



The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

July 16, 2020

Vol. 185, No. 28
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Readers respond overwhelmingly to call to prayer for Japan

◆ Page 2



Theology 101 — Shepherd

◆ Page 6



Former Marine sees life turned around by Christ

◆ Pages 8-9



Photo by Carrie B. McWhorter

A simple personal evangelism strategy utilizes a tic-tac-toe-style board to identify contacts in the neighborhood.

Building healthy CONNECTIONS

Caring for church members, neighbors during crisis requires intention

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Loving your neighbor during the time of COVID-19 social distancing is a challenging command requiring new thinking and intentional effort.

“The internet can abate our need for personal contact, but it can’t replace it,” said

George Yates, church health strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. “Many church leaders who thrive on people contact have found depression knocking on their doors these past weeks.”

Yates was lead presenter for “Building Healthy Connections in the New Reality,” a video conference hosted in

June by the SBOM’s office of LeaderCare and church health.

Helpful tips

Yates offered several tips for building healthy connections during disruptions of the church’s normal routine:

1. Start and maintain member-to-member contact.

“For Southern Baptists, this

is our small group ministry or Sunday School,” he said. “But we’ve been unable to do this as we wish. Classes with a care system up and going before the shutdown are way ahead now since they can ensure frequent contacts. I’ve heard from some church members who said they’ve not received a single contact (See ‘Intercessory,’ page 7)



CHECK OUT OUR PODCASTS!

Find the TAB Media podcasts at tabonline.org/podcasts or anywhere you get your podcasts.



OUR EXTENDED ALABAMA BAPTIST FAMILY

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

1-800-264-1225 | www.alsbom.org
Offices: Prattville

Leadership: Rick Lance, executive director

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

205-982-1112 | www.alabamachild.org
Main office: Birmingham

Leadership: Rod Marshall, president and CEO

ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

205-726-2363 | www.abhconline.com
Office: Birmingham

Leadership: Lonette Berg, executive director

ALABAMA BAPTIST RETIREMENT CENTERS

800-264-1225, ext. 329 | www.abrc.org
Main office: Prattville

Leadership: Ray Burdeshaw, acting president

THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

334-394-2000 | www.tbfa.org
Offices: Montgomery

Leadership: Barry Bledsoe, president

SHOCCO SPRINGS BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER

256-761-1100 | www.shocco.org
Location: Talladega

Leadership: Russell Kliner, executive director

ALABAMA CITIZENS ACTION PROGRAM

205-985-9062 | www.alcap.com
Offices: Birmingham

Leadership: Joe Godfrey, executive director

ALABAMA WMU

334-288-2460 | www.alabamawmu.org
Offices: Prattville

Leadership: Candace McIntosh, executive director

JUDSON COLLEGE

800-447-9472 | www.judson.edu
Location: Marion

Leadership: Mark Tew, president

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

205-726-2011 | www.samford.edu
Location: Birmingham

Leadership: Andrew Westmoreland, president

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

251-675-5990 | www.umobile.edu
Location: Mobile

Leadership: Lonnie Burnett, president



Unsplash.com

Overwhelming response to call to prayer for Japan

On the front page of the June 25 issue, Scotty Goldman invited TAB readers to pray for Japan. And wow, did you respond.

Goldman, director of the office of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he had a goal to get 150 signed up for text message prayer updates, and more than 200 of you asked to be put on the list.

"I have had multiple contacts from pastors/others who have expressed an interest in going another step toward deeper relationships with us in this effort," Goldman said.

He also said his primary contact in Japan had heard from 15 pastors who saw the article and wanted to be involved.

The 30-day prayer effort started June 25 and ends July 24, the date Japan was set to hold the opening ceremonies of the summer Olympics before the COVID-19 crisis forced leaders to move the games to 2021. The country is home to

four Alabama Baptist families serving as missionaries.

"Ask any missionary anywhere, 'What's one thing we can do for you?' Without fail, every one of them have said to me, 'Pray for us.' They know that without prayer, their ministry is going to struggle," Goldman said in the June 25 TAB article.

It's special for them to know they've got people all across their home state lifting them up, he said.

The country they call home is one of the most unreached nations in the world, with less than 1% of Japan's population of 126 million professing faith in Jesus Christ.

Get involved

It's not too late to get involved. If you're interested in getting daily prayer prompts from now until July 24, text "JP2020" to 94090. Or for more information, visit a18c.org/30-days-of-prayer-for-japan, or email sgoldman@alsbom.org. (TAB)

To get daily prayer prompts from now until July 24, text "JP2020" to 94090. Or for more information, visit a18c.org/30-days-of-prayer-for-japan, or email sgoldman@alsbom.org.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 13.

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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.

Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org

Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Includes print, digital and full web access

Group Rate per issue — \$16.25
(Need at least five in your group to qualify)

Individual — \$24.95 per year with 3-year plan

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cynthia Watts
Executive Assistant

Carrie B. McWhorter
Content Editor

Debbie Campbell
Director of
Communications

Janet Erwin
Executive Editor

Linda Harrison
Director of Human
Resources

Grace Thornton
Special
Assignments Editor

Melanie McKinney
Advertising Manager

Margaret Colson
Special
Assignments Editor

Pam Holt
Sales
Representative

Hannah Muñoz
Digital Editor

Susan Stevens
Sales
Representative

Myriah Snyder
Digital Storytelling

Jessica Ingram
Event Coordinator

Lauren C. Grim
Creative Services
Manager

Annette Brown
Guest Services
Client Coordinator

Amy Hacker
Creative Services
Associate

Haley Piersol
Financial Assistant

James Hammack
Digital Services
Manager

Richard Maddox
Computer Services

Sarah Gill
Digital Services
Associate

NEWS SERVICES

Baptist Press (BP), Associated Press/Religion News Service (AP/RNS), Morning Star News (MS).

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE

Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Subscription Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council

Back to Campus special issue

Shout out to Boyce College at Southern Seminary, Samford University, University of Mobile, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Mississippi College, Baptist College of Florida, Luther Rice College and Bob Jones University for reserving a spot in TAB's Back to Campus issue.

MY RASHIONALE

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

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



Learning to reason works best when talked 'to,' not 'at'

The third grader spoke with absolute confidence and authority when he declared what would take place. He shared with great passion and clarity.

His friend stepped back in shock and countered with an opposing view, equally as confident in his own perspective.

The more they talked, the louder their voices became; soon they were in a full argument, both determined to win.

The debate between the two 8 year olds intrigued me because the words they were using, the concepts they were outlining and the understanding they were professing exceeded their age and grasp by at least a decade.

That's when it hit me — they were merely parrots, repeating what they had heard stated emphatically in their homes.

I've experienced the same type of thing with a child making an observation about another person or an event of which he or she has no firsthand knowledge.

And I can recall times when I thought I was having a private conversation with a friend while her children played nearby, seemingly paying us no attention at all, and a few hours later one of the children mentioned specific details from the conversation.

These were all good lessons for me to realize that children wholeheartedly listen and believe what their parents and trusted adults in their lives say.

That challenges me to work

hard to model how to give others the benefit of the doubt as our first response and how to show love and grace.

It also motivates me to be clear when I'm sharing an opinion or only one aspect of the story versus stating fact because I never want to tarnish the trust the children in my life, nor anyone of any age, have in me.

As believers, we know the Truth and we can choose to stand on it and not be afraid of all the stuff swirling around us, or we can let fear tempt us to hide behind it and sometimes use it to manipulate situations.

I'm guessing the explanation "because I said so" works in many parenting moments.

And while I'm not a parent, I have had plenty of times when I desperately wanted the person on the other side of the conversation to trust me and do what I was asking because I really did know best in that moment.

But in helping teach the children, teenagers and young adults in our lives how to reason and think around the issues of the world, would it serve them better to avoid loud, frustrated, soapbox-style rants that dismiss any opinion that isn't exactly

like the one leading the rant?

Would the conversations be more engaging and edifying if everyone's true concerns could be discussed calmly and all questions were welcomed?

Allowing people to process out loud and talk things out isn't conceding defeat to another viewpoint. It is merely receiving a front-row seat to that person's reasoning session and could provide an opportunity to influence his or her thinking. It also might mean gaining a deeper understanding of the situation and/or the other person. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

Keep hope alive; we were trained for these moments and get to be His image bearers in this unusual year

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.

But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For what we proclaim is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has

been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence.

For it is all for your sake so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. — *2 Corinthians 4, ESV*

Your Voice



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

Even the 'little toe' has a purpose in Kingdom work

By **Barbara Eubanks**
Author and humorist

I don't know why the little toe exists unless it's radar signaling a piece of furniture in the middle of the night, always a little too late. I don't know why I exist except for God to use me in some way.

I'm just a little toe in the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-8), but I'm useful to the Kingdom because He made me. My goal and my prayer is that God will use me each day for His glory.

During this pandemic and time of extreme isolation for me, I have had to double down on my prayers for God to show me how to be useful while staying home by myself.

I like to cook. I show love to people with food. After seeing a few young women complaining on Facebook about having to cook so much while the family was all home, the thought occurred to me (I call it a holy nudge) that I might be able to help some of them by showing how to make good meals with what they have on hand.

I started developing cooking videos on Facebook to do just that. I then put them on my website for friends who don't do social media. I've cooked everything from chicken and dumplings to homemade biscuits; from 10-minute sugar cookies to cobbles.

I've gained great satisfaction in doing this and have had many fol-

lowers who say I've helped them.

Our church has been having someone teach the Sunday School lesson online, and our pastor brings a sermon on our church's website.

I have some Facebook friends who never go to church and probably wouldn't go to a church's website. I got another holy nudge — teach the Sunday School lesson on Facebook for these friends.

It has been a great success in that I see many of these nonbelievers watching. As an added bonus, I've reconnected with many of my former students this way.

This little toe has profited in many ways by following God's holy nudges. This has kept me busy. I've found friends, made new

friends and stayed out of a valley of depression. I've also been able to feed a few neighbors from my bounty and cooking. This little toe is just as important as the head when I allow God to use me.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Barbara Eubanks is the author of three humorous devotional books, "Humorous Happenings in Holy Places," "And the Angels Laughed" and "Laughing with the Lord." She also has published two Christian novels, "A Web Too Tight" and "A New Beginning: God's Second Chances." She has written numerous magazine and newspaper articles and Sunday School lessons for LifeWay. She lives in Boaz.

5 common mistakes when counseling others

In a recent video published on LifeWayVoices.com, Lilly Park, certified counselor and assistant professor of biblical counseling at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, explains five of the most common mistakes we can make when trying to counsel others.

1. Good intentions

We are quick to say something that was helpful for us personally, but it really isn't helpful to that person.

Good intentions are helpful sometimes, but

it's not always enough. It's okay if you don't know what to say. You can always say, "I'm sorry, I'll be praying for you."

2. Hearing without listening

What I mean is that we can get so familiar with certain problems [that we don't recognize] each person is unique in how they experience the same problem. I can get familiar to the point of giving the same response to everyone.

Listen and try to remove those preplanned words and distractions. Try to be there with that person so you can

give more thoughtful and loving responses.

3. Address the body and soul

God has created all of us with a body and a soul. Some of us lean more towards addressing the physical components, and that's important. We want medical attention if that's needed. We want to exercise, eat well, those things. But we also want to care for the soul.

Yet some of us can overly focus on the soul and just say, "Well, you just need to pray. You just need to read the Bible." But it's both.

We should be good stewards in helping people think holistically about their problems.

4. Be there physically

We are relational beings. [We are not] created to be alone, no matter how much we know or we think we know about the Bible and the answers to this life. The point is that we need each other.

I have benefited greatly from godly men and women who have spoken truth into my life and who have made time to be there for me. We don't have to be experts to love someone. Just be-

ing there physically can speak volumes.

5. Our hope is in Christ

That doesn't mean God will just remove that hard trial no matter how much you pray about it, but God will give us the grace and strength to endure it and to conform us more to the image of Christ.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Reprinted with permission. To read the full transcript, visit lifeway-voices.com and search for "Lilly Park."

“Even though times may change, God’s mission continues.”

STEVE TURNER

Senior director of next gen mobilization through Send Relief, NAMB

TRUTH. We are living in a time where Satan doesn’t even hide anymore, and the world still can’t see him.

Evil is real, folks. Any of us can be victim of it or be the aggressor. The answer is submitting our lives to Christ, which allows us to make peace with God — and peace then is available in our lives.

We become so overwhelmed at the mercy Christ Jesus gives us that we have to extend it in gratitude to others.

Terry Wilhite
Mobile, Ala.

We have so many misgivings of what the future holds in our tomorrow of uncertainty, yet the psalmist understood the Lord had delivered him from death. Because of this, he could trust the Lord to catch him from falling so he could walk before the presence of God. The battles of this life do not define who we are. The trouble of our yesterdays can remind someone else in his or her tomorrows that there is hope in Jesus, our Savior, who we will live with forever.

D. Jay Powell
“Be Inspired: 101 Thoughts
for Every Christian Writer”

The Bible says our world is like raging surf with the forces of darkness constantly breaking around us.

These evil forces push us one way and then pull us another, trying to drown our souls and destroy our lives. In such a spiritually chaotic world, we must stand firm in our faith so we are not carried away by these dark forces.

Let us follow the command of Scripture and be “strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

Bob Adams
Retired pastor

From the *Twitterverse*

@CSLewis_Quote

“There is no excess of goodness. You cannot go too far in the right direction.” #CSLewis

@jenniferwilkin

Whether we speak our piece or hold our peace, let it be done in the fear of the Lord, not the fear of man.

@DustyMcLemore

“For our fallen culture to seek Jesus, it needs to see Jesus in us. More today than yesterday and more tomorrow than today.”
— @JimDenison

@TrevinWax

Sometimes the call to faithfulness may seem like a burden. But may we never forget that this call is also our greatest privilege. We live

in light of the truth, trusting that the flame of faithfulness that passes from generation to generation will never go out.

@kk4me2

We trust fully in the promises of God because He is loving, faithful and true.

@JBozeAL

[I] have said it many, many times on here. God is still God, Jesus is still Lord and the Bible is still the word of God. That being said, the next time I type that, none of the above will have changed. Oh, praise His name!

@RevKevDeYoung

Don’t ever think that gathering for worship isn’t doing anything. In the midst of a world that feels like it is

falling apart, turning our attention to God is always a step in the right direction.

@micahfries

We’re in a moment where many are increasingly skeptical about their faith while dogmatic and even fundamentalist about their political ideology. Flip it. Be passionately steadfast in your faith and radically skeptical of your own and anyone else’s political ideology.
— Mark Sayers

@nathanrose33

When the devil hurls his accusations against you, reminding you of your sin, go ahead and agree with him. You should also point out that he missed a few. But then remind him, as well as your heart, that this is the very reason why Jesus came — to die for sinners like you.

Some long-tenured pastors feel this current situation has led to some of their most difficult days in ministry. Pastors need your prayers and your understanding as they try to make the best decisions for the church family. ...

Difficult decisions, dwindling attendance and other issues can weigh on pastors and make their calling even more challenging. Now is the time to show them patience and grace as we lift them up in prayer.

Now would be a good time for you to express your personal appreciation to your pastor and let him know you are investing more time in intercessory prayer for him as he ministers during these daily challenges.

A short text or an email to him can offer more encouragement than you realize. Just a few words to let him know you realize his load is heavy and that you appreciate and respect him will be a special and welcomed blessing. Invite others to join you.

Milton Hollifield
Executive director
Baptist State Convention
of North Carolina

Diversity is a positive experience only if it is accompanied with respect, understanding, gratitude and hope.

Pastor Javier Chavez
Gainesville, Ga.

God is teaching me during this time ... that he provides no matter what. He’s teaching me that no matter how much control I may think I have over my life, I have no control whatsoever. He’s been teaching me that it is time for me to put that control out of my hands and into His hands and to completely have faith and trust in Him.

Celena McAlpine
University of Montevello
Onemissionstudents.org

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

Southern Christian Writers Conference set for July 24–25

Many events and conferences have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 Southern Christian Writers Conference is no exception.

But, as they say, the show must go on. And go on it will.

On July 24–25, the 2020 SCWC will be held virtually via Facebook Live.

Just like the in-person conference — usually held in June at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa — the conference will include two keynote speakers, 15 workshop options (four can be viewed live and all will be available

to view following the conference), a Q&A panel, breakout sessions, an awards ceremony, opening and closing sessions, door prizes and optional one-on-one Zoom meet-

ings with agents and publishers.

The keynote speakers for this year's conference will be Lauren Sisler, an award-winning sports broadcaster for ESPN and SEC

Network, and Debora Coty, a humorist, columnist and author of 40 books including the "Too Blessed to be Stressed" series.

The conference will be held in a private Facebook group. Following registration and payment, participants will be given access to the group and instructions on how to participate.

For more information, including a list of all the workshop leaders,

visit southernchristianwriters.com or search for "Southern Christian Writers Conference" on Facebook.

To register, visit southernchristianwriters.com/register. (TAB)

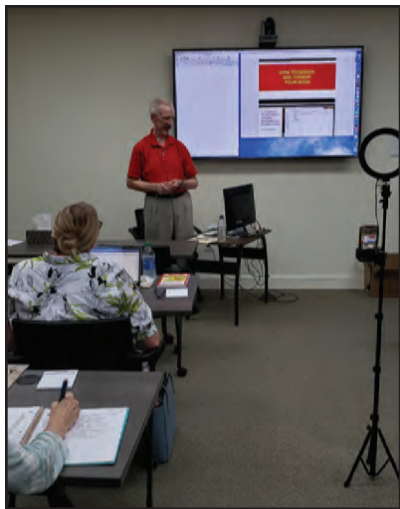


Photo by Cynthia Watts

David Sloan leads a session at a recent writing workshop held by the SCWC at the TAB Media building in Homewood.

For more information, including a list of all the workshop leaders, visit southernchristianwriters.com or search for "Southern Christian Writers Conference" on Facebook. To register, visit southernchristianwriters.com/register.



Photo by Annette Brown

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, many workshops and conferences have had to go totally or partially virtual, with teachers and/or participants joining via platforms such as Facebook Live or Zoom.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Figures

Shepherd

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

For the past five weeks, Theology 101 has taken its start from Jesus' summary statement in John 16:25 when He said, "I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech."

Among those figures of speech Jesus used to refer to Himself and His ministry were Word, Lamb, Bridegroom, Bread and last week, Light. The Apostle John used this same explanation earlier when Jesus began the teaching about Himself as the Good Shepherd, writing, "This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them" (John 10:6).

Old Testament roots

This figure had its roots in the Old Testament. Isaiah prophesied, "Behold, the Lord God shall come ... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd" (Isa. 40:10–11).

This figure sets forth rather clearly the nature of Christ's death as substitutionary atonement. A foregleam of this truth was given when Isaiah wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (53:6). Jesus said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). A few words later, He added, "I lay down My life for the sheep" (v. 15).

However, Jesus did not leave the matter at the point of a death. He

added, "I lay down My life that I may take it again ... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17–18).

Salvation as eternal security also finds itself interwoven into this figure of Christ as a shepherd. He declared, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27–28).

Personal identification

Salvation as a spiritual relationship with Christ stands out in the figure of the Good Shepherd and His sheep. Personal identification with Christ, as well as intimacy with Him, stand out in the verbs He used (knows, calls, hears, leads, follows). One may also notice Christ leads His sheep; He does not drive them. Herdsmen drive cattle, but shepherds lead sheep.

Psalm 23 reminds us our Good Shepherd knows about pastures of nourishment and waters of refreshment. A good response would be, as worded in a hymn: "Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care; in Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare." ✝

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.



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).



Defender of religious liberty John Smyth born 450 years ago

John Smyth (1570–1612) was co-founder with Thomas Helwys of the Baptist denomination. He was a defender of religious liberty.

Smyth was born in 1570 in Nottinghamshire and believed to be the son of John Smyth, a middle-class Englishman. He was educated at the grammar school in Gainsborough.

He studied at Christ's College, Cambridge. Between 1594 and 1598, he was a Fellow of the College.

Opposing state control

Ordained as an Anglican priest in 1594, he soon challenged the Church of England. By 1602, he had become a separatist, a person who opposed state control of the Church. He pastored an independent congrega-

tion at Gainsborough composed of between 60 and 70 members.

For two years he and John Robinson — the minister to the Pilgrims in England and later in Holland — helped organize separatists in Nottinghamshire. In 1608, the Ecclesiastical High Court suppressed separatism. Robinson and his followers set out for Amsterdam, Holland. Then Smyth and Thomas Helwys, a prominent member of the Gainsborough church, followed and arrived before Robinson.

Smyth and Helwys formed the first Baptist church in Holland in 1608/1609. Smyth and others believed in believer's baptism as opposed to infant baptism. Smyth baptized first himself, then Helwys

and the rest of the congregation. At the time Smyth, using a dipper and a bucket of water, poured water over the heads of the believers. Baptists would later adopt immersion. Smyth became known as the "self-baptized."

When Smyth's church became Baptist, Robinson took his group to Leiden, Holland. Although Robinson did not go to America, many of his group sailed on the Mayflower.

Eventually, Smyth moved away from his Baptist views and identified with the Mennonite church. The Mennonites already practiced believer's baptism.

Thomas Helwys led his followers back to England and formed the first Baptist church there in 1611/1612.



SMYTH

Intercessory prayer key part of evangelism

(continued from page 1) in these two-and-a-half months, and this is incredibly sad."

Yates said he knew of some classes gathering outside, in backyards, driveways or local parks in addition to those using video resources. "It's helpful to remember Jesus' classroom," he said. "He preached wherever He was and at every opportunity."

2. Match member-to-ministry contact.

Yates said classes should find some way to engage in ministry together and some way to foster "friendly accountability."

"Sometimes we look for 'warm bodies' to fill spots

in our ministries, but we must remember that people serve out of their passion," Yates said. "A better way is to help members find their areas of giftedness and interests."

Yates noted the SBOM offers assessments like the "Passion Assessment" and the "Strengths Matrix" to help church members identify their ministry gifts.

3. Launch neighbor-reaching-neighbor contact.

Evangelism is a significant area of ministry, and it "runs on the rails of relationships and prayer," said Daniel Wil-

son, director of the SBOM office of evangelism.

"The more 'hooks in the water' we have in fishing for men, the better we are,

but nothing beats friendship evangelism," he said. "Oscar Thompson had it right years ago when he wrote 'Concentric Circles of Concern.' We

all have those in our circles who need Christ, including some who share our last name — our own family."

Wilson displayed a tic-tac-toe-style board he'd recently filled in.

"I put myself in the middle, and then listed my

eight closest neighbors," he said. "This is my missions field, and this is a simple tool Christians can use. We make a point to meet and to know and to share faith with our neighbors."

SBOM evangelism associate Terry Long agreed that intercessory prayer is mandatory in reaching people for Christ.

Spirit at work

"People can reject our outreach attempts, but no one can withstand the Spirit of God who works on their hearts," he said.

4. Engage in member-to-community contact.

Yates recommended the SBOM's "Community Needs Survey" resource as a way

to get started, noting one question is, "How can we pray for you today?"

"This is a time to have conversations with our community leaders to discover how our churches can help," Yates said. "These should be genuine conversations to unearth needs. Every church can do something better in its community."

To access the SBOM resources for church members and community outreach, visit tabonline.org/connection-resources or call the SBOM at 800-264-1225.

TAB Media also has a playlist of evangelism videos at youtube.com/tabmediagroup.

To access the SBOM resources for church members and community outreach, visit tabonline.org/connection-resources or call the SBOM at 800-264-1225.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad for \$1 per word.
For more information call 205-870-4720,
ext. 102, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

CHURCH POSITIONS

WORSHIP PASTOR

Redeemer Community Church is seeking a full-time worship pastor. Redeemer Community Church is a 5-year-old church plant in Oneonta, Ala. Please email resumés, references and links of worship videos to: matt@redeemeroneonta.org.

WORSHIP LEADER

Macedonia Baptist Church, a rural church in Bullock County, Alabama, near Union Springs, is seeking a part-time worship leader. We are prayerfully seeking someone who is capable of leading our congregation in a well-blended service of hymns and new worship songs. If interested, please email resumé to: scgarnett@gmail.com or call Pastor Steve Garnett at 706-773-2214.

PART-TIME WORSHIP PASTOR & PART-TIME OUTREACH LEADER

First Baptist Church, Vincent, is currently in prayer and searching for a part-time worship pastor and part-time outreach leader. My name is Robbie Weems, and I am the new pastor at FBC Vincent. We are not looking for someone who is just looking for a check but a person who is passionate about advancing the kingdom of God. Please send your resumé to: weems1969@aol.com or call 205-617-1277.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR & STUDENT MINISTER

Slocomb First Baptist Church, Slocomb, Ala., is seeking to hire a full-time associate pastor. Primary duties include overseeing the ministries to our students from sixth thru college and career. Please submit resumés and/or questions to: fbcs206@aol.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Indian Springs First Baptist Church, Pelham, AL 35124, seeks financial assistant. 5+ hours/week. Excel, Quickbooks, ADP. Paid time off. +/- \$14.50/hr. Submit resumés to: indianspringschurch@gmail.com.

BUSINESS

FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-

in-tubs. We service Alabama 1-800-682-0658.

STEEPLES, ETC.

No job too big or too small. Call for free on-site consultation. Toll-free 1-888-699-9679 or Alabama local 205-699-9679. Ask for the owner Terry Barnes. Visit gallery at leadsstainedglass.com.

SIGNS

NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Signs Services, a full-service sign company located in Alabama for 26 years, is ready to help you grow your church sign ministry. From digital message signs to traditional signs. Reliable Signs handles the design, fabrication and installation statewide. www.reliablesigns.com. Give Danny, Stephanie and the rest of the team a call 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach for over 25 years. Call Donna: 251-656-4935, Don: 251-752-2366, Eddie: 205-556-0368 or www.gulfshorescondos.com.

MINISTRIES

TAB PODCASTS

The TAB Media podcast channel now offers four podcasts: TAB Talks, a radio show featuring a special guest or guests that comes out on Mondays; TAB News, an audio digest of the weekly newspaper that comes out on Wednesdays; TAB Briefs, which will offer three current faith-based news and culture stories and comes out on Fridays after debuting first on Facebook Live at The Alabama Baptist newspaper on Facebook; and TAB Stories, a seasonal, long-form, in-depth feature into the life of a specific person church or ministry. Listen to the TAB Media podcasts anywhere you get your podcasts or at www.tabonline.org/podcasts.

'God causes all things to work together for good'

Former Marine sees life turned around by Christ

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Judson Akin graduated from high school, he didn't have much of a plan. He wasn't going to college, and he didn't have a trade. He didn't feel like he had much to offer.

That is, until a recruiter from the Marine Corps sat down across from Akin and offered him something that to him sounded a lot like a calling — a warrior lifestyle.

"I didn't skip a beat — I said, 'Sign me up,'" he said.

Akin had grown up in church, walked the aisle as a little boy and rededicated his life as a teenager, but even so, he'll tell you God wasn't in the picture when he made that decision. It wasn't about being a Marine for Jesus. He'd been hanging around with rowdy

friends, and the pull of his own desires was stronger, he said.

"I feel like that was a crossroads where I could've stayed here and gotten back into church and been pulled back into God's path, or I could go in this direction and it's probably going to

"I had ventured so far away from God's path that there was no 'what does God want from me.'"

Judson Akin

take me away from God's path," Akin said. "I chose that road."

And he chose it without regret.

"From the second I went to boot camp, I realized that this is what I was made for, at least

that's the way it looked in my eyes," Akin said. "I was very good at it. Everything came easy to me, and I loved every part of it. I decided at that point that being a Marine was what I was meant to do."

'All about me'

It became a personal mission for Akin to be the best Marine he could be.

"I had ventured so far away from God's path that there was no 'what does God want from me' — it was all about me and making a name for myself," he said.

He went to Iraq first, then Afghanistan.

Pursuing self-glory

"During my second deployment to Afghanistan, I was so far off of God's path that everything was about me," Akin said. "I was selfish, arrogant, anything you can think of. I was angry, I was bitter, I was mean. Instead of having role models, I wanted to be the ultimate Marine."

And just like that, two four-year enlistments had nearly passed, and it was time for him to enlist for a third — a no-brainer for Akin. Except that God intervened, he said.

Around that time, he made a few missteps that complicated his reenlistment. And if that wasn't enough to seal the deal, he tore his Achilles tendon.

There was nowhere to go but home, and home he went with his wife and son

"[Church] was the only place I could think of to go. Matt was the pastor there when I joined the Marines. When I walked in to talk to him, it was like a flood. A big load of it came off of me. I at least knew the right path now of where to put my burdens, struggles, where to place all this stuff. That was a crossroads."

Judson Akin



Photo courtesy of Judson Akin

After serving in the Marines, Judson Akin, pictured with his wife, Kate, and children L.J. and Elizabeth, first went back to church so his son, L.J., would have a better role model.

he finally did something that didn't come naturally at all — he asked for help.

First, he told his wife, and she was able to get him some help through the medical community.

"If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here today, I don't think," he said.

And second, he went to visit Matt DeBord, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clanton. He had retraced his steps to the last place in his life where he felt true joy, and that wasn't the Marines — it was church, he said.

"It was the only place I could think of to go," Akin said. "Matt was the pastor there when I joined the Marines. When I walked in to talk to him, it was like a flood. A big load of it came off of me. I at least knew the right path now of where to put my burdens, struggles, where to place all this stuff. That was a crossroads."

A different path

And this time, he chose the path that led straight to Jesus.

At first, Akin didn't do it for himself — he did it

"Judson is an amazing example of what happens when God steps into a man's life and transforms him."

Chris Ferguson
minister of youth and missions, FBC Clanton

for his son. He wanted to be there for his son and for him to be in church, even if Akin thought of himself as beyond redemption.

But over time, what Akin began to see was that God used every single part of his story to bring him to the place he is now.

"God causes all things to work together for good," he said. "He will let your Achilles get snapped so that you'll be on the right path and be doing His will."

It's a story Akin shares every time he gets an opportunity. He's shared it with his church and with the youth group.

Chris Ferguson, minister of youth and missions at First, Clanton, said Akin is a great role model of faith for them.

"Judson is an amazing

example of what happens when God steps into a man's life and transforms him," Ferguson said. "I didn't know Judson in his military days. It's hard to picture him the way he describes himself. Why? Because I see a man who loves Jesus and others. That is all God."

'Take that step'

Akin said he'd love to talk with others who are at the point he was and tell them to take a step in the direction of Jesus — to visit their pastor or knock on the door of a neighbor who has a strong faith.

"If you're at your low point, what's it going to hurt to go knock on a church's door or reach out to somebody you know who is a believer? Just take that step," Akin said.✝

— and no identity, he said.

"Being a Marine was literally the only thing I thought I was good at, so this was really tough for me — a hard pill to swallow," Akin said. "I couldn't figure out what I wanted to do, what I could do. I felt

like a failure to my wife and son. It just ate at me, the mistakes I made. I felt like I had ruined my career."

Depression set in, and after a while, Akin was struggling with thoughts of suicide. But at rock bottom,

**Don't let
SOCIAL DISTANCING
become spiritual distancing.**



*"Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God."*

ISAIAH 41:10



FM 101.1 AM 850
BIRMINGHAM
WXJCRADIO.COM

THE MOST POWERFUL BIBLE
TEACHING SIMULCAST IN AMERICA



**EVERY
ALABAMA
VOICE MUST
BE HEARD.**

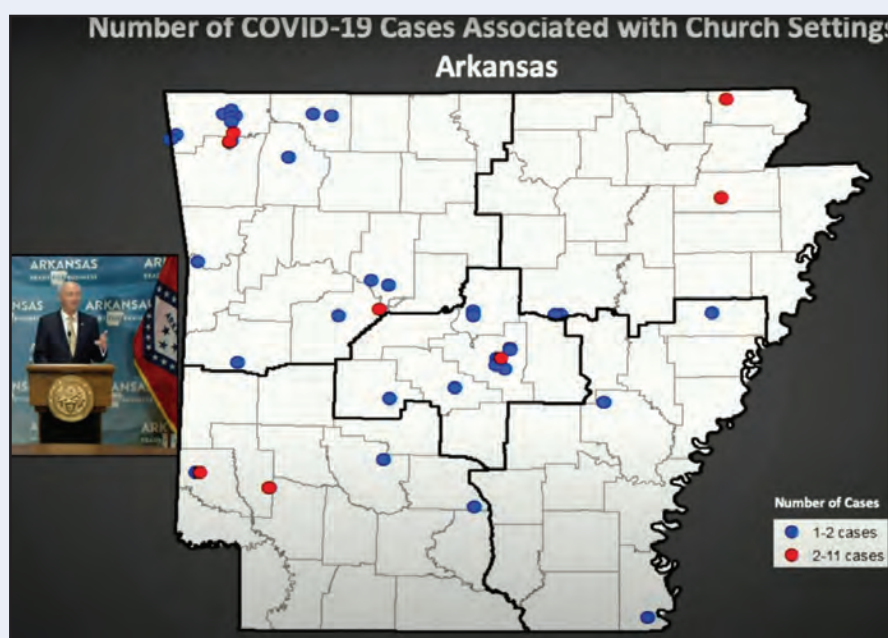
**IT'S NOT
TOO LATE.**

VISIT MY2020CENSUS.GOV

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



3 stories you should know



Screen capture from YouTube/BP

Churches in Arkansas, including two prominent SBC churches, say they were unfairly singled out in a June 26 briefing by the Arkansas Department of Health. The report listed Cross Church, a multi-site congregation, and Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, among churches from multiple denominations linked to COVID-19 clusters. State Baptist leaders said the information was erroneous and that singling out churches in reporting is 'unfair and damaging.' (BP)

CP giving drops in June; missions gifts way down

Gifts to the Cooperative Program in June totaled \$15,106,500.79, 4.11% less than the same month last year.

June saw an increase in gifts over totals in April (\$14.1 million) and May (\$14.8 million), when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was most acutely felt.

April marked the lowest monthly national CP total since December 2016.

As of June 30, gifts received by the Executive Committee for distribution through the CP Allocation Budget total \$145,213,356.17.

In June, designated gifts, which include contributions to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, disaster relief, hunger funds and other special missions gifts, were 38.5% below gifts received in June 2019. (BP)

High court delivers 2 religious liberty wins

The U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed in two 7-2 rulings handed down July 8 that churches and religious organizations are free to make employment and health insurance decisions based on their convictions.

In one ruling, the justices reiterated their support for a "ministerial exception" enabling churches and religious bodies to hire and fire based on their beliefs. In the second, the court upheld federal rules that protect the rights of employers with religious or moral objections to the contraception mandate of the Affordable Care Act. The opinion came after a seven-year legal battle by the Little Sisters of the Poor, a Catholic order that serves the poverty-stricken elderly, to gain an exemption from the requirement.

Read more at tabonline.org/SCOTUS-religious-liberty. (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

George Ricker, first full-time director of Shocco Springs, dies at age 94



George Ricker, director of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega from 1970 to 1989, died July 2. He was 94.

Ricker, Shocco's first full-time director, oversaw major renovations and four major construction projects on the Shocco campus.

He afforded many young people the opportunity to work as summer staff at Shocco, many of whom accepted the call to full-time ministry.

Russell Klinner, Shocco's current executive director, said he has heard many stories about Ricker's influence since being named to the position in 2017.

"Countless salvations, marriages, calls to ministry and life experiences are the direct result of [Ricker's] passion for spreading the gospel to the world through his influence at Shocco Springs," Klinner said.

After his retirement in 1989, Ricker served in-



RICKER

terim pastorates in Alabama, Hawaii, Alaska and Germany, and a short-term missions assignment in Japan with the then-Foreign Mission Board.

Ricker was a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham; Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Along with serving in various roles in Alabama Baptist life for 37 years, he also served as pastor of three churches in Alabama and Texas before ultimately landing at Shocco.

Ricker was preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Iva Nelle. He is survived by two sons, Stephen and David. (TAB)

'Pete' Edwards, longtime pastor of Unity, Marbury, dies at age 61



Anthony "Pete" Keith Edwards — pastor of Unity Baptist Church, Marbury, for the past 23 years — died July 1. He was 61. A native of Bibb County, Edwards was a steel fabricator in addition to his church ministry work.

He is survived by his wife, Sally; daughters, Christy and Melissa; son, Keith; eight grandchil-

dren; and two great-grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

Barefoot preacher, longtime pastor 'Bill' Faircloth dies at age 74



William "Bill" Merrill Faircloth Jr. — pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Thomsville, for the past 18 years — died July 2. He was 74.

Faircloth, who came to faith in Christ as an adult and started his ministry in 1984, is known for preaching barefoot because of a personal conviction that the place where the word of God is preached is holy ground.

He is survived by his wife, Becky; daughters, Ashley and Paige; son, William III; and six grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

Samford professor of religion and science named ISSR fellow



Samford University religion professor Josh Reeves has been named a fellow of the International Society for Science and Religion.

The honor places Reeves among 200 of the

— ALABAMA NEWS —

FBC Grand Bay forgives flag thief, extends invitation to attend church

It's not every day that a church is robbed, but it's even less common for the offender to return what was stolen with a written apology.

First Baptist Church, Grand Bay, recently placed American flags across its campus to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday. Ribbons were placed on each of the flags to honor veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

As they arrived for worship on July 5, church members noticed four of the flags were missing.

The anonymous thief stole the flags from the church's property but later returned the flags with a note asking for the church's forgiveness.

The letter reads, in part, "I am sorry for taking the flags. I did not mean any disrespect though I know it was wrong. I asked for forgiveness as soon as I got them. I was drinking and had a dumb idea. ... Again, I truly apologize and here are your flags back well took care of. I am not a bad person, just a little messed up but I am spiritual and have begged forgiveness. Please forgive me. Sincerely, I'm sorry."

The individual added, "P.S. The flags are beautiful and I love God and America."

Church member Melba Schafer told Mobile's NBC affiliate WPXI that the flags were put "back up where they belong" following their return.

Royce Dubose, pastor of First, Grand Bay, said the church does not know who the culprit was, adding, "to be honest with you we don't want to know. And not because we are angry at them but because we don't want to embarrass them. We don't want them to feel any more remorse than they are already feeling."

A July 6 post on the church's Facebook page features photos of the returned flags and of the offender's apology letter.

Church leaders said they accepted the unnamed perpetrator's apology and also invited him or her to attend their church.

"Praise God our stolen flags from First Baptist Church, Grand Bay, were returned with a note of apology. We would like to let whoever it was, since you didn't sign your note, know that your apology is accepted, and you are invited to attend our church services anytime," the post stated. (Caleb Yarbrough)



Photo by Lisa Patteson

A full display of U.S. flags flies again in front of FBC Grand Bay following the theft of four flags Independence Day weekend.

— NEWSBRIEFS —

world's most distinguished scholars in the study of science and religion.

Reeves is director of the Center for Science and Religion at Samford. In addition to his many books, articles and presentations in science and religion, Reeves has brought to Samford hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to support symposia and special lectures.

Reeves is a 1998 graduate of Samford and earned a master of divinity from Beeson Divinity School. He also holds graduate degrees from Cambridge University and Boston University. (Samford, TAB)

IMB urges caution when traveling, encourages commitment to missions

International Mission Board senior leaders are urging Southern Baptists to use extreme caution if they are considering overseas missions travel for the remainder of 2020.

As many countries continue to require quar-

antines or have not yet opened their borders, travelers could face unexpected circumstances, including quarantines upon re-entering the U.S.

The future threat and spread of COVID-19 also remains an unknown factor.

IMB personnel on the field are continually monitoring their local situations and government restrictions.

Many missionaries will not be able to host groups for the foreseeable future due to government-imposed travel bans and other factors related to the pandemic.

Churches with long-standing partnerships and plans to travel soon should remain in close contact with their field contact for guidance. They should also continue to check travel restrictions and re-entry to the U.S. guidelines, which could change day to day.

More information about ongoing work is at tabonline.org/IMB-commitment. (IMB)



REEVES



IMB photo

Persecuted church

Christian genocide underway in Nigeria, experts warn

JOS, Nigeria — Nine women and children were fatally shot or hacked to death by Muslim Fulani herdsmen June 3 in ongoing violence against Christians in Nigeria. The nine lived in the predominantly Christian village of Tudun Doka. Seven others were kidnapped from the village.

On May 15, herdsmen killed more than 30 people in seven other villages. Also that day, Kennedy Nendi Drengkat of the University of Jos was killed in his home and his 6-year-old daughter, Joanna, kidnapped. She and another kidnap victim were rescued.

The next day, two Christians were killed in Ungwan Anjo village. Most of the houses in the village were burned.

In January, Christian Solidarity International issued a genocide warning for Nigeria. On June 25, international advocacy group In Defense of Christians held an online press call and said Christians are being explicitly targeted in ongoing violence intended to drive them off their land.

Gregory Stanton, the founding president and chair of Genocide Watch, estimated as many as 27,000 Christians in Nigeria have been killed since 2012. The nature of the attacks clearly fit the U.N. definition of acts of genocide, he said.

Nigeria is No. 12 on Open Doors' World Watch List 2020 of places where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

News near you

ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

► Pleasant Grove

Baptist Church, Atmore, will celebrate homecoming on July 19 at 11 a.m. Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, and president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention will preach. Cox's first pastorate was Pleasant Grove Baptist. Music will be provided by The McPherson Family Bluegrass Gospel Group. Larry E. Beauchamp is pastor.



COX

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries




Myers-Mallory
 State Missions Offering

Week of Prayer
FOR STATE MISSIONS

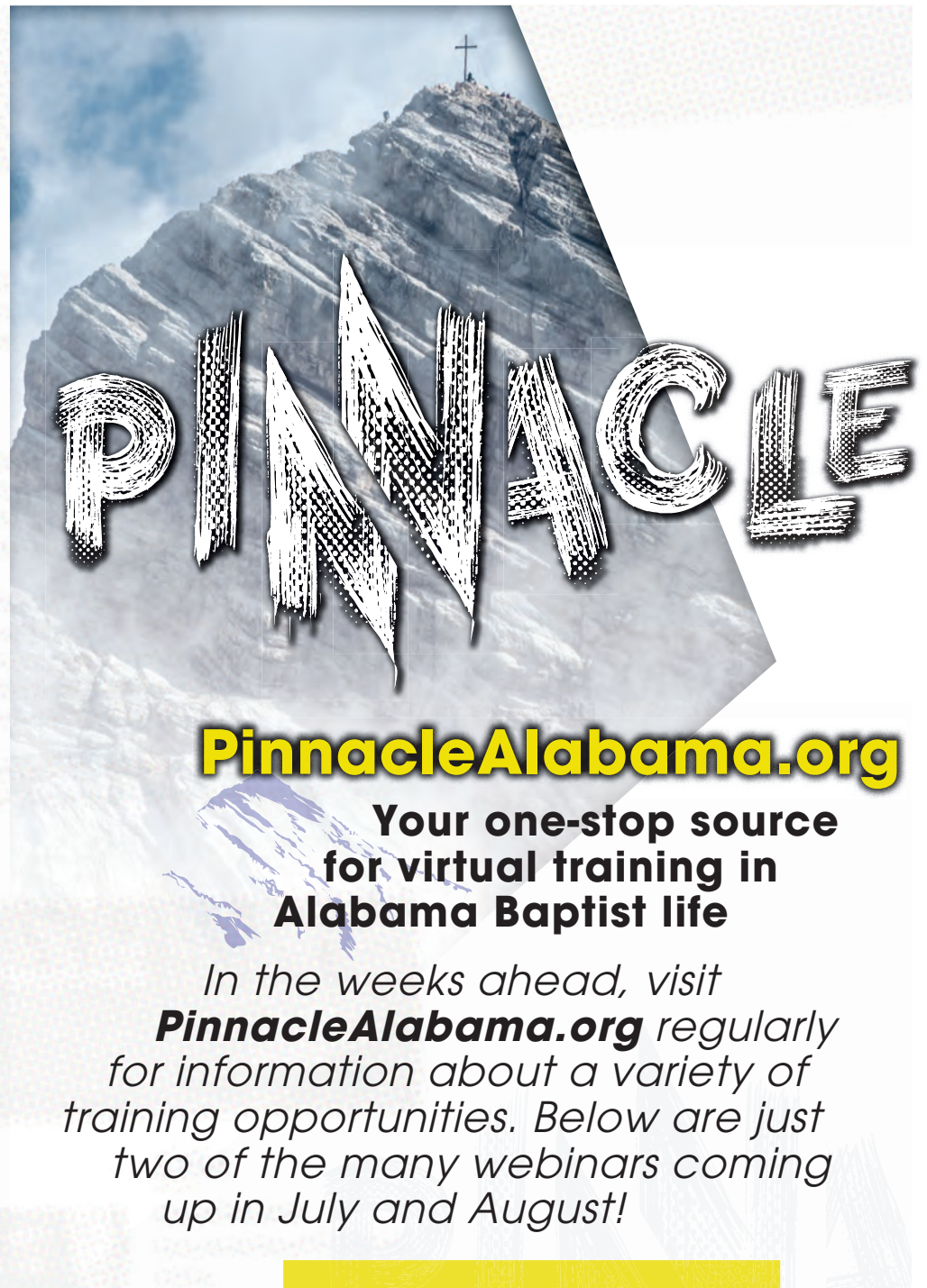
SEPTEMBER 13-20 • 2020

YOUR GIFTS HELP SUPPORT THESE GREAT COMMISSION MINISTRIES:

- ALABAMA WMU
- DISASTER RELIEF
- CHURCH PLANTING
- PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS
- CHURCH REVITALIZATION



Myers-Mallory.org
 State Goal: \$1,200,000

Pinnacle

PinnacleAlabama.org

Your one-stop source for virtual training in Alabama Baptist life

*In the weeks ahead, visit **PinnacleAlabama.org** regularly for information about a variety of training opportunities. Below are just two of the many webinars coming up in July and August!*

UPCOMING WEBINARS

To register, visit PinnacleAlabama.org

JULY DISCIPLESHIP LUNCH & LEARN WITH WARREN HAYNES, Thursday, July 23, 12 p.m.

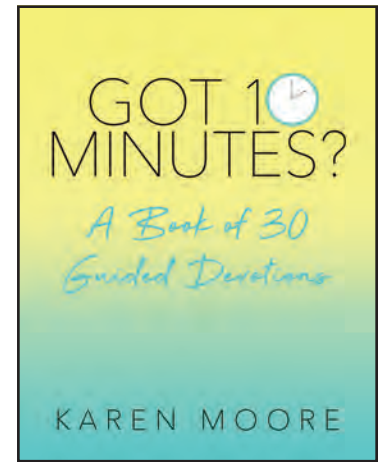
Hear from and interact with Warren Haynes, seminary professor, author (*Discipleship Uncomplicated*), speaker and pastor, from noon to 1, then stick around if you can for an additional 30-minute Q&A with your Alabama hosts.

MINISTERING TO PRESCHOOLERS AND CHILDREN IN CHALLENGING TIMES, Tuesday, July 28, 10 a.m.

As churches begin to reopen their preschool and children's ministries, what will nursery, Sunday School, children's worship and other programs look like in the days to come? Patty Burns and Belinda Stroud, state missionaries for preschool and children's ministries, will be leading a discussion about the "new normal" in this area.

MISSED A WEBINAR? Visit vimeo.com/alsbom to view completed webinars.

GOT 10 MINUTES?



By Karen Moore

Special to The Alabama Baptist | ©2020 Karen Moore

God Goes Before You

“The Lord will go before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forget you. Don’t be afraid and don’t worry.”

D E U T E R O N O M Y 3 1 : 8 (N C V)

Devotional Moment

Things have changed in all of our lives over the past few months.

COVID-19 has put the world on a temporary hold,

and whether you’ve lost your job or you’re wondering when you’ll be able to visit your grandchildren, your life has changed.

Since summertime usually hosts a myriad of graduations and weddings, people have struggled with how to handle events and celebrations.

Things we once took for granted like fully stocked grocery stores or being able to travel any

time we choose have given us pause.

God has a reminder for us though. He wants us to realize He is right here with us and nothing has changed in His willingness to help us rise above our circumstances.

He knows the desires of our hearts and now that things have slowed down a bit, He is inviting us to draw near.

Come closer and listen.

Cast your burdens in His direction. God has not forgotten about your loved ones, and He has not abandoned you to fear and worry.

He goes before you even now, preparing the way.

to open doors You know are meant for me to walk through. I ask You to help me trust in You for all that I am and all that I will yet be. Amen.

Prayer

Father in Heaven, I pray
You will go before me

Action Step

Put three key words in your journal that describe how you are feeling today.✝

“He wants us to realize He is right here with us and that nothing has changed in His willingness to help us rise above our circumstances.”

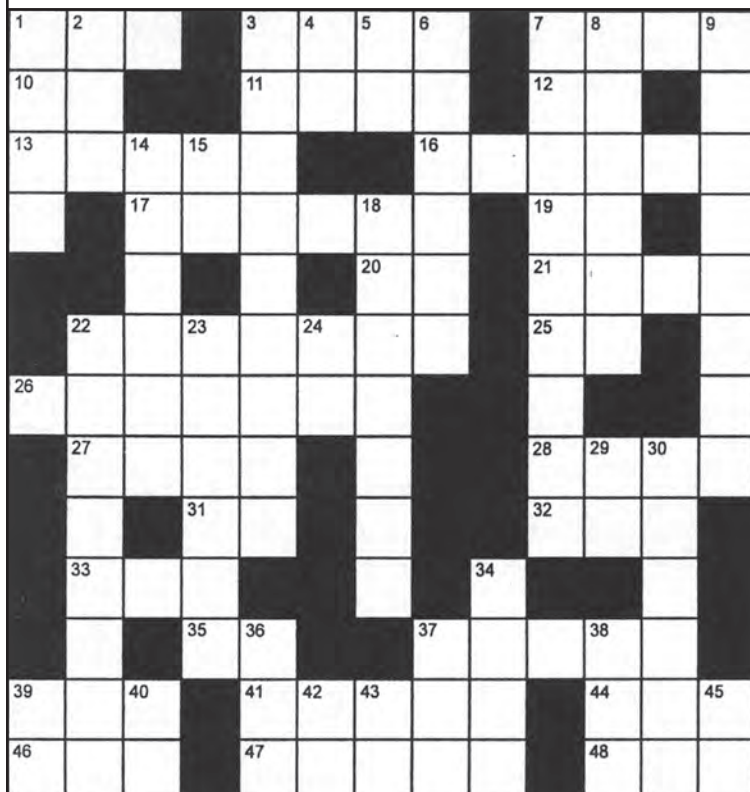


MOORE

EXCLUSIVE FOR TAB READERS
Save 50%
“Got 10 Minutes for God?”
AND
“Got 10 Minutes for God: 30 Guided Devotions”
Retail Value \$25, **Now \$12**
For details, email
Got10Devotions@gmail.com

Christian Crossword

By Pamela Jensen Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- The ___ that covereth the inwards. (Lev. 3:3)
- Went to sojourn in the country of ___. (Ruth 1:1)
- Jehu destroyed ___ out of Israel. (2 Kings 10:28)
- He placed ___ the east of the garden. (Gen. 3:24)
- ___ also to save them to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:25)
- Associated Press. (abbr.)
- Nor height, nor ___, nor any other. (Rom. 8:39)
- The Lord sent ___ unto David. (2 Sam. 12:1)
- Unto ___ the prophet, the son of Amoz. (Isa. 37:2)
- Short for “hello.”
- Bureau. (abbr.)
- Zimri, the son of ___, a prince. (Num. 25:14)

- He shall send them a ___. (Isa. 19:20)
- Her Highness. (abbr.)
- In thee shall all ___ be blessed. (Gal. 3:8)
- An eagle stirreth up her ___. (Deut. 32:11)
- Ye shall find the ___. (Luke 2:12)
- Hi in the mirror.
- Of fowls also of the ___. (Gen. 7:3)
- In addition, also.
- New Jersey. (abbr.)
- Nehemiah the son of ___. (Neh. 3:16)
- Not on.
- Being a wild ___ tree. (Rom. 11:17)
- Though they be ___ like crimson. (Isa. 1:18)
- Short for “good-bye.”
- The name of it called ___. (Gen. 11:9)
- There was no room

- for them in the ___. (Luke 2:7)
- ### Down
- Shall the rich man ___ away. (James 1:11)
 - Men ___ the bread of angels. (Ps. 78:25)
 - The three and 20th to ___. (1 Chron. 25:30)
 - Obadiah. (abbr.)
 - Alabama. (abbr.)
 - These are their names: ___ in the hill country. (1 Kings 4:8)
 - David comforted ___ his wife. (2 Sam. 12:24)
 - The son of a Benjamite. (1 Sam. 9:1)
 - Heard them speak in his own ___. (Acts 2:6)
 - ___ then went out unto them. (John 18:29)
 - Tensile strength. (abbr.)

- Proud, ___, disobedient to their parents. (2 Tim. 3:2)
- ___ them through thy truth. (John 17:17)
- Seal up the ___ and prophecy. (Dan. 9:24)
- To be upon.
- Joshua had taken ___. (Josh. 10:1)
- Because of unbelief they were ___ off. (Rom. 11:20)
- ___ had six sons. (1 Chron. 9:44)
- These three men, Noah, Daniel and ___ were in it. (Ezek. 14:14)
- Avenue. (abbr.)
- I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of ___. (Ex. 31:2)
- Obstetrics. (abbr.)
- Chemical symbol for Iron.
- The sixth tone of the diatonic scale.
- Ibidem.
- Daniel. (abbr.)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 19

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



LIVING WISELY Proverbs 14:8–15

Prudent (8, 15)

The wisdom of the prudent or sensible is not the wisdom of the learned. The term “prudence” indicates the mental capacity to formulate a plan. It can refer to selfish scheming and trickery. In verse 8, the term describes a person who takes the time to learn the situation and plan a realistic course of action for that situation.

Wisdom is the righteous application of true knowledge. Head knowledge is insufficient without the Spirit’s application to the inward man. The sensible person is one who examines his or her lifestyle and experiences, learns from failure and corrects those mistakes so they do not continue reaping unwise results.

The fool is someone with no moral restraint, one who cannot come up with logical moral conclusions. The stupidity of fools affects every aspect of a person’s life, including his or her speech, morality, work ethic and daily life. The foolish person deceives himself to such a degree that he can no longer recognize wisdom when he sees it. The foolish person examines situations and consistently reaches the wrong conclusions.

Verses 8 and 15 form a chiasmic pair, meaning they deal with similar or even the same words or ideas but in reverse order. These two verses contrast sensible and foolish people. In verse 15, the “inexperienced one” is the person who is easily deceived. The gullibility of the inexperienced one is often the result of laziness or an unwillingness to learn rather than a product of the person’s age. In contrast to the inexperienced, the “sensible one” watches his steps very carefully. He is thoughtful and vigilant as he makes decisions in life.

Content (9, 14)

“Reparation” refers to a guilt offering in the Old Testament sacrificial system. The guilt offering required a sacrifice to God as well as restitution to the victim by the one who committed the sin. When a person’s sinful act resulted in another person’s loss, the guilty party was

required to repay the amount of the loss plus an additional 20%.

Fools are so selfish that they will not obey God with the appropriate restitution to the person they have damaged. Fools do not care about anyone but themselves. They are not concerned in the least about their accountability to God or to others.

The “upright” are in right standing with God. They realize their covenant relationship with God places them in a covenant relationship with God’s people.

In verse 14, the “disloyal one” is a person whose heart turns back; a person who has chosen to abandon his commitment to live according to a covenant. The disloyal believe they can sin without having to face any consequences personally. However, apart from God’s mercy, all sinners receive what their conduct deserves.

The upright is the “good one” in verse 14. As he or she lives in covenant with God and with others, God will bless him or her. Obeying God’s commands and following God’s wisdom leads to contentment.

Joyful (10, 13)

Often a disconnect exists between outward appearance and inner reality. Happiness is a result of a person’s circumstances. Joy, on the other hand, is a choice a person makes based on faith in God’s future grace.

This joy is produced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. No one knows the inner life of another’s heart, and the appearance of happiness can be deceptive.

Thriving (11–12)

These verses form the core of Solomon’s message in this passage. When a person chooses the way of wickedness in life, destruction is the only possible destiny.

The way of wickedness may appear enticing to the fool who can no longer discern right from wrong, but the result will only be death.

The way of the upright, however, will flourish. The righteous person will experience success in God’s eyes, not in the eyes of the world. 🌈

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University



HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO POLITICS? Romans 13:1–10

Respond to the government with obedience. (1–4)

Paul wrote to Christians living at the epicenter of the Roman Empire and told them to submit themselves to all governing authorities, remembering that they have been instituted by God. This was not an endorsement of a specific form of government but of the value of government in maintaining civil order.

Governments are expected to punish those who do evil and leave those who do good in peace, serving as “God’s servants” for the good of those who live lawfully and the restraining of those who do not.

Of course, governments do not always act that way. Our Lord and the Apostle Paul both suffered at the hands of the authorities of their day, as did many of the prophets before them. And Acts 5:29 reminds us that when obeying authorities would require disobeying God, “We must obey God rather than men.”

Believers are to obey all proper laws, but the command to obey does not mean we cannot protest policies and actions of the government that dishonor God. Paul himself engaged in peaceful civil disobedience when he was unjustly arrested and imprisoned and refused to walk away until he received an apology for how he was treated (see Acts 16:36–40).

Respond to the government with integrity, respect and honor. (5–7)

Governments serve society by maintaining a level of civil stability and order that permits us to live without being at the mercy of chaos and lawlessness as the fundamental reality of our daily existence.

Paul says we owe them more than basic obedience to the civil laws that provide for a just society. As God’s servants (v. 6) we also owe them taxes, revenue, respect and honor (v. 7). In Paul’s world, the good that civil leaders did for their people was expected to gain them ever greater honor as generous benefactors of their people. The services rendered

by public servants should indeed be respected, honored and compensated, and the taxes necessary for the fulfillment of their responsibilities should be paid. This means treating all public servants with respect and honor, not just those of the political party we support. If Paul could write as he does about honoring pagan Roman authorities, we can be respectful of politicians whose policies we oppose as well as of those we support.

Respond to political discussions and disagreements with love. (8–10)

The ultimate obligation we have to every member of our society is the obligation to love. Paul says all of God’s commandments are summarized in Leviticus 19:18, the commandment to love our neighbor as ourself. In a remarkable use of understatement, Paul declares, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor.” On the contrary, it prioritizes the well-being and the dignity of our neighbor, treating the best interests of our neighbors as a moral and spiritual priority.

Our nation is polarized to an extent rarely seen before. People angrily insult and dismiss each other based on political disagreements. We don’t treat each other with the dignity and respect due to all those made in God’s image.

Paul reminds us that if we love Christ, we must also love our neighbors as Christ loves them. We need love to listen without insulting or demeaning those whose ideas offend us. People should recognize our love for them is not measured by our agreement with their ideas.

Our Christian witness depends on this kind of love. In a time of great contention and polarization, we are called to be salt and light and to honor Christ in how we talk to others. Our ability to show common courtesy and disagree civilly are tremendously important parts of our Christian testimony in a world gripped by anger and hate. Christ’s love and respect are always needed — especially in times like these. 🌈



Media reviews

COMEDY

Comedian Bone Hampton trusts God in challenging entertainment world

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Christian comedian and actor Bone Hampton lives by a simple motto: “What doesn’t kill you makes you funnier.”

Hampton fell into comedy when he was in college. As a member of the University of West Texas football team, he didn’t see much playing time. Only starters would go to away games, with one exception — one different non-starting player would go each time to get more experience. Before one away game, Hampton was surprised when the coach said he was going.

“I was like, for what?” The coach’s reply — “They want you to go to the game because you always make them laugh.”

Hampton started thinking that he might be on to something. That thought was encouraged early on by some big names in comedy. When the movie “Necessary Roughness” was filmed on his campus, Hampton got a part and met the comedian Sinbad.

Sinbad invited Hampton to be part of an ABC Special that was in the works. The

show was eventually canceled, but Hampton got a huge boost of confidence from being invited.

“Sinbad thought I was funny enough to be on his ABC show,” Hampton said.

Then while still in college, Hampton entered and won a “Wanda Impersonation Contest,” based on a character from the show “In Living Color.” That led to meeting Jamie Foxx.

Encouraged by others

“At that point I was like, that’s Sinbad and Jamie Foxx, two of the top-notch comedians in the world, [who] said, ‘Hey, man, you’re funny.’”

After college graduation, Hampton performed during open mic time at Steve Harvey’s Comedy House in Dallas. He got a good reception his first time up. The second time, he got booed off stage.

“As I was walking off stage, Steve Harvey grabbed my arm and said, ‘Don’t worry about them. You’re going to be all right,’” Hampton said.

Harvey then chastised the audience because they didn’t realize Hampton’s brilliance because he kept it clean.

While performing the next six months there, Hampton asked advice from every comedian that came through, including

Yvette Wilson, a comedian and actor on “Moesha.”

She encouraged him by saying, “The fact that you can be funny and be clean — if you pull this off in [Los Angeles], you probably can write your own ticket.”

When he got to Califor-



Photo by Tracy Riggs

nia, he had his fair share of rejection. But Harvey had advised him how to handle it: “You’ve got to remember, the fact that you walked up on stage [means] you have more confidence than all of the people in the audience put together.”

Hampton’s faith stayed strong despite the challenges of the entertainment world. There was continuing pressure to use profanity in his act, but Hampton knew he had to answer to God — and to his mom — so he kept it clean.

Guided by faith

Several former pastors have helped guide him, as has Scripture. One of Hampton’s favorite passages is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

“What I hear as a comedian is Jesus saying, ‘Uh, Daddy, ... I know I signed up for this. I know we agreed that I’m going to come down here, live a little bit and then get up on this cross and get crucified. I know. I know! I’m not trying to backtrack, but I’m saying, if you have a Plan B, let me know about that right now. Otherwise, I’m good.’”

The passage reminds Hampton that he doesn’t have to feel bad if he

asks God for an easier way out of a situation. “If even Jesus asked His Father ... then it’s okay.”

When Hampton found the Christian Comedians Association (CCA), a group started by Chonda Pierce, he

first was told he couldn’t open for Pierce because his jokes were “too black” for her white audience.

But after another comedian bombed, Pierce went to her team and told them Hampton couldn’t do any worse.

His first time opening for Pierce, Hampton got a standing ovation. Chonda was amazed and took him under her wing.

One principle Hampton lives by is that something isn’t automatically right just because it’s all you know.

“You have to test what you think is right against, first of all, the word of God.”

If the issue is not addressed in Scripture, then look at how it affects people, he said. Hampton keeps this in mind when performing.

“When I’m on stage, I have power. I can control the mood of the room. [I] want everybody to leave feeling better than they did before they came in.” ✝

Learn more
about Hampton
and hear some
of his comedy at
bonehampton.com.



Photo courtesy
of Bone Hampton

DEPEND ON FAITH



Photo by Robbie Rogers/MLB via Getty Images

Professional baseball player Sands makes sure his actions speak louder than words

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Jerry Sands' professional baseball career has spanned an ocean, three countries and more than a decade.

A right fielder for the Hanshin Tigers in the Nippon Professional Baseball League in Japan, Sands has played on four Major League Baseball teams since he was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2008. He was the Dodgers Minor League Player of the Year in 2010 after a promotion to Double A Chattanooga in the Southern League.

MLB debut

Sands, 32, made his MLB debut in April 2011 with the Dodgers. In 61 games he batted .253 and hit four home runs, including a grand slam that May.

He went on to play for the Tampa

Bay Rays, Cleveland Indians and Chicago White Sox.

During his MLB career he racked up 67 RBIs, 10 home runs and a .238 batting average.

Sands went to Asia in 2018 to play for Kiwoom in the Korean baseball league. He smashed 12 home runs, batted .314 and had 37 RBIs in 25 games. In 2019, he batted .319 with 33 home runs and 125 RBIs.

After the 2019 season, he moved to Japan to play for Hanshin, his current team.

During his professional career, Sands said he has had to depend on his faith.

"You have got to rely on Him, or you are not going to go anywhere," Sands said. "If you rely on the Lord then things are going to work out for you. Even if they don't work out

in baseball, it's a better life through Him," Sands said.

His parents, Jerry and Lori, have been important influences and are his biggest role models, Sands said.

Influential parents

"They have worked hard all their lives for everything they have gotten," he said. "They've supported me through my life, and I would not be here without them."

Sands has displayed those same work habits each place he's played baseball.

"I have had a lot of successes, and a lot of failures that have helped to build the success," he said.

A self-described "pretty big competitor," Sands admitted he's disappointed with each loss but is glad he's still in the game. He doesn't want to hold anything back in a game he has loved for years.

"You can't play every day and not love the game," he said.

His wife, Morgan, has been influential in his faith walk. When they were dating, she would text him Bible verses and tell him to keep his head up, that everything was going to work out through Christ.

Married in 2011, he and Morgan have two sons, Eli, 5, and Tucker, 3. They attend Watkins Chapel Baptist Church in Middlesex, North Carolina.

In addition to reading the Bible and learning how it applies to daily life, Sands said his faith has grown through participation in Baseball Chapel.

"On the field I am not much of a vocal leader," he said. "I lead by actions; the way I carry myself, the way I go through everyday life. I feel like you represent the Lord more by your actions than by what you say."

Sands has seen "the Lord come out in people" through guidance they've provided him and in everyday situations.

Developing skills and faith

"Every day you are always going to see the Lord acting through you or through other people. You've got to remember what you believe in and make sure your actions are speaking louder than your words," he noted.

Being a better Christian and a better player are two of his goals, Sands said, and on two continents he continues to develop his leadership skills and faith.

"I feel like I am a pretty good leader on and off the field. That is something that you can't teach," Sands said. "I want to continue to use the talents that God has blessed me with. I can see where [faith] is affecting my life."✝



Photo by Brian Blanco/Getty Images