

Faithful athlete

Shiloh Christian School football player trusts God on and off the field.

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Students praise

Students from 32 Arkansas Baptist churches participate in PraizFest.

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Arkansas baptisms increase

Lisa Watson
Arkansas Baptist News

FOR THE PAST three years, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) has adopted the theme of "Reaching Generation Now," encouraging Arkansas Baptist churches to intentionally share Christ with older children and youth.

That intentionality is evident in the dramatic increase in baptisms in the past three years, especially among older children and youth.

Though baptism statistics for 2010 are still coming in, there has been a marked increase among that

age group. At press time, records indicate a total of 12,487 people were baptized in 2010, which is 350 more baptisms than a year earlier.

A more dramatic picture emerges in the number of children baptized between the ages of 9 and 11 and youth baptized between the ages of 12 and 17 during the same time period. Together, there were about 1,000 baptisms.

Sonny Tucker, ABSC evangelism and church growth team leader, attributes the increase to Arkansas Baptist churches that made a commitment to reach older children and youth for Christ.

"This shows we can reach young people today," said Tucker. "We have to be intentional and focused, but it can be done."

Emil Turner, ABSC executive director, acknowledged Tucker and the evangelism and church growth team's contribution to the growth in baptisms, adding, "...in great measure, it is the result of the churches and pastors in Arkansas becoming burdened for the next generation. God has put this on our hearts, and He has given us a harvest."

The evangelism and church

See **BAPTISMS** page 2



Youth Evangelism Conference set for April 1-2

LITTLE ROCK - The nation's top youth communicators, Christian concert and praise bands will be featured at the 2011 Arkansas Baptist

Youth Evangelism Conference.

Set for April 1-2 at the Statehouse Convention Center in downtown Little Rock, the conference includes

nationally-known youth evangelist Wade Morris of Birmingham, Ala., and Wes Hamilton of Fort Worth, Texas.

"It is always exciting to see what God does when hundreds of Arkansas Baptist students get together to worship, study God's Word and be challenged to introduce their lost friends to Christ," explained Sonny Tucker, team leader of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) evangelism and church growth team. "They will be challenged in areas like sharing their faith, creating an atmosphere for evangelism in their youth group and local church,

living with a passion to see lost students saved and the need to live with urgency."

Morris served on staff at several churches before surrendering to a full-time call to itinerant evangelism ministry. He has spoken to both adults and students across the United States and many parts of the world.

Hamilton, a former teaching pastor at Lake Pointe Church, Rockwall, Texas, is pastor of Hulen Street Baptist Church, Fort Worth. He has preached to thousands of stu-

See **YOUTH** page 3

New ABN Archives feature

DO YOU EVER wonder what was going on in Arkansas Baptist life 20, 50 or 100 years ago? Our state has a rich Baptist history, but it is a shame that interesting news from the past stays tucked away on a dusty shelf.

With that in mind, we are creating the ABN Archives. Be sure to check the new feature in today's issue on page 8. If you have an item for the ABN Archives, please contact us at jessica@arkansasbaptist.org.

State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth 'Reaching Generation Now'

SHERWOOD - "Reaching Generation Now" was the focus of the 2011 Arkansas Baptist State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth, held Jan. 24-25 at First Baptist Church, Sherwood. The conference, which is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), featured top Southern Baptist pastors, evangelists and leaders who preached on a variety of topics centered around the theme.

Evangelism conference speakers included John Franklin, founder of John Franklin Ministries and author of several books on prayer, including "And the Place Was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Meeting;" David Uth, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando,

Fla.; Junior Hill, long-time evangelist; Robert Smith, professor of Christian preaching at Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Ala.; Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.; Thomas Hammond, interim vice president of evangelism at the North American Mission Board; and Gary Hollingsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock.

The First Baptist Church, Greenwood, praise band led the conference music. Christian comedy sketch group, The Skit Guys, entertained the crowd with hilarious and moving skits.

Several groups met in conjunction with the evangelism conference, including the prayer network,



The Skit Guys

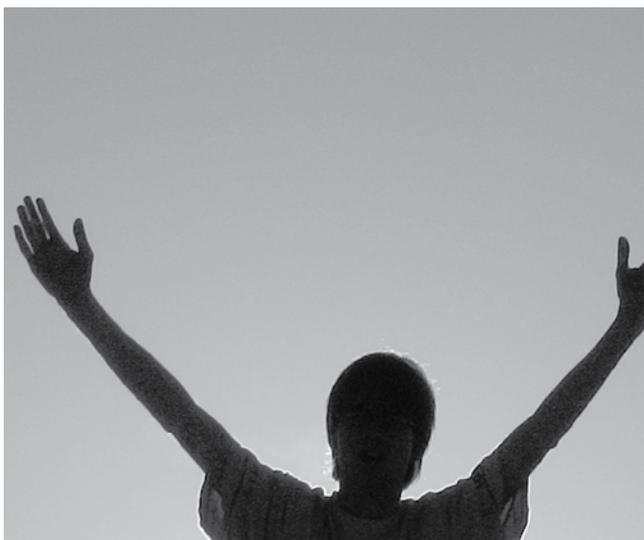
Tommy Woodard, left, and Eddie James perform at the 2011 Arkansas evangelism conference.

associational missionaries and associational directors of evangelism, vocational evangelists and the Arkansas Student Pastors Network.

"The Evangelism Conference

was a great meeting of inspiration and encouragement," said Emil Turner, ABSC executive director.

See **EVANGELISM** page 6



BAPTISMS

continued from page one

growth team has published a report recognizing the top 10 churches in various breakdowns of baptisms. They believe churches of all sizes need to be applauded for excellence in reaching and baptizing people. For a list of the top 50 churches in overall baptisms, go to www.arkansasbaptist.org.

The lists of baptism totals are from the Annual Church Profile (ACP).

Watson Chapel Baptist, Pine Bluff, 16
First Baptist, White Hall, 15
First Baptist, Nashville, 13

500 + Average in Sunday School Attendance

Cross Church, Springdale, 197
Immanuel Baptist, Little Rock, 39
First Baptist, Rogers, 39
Central Baptist, Jonesboro, 38
First Baptist, Bentonville, 36
Indian Springs Baptist, Bryant, 35
Valley Baptist, Searcy, 34
First Baptist, Marion, 30
Park Hill Baptist, North Little Rock, 30
East Side Baptist, Fort Smith, 28

Top Youth Baptisms

1-50 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Oak Grove Baptist, Cabot, 14
Higher Trails Baptist, Brookland, 9
Winfield Baptist, Waldron, 7
Wheatley Baptist, Wheatley, 7
Clear Lake Baptist, Blytheville, 6
Roberson Memorial Baptist, Lonoke, 6
Cove Chapel Southern Baptist, Springfield, 6
Memorial Baptist, Hackett, 6
Primera Baptist, Springdale, 6
Cominto Baptist, Dermott, 6
Hmong Baptist, Gravette, 6

51-100 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Mountain Springs Baptist, Cabot, 28
Piney Point Baptist, Rogers, 28
Center Ridge Baptist, Center Ridge, 14
Floral Baptist, Floral, 14
Pisgah Baptist, Fouke, 12
First Baptist, Alpena, 11
Pilgrims Rest Baptist, Batesville, 10
Briarwood Baptist, Cabot, 9
Charity Southern Baptist, Rogers, 9
Lakeside Baptist, Rogers, 9
Union Baptist, Harrison, 9
Vine Prairie Baptist, Mulberry, 9

101-250 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Abbott Baptist, Mansfield, 31
First Baptist, Dardanelle, 27
First Baptist, Farmington, 21
Mount Zion Baptist, Batesville, 20
Maple Grove Baptist, Trumann, 16
First Baptist, Booneville, 15
First Baptist, Lepanto, 15
Finch Baptist, Paragould, 13
Kibler Baptist, Alma, 12
Emmanuel Baptist, Piggott, 11
Holly Springs Baptist, Sparkman, 11

251-500 Average in Sunday School Attendance

First Baptist, Mountain Home, 21
First Baptist, White Hall, 21
Beech Street Baptist, Texarkana, 15
First Baptist, Nashville, 14
First Baptist, Siloam Springs, 12
First Baptist, Clinton, 11
First Baptist, Manila, 11
First Baptist, Crossett, 9
Friendship Baptist, Conway, 8
Union Valley Baptist, Beebe, 8

500 + Average in Sunday School Attendance

Cross Church, Springdale, 140
First Baptist, Bentonville, 63
First Baptist, Greenwood, 62
First Baptist, Rogers, 40
Valley Baptist, Searcy, 32
East Side Baptist, Fort Smith, 28
First Baptist, Marion, 28
First Baptist, Cabot, 19
Midtowne Church, Benton, 18
First Baptist, Fort Smith, 17
Grand Avenue Baptist, Fort Smith, 17
Trinity Baptist, Texarkana, 17

Top Baptisms by Church Size

New Church Plants

Midtowne Church, Benton, 82
Cross Roads Church, Rogers, 34
Point of Cassville Church, Cassville, 28
Life House Church, Texarkana, 27
Bar None Cowboy, Mountain Home, 19
Mountain Top Cowboy, Heber Springs, 16
Rey de Gloria Church, Gurdon, 15
Higher Trails Cowboy, Brookland, 14
City Church, Little Rock, 13
Iglesia Tabernaculo Bautista, Jonesboro, 12
Iglesia Bautista Shalom, Rogers, 12

1-50 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Cross Roads Baptist, Rogers, 31
Cassville Baptist, Cassville, 28
New Hope Baptist, Dardanelle, 20
Immanuel Baptist, Siloam Springs, 20
West Side Baptist, Little Rock, 18
Hon Baptist, Waldron, 18
First Baptist, Knobel, 18
New Hope Baptist, Marion, 15
Linwood Baptist, Moscow, 15
Vimy Ridge Immanuel Baptist, Alexander, 14
Higher Trails Cowboy, Brookland, 14
Yarbro Baptist, Blytheville, 14

51-100 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Piney Point Baptist, Rogers, 134
Cornerstone Baptist, Harrisburg, 60
South Texarkana Baptist, Texarkana, 41
Charity Southern Baptist, Rogers, 34
Bono Baptist, Greenbrier, 30
Mountain Springs Baptist, Cabot, 28
Center Ridge Baptist, Center Ridge, 28
Lakeside Baptist, Rogers, 27
Vine Prairie Baptist, Mulberry, 25
Briarwood Baptist, Cabot, 25

101-250 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Cross Life Church, El Dorado, 150
First Baptist, Dardanelle, 58
First Baptist, Farmington, 52
Mount Zion Baptist, Batesville, 49
First Baptist, Salem, 43
Kibler Baptist, Alma, 41
First Baptist, Cherokee Village, 37
Mount Vernon Baptist, Mount Vernon, 37
Abbott Baptist, Mansfield, 34
Maple Grove Baptist, Trumann, 33
Marshall Road Baptist, Jacksonville, 33

251-500 Average in Sunday School Attendance

First Baptist, Mountain Home, 79
Circle J Cowboy, Texarkana, 56
Union Valley Baptist, Beebe, 53
First Baptist, Siloam Springs, 44
First Baptist, Manila, 44
First Baptist, White Hall, 43
Central Baptist, Conway, 43
Watson Chapel Baptist, Pine Bluff, 39
First Baptist, Beebe, 38
First Baptist, Nashville, 38

500 + Average in Sunday School Attendance

Cross Church, Springdale, 970
First Baptist, Rogers, 164
Valley Baptist, Searcy, 131
First Baptist, Bentonville, 118
First Baptist, Greenwood, 104
First Baptist, Marion, 92
Central Baptist, Jonesboro, 87
Grand Avenue Baptist, Fort Smith, 85
Immanuel Baptist, Little Rock, 79
Nettleton Baptist, Jonesboro, 70

Top Children's Baptisms

1-50 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Burlington Baptist, Omaha, 18
Southside Baptist, Hamburg, 16
Sylvan Hills Baptist, Camden, 16
Providence Baptist, Trumann, 14
Bakers Creek Baptist, Russellville, 13
Mount Gilead Baptist, Norman, 12
Arkoal Baptist, Huntington, 11
Memorial Baptist, Waldo, 10
Clear Lake Baptist, Blytheville, 10
Houston Baptist, Bigelow, 10

51-100 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Bear Creek Springs Baptist, Harrison, 18
Cornerstone Baptist, Harrisburg, 15
Bono Baptist, Greenbrier, 15
Piney Point Baptist, Rogers, 13
Dolph Baptist, Rogers, 12
Center Ridge Baptist, Center Ridge, 11
Fellowship Baptist, Batesville, 10
Charity Southern Baptist, Rogers, 9
First Baptist, Greenland, 9
Vine Prairie Baptist, Mulberry, 8
Glendale Baptist, Booneville, 8
Spradling Baptist, Fort Smith, 8
Ione Baptist, Booneville, 8
Temple Baptist, Searcy, 8
First Baptist, Hazen, 8
First Baptist, Jasper, 8

101-250 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Mount Vernon Baptist, Mount Vernon, 26
First Baptist, Farmington, 25
First Baptist, Cherokee Village, 19
Highland Drive Baptist, Jonesboro, 17
First Baptist, Dardanelle, 15
Highland Heights Baptist, Benton, 14
Fellowship Baptist, Huntington, 14
Central Baptist, Pine Bluff, 14
Life Line Baptist, Little Rock, 13
First Baptist, Clarksville, 13
Maple Grove Baptist, Trumann, 13

251-500 Average in Sunday School Attendance

Mountain Home Baptist, Mountain Home, 33
First Baptist, Siloam Springs, 27
Central Baptist, Conway, 22
Union Valley Baptist, Beebe, 20
Immanuel Baptist, Rogers, 19
First Baptist, Lowell, 16
First Baptist, DeQueen, 16

Shiloh Christian School quarterback

Kiehl Frazier trusts Christ's plan for his life



Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

SPRINGDALE – When Kiehl Frazier – *USA Today's* high school player of the year on offense – steps onto the field at Auburn University's Jordan-Hare Stadium in the fall, he may have the opportunity to follow both a Heisman Trophy winner and a national champion.

Frazier, a senior at Shiloh Christian School in Springdale and one of the nation's top recruits, will be in the mix to replace Cam Newton as the offensive leader of the Auburn Tigers.

"I think it's going to be fun," the 6-foot-3, 218-pound quarterback said. "There are a lot of expectations, of course, but I'm going to try not to emulate Cam, but to do my thing."

Frazier's "thing" on the field is giving opposing defenses fits with his ability to throw and run. He led the Saints to their third straight state championship last fall, earning MVP honors in each year's title game, establishing an Arkansas record.

In 15 games during his senior season, Frazier completed 63 percent of his passing attempts for 2,975 yards and 42 touchdowns, with only eight interceptions. He also rushed for 1,164 yards and 22 touchdowns.

As noteworthy as his football accomplishments are, those who know him say that off the field he's equally as impressive.

"He's a great kid," said Josh Floyd, head football coach at Shiloh Christian and son of Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church, Springdale, which operates the school.

"He's a humble kid," the coach said, "and I think that's been a big key to his success. He knows where any ability he gets is from the Lord."

Frazier grew up in a Christian home, and his grandfather was a pastor. Frazier became a Christian as a young boy and says his faith in the Lord is an ever-present priority in his life. His walk with the Lord is especially important as a source of strength to resist temptations common to high school students and to deal with the criticism that often comes with being a prominent young athlete.

"You've got to stay in the Word and not let that stuff get you down, and know that Christ has a plan for your life," Frazier said in an interview with Baptist Press.

Going to a Christian school has been a blessing by giving him fellow students, teammates, teachers and coaches who help him grow in his faith, Frazier said.

"It's fun to be around kids who win," he said, "and kids who win with character."

Away from football, Frazier has been involved in fundraising for an orphanage in Haiti badly damaged by the 2010 earthquake. He also regularly spends time with the younger

students at Shiloh Christian, where he often visits their classroom to read to them and encourage them in other ways.

"I think he understands that he has an opportunity to pour his life into other people," Josh Floyd said.

Frazier said he decided on Auburn in part because of his relationship with offensive coordinator Gus Malzahn, whom he has known for a few years. Malzahn coached at Shiloh Christian from 1996-2000 and at Springdale High School from 2001-2005.

"The offense they run fits my style really well," Frazier said, "so that was kind of the deciding factor why I went down there."

Floyd said another reason Frazier decided on Auburn was spiritual in nature, since Malzahn and other coaches there are Christians, giving a spiritual dimension to Auburn that is different than most college football programs.

Whatever the future holds for Frazier during his collegiate career, Floyd is convinced that Frazier will be successful. Though he's not a fiery, emotional leader like Tim Tebow, Floyd said Frazier is extremely competitive and works hard to improve himself.

"He wants to use his ability," Floyd said, "in a positive way for the Lord."

Tim Ellsworth is director of news and media relations at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Youth from 32 churches sing at 'PraisFest'

BENTON – Sounds of worship and adoration of God filled the auditorium at First Baptist Church, Benton, as more than 450 youth from 32 Arkansas Baptist churches sang along with a full orchestra at PraisFest Jan. 28-29.

Nationally acclaimed choral director Jeffery Redding was the featured clinician during the youth choir event, which is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) leadership and worship team.

Redding is an "excellent, energiz-

ing" clinician, said Larry Grayson, ABSC leadership and worship team member and PraisFest organizer. "The kids loved him."

Students spent Friday night and most of Saturday preparing seven choral pieces to present in the Grand Finale concert, which was open to the public.

PraisFest provides students with the opportunity to meet with the Lord and "to reaffirm" their commitment to Him, said Grayson. PraisFest is also designed "to infuse the students with passion and joy

for worship" and "to give them the skills they need."

Students will have another opportunity to learn more about music ministry at PraiseWorks, a weeklong music arts camp for youth who have completed grades 7-12.

"PraiseWorks is the same type of experience as PraisFest, but along with it, students have tons of track events," said Grayson.

These include guitar, drums, technical, media, drama, sign language, interpretive movement and "stomp," giving students "the op-

portunity to learn about being in ministry from some of Arkansas' incredibly gifted and experienced worship leaders."

Children who have completed grades 4-6 can attend JoyWorks, a weeklong music arts camp that is similar to PraiseWorks.

For more information about PraiseWorks and JoyWorks and other music ministry opportunities, go to www.absc.org/musicministry or contact Larry Grayson at lgrayson@absc.org or 800-833-2272 (toll free) or 501.376.4791 ext. 5121.



YOUTH

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students at youth camps, Discipleship NOW events and student evangelism events.

Christian recording artists, The Afters, will perform at the conference. The title track of The Afters' latest album, "Light Up the Sky," reached No. 1 on the Christian music Billboard charts.

Brenton Brown, a popular worship leader whose songs have been

recorded by artists such as Chris Tomlin and Lincoln Brewster, will lead worship at the event.

Jordan Clark and Brad Davidson of Far From Ordinary, a Christian sketch team, will also perform at the event.

For more information about the Youth Evangelism Conference, go to www.absc.org/yec or call David Bond at 800-838-2272, ext. 5222.

It's a new day for newspapers

In 1990, I wrote my thesis, "A Descriptive Analysis of the *Arkansas Gazette*: One Year After Gannett Ownership," as a part of the requirement for a master's degree in journalism at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock (UALR).

As the title implies, the thesis was simply a study of the *Arkansas Gazette* following its purchase by the Gannett newspaper chain. The study examined how the *Gazette* had changed in design, typography and in such things as the length of stories published since it was sold to Gannett.

The *Gazette*, with a history of being the "oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi" and distinction as a Pulitzer Prize winner, had gone from a "old grey lady" to more like the Gannett's flagship national newspaper, *USA Today*. Articles on major topics of interest to Arkansans were shorter, there were more and larger photographs and headlines were larger.

The results of my thesis were not surprising among journalism students and faculty at UALR at the time. We knew a new day was dawning for newspaper journalism. Newspapers had to change or die.

I have heard and often repeated the phrase, "It doesn't matter how good your publication is if no one is reading it." Not only do we want the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) to be a quality publication, but also we want it to be read. We want Arkansas Baptists to see the

ABN as a partner in ministry that helps churches fulfill their Great Commission calling. To do that effectively today, we must look at new ways to deliver Arkansas Baptist news beyond the printed newspaper.



PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough

It started last October with the launch of the ABN *Now*, our new digital edition. I applaud efforts of the staff to move in this direction and lead state Baptist newspapers with this

approach – but we must do more. Nearly all newspapers – secular and religious – have been declining in circulation for the past several decades. Readership of all newspapers is down, as more people get their news from TV and the Internet. Southern Baptist state newspapers have experienced a dramatic decline in circulation during this same period. Some observers point to controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), while others say that traditional newspapers just aren't relevant in today's world.

Newspaper circulation is a funny thing. During years of dramatic growth in the SBC (1950s-1970s), it wasn't uncommon for state Baptist newspapers to have two to four times the circulation they have today. For example, the circulation of the ABN in 1981 was more than 73,000. Today, the circulation is about 24,000. If we look further into our past, we see it

hasn't always been this way. In the 1920s, the ABN's circulation was less than 5,000. In the 1940s, it was less than 10,000. In the early 1950s, it was 37,000.



1901

Advertisers look at a publication's circulation as an indicator of their potential reach into their target audience. While your church is a key supporter of the ABN by giving through the Cooperative Program (CP), we want to make our newspaper more desirable to advertisers so that we are less dependent on the CP – which means more mission dollars on the field to impact lostness in Arkansas.

Indeed, the ABN is changing with changing times. We will continue to strive to publish a newspaper that is well designed and contains news primarily about what God is doing among Arkansas Baptists. But to deliver the news to the most readers, we have to adapt and be intentional about changing the way the news is distributed and accessed.

Plans for the ABN's future are exciting! A new Web site is in the works, for example, that will be



2011

an important bridge between our traditional printed newspaper and our digital edition. Our desire is that the ABN Web site becomes an important destination for Arkansas Baptists to share ministry ideas, stories from the field and dialogue on issues important to them.

Additionally, look for more new ways to access the ABN. We want to provide versions of the ABN that you can read on your iPhone, your iPad and other mobile devices. We'll also be more intentional about providing Arkansas Baptists with breaking news through our Twitter feed and other social media.

While the traditional "printed" newspaper may indeed be dying, the need for news is alive and well. The ABN plans to work hard to be a vital part of telling the story of Arkansas Baptists and the work they accomplish for God's kingdom for many years to come.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Your editorial

I'm an old retired Baptist preacher with lots of time on my hands. With all that time, I welcome the arrival of the *Arkansas Baptist News*. I read it through and make mental notes as to what responses I need to make. I am probably at least the 100th one to point out your crediting of

Second Chronicles 7:14 to Paul's writing in Second Corinthians. It is also an incomplete quote, but perhaps you meant it to be.

I wish ever won was perfik like me, but sadly that is not the case. Have a great day.
William R. "Bill" Canary
Flippin

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks for pointing out my obvious error, Bro. Bill! I appreciate faithful readers like you who keep us on our toes – and with a sense of humor!



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Baptists Ask

My church gives to something called the "Cooperative Program." What is it, and why do we give to it?

The Cooperative Program is the vehicle by which Southern Baptists solicit, collect and distribute denominational funds for state and national use. Designed in 1925, it makes sure all Southern Baptist and Arkansas Baptist boards and agencies receive regular funding throughout the year.

Before the Cooperative Program came into being, churches heard about various causes through "traveling agents," who made emotional pitches. Naturally, those who were better speakers received more funding for their agencies, while others received less money and attention.

The Cooperative Program streamlines denominational giving. Because the churches become the major source of promotion, administrative costs stay low. It also means all ministries depend upon a percentage, rather than on an emotional plea. Each ministry receives necessary funding, and churches can contribute to all of them.

Churches give through, not to, the Cooperative Program. The local church normally gives a percentage of its undesignated funds, which are then sent to the state convention. State conventions, in turn, send a percentage to the Southern Baptist Convention. Most of the monies for Arkansas and the SBC are divided into three main areas: missions, evangelism and education.

While there are many advantages to Cooperative Program giving, one major disadvantage is that it often goes unnoticed in the local church. Few church members understand its importance or how it works. It is important that pastors inform their churches about the exciting work of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

I definitely know the importance of Cooperative Program giving. I went to a Southern Baptist college, served as a missionary Journeyman, received two degrees from a Southern Baptist seminary and currently teach at a Southern Baptist college – all of which receive Cooperative Program funds. Though you do not know me, you still supported me financially. Thank you.

Ken Gore is chair of the Williams Baptist College department of Christian ministries.

Bring Somebody to Jesus!

We really do not read much about him in Scripture. He is only mentioned 12 times in the Bible, and four of those are when his name is listed with the names of the other 11 apostles. Even in the traditions of the early church, he is one of the few disciples about whom there are few legends. But that is not to say this disciple is unimportant. In fact, I believe his life was one of the most valuable assets in the ministry of Jesus. This man sometimes took the behind-the-scenes role while others took the spotlight. The truth is he knew his life and ministry wasn't about himself. He lived his life for One: Jesus.

I am talking about Andrew. While he is mentioned very little in the New Testament, whenever he is mentioned, he is usually doing the one thing Jesus commands and expects of all of us: Andrew was always bringing people to Jesus.

What we learn about Andrew is that bringing people to Jesus is a priority. In John 1:40, we see Andrew's first task as a new follower of Jesus was to go and bring his brother Simon to Jesus. Simon's name would be changed to Peter, and he would later become a great Apostle and leader of the early church. Why? Andrew

was willing to bring him to Jesus.

We also learn from Andrew that bringing people to Jesus is a partnership. In John 12:20-26, there were some Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus. They talked to Philip, who went immediately to Andrew for advice. Andrew led Philip to bring these people to Jesus. Philip knew exactly who to go to in learning how to bring people to Jesus. Andrew was his immediate example.

Finally, we learn from Andrew that bringing people to Jesus is powerful. In John 6, when Jesus asked His disciples where they could buy food for the hungry crowd, it was Andrew who brought the boy with his lunch of five small barley loaves and two small fish. Jesus then used that small meal to feed about 5,000 men. And when they were all fed, there were 12 baskets of bread left over. While the other disciples were standing around making excuses, Andrew was bringing a boy to Jesus, and the results were life-changing. The miracle would not have occurred had Andrew not been looking for someone to bring to Jesus.

If we are going to reach Generation Now, you cannot stand around making excuses; instead, you must get out there and bring somebody to Jesus!



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Clay Hallmark

What I know about some churches not in the baptism report (part one)

As we reflect on the 2010 Baptism Report in Arkansas, we see many churches that our Lord blessed with a tremendous spiritual harvest, resulting in many new believers being baptized. We certainly want to rejoice with those who rejoice. Our Lord strongly emphasized in Luke

15 that there is rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents. If it is a big deal in heaven, then it ought to be a big deal in Arkansas.

Some noteworthy thoughts come to mind regarding the baptism report and those who attempted to reach Generation Now. First, the baptism report does not reflect the faithfulness, or lack thereof, of those churches not on it. We know there are many churches not on the baptism report that were faithful to share the gospel and put forth great effort to impact lostness in their communities.

Second, many faithful churches did not make the baptism report for a variety of reasons. Some churches were blessed with a great number of older children and youth making professions of faith but were unable to baptize them because of the parents' reluctance. These churches will begin nurturing relationships with the parents that lead to their trust and hopefully their salvation.

Other churches not on the baptism report prayed and worked intently to sow the gospel but did not see a harvest. We believe God will bless His Word going



out, as He promised He would, with a harvest at a later time. Some seed yields an immediate harvest, while other seed must go through a season of growth and maturation before a harvest.

Other churches not on the baptism report began moving from evangelistic inactivity toward a vibrant outreach ministry. Many pastors, youth

pastors, children's pastors and faithful lay leaders led their churches from a position of non-involvement with the current generation to embracing and connecting with them to share the love of Christ. Changing the evangelistic DNA of a church can be slow and

difficult, but God honors His children who have a burden for lost people and a passion to reach them.

I personally know many pastors and staff who diligently shared the gospel yet did not experience a great harvest in their churches. I believe that there are hundreds more in Arkansas. Your faithful giving to missions through the Cooperative Program allows us at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to work weekly with a tremendous number of churches that want to reach more people for Jesus.

I wish that I could recognize each of you who faithfully tried to reach people but did not make the baptism report. You also deserve heartfelt appreciation and recognition for your hard work in 2010. Please remember that your effort did not go unnoticed. One day you will be rewarded by the One whose name is above every name!

GUEST VIEWPOINT

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC evangelism/church growth team leader



Quotable:
John Franklin,
author of several
books on prayer
including "And
the Place Was
Shaken."

On reaching youth

"We have come to the place and the point in our nation that we recognize we are losing our youth. We must reach the generation now."

"Historically, whenever God has come and He has radically brought a nation back to Himself - when a nation is drifting and turning from God and suddenly He descends - He will primarily impact the age group between 15 and 24 years of age. The reason for that is they are more receptive of God and change."

"If we keep doing business as usual, they have absolutely no hope. ... We've got to stop trying to manufacture more of the same, and we've got to return and drill down to the foundations and get God's perspective."

On God's judgment

"If people say God's going to judge America, you need to correct them. He's not going to; He already is."

"Whenever we begin to see the signs of judgment, we need to quit doing business as usual, and we need to come and fall on our face before our God and ask Him, 'How did this happen on our watch? Where did we depart from You?'"

On getting right with God

"So my fear is we come to something like the evangelism conference and we're just going to ... do more witnessing. That comes after we spend a lot of time in His presence getting things right. When we do that, it's going to be amazing what He does to generate the drawing of people to Himself. And then the transformation comes. Then our youth will be saved."

"We're going to have to get desperate in His presence. We're going to have to fall on our face and there's going to have to be tears in our prayer service."

On reaching youth

"I'm learning to reach this generation; guys, the days of pretending to be one thing in the pulpit and something else out there, they are long gone. The greatest sermon you will ever preach will not be in the pulpit of your church. It will be in how you walk among your community, in how you live among your people, in what you do to demonstrate who you are."

On authentic faith

Compassionate generosity: "Everything I have, I have by one way - by the grace of God. It's not what I deserved. It's not what I did. And I think when our people finally get it - it's not our stuff - then all of a sudden, we are moved and we will share His stuff with His people."

Sacrificial obedience: "If you've been praying for God's provision, maybe God's saying, '...When you go all the way I've called you to, then you'll see.'"

"Everybody has something in your life that may take the affection away from God. And I believe that God calls us to offer up that

Quotable:
David Uth, Pastor
of First Baptist
Church, Orlando,
Fla.



Isaac in that moment. And when you do, your ministry will never be the same because you will see how God provides."

"I believe that our world needs to see that our God provides. They need to see a demonstration of faith that is absolute obedience."

Uncalculated risk: "If God fails, will anything be different in your ministry? Or have we built ministries that have Plan B? Is there anything you're doing that requires risk, that requires bold faith? Is there anything in our ministry that calls us out there and if God fails, we're gone? Because that's what faith is."

"Let's not just say we have faith. ... Let's live out our faith. And the result - may Arkansas see it and may they know our God reigns."

EVANGELISM

continued from page one

"I am grateful that Arkansas pastors and churches support this kind of ministry. It is another example of the blessings that come with being an Arkansas Baptist."

The ABSC evangelism and church growth team plan the conference each year to focus on evangelism, revival, prayer, spiritual awakening, personal soul winning and church growth/health," said Tucker.

But they also emphasize encour-

aging those in the ministry.

"My heart for this conference is that it focus solely on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the salvation of the lost, the encouragement of those whom God has called and a commitment to do whatever it takes to rescue souls from eternal damnation in hell," he explained. "Our pastors expect this of their evangelism conference. These are things upon which we all agree and that unite us."

On reaching parents

"If we're going to reach ... the next generation, Generation Now, ... we've got to reach some parents for Jesus, perhaps, first. And maybe one of the issues is that we have moms and dads who are not saved, and I'm all about us doing everything we can do to connect with Generation Now, but we've got to lead some parents, perhaps, to Jesus as well."

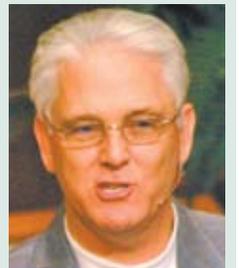
"Not only do we believe that parents are the primary spiritual leaders of their children, but now as a church, we have to establish this as a priority. A church must establish a priority on reaching every generation."

On blessing children

"Families can get so busy, wanting all of their children to experience all these other things, they forget to bless their children."

"If we can create an atmosphere in homes, and in churches and in our ministries where those children can know that not only they're being brought to Jesus, but they're being blessed, and they're being

Quotable:
Gary
Hollingsworth,
pastor of
Immanuel Baptist
Church, Little
Rock.



told who they are in Jesus Christ, it's a very natural step for them to take that next moment of salvation when it comes."

On reaching children

"You know the old line they say, 'Well, teenagers are the church of tomorrow. They're the future of our church.' And I always say, 'No, they're not. They're the church today.' We've got to start finding out ways now to help incorporate them and plug them in and get them involved."

"We have got to have a passion for this generation, and when we have that passion, from the pulpit, to the pew, to the parent, to every single one of us, understanding that God has given us a wonderful opportunity."



Quotable:
Junior Hill,
evangelist,
Birmingham, Ala.

On being humble

"And my dear brother, I want to tell you something, if you don't humble yourself, God has a peculiar way of humbling yourself for you. Don't get too proud about what you've done."

On friends versus foes

"I believe what has happened in many of our churches in America is that we've taken friends that God gave us to make us better and made enemies out of them, and we have taken what we think are our friends and exalted them, and they've become our enemies. See that's why the Bible says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

On pleasure from pain

"I found what God wanted me to do. You know how I found it? Because God gave me what I thought I didn't want, and took away from me what I did want, and now all of those afflictions and problems that I thought I had have turned into pleasures. So all I can say is, 'Thank God for thorns.'"

On life in the ministry

"At some time or the other, most all of us in the ministry, or related ministries, has felt like a failure."

On Paul's "thorn"

"So I'm not here tonight to say that failure, per se, is a good thing, but I'm saying to you that, in the hands of a sovereign God, failure is often the instrument of peculiar ways God has of teaching us lessons we never learn any other ways. Failure, trouble, heartaches, sorrow are often the instruments God uses to teach us lessons. And Paul specifically talks about that when he talks about that thorn."

"It changed his exaltation into humiliation, made friends out of his foes and changed his problems into pleasures."

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Quotable:
Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

gelistically and also in permeating our culture – is on the wane.”

On the Holy Spirit

“And so I ask this question, while we are trying to reform our churches and even our denomination organizationally, does it seem we are putting far too much emphasis on our own ingenuity and not enough emphasis on God’s initiative working through us by the power of the Holy Spirit?”

“I’d like to preach on what it means to be a leader who is full of the Holy Spirit...and what it means to have a church that is literally experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“Wouldn’t you like to have personal transformation, and encouraging leadership, and evangelistic success, and winsome in personnel selection and then winsome in strategic decision making...mark you as a leader in the kingdom of God? I want the Holy Spirit to fill me in such a way that these five things are evident in my life on a regular, daily, consistent basis as marks of my ministry leadership.”

On God’s call

“God is calling people – men and women in this generation – to take our places in ministry leadership and to carry the gospel the next 20, 30, 50 years forward. He’s counting on you to teach the concept of call, and He’s counting on you to extend an opportunity to make a commitment to God’s call. I challenge you to do that...”

On impacting culture

“Southern Baptists have never had more money, more personnel, more expertise, more curriculum, more training materials; we’ve never had more colleges, more seminaries, more books, more conferences than we have today. Yet, our influence, especially on the next generation – our influence evan-



Quotable:
Thomas Hammond, interim vice president of evangelism, NAMB.

don’t we call them ‘guests?’ Why aren’t we prepared for them as if we want them as our guest?”

“Researchers tell us this: church guests decide whether or not to return to the church they’re visiting in the first 10-12 minutes upon entering the campus.”

“So what have they experienced in the first 10 minutes? They’ve experienced us either at our worst, or at our best.”

“You have everything lined up for (Baptists) who are so familiar with our world, but are you ready for (the unchurched)?”

“You see, what a person is doing in the first 10-12 minutes is saying, ‘Are you real?’ ‘Are you authentic?’ ‘Do you care?’”

“Whenever that family comes to your church, they’re not really caring how awesome the sermon is or whether you have drums or not. ... What they want to know is, ‘Do you really know God...and can you help me with my problems?’”

Notes and a PowerPoint presentation from Hammond’s message are available at www.arkansasbaptist.org.

On being visitor friendly

“Every person that God sends to our church on our campus, ... where we worship God, they should experience the love of God and at least hear clearly about His love.”

“Fact No. 1...your church cannot grow without visitors.”

“Fact No. 2...your church cannot grow if your visitors don’t come back.”

“What is the difference between a guest and a visitor? Everybody says a guest seems more welcome and wanted...a visitor is someone who pops in on you (uninvited).”

“The difference between a visitor and a guest is the difference between never missing another Sunday or never coming back. You see, if nobody wants to be a visitor, why do we call them ‘visitors?’ Why

Portions of the evangelism conference messages and more information about purchasing an entire message available at www.arkansasbaptist.org.

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Archives

1901-2011

35 years ago - Feb. 1976

- “The 1976 Evangelism Conference which convened in Immanuel Church, Little Rock, had as its theme “The White Harvest.” The conference stressed information, inspiration, and methods. The endeavor, which met Jan. 19-20, featured Stephen F. Olford, director of Encounter Ministries, Inc., Holmes Beach, Fla; Evangelist Sam T. Cathey, Owasso, Okla; Reed Hardin, director of Renewal Evangelism at the Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Ga.; and included a host of Arkansas speakers.”

- “ARKADELPHIA - Ouachita Baptist University has been named a National Bicentennial University by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in Dallas, Tex., according to Mrs. Mary Benberg, development officer at OBU.”

- “Recently, an endowment trust was established with the Arkansas Baptist Foundation that will provide assistance for indigent patients at the Bangalore Baptist Hospital in India.

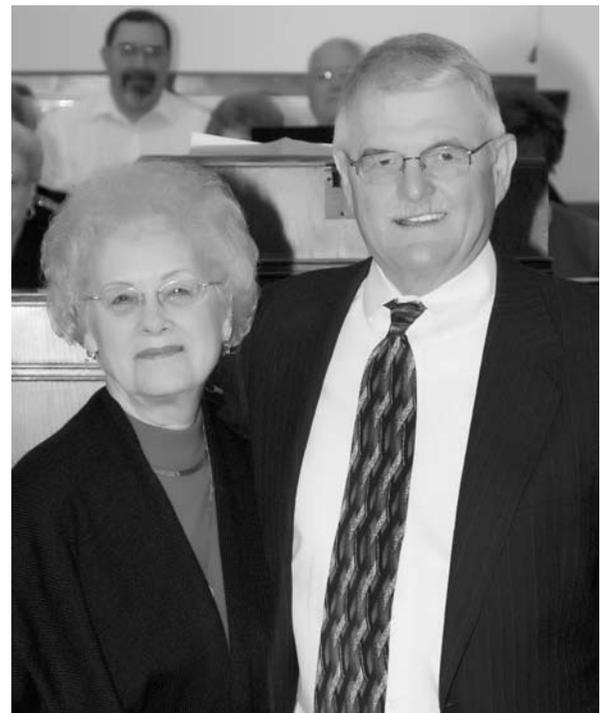
An article in the Dec. 11 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, entitled, “Medical Missions—Caring Doubly for India’s Masses” describes the ministry of the hospital. Dr. Rebekah Naylor, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Bob Naylor, president of Southwestern Seminary, was quoted as saying, “Our hospital has been fortunate because the whole staff is committed to sharing the gospel and ... giving quality medical care.”

75 years ago - Feb. 1936

SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Sunday, February 23, 1936

Immanuel, Little Rock	877	school
First, Fort Smith	816	at wor
First, Little Rock	690	tions a
Second, Little Rock	676	for the
First, Pine Bluff	645	questio
Tabernacle, Little Rock	570	occasio
First, Blytheville	392	the as
First, Booneville	385	ficers c
Fayetteville	368	ing is
First, Paris	342	Sunday
First, Paragould	341	school
First, Arkadelphia	339	School
First, West Helena	325	struct
First, Camden	316	doing
First, Benton	297	the at
First, Harrison	265	sociati
Van Buren	244	tion f
Calvary, Fort Smith	239	at the
De Queen	232	school
Ohio Street, Pine Bluff	232	to com
First, Searcy	200	the ca
First, Norphlet	177	associ
South Highland, Little Rock	176	sociati
First, Siloam Springs	129	there
First, Ashdown	127	these c
First, Coy	77	be gla
Biddle, Little Rock	67	in the
Rudy	56	tation
Graves Memorial, N. Little Rock	54	vided
		the ne
		names



Perfect attendance

Clara Shell, left, recently was recognized for 47 years of perfect Sunday school attendance. Shell is shown here with pastor Gary Gipson of Gravel Hill Baptist Church, Benton.

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The HUB: church unveils children's area

THE HUB, the Kidz Ministry of Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, recently underwent renovations – and came out looking like a train station. According to the HUB's purpose statement, the ministry "exists for one purpose – to help children put God as the center, 'the hub,' of their life as children grow in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man as described by Christ's example in Luke 2:52."

The ministry includes Central Station, where children check in, the Smalltown Express for children in kindergarten and younger and Midtown for children grades 1-6.

"It has been encouraging to see the excitement on the kids', as well as the parents', faces as we completed the project," said Emily Smith, the church's children's minister. "The kids are excited about their new rooms, the new play area and, of course, (they) cannot help but pull the train whistle before going to class. It is a blessing to have a kid-friendly environment where we can continue to watch the kids grow in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man as described by Christ's example in Luke 2:52."



Church life

First Baptist Church, Sherwood, will host its annual wild game dinner for men and boys at 6 p.m. Feb. 18. For more information, call the church at 501-835-3154.

First Baptist Church, Ashdown, will host the Arkansas Master Singers Festival of Song at 2 p.m. Feb. 10.

First Baptist Church, Blytheville, will host Life Line Screening Feb. 25.

First Baptist Church, Valley Springs, will host the Thrive While Alive women's conference April 15-16, featuring Kirsten Hart of First Baptist Church, Harrison. Hart has been speaking at women's ministries since the 1990s and has toured with the USO group, ReCreation, as well as with the Spurrllows, Eternity and Friends, the backup group for Larnelle Harris. Conference registration is due by April 1. For more information, visit www.fbcvs.com.

Washington Madison Baptist Association, Fayetteville, will hold a reception to honor Harry Black, associational missionary, at University Baptist Church, Fayetteville, from 2-4 p.m. Feb. 27. Everyone is invited to attend. Black, who has served on the Washington Madison staff since 2000, recently accepted a position as associational missionary at Capital Baptist Association in Oklahoma City, Okla.

Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, will host the 2011 Women's Winter Conference, at 8:30 a.m. Feb. 19. Guest speakers are Andrea Lennon, Stephanie Floyd and Tammy Fletcher. Lennon works with True Vine Ministry and is author of "Reflecting His Glory." Floyd is a member of Restoration Ministries Christian Fellowship in Little Rock and also works with 11th Hour Ministry. Fletcher is part of Wholeheart Ministries. For more information about the conference, call 501-771-1125 or email central-connections@gmail.com.

Ordinations

First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, ordained Travis Chisom as a deacon Jan. 30.

To submit your church events, go online at www.arkansasbaptist.org.

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- ◆ Feb. 9: Tim Cummins, WBC, Box 3343, Walnut Ridge, AR 72476, Thailand.
- ◆ Feb. 12: Carlos Owens-Hughes, WBC, Box 3283, Walnut Ridge, AR 72476, Colombia.
- ◆ Feb. 14: Bekah Hall, OBU Box 3588, Arkadelphia, AR, 71998-0001; South Africa.
- ◆ Feb. 25: Joshua Fischer, OBU Box 3309, Arkadelphia, AR, 71998-0001; Ecuador.
- ◆ Feb. 27: Allyson Huffman, OBU Box 3878, Arkadelphia, AR, 71998-0001; Belgium.

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PASTOR

Shiloh Baptist Church of Harrison is accepting resumes for **pastor**. Resumes may be mailed to Shiloh Baptist Church, Attention: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 667, Harrison, AR 72601, or email to tj_tomlinson@cox.net.

Formosa Baptist Church, located in North Central Arkansas, is now accepting resumes for **pastor**. Send resumes to Formosa Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1530, Clinton, AR 72031.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

ASSOCIATE PASTOR: A healthy, growing, mixed-generational church is looking for a full-time associate pastor for adult education, new member/member assimilation, administration, missions. Great people skills and wisdom are musts in growing church's spiritual health. Send resumes to Waterloo Road Baptist Church, Attention: Personnel Committee, 3100 East Waterloo Road, Edmond, OK 73034, or email to jbroyles@waterlooroad.org.

Cullendale First Baptist Church, Camden, Ark., is seeking a **student/youth minister**. Full-time position. Salary based on experience and education. Full job description available. Email bwiliams@cullendalefbc.org, or call 870-231-5441. Resumes will be accepted until Feb. 28, 2011.

Leonard St. Baptist Church in Hot Springs is seeking a **part-time family minister**. His duties will be primarily dealing with students and their families. This should be someone with a mis-

sionary mindset focused on shepherding those who come to Christ. For more info, please contact Pastor John Graves at 501-623-7205. For more info on the church, visit www.hotspingschurch.org.

First Baptist Church, Forrest City, is seeking a **full-time minister of music**. If interested, send resume to 507 N. Rosser St., Forrest City, AR 72335.

MISCELLANEOUS

College Students – Do you have summer plans? Consider spending eight weeks on mission in the Philippines, working with the student ministries of the University Baptist Church of Manila. This exciting opportunity will be a life-changing event for you and for the Filipino students that you will work with. For more info, contact Ralph Baker, Atkins FBC music minister, at 501-757-0978 or rmbaker58@yahoo.com.

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OBU Dating, Engagement, Marriage Week March 1-6



ARKADELPHIA - The annual Dating, Engagement and Marriage Week is set for March 1-6 on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia.

The theme of the event, which is being hosted through the Ben M. Elrod Center for Family and Community, is "building strong relationships."

Included are breakout sessions for students and off-campus events for married and engaged couples.

"This is a fun week," said Judy Duvall, assistant director of the Elrod Center.

"Our students are, of course, interested in romantic relationships, and we want to give them

the tools they need to have strong relationships centered in Christ."

The conference is being led by several different speakers and couples both from Ouachita and other universities.

For more information about the week or the Elrod Center, visit www.obu.edu/elrod.

WBC student recovering

WALNUT RIDGE - Shane Smith, 20, a sophomore at Williams Baptist College and member of the school's basketball team, is recovering following an accidental shooting Jan. 30.



Shane Smith

Smith was shot at close range in the lower abdomen by a 12-gauge shotgun while visiting a friend in Salem, said Brett Cooper, vice president for college relations at Williams. Smith has undergone two surgeries since the shooting.

"We are very pleased with Shane's recovery to this point and continue to lift him and his family up in our prayers," said Cooper. "He still has a long road of recovery ahead of him, but God's hand has clearly been with him."

Cooper said the entire Williams campus has been in "a state of prayer" for Smith since the shooting occurred. "Our students even organized a time of prayer in the Old Chapel Monday evening. We are very anxious to see him get well and get back to his college family."

Smith, a physical education major, is the son of Wendall and Tena Smith of Salem. His father is director of athletics for Salem public schools and a Williams alum who played basketball at the school.

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Got to have hope

Where do you place your hope? If your hope is in your finances, you've probably been shaken by the economic turmoil of the past couple years. If your hope is in your career, 9.5 percent unemployment has likely caused some fear in your life.

King Hezekiah of Judah provides an example of a much better place to place our hope.

2 Kings 18:5-6 says, "Hezekiah trusted the Lord, the God of Israel.

There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the

Lord and did not cease to follow Him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses."

This is an amazing statement considering he was being compared to David and Solomon.

Hezekiah reigned during a period of great political uncertainty for Judah. The northern kingdom,

EXPLORE THE BIBLE FEB. 20, 2011

*Bruce Wilson, member,
Geyer Springs First Baptist,
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Scripture passage:
2 Kings 18:1-20:21

Being a grandparent is fun. We have a big yard, golf cart, lots of toys and a little more disposable income. Add to that the fact that I'm not the main party responsible for them! I can help my grandchildren with some of the things their parents are teaching them, adding comfort and understanding that mom and dad will provide later, when the child's lesson is learned.

If this is such wonderful experience for me as a human being, imagine how great it is for God when I am obedient - when He can give me the delights of His heart for me. Hosea 11 tells us God is tender in

mercy toward us, not holding anger against us as do humans. Each day, newspapers carry stories of yet another abused and neglected child, but those stories will never be told of our heavenly Father. Hosea is sent back to rescue Gomer again and again, demonstrating God's determination not to abandon His people.

There is some debate among scholars whether Gomer was a prostitute before she married Hosea. However, I believe she was. This is not because I am a deep scholar, but because God is a great lover. None of us deserve His mercy. I am guilty

and shouldn't go to heaven, but God came looking for me; in Jesus Christ, God paid my sin debt. I know Hosea is a book full of the awful results of sin, but it is also a book full of news to make me shout. God cares enough to mourn over my situation, and He did something about my situation that I couldn't do. I can repent, and I can obey in the future, but only God can erase my

Israel, had just fallen to Assyria, as had many parts of Judah. Jerusalem was under siege from the Assyrian army, whose supreme commander was trying to persuade the people of Jerusalem to surrender.

The future looked hopeless for Hezekiah and Judah. What was Hezekiah to do? He sought the advice of Isaiah, God's prophet, and Isaiah encouraged him not to fear the Assyrian army for they would be destroyed. When all seems hopeless, seeking the counsel of godly men is a good place to turn.

the temple and prayed. His prayer in 2 Kings 19:15-19 is a great model for all of us to use when making a bold request of God to reveal Himself in a specific situation. He praises God as King, Creator and incomparable Lord before he asks for deliverance from the Assyrian army.

When your situation seems hopeless, don't let fear paralyze you. Fear often leads to bad choices, making the situation worse. Instead, see your situation as an opportunity to trust God and believe He will guide you through it. Prayer and the counsel of godly men give hope, whatever your situation. Learn to fear the Lord and not fear your situation.

God's love: like a "grand" Father

and shouldn't go to heaven, but God came looking for me; in Jesus Christ, God paid my sin debt. I know Hosea is a book full of the awful results of sin, but it is also a book full of news to make me shout. God cares enough to mourn over my situation, and He did something about my situation that I couldn't do. I can repent, and I can obey in the future, but only God can erase my

past with Jesus' blood.

There is more in Hosea to study regarding the result of sin and disobedience, but today I choose to celebrate the love and the mercy of God. I celebrate His promise in chapter 11 to restore and to gather His people. Today I'm thinking about my grand heavenly Father.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE FEB. 20, 2011

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Scripture passage:
Hosea 11:1-11

Keep hope alive

The focus of this final lesson in 2 Kings is the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, the Jews being taken in exile to Babylon and the ending of Judah as an independent nation. God in His sovereignty used Babylon to carry out His punishment against Judah for its continued disobedience and sin.

The purpose of these events was to punish the Jews and show them the path to redemption and obedience, not to totally destroy them. In Jer-

emiah 46:28, it says, "Do not fear, O Jacob My servant, for I am with you," declares the Lord. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations

among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."

God had not totally given up on His chosen people. Hope was not dead. They needed discipline in order to reconsider their relationship with the Lord.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE FEB. 27, 2011

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Scripture passage:
2 Kings 24-25

As Christians, we invite the Lord's discipline when we are disobedient. Hebrews 12:10-11 says, "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

You may be going through a difficult time in your life. It may or may not be due to disobedience, but these Scriptures encourage us to look at what God would have us learn from our experience. We can take great encouragement from

the Psalmist when he writes Psalms 94:14, "For the Lord will not reject His people; He will never forsake His inheritance."

Regardless of your situation, always humbly look to God for guidance and comfort. Jesus is the only hope on which you can rely. Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Be encouraged and keep hope in the Lord. As you encounter difficulties in your life, recall Paul's words in Romans 12:12, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

This has to be the most exciting time to be alive. Ninety percent of all of the scientists who have ever lived are alive now. Technology has brought the world to our living rooms. But there is better yet to be. God has promised us a home with Him in heaven for eternity, as well as blessings while we are here on earth.

As Christians, we see prophesy being fulfilled daily. We see the words Hosea spoke coming to pass as God gathers His chosen people to the Holy Land. No one can deny that the land is blossoming for the

Israeli people today. They export fruit, roses, grapes and minerals from the Dead Sea, just to name a few items.

Christians are being blessed in ways that before were impossible. The destruction of the Iron Curtain in Europe has opened a new field of harvest, and missionaries tell of wonderful opportunities.

In America, we are facing a critical time. Will we take a stand as true believers for moral purity and for truth? Have we learned the lessons Hosea has called to us through the ages? Will we obey God, repent of

our compromise and learn to love God with all our hearts?

The delight of my heart is when one of my children or grandchildren hugs, kisses or calls me just to say "hi" for no reason other than he or she loves me. I tell my boss I want to do my job right, not just to please her, but so I please God. If I please God, our customers will be pleased and my boss will, too. More than

that, I want to live so that I delight God.

Scriptures clearly tell us there is a time of gathering home. Jesus said if this wasn't true He would have told us. Since the only things we can take with us when we leave this world are the friends we win to Jesus, let's get packing!

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE FEB. 27, 2011

*Mary Kisor, member,
First Baptist, Dardanelle*

Scripture passage:
Hosea 14:1-9



NEWS DIGEST

CP 3.19 percent below last year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program (CP) are 3.19 percent below the same time frame last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Frank Page.

As of Jan. 31, the year-to-date total of \$65,652,460.17 for CP missions is \$2,163,875.88 behind the \$67,816,336.05 received at the end of January 2010.

Designated giving of \$37,461,636.88 for the same year-to-date period is 9.94 percent, or \$4,135,447.08, below gifts of \$41,597,083.96 received at this point last year.

The total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 2009-10 CP Allocation Budget.

State and regional conventions retain a portion of church contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention CP to support work in their respective areas and forward a percentage to Southern Baptist national and international causes. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

CBF eliminates 13 positions

ATLANTA (BP) - The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) has eliminated 13 staff positions amid a continuing decline in revenue, according to a CBF news release.

The CBF news release stated: "This difficult step was taken after previous financial contingency plans in fiscal years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

reduced grants to partners, program funding and staff salaries and benefits. The Fellowship's fiscal year 2010-2011 budget is \$14.5 million, roughly 20 percent lower than the previous year's budget. So far, revenue has been nearly 20 percent below the budget for the first four months of the fiscal year."

Two of the eliminated CBF positions will move to contracts, and one has been re-classified, according to the Jan. 28 announcement by the organization founded in 1991 in reaction to the Conservative Resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention.

2011 SBC: more missions, no night sessions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - Changes are in store for the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting being held in Phoenix - including two missionary appointment services, fewer business sessions and no night sessions - in hopes that more people will participate, the chairman of the committee planning that meeting announced.

Proposed changes include trimming the program to morning and afternoon business sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 14-15, and scheduling missionary appointment services for both of the convention's two mission boards, said Will Langford, pastor of Great Bridge Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va., and the chairman of the Committee on Order of Business.

The committee believes eliminating the evening sessions and trimming the program items will enhance participation and free up time for messengers and guests for fellowship, discussions and family, Langford said.

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Baptism stats

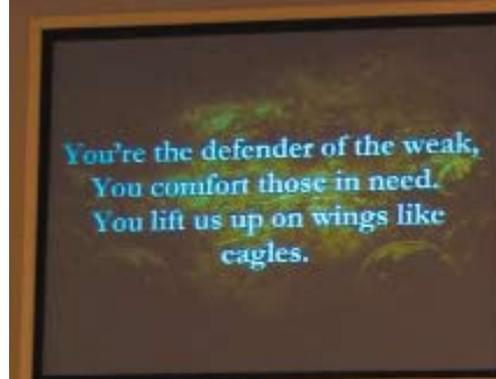
Arkansas Baptist State Convention reports top church baptisms.

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Youth evangelism

Youth Evangelism Conference set for April 1-2 in Little Rock.

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State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth

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