

## East Texas Baptist University

### VITA

**Thomas Sanders, Ph.D.**

**CURRENT POSITION:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Professor of Christian Ministry  
Edwin F. and Mary Prince Moore Chair of Business  
East Texas Baptist University  
One Tiger Drive, Marshall, TX 75670  
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### EDUCATION:

Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership Studies, Dallas Baptist University, August 2009  
Master of Arts in Religious Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, May 1990 Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Baylor University, May 1987

### TEACHING AND HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:

Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Christian Ministry and Edwin F. and Mary Prince Moore Chair of Business

February 2015 - current

- Conducted intensive institutional review of student characteristics (36% First Generation/40% PELL) and academic success data in order to develop high impact strategies through newly constituted office of Academic Success for improved retention and graduation rates.
- Served as the ombudsman for university retention improving the freshmen retention from 52% in Fall 2014 to 69% (highest retention on record) in Fall 2023. First time back-to-back cohort retention was at 65% or higher on record.
- Implemented campus-wide retention strategies that resulted improvement of four-year retention rate from 19% for Fall 2011 to 42% for Fall 2019 students. The four-year graduate rate has been stable at 42% (2017-19) for three years with the most current six-year graduate rate at 48% for Fall 2017 as of August 2023.
- Developed dual enrollment programs with local private and public schools with 295 students enrolled in Fall 2023; an 80% increase from Fall 2013.
- Provided leadership for the development of graduate enrollment and initiation of new graduate programs with 174 students in Fall 2023; a 70% increase from Fall 2013.
- Spearheaded the Ten Year SACS-COC Reaffirmation in 2019 with no follow-up or recommendations from the on-site review committee.
- Leads academic accountability group (two hours every Sunday night of both fall and spring semesters) for 10-12 student athletes for over a decade.
- Supervised the development of Sisk Health Clinic with services providing a Nurse Practitioner for students, faculty, and staff as well as developing an innovative partnership

with University Health Insurance to provide no cost services to staff and faculty who are on insurance.

- Served as the university crisis management leader during COVID managing health policy, health protocols, clinical testing, media and technology preparation for instruction, and risk assessment so that 80% of classes could meet in-person during the crisis, and students could have a safe campus experience.
- Developed Letter of Intent, Charter of Work, and Timeline for merger consolidation/level change for East Texas Baptist University and B.H. Carroll Theological Seminary as well as led the team to create the substantive change for merger/consolidation/level change for SACS-COC.
- Led the successful approval of SACS-COC Substantive Change initiative to move the University from Level III, awarding master's degrees to Level VI, awarding four or more doctoral programs.
- Coordinated 8 Global Study and Serve groups to Israel for students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, East Texas Baptist University  
June 2014 – February 2015

Assistant Provost and Associate Professor of Religion, East Texas Baptist University  
June 2013 – June 2014

Graduate Program Director, Dallas Baptist University, 2006-2013

- Developed and directed two graduate programs: Master of Arts in Christian Education: Family Ministry and Master of Arts in Christian Education: Children's Ministry Programs. Both programs were developed and offered on campus and fully online.
- Associate Professor of Christian Education, Leadership, and Research

**Courses Taught:**

RLGN 4341 Church Administration

RLGN 5350 Leadership and the Educational Ministry of the Church

CHRM 4305 Family Ministry

CHRM 2341 Principles of Christian Teaching

RLGN 3306 Youth and Single Adult Ministry

RLGN 4303 Christian Servant Leadership

CHST 4306 Children's Ministry in the Church

MACE 6392 Moral Development in Young Children

MACH 6311 Early Childhood Ministry

MACH 6312 Ministry with Children

MACH 6350 Ministry in Church Weekday

MACH 6351 Children and the Christian Faith

MACH 6352 Advanced Childhood Ministry

MACH 6353 Ministry to Families

LEAD 1111 Learning and Leading

MGMT 4353 Organizational Management  
EDDL 7334 Qualitative Research Methodology and Analysis  
EDDM 7315 Ministry Development and Design  
EDDM 7320 Internship: Ministry Leadership  
EDDM 7371 Faith Formation and Christian Education Process  
PHDL 7303 Leadership through the Ages: Classical Leadership – Educational Model  
PHDL 7308 Great Books  
PHDL 7313 Faith Formation and Leadership Development  
PHDL 7315 Qualitative Research

**OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE:**

Minister to Children and Families, 2003-2006  
Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

Director of Childhood Ministry Publishing, 1996-2003  
LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN (Supervised budget of \$35,000,000 and staff of 85 editors, consultants, and graphic designers as well as 200 plus contract, and part-time writers and authors in developing and providing curriculum and leadership resources for churches and families)

Minister of Childhood to Children and Their Families, 1994-1996  
Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, TX

Minister to Preschoolers and Families, 1990-1994  
First Baptist Church, Waco, TX

Minister of Youth and Childhood Education, 1987-1990  
First Baptist Church, Hewitt, TX

Minister to Students, 1984-1987  
Calvary Baptist Church, Waco, TX

**PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:**

**Scholarly Research:**

*Such as These: Exploring the Conversations with Children about Conversion and Baptism. Christian Education Journal Fall 2013.*

*Images from the Caves: Childhood Reflections of Faith and Life during the Siege of Vicksburg, Baptist History and Heritage Society, May 2013.*

*Children's Understanding of the Language of Faith* (related to salvation, baptism, church, and ordinance) in process with 700 plus children participants to be conducted in June 2013.

*Supporting Children in the Death of a Parent*, research project collaborated with graduate student Jason Noble.

Unpublished qualitative research with graduate students related to needs of different types of families in the context of church ministry, emerging ministry design among six church starts, and children and conversion.

**Books:**

- Capps, T., Sanders, T., & Shaw, T. (2011). *I'm a Christian now! Leader resources Revised edition*, LifeWay Church Resources.
- Sanders, T. (2010). *I'm counting on you*, Sampson Resources.
- Sanders, T. (2009). *The kingdom of God belongs to such as these: Exploring the conversion experiences of Baptist children* (Doctoral dissertation), Dallas Baptist University. Sanders, T. (2009). *Jumpstart*, Sampson Resources.
- Sanders, T. (2009). *Kids ministry 101: Practical answers to questions about Kids Ministry*, LifeWay Press (contributor).
- Sanders, T. (2001). *When can I?*, Broadman and Holman.
- Sanders, T. and Bradberry, M. (2000). *Teaching preschoolers: First steps toward faith*, LifeWay Church Resources.
- Sanders, T. (2000). *Levels of biblical learning*, LifeWay Church Resources.
- Sanders, T. and Lumpkin, C. (1999). *Preschool Sunday school for a new Century*, LifeWay Church Resources.

**Chapters in Books:**

- Handbook for Baptists: Things Every Baptist Should Know*. 2013, edited by Bernie Spooner, contributor of the following chapter: Talking with Children about Faith, Conversion, and Baptism
- Christian Education Leadership: Making Disciples in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*, 2012 edited by Bernie Spooner, Christian Leadership publishing, contributor of the following chapters: Spiritual Formation and Christian Education, Preschool Ministry and Faith Formation in Early Childhood, Leading the Formation of Children

**Dissertation Chair:**

- Penick, Mark. (2013). *Christian Conversion Related to I Am Second: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study*. Dallas Baptist University.
- Shelton, Ross. (2015). *Revitalization in Seven Previously Declining, Established, Baptist General Convention of Texas-Related Churches*. Dallas Baptist University.
- Cranford, BJ. (2016). *A Study of Baptist Pastors' and Childhood Ministry Leaders' Practices Relating to the Age of Accountability*. Dallas Baptist University.
- Whitenack, John H. (2016). *How Church Plant Leaders in the Sojourn Network Minister to Families: A Multiple Case Study*. Dallas Baptist University.

**Curriculum:**

- Women's Missionary Union: *Start* magazine, 18 units of curriculum for preschoolers
- LifeWay Christian Resources: Vacation Bible School, 1 unit for children and 2 units for students; Sunday School, 2 units for preschool and 1 unit for children
- RSI: Three units of stewardship resources for preschool and children
- Baptist General Convention of Texas: *Tejas Trails Adventure*, Birth-Sixth Grade Texas
- WMU: Mary Hill Davis Week of Prayer Curriculum, Fall 2010

**Articles:**

- Sanders, T. (Fall 2012). Children's ministry that fits [Review of the book *Children's Ministry that Fits*, by D. Csinos]. *Christian Education Journal*.

- Sanders, T. (2011). Introduction for *Telling the Story of Jesus to Mississippi Children*. Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.
- Sanders, T. (2011). The Power of Parents in the Lives of Children. *Experience Kingdom Life Focus*, 11, 6-7.
- Sanders, T. (2010). Childfaith: Experiencing God and spiritual growth with your children [Review of the book *Childfaith: Experiencing God and spiritual growth with your children*, by D. Ratcliff & B. Ratcliff]. *Christian Education Journal*, 7(2), 437-440.
- Sanders, T. (2010). Handbook of psychology of religion and spirituality [Review of the book *Handbook of psychology of religion and spirituality*, edited by R. F. Paloutzian]. *Christian Education Journal*, 7(2), 446-449.
- Sanders, T. (Spring 2010). The pastoral care of children [Review of the book *The pastoral care of children*, by D. Grosseohme]. *Christian Education Journal*, 7(1), 207-211.
- Sanders, T. (Summer 2007). Tag, you're it! *In Ministry with Kids*, 36-38.
- Sanders, T. (Fall 2007). First impressions: Helping parents guide their child to Christ. *In Ministry with Kids*, 44-46.
- Sanders, T. (2004). OK, I'll do it. *Bible Express*, 11(12), 23.
- Sanders, T. (2004). The whole thing. *Bible Express*, 11(12), 22.
- Sanders, T. (2003). The changing arena of childhood. *In Ministry with Kids*, 6-7.
- Sanders, T. (Winter 2003-2004). Seeking the seekers. *In Ministry with Kids*, 6-8.
- Sanders, T. (2002). Developing a biblical worldview. *ParentLife*, 9(3), 24.
- Sanders, T. (2002). What does holy mean? *Bible Express*, 10(1), 6-7.
- Sanders, T. (2002). When discipline differs. *ParentLife*, 16(12), 26.
- Sanders, T. (2001). Teaching preschoolers the way God created them to learn. *The Leader*, 6(8), 21-22.
- Sanders, T. (2000). Teaching your child about fear. *ParentLife*, 7(5), 50.
- Sanders, T. (2000). Teaching your child about Jesus. *ParentLife*, 7(6), 50.
- Sanders, T. (2000). Teaching your child biblical truths. *ParentLife*, 6(12), 50.
- Sanders, T. (2000). Tell it like it is! *Preschool Leader Guide*, 1(2), M1.
- Sanders, T. (2000). The truth of the matter. *ParentLife*, 6(7), 40-41.
- Sanders, T. (1999). Family matters. *Bible Teaching for 3's-Pre-K: Leader Guide*, 1(1), 131.

#### **Academic Presentations:**

- Velma E. Schmidt Early Childhood Conference, 2007, University of North Texas, "The Moral Life of Children"
- Velma E. Schmidt Early Childhood Conference, 2008, University of North Texas, "Spiritual Formation in the Early Years"
- Baptist World Alliance, 2008, Christian Education Commission, "Deuteronomy 6: Implications for Christian Education for Children"
- Baptist World Alliance, 2009, Christian Education Commission, "The Kingdom of God Belongs to Such as These: Exploring the Conversion Experiences of Baptist Children"
- Baptist World Alliance, 2011, Commission on Theological Education and Spiritual Formation, "Millennials and Theological Education"
- Fellowship of Baptist Historians during the Baptist History and Heritage Society, May 2011, Annual Meeting, "The Bushnell Effect on Baptist Education, Baptism, and Conversion"
- Baptist World Alliance, 2012, Commission on Theological Education and Spiritual Formation, "Faith Formation in All the Stages of Life"

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

Editorial, Consultant Activity:

*Read to Me Bible for Kids: KJV*, 2000, Broadman and Holman, Thomas Sanders. (support material contributor, executive editor)

*Read to Me Bible for Kids: NIV*, 2000, Broadman and Holman, Thomas Sanders. (support material contributor, executive editor)

*Christian Education Journal*, Children and Family Ministry Book Review Editor

Bread for the World Academy Advisor, Washington, D.C. (Bill Gates Foundation sponsored)

“*The Gathering*” Planning Committee, 2013, Texas Baptists BGCT

Come to the Table Resources, 2011, Christian Life Commission

Childhood Ministry Journal, 2009, Volume 1, Edition 1, Editor

Childhood Ministry Journal, 2011, Volume 1, Edition 2, Editor

**Awards and Honors:**

John Sullivan Leadership Award, 2000, LifeWay Church Resources

Teamship Award, 2001, Sunday School Group, LifeWay Christian Resources

Outstanding Young Leader Award, 2004, Baptist Association of Christian Education Nominee for Piper

Outstanding Professors, 2012, Dallas Baptist University

**Professional Organizations:**

Theta Alpha Kappa Theological Studies Honor Society Moderator and Sponsor

North American Professors of Christian Education

Baptist World Alliance Commission on Theological Education and Spiritual Formation

Baptist Religious Education Association of the Southwest

Baptist Association of Christian Educators

**Online Writing:**

*Faithvillage.com* Contributor (list articles)

- o The Power of Parents in the Lives of Children (Feb 2012)
- o When Discipline Differs (Feb 2012)
- o The Hunger Games: Hungry for What? (Mar 2012)
- o Follow the Leader (Mar 2012)
- o Sharing the Easter Story with Children (Apr 2012)
- o “No” – A power word for children (Apr 2012)
- o Lying and Spiritual Development for Children (Apr 2012)
- o “He is different like that” (May 2012)
- o Parents: A Barrier or Filter Between Two Worlds (May 2012)
- o “Jesus Has Never Taught Zeke!” (May 2012)
- o “Look Who is Not Coming to Church” (May 2012)
- o Letters to Camp (Jun 2012)
- o Pastor to the Youngest (Jun 2012)
- o “Who is Teaching Whom?” (Jun 2012)

- o Vacation Bible School is Still Cool! (Jun 2012)
- o Being Dad, Being Minister (Jun 2012)
- o Talking with Your Child about Death: Part 1, Part 2 (Jul 2012)
- o The Spiritual Lives of Children's Books (Jul 2012)
- o Kids, Competition, and Stress (Aug 2012)

**Keynote Speaking/Conference Leading:**

Keynote speaker on ministry topics related to preschoolers, children, student, family and leadership development, and advocacy in hundreds of churches/associations/conferences.

Alabama Baptist Convention

Alaska Baptist Convention

Arkansas Baptist Convention

Association of Christian Schools and Institutions

Baptist Association of Christian Educators

Baptist Convention of South Carolina Baptist

Convention of North Carolina

Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Baptist Religious Educators of the Southwest

Baptist World Alliance (Four presentations: Prague in 2008, Amsterdam in 2009, and Kuala Lumpur in 2011, Santiago in 2012)

California Baptist Convention

D6 – Family Ministry Conference (Dallas, TX and Louisville, KY)

Dallas Morning News 360 Series Panelist – *Competition at a Young Age: Are Our Children Under Too Much Pressure*, August 8, 2012

Florida Baptist Convention

Georgia Baptist Convention

Heart of the Child Conference, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri

International Network of Children's Ministry

Kentucky Baptist Convention

LifeWay Christian Resources

LifeWay Kid's Conference

Alaska Baptist Convention

Louisiana Baptist Convention

Missional Ministry Conference

Missouri Baptist Convention

New Mexico Baptist Convention

Southwest Regional Sunday School Workshop

University of North Texas Early Childhood Conference

Tennessee Baptist Convention

Texas Baptist Weekday Education Association

Texas Baptist Preschool/Children's Minister's Retreat

Virginia Baptist Convention

Washington/Oregon Convention

Weekday State Director's Retreat  
Youth Ministry Conclave, Dallas, TX - 2011, 2010, 2009

**University Leadership:**

Chair, University Strategic Planning Committee  
Service-Learning Council  
Ph.D. Dissertation Committees (Chairperson of 5, Research member of 5)  
Ph.D. Committee  
Graduate Program Committee  
Co-Chair, Childhood Ministry Summit Workgroup  
Theta Alpha Kappa Theological Studies Honor Society Moderator and Sponsor  
Institutional Effectiveness Committee  
Alpha Lambda Delta Freshmen Honor Society Sponsor  
Protection of Human Participants (IRB) Committee  
Disabilities and Accommodations Committee, (Chairperson)

**Professional/Church/Community Leadership:**

Baptist World Alliance Commission on Theological Education and Spiritual Formation  
Board Member Mustang Run Country Estates Homeowners Association  
Volunteer, 4-H, Forney, TX  
Kindergarten Sunday School Department Director, Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, TX, 2006-2009  
Inclusive Sunday School Class for 6 children with special needs along with 20 typically developing children, Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, TX, 2009-2012  
Board Member Mission Marshall 2019-2020