



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

The St. Andrews Seven

So, pray to the Lord of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his 'fairways.' (Matthew 9:38, Golfer's NLT).

Who will go for us? And I said, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8, NLT)

Do you know the story of "The St. Andrews Seven?"

Surely, it's a golf story, right? Could it be Old Tom Morris, Harry Vardon, Bobby Jones, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods? Or it could be a term for when all goes wrong in the 17th Road Hole Bunker.

But no. This story is barely a golf tale, even though it all happens in St. Andrews.

Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) was a St. Andrews professor who, two hundred years ago, inspired six of the brightest students in Scotland to become Missionaries to India. "The St. Andrews Seven" refers to Chalmers and the six lads.

In 1824, the St. Andrews University Missionary Association was formed after the boys agreed with a Chalmers quote: "Only one thing seemed to matter: to discover God's will and do it."

Robert Nesbit (1803-1853), John Adam (1803-1831), Alexander Duff (1806-1978), William Mackay (1807-1865), and David Ewart (1806-1860) all left for India between 1827 and 1834.

All served and died in India, except for the inspirational 18-year-old John Urquhart (1808-1826), who died before he could get on a ship.

This story is personal for Sue and me. In the 1980s, we fell in love with Scotland and India. Golf and mission trips to these diverse nations have formed friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

We especially love Fishhook International, which works exclusively in India (www.fishhook.org). I can tell you from personal experience that Indian graveyards are filled with thousands of Scottish missionaries!! One of the greatest missionary movements in history started with the St. Andrews Seven.

But Golf almost sidetracked the mission to India! When Thomas Chalmers arrived in St. Andrews in 1823, the golf bug bit the professor.

"It is true that, since the 15th century, St. Andrews has boasted the world's most famous golf links. In his early days at St. Andrews, Chalmers played golf almost daily...."

Indeed, golf has always been a potential distraction for men of God and students: “In 1823-1828, Chalmers received many letters from parents, anxious about their sons and the fatal charms of the common room and golf course. Such fears were not baseless.”

But thank God, many decades of Scottish missionary fervor were saved when “Chalmers came to his senses and quit golf! He gave it up on the grounds that it weakened his capacity for study.” All quotes are from “The St. Andrews Seven.”

So, let’s fast-forward to July 2024. I am in Scotland for seven weeks right now, and my heart is sad.

St. Andrews is no longer a mission sender. It is a mission field. They do not send missionaries; they need missionaries sent to them.

The faith of John Knox (1514-1572), John Wesley (1703-1791), Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) and Old Tom Morris (1821- 1908) is a distant memory.

In the latest Scottish census, a clear majority of people said “No Religion.” In 2023, a Muslim was elected First Minister of Scotland. My personal guess is that true followers of Jesus Christ in Scotland would be less than one percent.

The 1824 version of ‘The St. Andrews Seven’ went to India.

The 2024 version of ‘The St. Andrews Seven’ may need to come to Scotland. Could that be you?

I know that sounds crazy... but hey, here is a more reasonable idea.

LinksPlayers exists primarily because golf clubs are environments that need missionaries. For example, my golf club is Steelwood. So, I am looking for “The Steelwood Seven.”

How about your club? Are you a missionary?

Prayer: Almighty God, Scotland, and the world of golf need missionaries. Lord, I will go. Send me. Amen.

—

Tim Philpot

Copyright 2024 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.