



The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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Photo courtesy of the Church at Southside

Keith Akins (left), pastor of the Church at Southside, and FIVE's general manager Roy Pedroso prepare to serve meals to the Birmingham homeless since Akins' church can't meet during the COVID-19 crisis.

'Let's still go'

Church at Southside finds way to keep serving during crisis

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When the news about coronavirus-related church closures first started floating around in Birmingham, Pastor Keith Akins lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling.

"I was having trouble sleeping at night thinking about some of our friends going without food," he said.

Since November 2016,

his church — the Church at Southside — has largely been made up of homeless people who gather in a parking lot in downtown Birmingham to eat a meal and worship God. They've met rain or shine ever since — and that includes snow and hurricanes.

Counting on a meal

On a normal week, Akins pulls a food truck up, and his team unloads tables and large dishes of food church mem-

bers and volunteers serve to the people lined up — people who count on that meal every week. For that reason, the church staff didn't want to miss a Sunday if they could help it.

"The first week we started hearing about the coronavirus, we thought, 'Let's still go; we'll be safe in how we do this,'" Akins said.

At that point, some groups who normally provided food (See 'COVID-19,' page 7)

Tips on how to meet needs in your area

Like Keith Akins' church (see story, this page), your congregation may be wondering how to best help the vulnerable in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

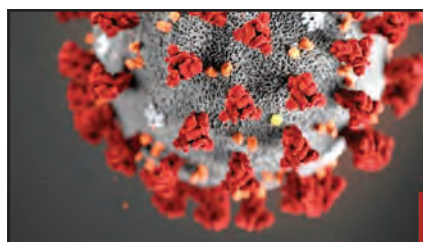
Raleigh Sadler, executive director of Let My People Go, said it can be hard to know what to do — but he wants to help.

"Pastors are scrambling right now, and we want to help them think through what they can do in this season," he said. "Everyone's asking the question of how to make church virtual, but they're also struggling because we know there are people with practical, physical needs we need to meet."

Because of that, he's offering something to interested pastors — free coaching to help them identify the most vulnerable populations in their area and ways to help them. Let My People Go has an assessment in place to help pastors know the needs in their community and connect them with resources to meet those needs.

For more information or to ask for coaching, email Sadler at info@lmpgnetwork.org. (TAB, BP)

To watch the videos from this week's issue, visit our YouTube channel "TAB Media."



COVID-19

See pages 6-9 for information and updates

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TAB staff/families being creative & serving during COVID-19 pandemic



Photo by Janet Erwin

Janet Erwin, TAB's executive editor, hangs her completed face masks out to dry after washing them.



Photo by Rusty Piersol

Neighbors share the hope of the Easter season by designing 'stained glass' crosses on doors and windows.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

Alana Grim brightens up the sidewalk outside her house with chalk in Hernando, Mississippi.



Photo courtesy of Martha Simmons

TAB correspondent Martha Simmons (right) and her mom sew masks in their makeshift factory.

Right: A driveway invites passersby to grab some chalk and draw their own messages of encouragement.



Photo by Annette Brown

Share what you, your community or church have been doing to find creative ways to serve others. Email news@thealabamabaptist.org.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

TAB Media

"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

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MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
President and Editor-in-Chief

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Productivity and intentionality helpful for our new normal

In the matter of four days, I had the same number of conversations asking a similar question — how can we keep the positive aspects of the current stay-at-home restrictions once the risks are minimized?

“I don’t want things to go back to normal, aside from being quarantined that is,” one friend said.

“I really like our new family structure and routine,” another friend stated.

“I’m definitely ready to be able to go places again and get back to work, but I do hope we can keep the calmer lifestyle.”

“There have truly been some blessings that I didn’t even realize I was missing out on, like family worship time, just the four of us in our living room, and an opportunity to sit and talk without being in a rush or being distracted.”

Everyone agrees we want the coronavirus eliminated and the danger alleviated; we also crave freedom to gather together and be out in public again.

We miss our church families even as most are finding creative ways to stay connected.

And we all grieve with those who have lost loved ones to the virus and are concerned about those battling it at the moment.

I’m confident everyone across the globe is more than ready for life as we once knew it to resume, but is it possible to merge our new, yet temporary, normal with our past freedoms and routines and truly have the best of both worlds?

Will we have the discipline to continue prioritizing what really needs to be done over some of the good but unnecessary items we take on, sometimes without even realizing it?

What will business meetings and daily work assignments look like after COVID-19?

Will church look and feel differently post-virus?

Who will we be individually on the other side of this?

Self-reflection is not always an easy task, but there’s really no better time than the present to

go for it. You never know what you will discover in the process.

One thing that comes to mind for me is all the times I’ve thought, and sometimes even said out loud, how I wish I could hit pause on the entire world for 24 hours so I could catch up on a few things while the rest of life was frozen in time.

Technically, that’s not what’s happening right now, but the world has slowed down in so many areas and at such a significant pace, I do have an opportunity to tackle some of the projects that keep getting pushed

aside when life is at full speed.

If I can finish up a few projects that have been weighing heavily on me, then I’ll have a better chance of maintaining some of the positive outcomes from the current restrictions.

The more of those projects that move from pending to completion, the more margin I’ve created — assuming I’m disciplined enough to protect the margin on the other side.

And there’s a bonus — being productive and intentional is not only freeing but also helps the days move more quickly. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

We can’t gather in person to share praise reports right now, but we can give shoutouts through TAB Media

It’s only been about six weeks, but it seems like six months now — all thanks to how quickly and how much life has changed since COVID-19 became a reality for those of us living in the United States.

Many items in the works here at TAB Media were pushed aside to handle news and information related to coronavirus updates.

Several fun features may never find their way onto our pages, but as we uncover those items along the way, I’d like to provide a shoutout when I can.

Mountain View shoutout

For instance, Kyle Taylor from Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell, had planned to help me with a fun photo of some of the TAB readers there,

including my mom, Brenda Davis, so we could give a shoutout to her for keeping up with the group subscription list from the church.

Thanks, mom, for always looking out for the subscribers there at Mountain View and making sure everyone has an opportunity to partner with us.

And thanks to Pastor Sammy Taylor for keeping TAB as a resource for the congregation.

We also thank each of our readers from Mountain View as well as from the more than 3,200 other church families across the state and into the panhandle of Florida that partner with us.

Whether you connect with us individually or through your church family, we are grateful for your partnership and appreciate all you do in service to our Lord.

Having your voice at the table is important to us, and we encourage you to join the conversations that are important to you.

Share your shoutouts

We’d also like to hear about some of the amazing stories happening during this difficult time.

Who are the unsung heroes in your life or community, those making a difference and being a positive influence?

And how is God showing up for you right now? How are you seeing Him move?

We’d love to hear from you. Share your shoutouts and stories through the submission section at tabonline.org or by emailing news@thealabamabaptist.org. And send photos if you can.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

The perfect time to learn and experiment in social media

Chris Martin
LifeWay Christian Resources

I don't have any data to back this up, but I don't really think I need it: It is safe to say that more churches and pastors have used social media to connect with their people in the last month than ever in the history of the Church or the internet. It has been a sight to behold. ...

In my role at LifeWay, I am responsible for advising our 60-plus social media managers on social media best practices. I meet with all of them over the course of a given month. My advice to them the past

few weeks has been this: "It has never been a better time to experiment on social media."

That is also my advice to you today. It has never been a better time to learn and grow and experiment on social media. Why? Two basic reasons:

1. More people are using social media than ever.

Toward the end of March, Facebook reported that record numbers of people were using their apps — specifically, countries hardest hit by the coronavirus had seen a 50% increase in messaging on

Facebook-owned platforms.

We have seen a serious increase in engagement across almost every active social media account we manage at LifeWay. A lot more people are spending an above-average amount of time on social media. Some folks are doing it because they can't go to work. Others are doing it because they can't go to church or other activities.

For a whole host of reasons, more people are scrolling social media platforms than usual. This means you have more people paying attention to your church social media accounts than ever. When you have a captive audience, it's the perfect time to try all kinds of experimental content: live Q&As with a pastor or staff member, Facebook Live worship sing-a-longs with the worship pastor, bedtime stories with the children's minister. Try all kinds of fun content you've never tried before to serve your people and see what sticks.

2. Content standards are flexible.

The second important ingredient that makes our present time such a great time to learn, grow and experiment on social media is that social media users' expectations for content quality are lower than usual.

Local news outlets have anchors reporting traffic and weather from their living rooms. Late-night television hosts are recording shows from their kitchens. NASCAR is airing video-game versions of races in place of the real-life racing that is on

hold. All of this is happening and no one is really complaining.

If video production crews that normally run operations in the millions of dollars are making do with a computer and a webcam, your church's livestream service or Sunday School video quality doesn't need to be pristine.

No one in your congregation expects you to have "virtual church" figured out right now. Don't put undue pressure on yourself to have everything right all the time.

One of the hallmarks of learning and experimentation is failure. We mustn't be afraid of failure when we experiment with social media in this time. It is important that we don't experiment with insensitive, humorous content right now, making light of a tragic situation.

But if our new live worship sing-a-long or evening story time doesn't work as well with our audience as we'd hoped, that's OK.

Our church families feel more disconnected from one another than ever before. But most of them are probably using social media more than ever before. Let's all do what we can to serve them with social media content that points them to the Savior of the world, the source of their hope in scary times.

Experiment. Try things you have never tried. Point your people to Jesus and encourage them with God's word in innovative ways.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Chris Martin is a social media manager for LifeWay Christian Resources and student ministry director at City Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn. (BP)

Pastors and sabbaticals

Thank you for the story on ministerial sabbaticals featured in the March 19 issue of *TAB*.

The Center for Congregational Resources at Samford University has worked with over 150 ministers in the past 14 years to help them experience Sabbath time. At the end of their Sabbath leave, we ask how long it took for the minister to "step off the treadmill." Almost all say two weeks.

Though ministers usually have vacation leave, we know they need more time before they begin to experience the rest that Sabbath time allows. Sabbath leaves are not extended vacations. They represent time away for the minister and his or her family to experience

renewal of spirit, mind, body and emotion through a Sabbath leave plan shaped around their goals. Our research shows that both minister and church benefit.

Our program provides assistance helping ministers create Sabbath plans as well as the opportunity to apply for grant funding in support of the Sabbath leave.

For information, contact the Center for Congregational Resources at 205-726-4064 or visit our website at samford.edu/congregational-resources.

**Director Michael Wilson
Center for Congregational
Resources at Samford
University**

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“I firmly believe God is doing a work in each of us during this time of quarantine.”

TIFFANY HUDSON

Director for Vanderbilt University Baptist Collegiate Ministry

Never, and I do mean never, have Southern Baptists needed to gather together to pray for one another, for America and for the world like we need to pray right now.

President Ronnie Floyd
SBC Executive Committee

Jesus, through the person of the Holy Spirit, is constantly present with every believer. He should be as real to us in the shopping mall as the Sunday School class, as real in the recliner as the pew.

Bob Adams
Retired pastor

Medical personnel need the masks greatly right now. Besides, they didn't belong to us anyway, they belonged to God! God just let

us hold on to them for a little while until He could use them to bless others.

Richard Brunson
North Carolina
Baptists On Mission

In my Bible reading this morning, I was reminded by the Spirit that Jesus can calm storm-tossed seas. I must not be like the disciples who lost faith in the midst of the storm. There is nothing He cannot do when we put our trust in Him (Luke 8:22–25).

Pastor Bill Wilks
NorthPark Baptist Church
Trussville

Why does Jesus tell us not to worry, to not be anxious about the

future? I think it is because He knows that worry distracts us from following Christ. ... Worry served as a distraction from following the very one, Jesus, who can take all that worry and anxiety away.

Matt Madison
Southern Baptist chaplain
and Alabama Baptist

The current global pandemic will create interest among churchgoers and nonreligious people about what the Bible says about plagues, disasters and the end times. The urgency pastors feel is less about stockpiling toilet paper and more about helping people be ready for Christ's return.

Scott McConnell
Executive director
LifeWay Research

From the *Twitterverse*

@jenniferwilkin

Generosity flourishes when we do not fear loss.

@jburnham549

Whatever commands the love of your heart shapes the direction of your life. #lovewelltoday

@PaulTripp

In times of trouble, there's comfort in the cross because it is a constant reminder that God can bring very good things out of very bad things.

@SamAllberry

“You're not preaching to a camera. You're preaching to people — through a camera.” Wisdom from a colleague at church today.

@shadesmtn

World religions say do your best work and hope you can get to heaven. Jesus says I have done the work,

and you can know you can get to heaven.

@BryanDGill

There was something strangely special about sharing the Lord's Supper in our homes but in community with thousands of other @shadesmtn believers at the same time.

@jingraham83

“The celebration of Easter tells us what lies on the other side of COVID-19 and on the other side of all our trials: life with God.” — @esaumccauly

@bradleybrisco

“Jesus is Lord” is not merely a confessional doctrine/statement that is settled once and for all; it is a daily recognition and decision to fall under His reign.

@fxenabler

Hey, church people faithfully streaming low budget, shaky, amateur daily prayer or Sunday service from your messy house because you want to serve your church community and offer what you can to God in love: that's your perfume poured over Jesus' feet. It's beautiful. Keep going.

@DrMichaelLBrown

I would far rather have the whole world hate me and God say to me, “Well done” than have the whole world love me and God say, “I'm disappointed with you.”

@ChrchCurmudgeon

Please pray for our children's ministry director. She fell off a stepstool and suffered injuries to her head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

The Church in Action

We are in the process of starting a fundraiser and communicating with a local church to get rice and oil to people. This church has already started donating rice, but they have already run out of funds. If we can raise enough funds, we will add some vegetables to the donations.

Baptist representatives serving in Asia

Pray for our local Pregnancy Care Center that has remained open [for essential needs] because the local abortion clinic has remained open. They too are on the front lines, and the doctors that serve at Huntsville Pregnancy Resource Center (HPRC) have supported this decision as being necessary even during this pandemic. They are still in the business of saving lives — spiritually and physically!

Madison Baptist Association Facebook post

McElwain Baptist Church is offering a wonderful service to residents in the Crestline, Mountain Brook and Eastwood Mall area. (Although everyone is invited to use this service.) They have a drive-thru gasoline service station set up where they will pump your gas for you. If you are high risk for COVID-19 and are being extra careful about touching gas pumps that everyone in the city is touching, take advantage of this awesome service.

The McElwain gas station is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 2 to 5 p.m.

Birmingham Metro Baptist Association Facebook post

LESSONS FROM ITALY

Faith and self-sacrifice under quarantine

An interview with a Baptist representative working in Italy during COVID-19 pandemic

By Martha Simmons
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Last fall, troubling news images from Italy showed the historic flooding of Venice. Today, the Venice canals are back to normal, but they are eerily empty of their iconic boat traffic, due not to flooding but an invisible tsunami: the novel coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

As of April 9, the disease had sickened more than 139,000 throughout Italy and killed almost 18,000. Italy quickly became ground zero for COVID-19, taking over the title from Wuhan, China, where the disease first emerged. Hospitals are overwhelmed. Coffins are stacked in parking lots, and crematories can't keep up with the deaths. The entire country of more than 60 million is still on lockdown.

Quarantined along with them are Kip and Janet Dwyer, Baptist representatives in Turin, a northern Italy metropolitan area with a population of more than 2 million.

Truly valuing people

Janet Dwyer, who holds a doctorate in counseling, shared with TAB her impressions of the emotional trauma inflicted by the crisis and spoke about how faith has helped her family during this difficult time.

Q: What strikes you most about the human condition in the midst of this crisis in Italy?

A: I have been really impressed



Unsplash.com

Italy has been a hotspot for the COVID-19 outbreak, but throughout the pandemic, the people of Italy have been examples of sacrificial love as they follow the government's restrictions and care for those around them.

with how willing the Italians are to do whatever is necessary for the good of the vulnerable. Italians truly value human beings, which is already evident in the way parents care for and sacrifice for their children.

Italians also value extended family highly, and as Italy's population is aging (Italy has one of the oldest populations in the world, second only to Japan), people seem very willing to sacrifice their personal freedom to move around, go to work and live normal lives in order to protect those they love.

The American in me was a little miffed at having my "freedom" taken away, but true freedom, as

others have pointed out, is not doing whatever you want, but choosing to do what is right and good for the whole.

I feel like Italians have modeled sacrificial love as they have followed restrictions and cared for those around them. Grocery stores here were not cleaned out. All the stores I have been to these days of lockdown have been fully stocked. Nobody is hoarding or buying more than they need.

Deny yourself

To me, this is the big thing Americans can learn from Italy — the greatest freedom is to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. Right now, we have the opportunity

to do that by sheltering in place as much as possible.

Q: Italians are a very sociable culture. How are people managing in this case of extreme isolation?

A: Italians are doing what you see Americans doing these days — church events have moved online, and in some cases there are even more prayer meetings and "gatherings" than usual as people are seeking to support each other.

Living in uncertainty

Friends have told us that they are having virtual birthday parties using Skype, Zoom and Whatsapp, and everyone saw the videos of various cities in Italy with Italians out on their balconies at 6 p.m. singing and dancing together in the early weeks of the crisis.

Q: How can people deal with the emotional trauma of this crisis?

A: For me, the hardest days were when the "rules" kept changing every day, circling closer and closer with more and more restrictions.

The unknown, I think, can just skyrocket anxiety out of control, because you're sort of falling down the ladder of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Forget about trying to live a fulfilling life; people are now wondering, "Am I safe? Is my family safe? How can we not get sick? Am I going to be able to get food and supplies?"

Living under this kind of uncertainty is a low-grade, ongoing trauma. Not everyone responds to trauma by being traumatized but framing the whole COVID-19 experience this way can help us set more realistic expectations for ourselves.

You can't heal from a trauma while it is ongoing; the stress levels are too high.

When a trauma is ongoing, most people are generally unable to achieve the level of safety necessary to process the experience fully.

As the initial shock and panic of

"The American in me was a little miffed at having my 'freedom' taken away, but true freedom, as others have pointed out, is not doing whatever you want, but choosing to do what is right and good for the whole."

Janet Dwyer
Baptist representatives in Turin

the closures start to fade, we may find we have more mental and emotional space to try to make sense of this global outbreak.

Having a robust theology of suffering and loss is a huge advantage. Suffering and loss are a result of the fall and Jesus has redeemed both through His death on the cross — Jesus' resurrection proved that God uses suffering to accomplish good on behalf of all mankind.

Jesus' incarnation and model of humility normalizes loss — in fact, we as believers are called to renounce the things most dear to us as we follow Christ. If we are already making a practice of submitting our desires and dreams to Christ, we will be better able to cope with the losses we are experiencing through COVID-19.

At the same time, the idea that we can and should process all the losses and deaths right now, as the numbers of infected and deceased are increasing, is absurd.

We can ground ourselves in the truths we know about our God and our security in Him, but now isn't the time to pressure yourself to work out all the implications and know exactly how you feel about everything.

Bear other's burdens

It is enough to acknowledge what you feel moment by moment, develop practices for letting those emotions out physically and move on to the next thing. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

We can all help each other by first acknowledging and regulating, best we can, our own emotions and reactions.

For me, this has looked like journaling, prioritizing exercise (some of us will have to find new ways to exercise), watching TV that makes me laugh, baking and doing other indoor things I enjoy.

When the crisis first started in Italy, I had no emotional room to bear anyone else's feelings. When our own "tank" is filled, we can better bear others' burdens by listening to their concerns and understanding them from their perspective.

COVID-19 isn't something any of us can fix, so it is a great opportunity to practice acknowledging each other's reactions as normal and just sitting with each other in the pain.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed due to security concerns. ✠

Church is

MORE THAN JUST SERVICES

COVID-19 time for church to 'reengage world outside church walls'

(continued from page 1)
to the homeless had pulled out because of COVID-19, he said. "People were showing up hungry. Some of them hadn't eaten in a day or two."

But after his team served as safely as they could that Sunday, all churches in the state were told they couldn't gather in large groups on Sundays for the foreseeable future, a measure aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19.

"It was just killing me emotionally and spiritually to think about not showing up," Akins said. "We had built this trust that rain or shine we'll be here. We had been out in rain, hurricane weather and snow, but this was a storm of a different force."

Father's provision

Akins was able to get the word out to his congregation that they would continue to offer food as long as they could within the limitations of the law. But he faced a lot of new questions — how could the church feed people when they can't gather as a group? And even if they could figure that out, how do they buy enough food to prepare a meal that large when they are limited in the quantities of items they can buy from the store?

"The week after hearing the news that we couldn't meet as a group, we got there early with a skeleton crew and more than 100 pre-packaged bags of nonperish-

able food, baby wipes and other things we thought might be helpful," Akins said. "As people walked up, we would catch them, give them a bag, tell them we loved them and then asked them to go on their way so we didn't gather a crowd."

His hope was that throughout

the week as they opened the food items, they would feel the Father's love and provision for them.

"They are some of the most forgotten people in our city, and it's a huge deal to be remembered," he said. "They're loved by God, and the church is a small part of that story."

And even though the bags worked fine, Akins and his leadership team still wanted

to serve them a meal. So they held a Zoom meeting to brainstorm, and team member Whitney Anderson thought it might be an opportunity to help a local restaurant too.

"We know the restaurants are hurting really badly right now too," Akins said. "So we wanted to check around to see if we could bless one of them by paying them to make meals for our church."

Church member Heath Echols began reaching out to local restaurants to see if there was a way the church could partner with one of them. Eventually, he discovered local restaurant FIVE already had a food truck called American Lunch that served free meals to anyone who needed it on a regular basis.

"With everything that's going on, they had already switched from five days a week to seven days a week," Akins said. "They said they would be happy to help us, and we could give a donation if we wanted."

Back in business

And with that, the church's meal service was back in business. They still distribute bags of food too. Akins also gives a message every week on Facebook — something many in the church have access to — to share truths with them and remind them they're not forgotten. Through the years, people who have observed them on the fringes have slowly been drawn in by the love and not just the meal, Akins said. They've become involved in the worship service, and some have met Jesus for the first time.

He said he hopes that through this unusual season, they'll continue to feel like the love the church shows them is a different kind of love.

"We tell them to hang in there and that hopefully we'll be back to normal soon," Akins said. "We want them to know we're not going anywhere."

He also hopes this crisis helps serve as a reminder for the

Church to care for the people who feel isolated all the time, not just during a pandemic.

"As the Church, I think we've become good at 'social distancing' from the people who are most vulnerable, even when things are normal," Akins said. "I believe He's showing us (through this time) that church is more than our services and gatherings — it's time to reengage our world outside the walls." ✠



Photo courtesy of the Church at Southside

The Church at Southside is made up largely of homeless people who gather to worship and eat a meal.

For more information, visit churchatsouthside.com.

DISCIPLESHIP

from home

How churches can continue to offer spiritual growth opportunities online

By Bryan Gill
Special to The Alabama Baptist

As social distancing continues in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, many churches have moved their weekly services entirely online.

Instead of walking down the aisle and picking their favorite seats before the church service starts, congregants now walk to their couch and await the live stream to begin.

Sunday School rooms with doughnuts and coffee have been replaced with of a cluster of screens in a Zoom meeting with children running around in the background.

While the modality of gatherings has changed significantly through the last few weeks, the purpose of the Church meeting together — to grow closer to Jesus — has not.

But how do you disciple your church members well and offer meaningful online spiritual growth opportunities during these times?

Focus on the mission

Start with the mission, not the technology. Tools are to be used to accomplish tasks and should not be the focus of the mission. Don't use a tool just for the sake of using a tool. Come up with a plan and a purpose that the tools will help you accomplish. The key is to find a sustainable rhythm that doesn't confuse or overwhelm your congregation.

Choose the best tool

Two essential categories of content delivery are: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous delivery happens in real time (think Facebook Live and Zoom chats). Asynchronous delivery allows people to view the material at their convenience (think recorded videos).

Both methods have their strengths, and it is important to thoughtfully choose the best tool to communicate with your intended audience.

Synchronous activities are best for small groups or Sunday School



Unsplash.com

classes because they allow for discussion among participants. Zoom and Microsoft Teams are good tools for interactive synchronous meetings.

Asynchronous activities work well when the live component is not necessary, such as for sermons, devotionals, announcements or general text-driven communication.

To ensure a good quality video in either format, utilize these tips:

- ▶ Choose a spot with good lighting to ensure a clear video.

- ▶ Be sure audio and video are both good quality. (Smartphone and tablet cameras are fine, but without a wireless microphone, the farther away you are from the camera, the poorer the audio quality will be.)

- ▶ Turn off all background noise, such as radios or TVs. If possible, turn off notifications on the device you are using too.

- ▶ Dress appropriately.

- ▶ Construct an organized plan but be flexible.

Develop a strategy

Simply putting something online does not mean you are discipling your church members. Churches

“Embrace this new opportunity as a new way to serve your people.

Don't try to recreate your face-to-face church service online.”

**Bryan Gill
men's ministry director
Shades Mountain Baptist Church**

need a strategy for online ministry. Be sure to think ahead and lead well during these unique times. Start with what you want to accomplish and then find the right tool to get the job done effectively.

Your strategy might look something like this:

- ▶ Deliver a weekly 20–30 minute sermon via livestream at your church's usual worship time or post a recording of the sermon. Another option is to record a 30-minute sermon in three 10-minute sections. Close each section with two reflection questions for your church to ponder before moving to the next section.

- ▶ Meet in small groups or Sunday School classes by hosting a

Zoom meeting for class members. Email the link to all class members and also invite those who don't usually attend a Sunday School class.

- ▶ Conduct a mid-week Bible study. Promote the study by posting a 30-second video on your social media platforms.

Consider other ways to continue discipleship during this time too.

- ▶ Record a 10-minute devotional or lesson and post it to YouTube. Send your class a link to the video and use GroupMe or another text messaging app to conduct an asynchronous text discussion afterwards.

- ▶ Use email or apps like Facebook Messenger to maintain continuous contact with your members.

- ▶ Set up groups in a text application like GroupMe or Teams to ask for prayer requests from the group.

- ▶ Send out daily or every-other-day Bible verses to the group via Instagram.

Keep moving forward

Embrace this opportunity as a new way to serve your people. Don't try to re-create your face-to-face church service online. You're not going to be able to do everything the same as you did before moving online.

Also, don't feel like you need to be an expert in online tools to continue the ministry of your church. Find someone who is comfortable using these tools and engage that person in this ministry opportunity.

When this is over and the church returns to the buildings, you might find that these online methods worked well. You might even decide to incorporate some of them into your ministry strategy moving forward.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Bryan Gill is the director of the men's ministry at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham. He holds a doctor of ministry degree in higher education from Gateway Seminary.

Parents as

TEACHERS

Tips for parents helping children continue studies during COVID-19

By Margaret Colson
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama is one of several states that have canceled in-person public school instruction for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year. School systems have moved to a combination of online learning and instructional packets to help students continue their studies, but the learning process is now primarily happening at home.

As this shift to “alternate methods of learning” occurs, many parents and caregivers are concerned about supporting their students through the process.

To address this concern, TAB Talks co-hosts Jennifer Rash and Debbie Campbell recently discussed homeschooling tips for parents and caregivers with Melissa Jordan, director of Faith Community Christian School in Trussville, and Deb Lowery, a Walker County mother who successfully homeschooled a child and a grandchild.

Jordan allayed parents’ fears, saying, “Take a deep breath. Know that you are not going to ruin your child’s education in eight weeks. ... Everything is going to be fine.”

‘You can do it’

“You didn’t choose homeschooling, and that’s OK, but you guys can do it. I promise you can do it.”

Jordan suggested setting up an area in the home where students can work on their schoolwork with minimal distraction, even a kitchen table. In homes with multiple children who may distract each other, she suggested using a trifold science board or even file folders taped together to place between the children so they cannot see one another.

Jordan also suggested parents

set a routine schedule along with a daily “anchor,” such as morning devotionals, that children can expect each day.

The schedule and anchor, she said, help “give your kids that security of knowing what’s coming.” However, she acknowledged, “Every day might be different,” so parents can allow for flexibility in the schedule.

Above all, Jordan said, “Give yourself and your kids an abundance of grace.”

Lowery, a 21-year-veteran home educator, underscored the importance of prayer as parents set out to educate their children at home.


“You can’t do this without praying and seeking Him,” she said.

She cited Deuteronomy 6:6–9, saying, “Schooling starts with parents. God gave us the responsibility to teach our children and to train them up. I am blessed to have been able to do that for 21 years. There were days I wanted to cry; there were trying days. But the Lord brought us through it.”

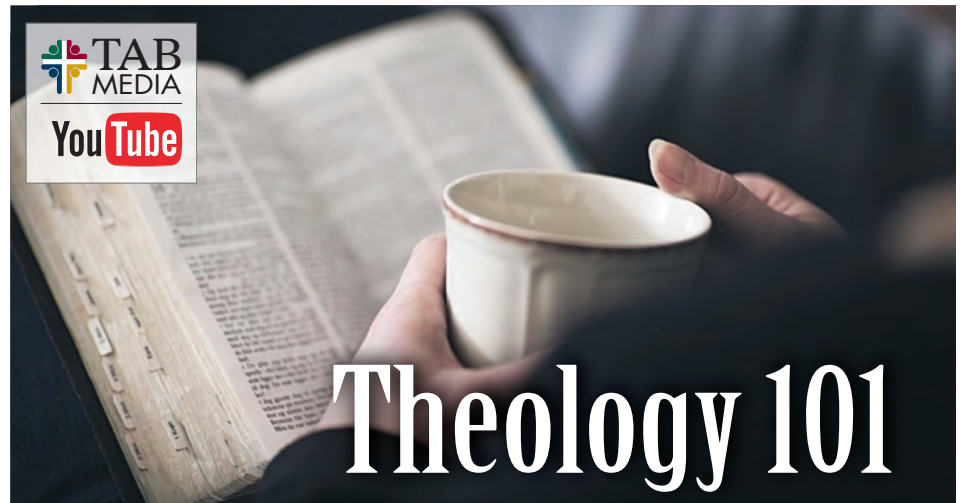
Every family is unique, said Lowery. Her children are eight years apart in age, so she became adept at giving an assignment or project to one child to work on independently while simultaneously offering more directed learning to her other child. One bedroom served as their “homemade schoolroom,” with two desks.

If both parents are home during this year’s school closure, each parent may want to become involved in the educational process based on each parent’s strengths.

Also, parents may call on adult friends or other parents to offer classes online in various courses or lead their children to use online tutorials, she said.

“It’s a blessing to be able to do this,” Lowery said. 

Listen to the TAB Talks podcasts in their entirety, including a suggested schedule for parents to consider, at tabonline.org/podcasts.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Doctrine of God

God as Father

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Previously, in thinking about the doctrine of God, we have used some rather heavy theological terms to describe Him. We began by thinking about the attributes and actions of God. In so doing, we used such terms of multiple syllables and theological heaviness as God’s infinity, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. Then we continued thinking about God using a two syllable and a single syllable term, both of only four letters, by which the Bible describes Him — holy and love. That God is holy is a distinctive theme in the Old Testament and that God is love is a major emphasis of the New Testament.

Sons and daughters


Beginning this week, Theology 101 will seek to let several common images serve to further explore the Bible’s revelation about God. The image for this week is Father. The image of a father is familiar to all of us in that each of us had a father. However, we do not understand God by using earthly, fallible fathers as our exemplars of God as Father. This distinction is immediately made when we add the Bible’s adjective to the term father that results in the designation “Heavenly Father.” Jesus put it like this: “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9).

God as Father reminds us further of His action in begetting us. As sons and daughters of our earthly

father, we know we were begotten of him. As children of God, Christians have “been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). Thus, as Heavenly Father, God has children.

God as Father leads to the truth that He gives good gifts to meet the needs of His sons and daughters. He has given us many great and precious promises about providing for His own. None of His gifts is more precious or greater than the gift of eternal life. This good news is set against the background of the bad news about sin’s wages in Romans 6:23: “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God as Father includes the assurance that He looks after us, providing for and protecting us. Being in Christ through saving faith, we are in the Father’s hand, from which nothing can snatch us away now or forever (John 10:29).

God as Father suggests His nearness to us, His interest in us, His caring for us, His providing our needs and His loving us with perfect, unending love. 

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



NOT EVERYONE IS CALLED TO FOSTER CARE, *BUT EVERYONE CAN HELP.*



Alabama Baptist
CHILDREN'S HOMES
& Family Ministries



This year, we are excited to share with our church partners, stories that testify to the fruit of ministry as we abide in Christ. These stories of changed lives are included in a video as part of our complimentary Church Offering materials. As you share these stories, you can help us serve children and families in need, as we work together to reach our 2020 Church Offering goal of \$3 million!

Items available online for viewing or downloading this Spring:
"Abide in the Vine" video
Full-color 11x17 poster
Full color, front/back bulletin inserts

Printed versions of these pieces, DVDs, and offering envelopes will be made available later this year.

VISIT ALABAMACHILD.ORG/ABIDE TO ACCESS THESE ITEMS DIGITALLY OR TO FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES!



‘Joyful in his calling’

Cahaba Association disaster relief leader Doug Vance sees God’s hand in ministry role

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Doug Vance said every time he stands in someone’s yard with a chainsaw, the person talks about how amazing it is that someone would come all the way there to help them.

And every time, Vance — leader of the Cahaba Baptist Association disaster relief team — tells them that’s not the amazing thing.

Much bigger story

“I say what’s really amazing is all the things God has done in our lives to make it possible for us to be here just because He loves you,” he said. “I tell them there’s not enough paper to write down all the things He put in our stories to get us to that point.”

Vance knows it’s a story much bigger than just him — God started crafting it

long before Vance had ever heard of Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief. He once had a career with the power company. Before that, he worked as a tree trimmer.

“In those jobs, the storms hit, and you go. I was already used to it,” he said.

So in 2014, when he got something in the mail about the need for more disaster relief volunteers and teams, he showed his pastor and told him he thought that would be a great idea.

“He said sure, and he told me to run with it,” said Vance, a member of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion.

And he hasn’t stopped since.

“I don’t know that there’s any way possible God could’ve set my life up any more for this ministry,” he said.



Photo by Bethany Rogers

Joining the efforts of Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief was an easy decision for Doug Vance, who had a career with the power company and worked as a tree trimmer. He now serves as disaster relief team leader for Cahaba Baptist Association.

To learn more about how to get involved in disaster relief work, call 800-264-1225 or visit sbdr.org.

Along the way, Vance has worked with chainsaw, flood recovery and tear-out teams. He’s helped build the Cahaba Association disaster relief team to around 15 volunteers and seen God provide a trailer and equipment.

Tom Stacey, director of missions for Cahaba Association, said Vance is “constantly recruiting” and an encourager.

“He’s all in and excited about the ministry,” Sta-

cey said, noting that Vance keeps the focus on evangelism. “I’ve been involved in disaster relief since the mid-90s, and I’ve yet to see anyone more joyful in his calling.”

Divine appointment

Vance can’t help it — the evangelism side of the ministry “lights my hair on fire,” he said.

He can tell story after story of how he saw God meet people right there in their

yard after a disaster hit — and brought others there by divine appointment too. One woman who had come over to cut her elderly mother’s grass met the team working in the neighborhood and ended up meeting Jesus as she talked with Vance.

‘See the change’

“You could just see the change happening as we talked and she prayed,” he said. “By the end, she was just squalling, and she walked away as happy as can be. That’s what it’s all about.”

Whether it be working with the cleanup crews, administration, feeding teams, shower trailers, child care, you name it — disaster relief needs more volunteers, Vance said.

“It’s an opportunity to meet people where they are, and whatever you can do, disaster relief ministry can use you,” he said.

To learn more about how to get involved in disaster relief work, call 800-264-1225 or visit sbdr.org.✝

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3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of the governor's office

On April 7, Jay Wolf (right), pastor of FBC Montgomery, joined Gov. Kay Ivey as she announced 'Ribbons of Hope.' During the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ivey encourages the people of Alabama to tie ribbons around a tree or pole in their front yard as a reminder to pray for medical personnel, first responders and for one another. Also attending the ceremony were Annel Robayna, SBOM associate in Hispanic church planting, and FBC Montgomery lay leader Soo Seok Yang. (TAB)

Discipleship conference rescheduled for Sept. CP giving continues on pace so far

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and Gov. Kay Ivey's stay-at-home order lasting through April 30, the first-ever Alabama Baptist Discipleship Conference has been rescheduled for September.

The conference — originally set for April 27–28 — will now be held Sept. 28–29 at Fulldale First Baptist Church. Speakers are from across the Southeast U.S. and from Canada.

The crowd size will be capped at 200 because three of the four conference speakers will hold roundtable discussions after their talks.

The discipleship conference is sponsored by Disciple-Making Ministries of Alabama in partnership with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

For more information or to register and save your seat, visit aldiscipleshipconference.com. (TAB)

While the financial impact of COVID-19 is still unknown, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee announced April 3 that Cooperative Program giving in the SBC is above budget by 2.94% at the midpoint of the fiscal year.

Contributions to SBC national and international missions and ministries totaled more than \$15 million in March 2020, bringing the six-month national total to more than \$101 million.

As of March 31, the amount given is above the \$98,250,000 year-to-date budgeted projection by \$2,888,686.43 or 2.94%.

The report does not reflect any financial impact related to COVID-19 and churches meeting online for much of the month of March and April. (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Send Relief names Francis Horton VP of international operations



Send Relief announced Francis K. Horton III as its new vice president overseeing operations outside North America on April 2.

Horton brings more than 20 years of international missions and relief experience to his new role. Since 2016, Horton has served as regional director for West Africa with Samaritan's Purse, leading the work of offices in three countries. From 2008 to 2015, Horton was area director for Central and South Asia with Baptist Global Response. In that role, Horton implemented community development, disaster response and refugee projects in 16 countries.

Horton earned a bachelor of science degree from Mississippi State University and a Juris Doctor from Mississippi College School of Law.

The announcement comes one month after the International Mission Board and the North



HORTON

American Mission Board announced Bryant Wright will lead Southern Baptists' national and international compassion ministries under the banner of Send Relief. (BP)

Former MKs explore compassion down 'The Good Road' on PBS



A new television program highlighting stories of people doing good all over the world will feature an Alabama ministry in an upcoming episode.

The May 16 episode of "The Good Road" — which premiered April 6 on 350 PBS stations, including Alabama Public Television — features work being done in Alabama Village, one of the most dangerous and impoverished neighborhoods in Prichard. The ministry, called Light of the Village, was started in 2002 when the founders, John and Dolores Eads, felt led to establish a full-time ministry after being involved in prison ministry. The goal was to share Christ's love, get to know the community and prevent people from ending up in prison.

The May 16 installment of "The Good Road" is part of a collection of episodes shot in various

places around the world by two former Baptist missionary kids, Earl Bridges and Craig Martin.

The families served in Thailand; the Martins were with the International Mission Board.

For more information on "The Good Road," visit tabonline.org/good-road. (TAB)

Larger churches helping smaller ones survive during pandemic



The Churches Helping Church Challenge, an initiative of the AND campaign supported by Christian ministries across the U.S., will provide \$3,000 grants to small churches negatively impacted by the financial challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. More than 20 donors contributed more than \$160,000 of the \$500,000 April goal as of April 6, the first day grant applications were accepted.

The target recipients for the grants are churches in low-income communities with 25–150 members — churches that play a vital role in their communities but are currently struggling to stay afloat amid current financial challenges.

For more information, visit churchrelief.org. (RNS)

— SBOM NEWS —

SBOM introduces platform to help churches manage virtual giving

The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA) and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) recently announced givethree65.com, a new giving platform available to all Alabama Baptist churches that allows donors to keep giving even without an offering plate.

“The creation of GiveThree65 reflects our deep desire to support the local church by providing a low-cost solution to meet a pressing, ongoing need revealed by the current crisis,” said Barry Bledsoe, TBFA president.

The secure digital giving platform provides four giving channels — an online giving page, text-to-give, noncash giving and a crowdfunding feature — all with no setup fees, subscription fees or contracts. Transaction fees will apply, though donors have the option to cover those fees during the giving process.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said he is grateful for the partnership with TBFA and hopes GiveThree65 helps Alabama Baptist churches during this time of uncertainty.

“This is a simple, clear and low-cost way of utilizing online giving,” Lance said.

Through the GiveThree65 website, churches

can create an online account and giving page to receive gifts that will then be direct deposited into the church’s bank account at least monthly.

Participating churches receive a toolkit with graphics and instructions to help communicate the new giving options to their members.

The kit includes finished files and editable design files to meet the needs of churches with or without a communications team.

The online giving page creates a giving tool right on the church’s website, blog or Facebook page, merging with the church’s brand through a few simple steps. However, churches that don’t have a website also can set up a giving page at no cost.

The other giving options are managed through the service as well.

Bank information is tokenized and encrypted to keep all information secure through Spreedly, a Tier1, PCI-compliant organization, according to information provided by the SBOM.

For more information, visit givethree65.com. (Lanell Downs Smith)



Unsplash.com

The GiveThree65 platform is available to all Alabama Baptist churches and allows donors to continue giving to churches.

Persecuted church

Burmese retaliatory airstrikes kill 21 civilians, displace 1,500 in Chin State

NAYPYIDAW, Burma — Airstrikes in March by Burmese army jets killed 21 civilians in the mostly Christian, ethnic Chin State of western Myanmar (Burma).

The March 14 attack on Meiksa Wa villages 2 and 3 in Paletwa Township of Chin State killed 12 people. The next day, additional airstrikes killed eight in Wetma village and one in Pyaing Tain village. Twenty-eight civilians were wounded in the two days of attacks, and 1,500 others fled.

A military spokesman said the army was returning fire from Arakan Army rebels believed to have been hiding in the villages.

According to Chin Human Rights Organization, the Chin people are targeted by both the military and the rebel fighters.

Christian leaders said the military and rebel fighters have frequently used Christian churches for cover and villagers as human shields.

Sources say the Burmese army has persecuted Christians to impose Buddhism upon villagers.

Myanmar ranks No. 19 on Open Doors’ 2020 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most dangerous to live as a Christian. (MS)



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News near you

CONECUH ASSOCIATION

► On March 15, 1845, 10 people gathered in a home to discuss forming a church. This year on March 15,



Evergreen Baptist Church photo

Evergreen Baptist Church celebrated its 175th anniversary.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State

Board of Missions (SBOM), preached and presented a certificate from the SBOM.

The church choir performed a special song — “Find Us Faithful,” and a brief history of the church was included in the bulletin.

Rod Marshall, president of the Alabama

Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries, brought greetings, and Lonette Berg, executive directory of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a certificate.

Church memorabilia was on display, including photos of former pastors, a wooden communion set, church directories and Woman’s Missionary Union history. Lunch followed the celebration in the fellowship hall.

“It was a time to focus on the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of our people,” Pastor Mark Whittington said.

LIMESTONE ASSOCIATION

► **Andy John King** is the new pastor of **Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens**. He was elected as the next pastor in

October 2019 and served under former pastor Dusty McLemore until his retirement at the beginning of April. King also served Lindsay Lane Baptist as senior high and college pastor and pastor of Lindsay Lane’s church plant in Harvest. Before coming to Lindsay Lane, he served at Southside Baptist Church, Deca-



KING

tur, and Round Island Baptist Church, Athens. King and his wife, Britney, have two children.

OTHER

► **Kenneth Harrison**, longtime pastor in Alabama and Florida, retired from active ministry on Feb. 26 at the age of 87. His Alabama pastorates included 10 years at Southside Baptist Church, Dothan; 10 years at Shiloh Baptist Church, Sardis; and six years serving in Cuba, Alabama. He now resides on his family farm in Florida. ► **The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions** will continue to host the Online Call to Prayer via Zoom every Wednesday at 10 a.m. The prayer time is open to everyone — pastors, staff, church members and all who can participate.

Find the link for the virtual prayer gathering weekly at alsbom.org or tabonline.org/events.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Last week, Buhl Baptist Church hosted an online revival with Michael Mason. If your church or association is hosting a special online event such as a concert or revival, share with us so we can help you announce the virtual event. 🌈

What does the CARES Act mean for you, your church?

Should we or should we not apply for the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan? It's a question Craig Carlisle, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, said he hears a lot from pastors. And he's not alone.

Church leaders all over the state are asking that question as the peak of the COVID-19 crisis looms.

The PPP is part of the economic relief bill, COVID-19 Pandemic

Phase III Stimulus Package (CARES Act), passed March 27. The PPP is intended to help small businesses, including churches and ministries, through the financial fallout from the global pandemic. Here are a few things you need to know:

▶ **A PPP loan can offer churches help with paying employees.**

The PPP is aimed at helping small businesses keep their workers employed and paid during the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes churches and ministry organizations with fewer than 500 employees at one loca-

tion. The loan "may be used to pay payroll costs, group health insurance benefits, paid sick leave, medical and insurance premiums, mortgage interest payments, rent payments, utilities or interest on other loans outstanding at the time of the pandemic," according to GuideStone.

Salary expenses above \$100,000 per employee are excluded.

▶ **Loan amounts are limited and**

may be forgiven. How much can you borrow?

The total average monthly payroll cost for the preceding 12 months multiplied by 2.5. That means if your average payroll costs for the preceding 12 months were \$20,000, the maximum amount of the loan would be \$20,000 times 2.5 for a total of \$50,000, GuideStone explained. The maximum amount available for a PPP loan is \$10 million.

PPP loans — which have an interest rate of 1% — have to be repaid within two years. However, some forgiveness options exist.

A fact sheet from the U.S. Treasury Department explains that loans may be forgiven if the recipient maintains employee and compensation levels and uses 75% of the loan for payroll costs, and the remaining 25% also follows specific uses.

▶ **The loan process doesn't ask churches to surrender any religious freedom rights.**

The loan terms will stay consistent with First Amendment rights and other statutory protections for churches, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission wrote in an April 4 article.

Ministries and churches can also participate even if they don't have their own tax-exempt letter yet.

▶ **Church employees who are laid off can receive unemployment compensation under the CARES Act.**

They can file as individuals with the Alabama Department of Labor.

More information on the CARES Act, its provisions for churches and ministries, and links to documents, resources and applications is available at tabonline.org/cares. (TAB)

More information about the CARES Act is at tabonline.org/cares.

If your home isn't safe, here's an online resource

Domestic abuse is escalating across the state and nation as a result of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. (Read more at tabonline.org/domestic-abuse.)

If you know of someone who is in an unsafe home situation and you aren't sure what to do to help, counselor Leslie Vernick is offering help.

Conquer, an online support community, allows women who are in a destructive marriage to support each other and gain

coping skills and strategies.

"We start with coaching — there's a five-step plan," said Vernick, who is also an author and a contributor to the Church Cares curriculum made available by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Topics covered

The group walks through topics like building a safety plan, learning what the Bible says about abuse and how to gain confidence in your identity as a woman of God.

A membership fee is

charged but Conquer offers scholarships.

Churches looking for a way to help someone through this time also might consider a sponsorship. Women can join through April 23.

For more information on Conquer, visit leslievernick.com/conquer.

If you are in a dangerous situation and need immediate help, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or thehotline.org. (TAB)

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 102,
or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking God's man to serve as our senior pastor. Please agree with us in prayer over this matter. If you believe you may be God's man for us, your resumé may be sent to: resumesbellevuegadsden@gmail.com. Resumés may also be mailed to: Pastor Search Committee, Bellevue Baptist Church, 150 Nocalula Dr., Gadsden, AL 35904. Please check our church website (bellevuegadsden.com) or our Facebook page for more information about our church. For a job description, please contact Susan Sauls: sauls.susan@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Louisville Baptist Church, Louisville, Alabama, seeking full-time pastor. Submit resumé to: Rhonda Henson, P.O. Box 38, Louisville, AL 36048 or rhenson_rn@yahoo.com.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR

First Baptist Church, Union Grove, is seeking a bivocational youth director. Send resumé to: FBCUG, P.O. Box 125, Union Grove, AL 35175.

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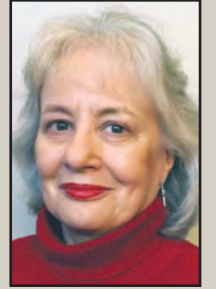
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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



2020 marks 210th anniversary of birth of 'King of Revivalist Preachers'

James Caughey (1810–1891) was a Methodist minister and evangelist. He was the first professional evangelist to have revivals in Canada. He also had successful ones in Britain.

This year marks the 210th year of his birth.

'Will of God'

He was born on April 9, 1810, in Ireland to Scottish parents. His family immigrated to Troy, New York, in the early 1820s.

He was converted at a revival in Troy in 1830. In two years, he became a probationary preacher with the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1834, he pastored in Burlington, Vermont. The next year he had his first campaign in Canada — a three-month evangelistic trip to Montreal.

He received a message from God in 1839 about where he should travel. He recorded it later: "The will of God is, that thou should visit Europe ... Visit Canada first; when this is done, sail for Europe."

He went to Canada in January 1841. In the five months he was there, 500 conversions took place. In July, he sailed to Britain. After preaching in Ireland several months, he traveled to northern England to share the gospel. He had much success from 1841 to 1847, with 20,000 people professing faith in Christ.

He became known as the "King of Revivalist Preachers." William Booth, an Englishman who founded the Salvation Army, heard

Caughey speak and learned much from the evangelist about preaching.

Caughey returned to Vermont. He visited Toronto in November 1851 and stayed for eight months where he preached seven sermons a week.

Around 2,000 conversions took place.

Until 1856 he spent each winter in Canada preaching.

In 1857, he returned to England for two years. He went again in 1860 and in the mid-1860s. Many conversions took place once again.

After his health declined, he returned to Highland Park, New Jersey. In 1886, his old friend William Booth visited him.

He died on Jan. 30, 1891. He was

buried in Elmwood Cemetery in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Caughey was a great revivalist who is unknown to many people — perhaps because he was overshadowed by Charles Finney and D.L. Moody.

Caughey had a sharp mind and a great wit.

His preaching was simple and traditional but filled with insights and persuasive applications to his listeners. He employed the "altar call" to bring people to a decision for Christ.

'On his knees'

One friend who witnessed Caughey's close relationship with Christ said, "He spent many hours of each day on his knees with his Bible spread open before him, asking wisdom from on high."✠



CAUGHEY

Christian Crossword

By Janice Buhl Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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45						46			47	
48						49		50	51	
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55					56				57	

Across

1. ___ shall not live by bread alone. (Matt. 4:4)
4. And the darkness He called ___. (Gen. 1:5)
9. My heart was ___ within me. (Ps. 39:3)
12. Mine ___ is as nothing before Thee. (Ps. 39:5)
13. Let us go and serve ___ gods. (Deut. 13:13)
14. There was no room for them in the ___. (Luke 2:7)
15. Lo, I have given thee ___ dung. (Ezek. 4:15)
17. The ___ also dwelt in Seir. (Deut. 2:12)
19. On this side Jordan may be ___. (Num. 32:32)
20. Grace ___ unto you. (Rev. 1:4)
21. Los Angeles. (abbr.)
23. Asa destroyed her ___, and burnt it. (1 Kings 15:13)
26. ___ unto me. (Ps. 55:2)
29. And a river went out of ___ to water the garden. (Gen. 2:10)
31. When ye pray, ___ not vain repetitions. (Matt. 6:7)
33. I will ___ unto thy days 15 years. (Isa. 38:5)

34. It ___ to him that was possessed. (Mark 5:16)
36. The young men of Aven and of ___-beseth. (Ezek. 30:17)
37. Hast thou eaten of the ___? (Gen. 3:11)
38. So that my feet did not ___. (2 Sam. 22:37)
40. Praise Him for His mighty ___. (Ps. 150:2)
43. And he cast stones ___ David. (2 Sam. 16:6)
44. Thou shalt feed ___ people Israel. (2 Sam. 5:2)
45. Then led they Jesus from ___ unto the hall of judgment. (John 18:28)
47. Therefore shall he ___ in harvest. (Prov. 20:4)
48. Even Bethlehem, and ___ and Tekoa. (2 Chron. 11:6)
49. ___ went and dwelt in her father's house. (Gen. 38:11)
52. Let there ___ light. (Gen. 1:3)
54. ___ made him a great feast. (Luke 5:29)
55. Went up to ___, and fetched a compass to

- Karkaa. (Josh. 15:3)
 56. The name of the wicked shall ___. (Prov. 10:7)
 57. Short for Emily.
- ### Down
1. Geuel the son of ___. (Num. 13:15)
 2. Hast thou not heard long ___? (2 Kings 19:25)
 3. Behold, all things are become ___. (2 Cor. 5:17)
 4. God is ___ respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34)
 5. Whose name was ___ an Israelite. (2 Sam. 17:25)
 6. Then Abraham gave up the ___. (Gen. 25:8)
 7. Made he a woman, and brought ___ unto the man. (Gen. 2:22)
 8. There is one ___ cut off from Israel. (Judg. 21:6)
 9. Abraham lifted up ___ eyes. (Gen. 22:13)
 10. Moses gave you ___ this side Jordan. (Josh. 1:14)
 11. Tennessee. (abbr.)
 16. Neither shall the ___

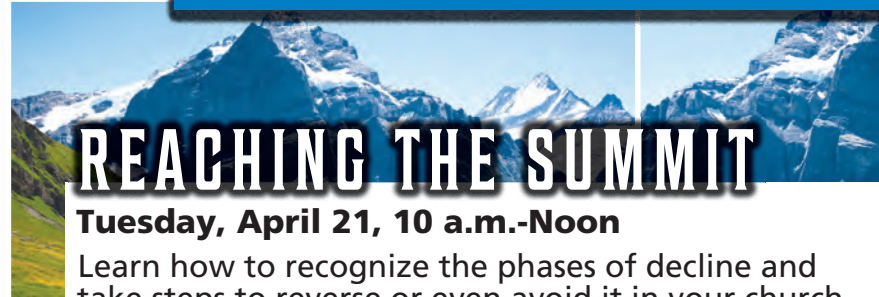
- of thy foot have rest. (Deut. 28:65)
18. David sent out 10 young ___. (1 Sam. 25:5)
22. I ___ no ... bread. (Dan. 10:3)
24. King David ___ unto the Lord. (1 Chron. 18:11)
25. The ___ number of them is to be redeemed. (Num. 3:48)
27. Saul abode in Gibeath under a ___. (1 Sam. 22:6)
28. Their ears are ___ of hearing. (Acts 28:27)
30. He will ___ suffer. (Ps. 121:3)
32. And daubed it with ___ and with pitch. (Ex. 2:3)
33. And he came ___, and drew near. (2 Sam. 18:25)
34. Abraham ___ Isaac. (1 Chron. 1:34)
35. Established. (abbr.)
39. Goat and the ___. (Deut. 14:5)
41. Aunt. (Spanish)
42. Short for Samuel.
46. The ___ sea. (Josh. 15:5)
47. And they filled them up to the ___. (John 2:7)
50. To ___ a son. (Heb. 1:5)
51. Avenue. (abbr.)
53. Elmodam, son of ___. (Luke 3:28)



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Thursday, April 30, 10-11 a.m.

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Monday and Tuesday, April 27-28

Monday, April 27, 1-2 p.m.

Discussion with Daniel Im, author of *No Silver Bullets* and senior associate pastor at Beulah Alliance Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Monday, April 27, 3-4 p.m.

Discussion with Ken Adams, lead pastor at Crossroads Church in Newnan, Ga., and founder/director of Impact Discipleship Ministries

Tuesday, April 28, 10 a.m.-Noon

Discussion with Scott Kindig, pastor of Kingdom Initiatives at Community Bible Fellowship in San Antonio, Texas

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New Samford basketball coach strives to lead by example

By **Margaret Colson**
The Alabama Baptist

Samford University named Bucky McMillan as its 29th head men's basketball coach April 6.

In a wide-ranging interview with TAB Talks co-hosts Jennifer Davis Rash and Debbie Campbell, McMillan said he will be a "players' coach, who can inspire people to reach their God-given talent. ... Coach McMillan is a guy who loves relationships."

McMillan, who has been head boys' basketball coach at Birmingham's Mountain Brook High School since 2008, comes to Samford University with a winning record, having led the Mountain Brook Spartans to five state championships — the first five in school history — with a 333-74 record in 12 seasons. In 2018 McMillan was named national Coach of the Year by the National High School Coaches Association.

His secret to such success? McMillan said he tells his players, "We're going to give 100%, 100% of the time. Not many people can do that in everything that they do."

Great motivation

Growing up in Birmingham, McMillan "loved all sports." However, a few people told him, "I don't think basketball is the sport for you." That was the only motivation the young man needed. "I like great challenges. I'm really glad I chose basketball," he said.

McMillan went on to excel in basketball in high school, at Mountain Brook, and then in college, at Birmingham-Southern College. While in college, McMillan coached youth basketball teams, and discovered his life's calling.

"I knew at that point that this is something special, this is something God is calling me to do," McMillan recalled.

Listen to the TAB Talks episode with Bucky McMillan at tabonline.org/McMillan.



Bucky McMillan

Samford photo

Many individuals instilled positive values in McMillan's life when he was younger, he said. "I try to instill those (values) in others, and ... what I wake up for every day are those interactions. ... That makes life worth living."

Among those positive values are trust, hard work, confidence and unselfishness. "If you can take those same values with you in your life (beyond athletics), what kind of person would you be?" he asks his players.

"We all trust each other, and we all end up loving

each other because of that."

Still, McMillan doesn't expect perfection, and he admits his imperfection.

"You're never going to be perfect. I do know that I do strive to be better than I was the day before," he said. "When you're a coach, you're a role model. You have to lead by example."

Samford's new basketball coach is a self-described "deep thinker" who likes to "dive into matters of faith."

After logically examining Jesus Christ's claims, Mc-

Millan determined, "Jesus is exactly who He says He is. Because of that, He is worth changing your life for. Through my spiritual journey, I've grown a lot these past 15 years, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity to grow at Samford and to be around that wholesome environment and the great impact it will have on me."

"When you put great people in the same room together all with the same mission, all on the same journey, great things happen. Magical things happen, and I'm looking forward to it," he said.

In introducing McMillan in the TAB Talks interview, Kevin Blackwell, assistant to the president for church relations at Samford University, said, "We are thrilled to bring him on and really looking forward to what he's going to bring to our basketball program."

To listen to this TAB Talks episode in its entirety, go to tabonline.org/McMillan.



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ISAIAH 41:10



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 19

Explore the Bible

By Robert E. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



SECURED Romans 8:12–25

Eternal Future (12–13)

Paul celebrates Christians' new life in the Spirit. Since the Spirit has put the deeds of the flesh to death, then we are set free. This glorious act of the Spirit means we are indebted to God, and we will live differently.

Do not be deceived, people who live according to the world have not been set free, and their end is death. Very simply, living according to the Spirit indicates we are God's children with the assurance of eternal life. Take note, both God and the believer have a role in sanctification. Paul states, "by the Spirit," meaning God in His power does it.

However, human responsibility comes into play; you must "put to death" the misdeeds of the body through daily actions. In other words, we cannot "hide" behind the sovereignty of God; we must take an active role in resisting our sinful desires.

Eternal Inheritance (14–18)

We should be encouraged that we are no longer slaves to the world, but God's adopted children. The leading of the Spirit validates our adoption. Thankfully, we are not left to our own wisdom (or lack of it) but are directed by the Spirit who shows us the way. A Spirit-led life is filled with a great sense of liberty that casts out fear of ever returning to slavery.

In both Roman and Greek law, adoption was a tremendous honor that elevated a naturally born person into a new place of position and status. Praise be to God, we are adopted sons and daughters of the King. As God's children, we have an intimacy that allows us to call Him Abba (Aramaic for Father). A humbling thought is we are now co-heirs with Christ. In some way, we will not only see Christ's glory but also share in it. I stand amazed!

However, Paul doesn't let us forget glory is costly. We must be willing to share in Christ's sufferings as well. Remember, suffering with Christ is not meaningless. Further-

more, the sufferings characteristic of this present age cannot compare to our eternal inheritance with Christ.

Creation Restored (19–22)

Paul presents an amazing thought that all creation is eagerly awaiting the announcement of God's children. Last year, our family gathered at Samford University for my daughter Abigail's graduation. We sat on the edges of our seats, awaiting her name to be called. As she walked across the stage to shake President Andrew Westmoreland's hand, her mother, grandmother and I were beaming and wanted to stand up and shout, "That's our girl!"

Abigail is thankful we contained ourselves. I can only imagine all creation, with a hushed expectancy, longing to hear God's children revealed. On this day, creation will be liberated from decay. Everything that has been touched by humanity's sin will be set free. Creation will be restored to more beauty and productivity than we can imagine, once again fully reflecting God's glory.

Humanity Restored (23–25)

Along with creation, we too groan in anticipation of the abundant blessings that await us. In other words, we are increasingly homesick for the redemption of our bodies. One day, our physical and emotional aches and pains will be no more. The problems of this world will pass away.

We will see our Savior and our loved ones. We groan because we have not fully realized our adoption and glorification. We live in the already but not yet; still, we look ahead in hope. Hope is not "wishing" something will happen, but an assurance of redemption received from a Spirit-filled life.

We are patient, waiting on God's timing, but we are rejoicing in the thought that one day all humanity will be restored. Praise His holy name! 🌈

Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament, Samford University



WHY THE RESURRECTION MATTERS 1 Corinthians 15:20–28, 54–58

On this second Sunday of Easter, as we witness and experience the global effects of COVID-19, we understand why, for the present time, we must live "always excelling in the work of the Lord" (15:58).

This week we continue following the line of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15. Some Christians at Corinth doubted the resurrection of the dead (15:12; compare the Athenians' reaction in Acts 17:32), and some probably doubted that Jesus Himself rose.

They might have accepted the claim that His soul lived on apart from His body, but that is not what Jesus' disciples experienced.

On Easter morning, the tomb was empty and the risen Lord walked and talked with them, offered His body to them (Luke 24:39; John 20:27) and ate with them (Luke 24:41–43; John 21:9–15).

According to Paul, this is how we will be raised.

Re-read all of chapter 15 for context.

Christ's resurrection makes our own resurrection possible. (20–22)

"First fruits" indicates that Jesus' resurrection was the first of many. The key for understanding Paul's argument is the meaning of "death."

For Paul, death is not merely the mortality of the body, but also a power. It works with another power, sin. Both powers are active because of "one man" (Adam). Both separate us from God, and we are helpless to do anything about either. Through His death, Christ defeated sin, and He defeated death through His resurrection. Because of this, we too "will be made alive."

As with death, "life" is more than life: it is resurrection, yes, but it is also living — finally and eternally — in right relationship with God (v. 58).

Christ's resurrection means He reigns as Lord over all. (23–28)

Paul says that the resurrection of

the dead will happen "at His coming." Those who are alive when Christ comes

"will be changed" into the same sort of beings that the resurrected have become (vv. 51–53).

For Paul, Christ can reign because He has been raised (compare Rev. 20:4–6). A Messiah who was still dead could not have "all things" subjected to Him. In verses 25–27, Paul draws on Psalms 110:1 and 8:6.

Victory in Christ means what we do for Him matters. (54–58)

Paul is continuing what he started in verse 35, responding to what was probably a sarcastic question about what kind of body could be raised to new life.

Paul says not, of course, the kind of body we have now, which dies and rots (it is "perishable"). God must grant our bodies what they do not possess on their own: imperishability and immortality. This requires a transformation into a new and different kind of body.

To celebrate the defeat of death (characterized as a beast with a stinger), Paul combines parts of Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.

Paul ends this section as he typically does. He is rarely satisfied merely to teach. He teaches because he wants his readers — and God wants us — to live in a particular way. It is not just that we will one day rise transformed to live victoriously with our Lord. Because the powers of death and sin have been defeated, we are transformed now to live as Christ wants us to live. Jesus also talked about this transformed and transforming way of life (see especially the Sermon on the Mount).

Paul's succinct command in verse 58 has real force this Easter.

COVID-19 has no effect on this exhortation to "be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord." Our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

On this second day of Eastertide, more than ever, let us live what we proclaim: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! 🌈



Media reviews

MUSIC

Kanye

Jesus is King

Def Jam Recordings

It may not be for everyone, but it's gospel-centric, Christ-centered and marvelous, featuring elements of gospel, R&B and hip-hop. "Selah" features Kanye rapping ("God is the king; we the soldiers") with a chorus singing "Hallelujah," while "Closed on Sunday" includes Kanye singing ("Raise our sons, train them in the faith")



and even a hat-tip to Chick-fil-A. Every song on the 11-track album is worth a listen. Let's pray Kanye continues producing music for the Kingdom.

Zach Williams

Rescue Story

Essential Records

It's an impressive album for fans of rock, country, gospel and folk music because it (incredibly) combines all four. In the title track, which has received significant radio airplay, Williams sings of his salvation ("And now where would I be without You? Where would I be, Jesus?") But there are songs just as catchy as that chart-topper, including "Slave to Nothing" and "Walk With You."



Williams is well-known for his 2016 album "Chain Breaker." "Rescue Story" is even better. It includes 10 tracks. (Michael Foust)

Using his platform

Hollens uses gift to bring laughs, ease anxiety during pandemic

By Tracy Riggs

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

One of the most important steps in preventing COVID-19, according to CDC recommendations, is to wash your hands often.

But are you washing them correctly? Are you washing them long enough? Have you had a hard time teaching your children (or spouse) proper hand washing techniques?

YouTube star Peter Hollens wants to help. Hollens, a classically trained vocal artist specializing in a cappella music, recently released "The Epic Hand Washing Parody" to help spread the word about proper handwashing techniques and hygiene.

In the video, Hollens parodies several popular songs in various styles so almost anyone can find a 20-second segment in a familiar tune to assist in making proper handwashing fun.

'Making a difference'

"I can't not do something right now," Hollens said about the compilation. "I have been so blessed to be able to be given a platform ... to fight this in whatever way I can. I'm following the rules. I'm quarantined. ... I need to stop everything else I'm doing. I need to focus on trying to educate to try to make a difference."

Hollens said he's heard from many parents and teachers who are using the song to help children wash their hands correctly.

The song also has brought some cheerfulness into a serious period of history, Hollens said.

One person wrote to Hollens, "I've been locked in my house for



Peter Hollens

Photo courtesy of Peter Hollens' publicist

three weeks now. I live in Italy. I was freaking out this morning, and I ran into this song. It just made my entire day."

"We're so focused on the anxiety and what we can't control," Hollens said. "I just want to bring levity right now because there's so much fear."

Hollens said he learned more than how to wash his hands while creating the song.

In making the video, he learned the importance of moderation: "You shouldn't wash your hands for six straight hours," he said with a laugh. "You'll rip your skin right off."

"The Epic Hand Washing Parody" is also Hollens way of helping others during this difficult time. Profits from the song are going to Global-Giving's Coronavirus Relief Fund, which allows fans a way to make a difference, he said.

Like everyone else right now, Hollens and his family are find-

ing ways to cope with the changes brought about by the coronavirus.

Before the pandemic, they were active in church, with Hollens and his wife singing in the choir at their local Methodist church. They pray before every meal and still work hard on promoting family values even during this time.

They have found that one positive aspect in all this is creating more rituals with their children.

"It's really weird to say but there's a certain amount of positivity coming out of this, for me anyway — of finding the essence of what it really means to be human and alive and appreciate the family more," Hollens said.

Hear more

Watch Hollens' "Epic Hand Washing Parody" and hear more of his vocals, including his rendition of "Amazing Grace," at his channel, youtube.com/peterhollens. 🎵

Ultimate concern

How coronavirus pandemic could change America's religion of sports

By Paul Putz

George W. Truett Seminary, Baylor University

Sports in America, John Tunis declared in 1928, are “a kind of national religion.”

Scholars can debate whether or not this is true, but sports are certainly like a religion. And much of their influence, as Sheldon observed, comes from their ability to bring people and communities together in shared spaces and shared experiences.

So what happens now that sports — even the Tokyo Olympics — have been canceled? What will the “religion” of sports look like in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Most people understand — or at least say they understand — that games are a minor concern compared to the life-and-death gravity of a pandemic. But that does not mean the loss of sports is inconsequential.

The cancellations of games, seasons and tournaments are painful for athletes and coaches who have devoted their lives to pursue athletic excellence.

That loss matters. It is all right to express grief and sadness for Olympic dreams that have been dashed, for hopes that have vanished, for routines that have been upended, for identities that now seem fragmented.

As those in the sports community express sadness and share in each other's grief, they can continue to build and strengthen the emotional bonds that give sports so much meaning.

There is hope for the future — the promise that one day, sports will return to our lives.

Of course, the return of sports is not the important thing.

The important thing is that at some point the pandemic will subside,



RNS photos

hospitals will no longer be in danger of being overcrowded and people will have less of a chance of being exposed to the novel coronavirus.

The return of sports won't solve any of those problems. But it will signify that those problems have been solved. And so sports fans can dream of what might happen in the future; they can hope for the return of the games they love.

Power of sports

Perhaps we can also hope that the power of sports might be diminished.

Will those of us who love sports take this moment to reflect? Will we affirm the good in sports while also pausing to consider the ways that sports can warp and distort our priorities — from our time and money

to our willingness to overlook ethical concerns?

Will we make an effort to change our patterns of behavior and also the systems and structures that we have built up over the years?

The historian in me is not very optimistic. But at least in my own life, I'm going to try.

With my fellow sports fans, I'll be lamenting lost games and dreams. I'll be looking back at old seasons and remembering players from the past. And I'll be envisioning the moments of joy and celebration to come when sports do return.

But I'll also be reminding myself — once again, and louder this time — that while sports are important, they should not be my ultimate concern. (RNS)

