pragmatic question. What difference does it make? We command people to confess their sins, we plead with people to forsake this world and their foolish pride. But what changes in your life as a professing believer, commend Christ to the hearer? The Bible speaks very plainly that those who are God's are “born again”, we are ‘New Creations’, we are Transformed. It is indisputable that if we are truly in Christ we are not of the world. So, the passage presents two important distinctions for us.

The first involves choosing to deliberately set your minds. Two truths here are reflective of the truth of salvation. The first is that we **can** choose what is good and Godly. In the new life we have in Christ we still wrestle with sin, but the distinction is that we do wrestle! There can and should be an optimism of the faith that sets the person and character of Christ before us constantly – reminding us that there is always an answer to temptation, and struggle. So, choose Christ, set your mind toward holiness and good.

Setting our minds leads to the final issue, what do you choose to strive towards. We above all should be striving toward the things above. In other words, aim high! As in aim beyond this world and the influence of the fall and sin. We were made in God's image, let's not be content in anything less than Godliness of character and thought! We will and do fail, that's not really the issue though. The issue is whether Christ and salvation is powerful enough to lead us ever upward and onward. We may not achieve perfection on earth, but we ought to be aiming and striving for it every day of our lives!

So, make your resolutions, don't let the world overcome the Holy Spirit in your life's aims and intents. Always strive and set you mind on things above, so others will truly see the power of Christ in and through our lives.

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## “Our Mission”

Someone asked me about the purpose of the association. Their question was, *“Does the association exist for the churches, or do the churches exist for the association?”* That is, in the full scheme of things, does the association exist for the unique mission and ministries of the local Church, or, is each Church a servant to the mission and ministries of the association? My response is that the association is a **Mission Resource** that is always there for the local Church; to assist, empower, encourage and promote the diverse programs and projects of the congregations that make up the association. The association **Assists**, (*key word*) and must assist, each congregation in fulfilling its individual calling to Kingdom work, fulfilling the Great Commission. Loyd Corder, Director of the Associational Services Division of the Home Mission Board, defined an association as *“A fellowship of churches on mission in their setting.”* The association extends the work of the local Church beyond what the churches can do alone. Dr. W. W. Barnes, professor of Church History at SWBTS, once stated, *“The purpose of the association has become well defined: to do what could not be done singly, increase the body in weight, increase in strength and achieve greater purpose.”*

But what about **Strawberry Baptist Association**? What’s our Purpose? The financial and prayerful support provided by SBA Churches to Strawberry association is used for mission work and continued church work, not only in Bedford County, but also throughout the United States and the world. The Bible is still God’s Holy Word, Salvation is by Grace alone, the Great Commission is still valid, and there is still a Need to Cooperate & Fellowship together. (*Reprinted 2/10*)

Our **Purpose**: to **ASSIST** the member churches in (*reaching, teaching*) touching every person with the gospel of Jesus Christ; by **Stimulating** greater fellowship, spiritual growth and unity among the churches; **Strengthening** ministries of stewardship, evangelism, missions and discipleship within the churches; and **Providing Opportunities to engage Cooperatively in Missions and Ministries** which the churches cannot adequately support individually. We do not have a Director of Missions to lead Mission and Ministry efforts, so we use of *“The Spirit”* not only to **Inform** member Churches of what is going on in the association; i.e., *“Church News”*, but to also **Encourage** member Churches to participate with other churches by *“providing Opportunities to engage Cooperatively in Missions and Ministries which the churches cannot adequately support individually.”* Remember our Purpose, both Churches and Association, is to reach Bedford County for Christ. **No One Church Can Do This ALONE!**

Our **Vision**: Due to our common faith in Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church, we **Commit** ourselves to **Connecting** with one another, for **Coordinating** the missions and ministries of our member churches, and **Communicating** opportunities to partner together to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Notice those **4 C’s**; we make a **Commitment to Connect, Coordinate, and Communicate** between Churches. That’s where our monthly Associational Newsletter, *“The Spirit,”* comes in; to help Connect member Churches to Coordinate and Communicate Mission and Ministry endeavors between member Churches. **“Kingdom Work is Greater than any Single Church.”** (*see previous Values*) It is imperative that we share with each other the Mission Opportunities and Ministries that each Church is doing; to **“Partner Together to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.”**

Our **Values**: The **Bible** is God’s Holy Word inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is our guide, final authority, source of unity and motivation for service to the honor and glory of God. **Salvation** is the gift of God’s Grace through Faith. It is accomplished once and for all by the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the Cross and His Resurrection from the dead. We are commanded by God in the **Great Commission** to take the Gospel to our neighborhoods, cities, nation and the world. The visible result of our **Obedience** to the Great Commission is the growth of our local autonomous Baptist Churches, distinguished by believers’ baptism by immersion and a commitment to the Word of God. But the Value that unites us and inspires us - **Kingdom Work is Greater than any Single Church**. Therefore we recognize the need to **Cooperate and Fellowship** with like-minded Baptist Churches in pursuit of a unified witness to our local communities. **Strawberry - Reaching the world for Christ begins right here in Bedford County.**



# Around the Association

## Bedford

- \*As we welcome in the New Year, the *Outreach Committee* is planning a Fun Event on New Year's Eve during morning worship.
- \*We are working on a church-wide *Pictorial Directory* with a "professional" photo room set up in the church and internal photographers. The team is taking some amazing photos. The goal is to have everyone's pictures taken by the end of January.
- \*We have 12 youth signed up for a *Trip to the EDGE* in January. We are happy that the playground equipment is getting a much-needed face lift.
- \*We wish everyone a **Blessed New Year.**

## Bethlehem

- \*We have called a New Pastor, Andy Saul. He will start his Ministry with us in January.

## Flint Hill

## Mentow

## Pecks

- \*We held a *Baptismal Service* on Sunday, New Year's Eve, celebrating the New life in Christ of a new believer.
- \*We are starting a New Sermon Series in January on *Experiencing God – Knowing & Doing the Will of God.*

## Quaker

- \*We packed **26 SBCV Christmas Backpacks for Appalachia** and **79 Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes.**

## Timber Ridge

## Trinity

- \*We will be hosting Lifeline Screening on Mon, Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

## Attention - Church Clerks Don't Forget your ACP'S!

You should have received your paper copy. You can fill them out online at [www.sbcworkspace.com](http://www.sbcworkspace.com), by hand and mail them, or drop them off at the SBA Office. ACP's are due by **March 31<sup>st</sup>**. Only **7** have been completed so far.

## SBA Spring Meeting

We are planning a **Spring Meeting** again this year (*sometime in April??*) to focus on **Stimulating Fellowship and Unity. Every Church is Invited, Urged, & Encouraged to participate with their full slate of messengers.** Watch "*The Spirit*" for details, i.e. date, time, place, etc. We are planning on having the meal catered, so we can spend more time in stimulating Fellowship, promoting Unity, strengthening Evangelism and Missions, and spending less time discussing SBA Business. **We Must Be About Our Father's Business!**



*"Forgetting those things that are behind, reaching forward to those things that are ahead." Phil 3:13*

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## **January Events**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Pastor's Conference**