

BMA of America Department of Missions Seeks to Create a Culture to Support a Church Planting Movement



Dr. Steve Ogne

By **DAVID PITTMAN**
Church Relations Coordinator, BMA of Texas

Dr. John David Smith, along with the other directors in the BMA of America Missions office, desire BMA churches to plant other churches directly with the support of the missions office, versus the idea of churches providing financial support and a central office doing the work of church planting. Smith is leading the charge to “create a culture” to support a “church planting movement” among the BMA. The missions office logo contains the phrase “Your Great CoMission Partner.” Smith is making use of Facebook and YouTube on the Internet to spread his vision of “reinventing” the missions department’s role in church planting. The goal, as Smith explains in periodic

video podcasts, is to partner with existing churches by providing expertise in church planting, resources in church planting and guidance in reproducing themselves. You can view Smith’s CoMission podcasts by searching YouTube with the keyword bmaamissions.

Larry Baker, BMA of America Director of Operations - North America, is heavily involved in the churches planting churches effort. Barker has noted, “Evidence is clear that many of the most fruitful and long-term church plants out there have been a result of the work of a local planting the church.” Barker goes on, “We really have a lot

Church Planting continued on p. 9

First, Palmer Moves to New Location and Celebrates 138 Years of Ministry



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God's Gift

HEAVEN IS A FREE GIFT!

It is not earned or deserved. No amount of effort or good works can earn a place for you in heaven. Why?

Because . . .

MAN IS A SINNER.

"For all have sinned . . ." (Rom. 3:23)

Because of this, man cannot save himself.

GOD.

On the one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish us. Yet God is just and must punish sin. God solved this problem for us in the Person of . . .

JESUS CHRIST.

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven—"the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).

THE GIFT IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. It means resting on Christ alone and what He has done, rather than what you or I have done to get us into heaven. "Believe on (or trust in) the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

SO MAY WE ASK . . .

Have you received God's free gift of eternal life? The Bible assures us in 1 John 5:13 that we can know we have eternal life.

Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die?

The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you are willing to repent (turn away from your sin and to the Lord Jesus) you can receive the free gift of eternal life by simply praying:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life. But I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins, and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation, and I accept your free gift of eternal life.

Encouraging Predictions for 2011

By **JERRY FULTON**

Editor

Welcome to Year 2011! One thing we can be sure of in the New Year is that things will change. Some things will change for the worse, some for the better.



Jerry Fulton

In 2011...

There may or may not be another terrorist attack on American soil.

A great revival may or may not sweep our land.

North Korea and South Korea may or may not enter into an all out war that will involve the United States.

The Iranian regime may or may not at long last be overthrown.

President Obama's poll numbers may increase or decrease.

A solution may or may not be found to pay our national debt.

Cures for dreaded diseases may or may not be discovered.

We may or may not say goodbye to some of our loved ones.

Jesus may or may not return for His Bride.

And the list goes on and on.

While we cannot be certain of what will and will not take place, Scripture is clear that although some things change, other things will remain until Jesus comes again.

A few days ago, a dear friend emailed me the following "Encouraging Predictions for 2011":

1. The Bible will still have all the answers.
2. Prayer will still be the most powerful thing on Earth.
3. The Holy Spirit will still move.
4. God will still honor the praises of His people.
5. There will still be God-anointed preaching.
6. There will still be singing of praise to God.
7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people.
8. There will still be room at the Cross.
9. Jesus will still love you.
10. Jesus will still save the lost when they come to Him.

Isn't it great to remember who is really in control, and that; "the Word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:25). May God bless you beyond measure in 2011! Live one day at a time, and give God the glory!



62nd Annual BMA of America National Meeting April 11-13, 2011

Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall, MPEC Events Center, Wichita Falls, TX

Program Agenda

Monday Morning, April 11

Display/Exhibit Set-up (Mon.-Wed)
 Registration Set-up
 (Enrollment and Finance Committee)

Monday Evening, April 11

7:00 First General Session
 Music
 Opening Prayer
 Welcome by President
 Introduction of Officers
 Introduction of Host Pastors
 Jacksonville College Choir
 President's Message and
 Introduction of Theme

Tuesday Morning, April 12

8:00 WMA Registration
 8:30 WMA
 Brotherhood
 10:00 Pastors' and Laymen's
 Conference

Tuesday Afternoon, April 12

1:30 Committee Meetings:
 Missions Department
 Baptist Music Fellowship
 Lifeword
 DiscipleGuide
 Seminary
 Nominating Committee
 Ministers Resource Services
 Moral Action Committee
 3:00 Second General Session
 Music and Prayer
 3:10 Enrollment Committee (Initial Report)
 Welcome Petitioning Churches & Seating
 Their Messengers
 3:20 Proposed Changes to the Constitution
 3:45 Nominees for Nominating Committee
 3:50 Clerk's Report
 4:00 Ministers Resource Services Report
 4:30 Miscellaneous Business
 5:00 Prayer/Adjourn
 5:30 Seminary Dinner

Tuesday Evening, April 12

7:00 Third General Session
 Music and Prayer
 Annual Message: Grady Higgs
 Alternate: Dr. John Adams
 Prayer/Adjourn

Wednesday Morning, April 13

8:30 Fourth General Session
 Music and Prayer
 8:45 Nominating Committee Report
 9:05 BMA Seminary Report
 9:35 Baptist Music Fellowship
 9:45 DiscipleGuide Church Resources Report
 10:15 Master's Builders Report
 10:25 Coordinating Council Report
 10:45 Brotherhood Report
 10:55 WMA Report
 11:05 Vote on Constitutional Changes
 Miscellaneous Business
 Prayer/Adjourn

Wednesday Afternoon, April 13

2:00 Fifth General Session
 Music and Prayer
 2:15 Final Nominating Committee Report
 2:25 Minute and Clerk Hire
 2:35 Election of Officers
 Election of Annual Speaker
 3:00 Moral Action Agency Report
 3:30 Committee on Arrangements
 3:45 Lifeword Media Ministries Report
 4:15 Revolving Loan Fund Report
 4:20 Election of Missions Advisory Committee
 Members
 4:30 Final Enrollment Committee Report
 4:40 Prayer/Adjourn

Wednesday Evening, April 13

7:00 Sixth General Session
 Music and Prayer
 7:15 Missions Department
 8:45 62nd Annual Session Closed
 Missionary Commissioning Service
 9:00 Closing Prayer

50 Days of Prayer and Partnership

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (BMAA Missions)—Imagine the power to touch lives half a world away-right from you own living room. Imagine navigating through dozens of nations in 15 minutes. Imagine piercing the darkness with the light of the Gospel with a single, heartfelt expression of compassion spoken directly to the heart of God.

That's the power of prayer. And the World Missions Calendar provided by the BMA of America Department of Missions can help you harness this power by guiding you through a daily habit of praying for missionaries around the globe.

Every BMAA church should have received

an order form for the 50 Days of Prayer and Partnership resources. These resources are provided by the missions office to help you promote and participate in this vital missions emphasis which will take place January 9 to World Missions Sunday on February 27.

If you did not receive an order form or you have misplaced yours, please contact the BMAA Missions Department and request another. To expedite your request, you may place your order online at www.bmaamissions.org. Please keep checking the BMAA

Missions website where you will find various electronic resources offered to enhance your 50 Days of Prayer and Partnership and World Missions Sunday.



BMA of America Meeting Hotel Information

Please call the hotel directly and identify that you are attending the BMA of America meeting.

Baymont by Wyndham

King \$76; Double \$79
 (Hot breakfast included)
 4510 Kell; (940) 691-7500

Courtyard by Marriott

King \$104; Double \$104
 (The Bistro is open for breakfast & dinner)
 Lawrence Road and Terry; (940) 696-0010

Days Inn & Suites by Wyndham

King \$71; Double \$75
 (Daybreak breakfast & belgian waffles included)
 4500 Kell; (940) 691-4200

Holiday Inn at the Falls

King \$85; Double \$85
 (Restaurant is open for breakfast & dinner)
 100 Central Frwy.; (940) 761-6000

Holiday Inn Express

King \$93; Double \$93 (Hot buffet breakfast included)
 5300 Kell Blvd.; (940) 692-8300

Homewood Suites by Hilton

Studio/One bedroom King Suites \$114
 (Hot breakfast included; light dinner included Mon.-Thurs.)
 2675 Plaza Parkway; (940) 691-4663

Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel

King \$69; Double \$69; Mini Suite \$69
 (Restaurant is open for breakfast & dinner)
 401 Broad Street; (940) 766-6000

Super 8 Motel by Wyndham

King \$60; Double \$60
 (Continental breakfast included)
 1307 Kenley Ave.; (940) 322-8880



www.bmatexas.org

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www.jacksonville-college.edu

Jacksonville College Bookstore

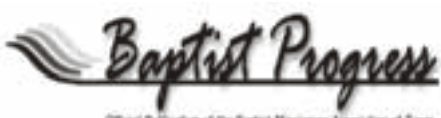
800-545-2791

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Events

JANUARY 8, 2011
Church, Call and Culture Workshop
DFW North Comfort Inn
L.E.A.P. Ministry Initiative Training

JANUARY 14, 2011
Kingsmen Quartet Concert
Suburban Wood, Humble
7 p.m.

JANUARY 25-26, 2011
e-Connect Ministry Lab
"Ministering in a Post-Christian Society"
L.E.A.P. Ministry Initiative Training.

FEBRUARY 22, 23 2011
e-Connect Ministry Lab
"Pattern for Ministry Flow"
L.E.A.P. Ministry Initiative Training.

APRIL 11-13, 2011
BMA of America Annual Meeting
Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall MPEC Events Center
Wichita Falls

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2011
BMA of Texas Annual Meeting
Farley Street Baptist Church, Waxahachie

Personnel & Positions

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS—Trustees for the BMA of Mississippi State Missions Department is seeking resumes for Director of Missions and Revolving Loan fund. Send resume to The Director Search Committee c/o Bro. Harold Floyd, 19 Pat Holifield Road, Laurel, Mississippi 39443.

PASTOR—First Missionary, Morton is seeking a pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 981, Morton, Texas 79346 or contact Jimmy Mullinax at 806-927-5311.

PASTOR—Pecan, Robert Lee is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Contact Bill Hood, P.O. Box 724, Robert Lee, Texas 76945 or 325-453-2065.

PASTOR—Temple, Little Rock, Arkansas is seeking a pastor. Submit resumes directly to the search committee at tbcpastorsearch@yahoo.com. Mail to: tbcpastorsearch@yahoo.com. You may also contact the church office at 501-565-4966.

PASTOR—Blackjack, Troup is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 605, Troup, TX 75789.

PASTOR—Myrtle Springs, Quitman is seeking a full-time pastor with educational background of college and seminary. Please visit our church website at <http://myrtle-springs.org> to view a more detailed job description. After prayerful consideration, please mail resume and a recorded sermon via CD to Myrtle Springs Baptist Church, Attn: Pulpit Committee, 2185 FM 2225, Quitman, Texas 75783.

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

TOMMY GUTHRIE is available for pulpit supply or interim pastor. Contact him at 903-326-5017 or 903-293-8044.

CARL WILLIS is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor. Contact him at 817-261-9980.

Churches in Review
December 12, 2010

CHURCH	S	W	B	L	P	St
Anthony Dr, Ennis	54	108				
Anchor Bible, Pharr	27	45				
Cedar Creek, Teague	12	18				
Central, Aspermont	37	81		1		
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	28	40				
Elwood, Wills Point	55	111				
Farley Street, Waxahachie	420	537	1			
Fellowship, Pittsburg	81	91				
First, Blooming Grove	258					
First, Judson	68	109				
First, New Summerfield	43	58				
First, Palmer	88	181				
Glade Creek, Gilmer	18	45				
Jackson, Canton	39	94				
Jackson, Joaquin	70	118				
Little Flock, Jewett	13	26				
Little Mound, Big Sandy	44	70				
Merriman Hills, Sherman	14	28				
New Harmony, Tyler	261	334		4	4	
New Haven, Dallas	24	53				
Pine Brook, Tyler		73				
Piney Creek, Kennard	31	50				
Rosewood, Gilmer	84	154				
Suburban Wood, Humble	56	64				
Temple, Mexia	30	43				
Tundra, Canton	90	115				
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	30	48				

December 19, 2010

CHURCH	S	W	B	L	P	St
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	20				
Central, Aspermont	36	86				
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	48	68				
Farley Street, Waxahachie	380	534				
First, Judson	61	125				
First, Palmer	79	100				
Glade Creek, Gilmer	16	34				
Jackson, Joaquin	75	102				
New Haven, Dallas	20	48				
New Hope, Mineola	64	131				
Piney Creek, Kennard	29	40				
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	70	84				
Temple, Mexia	35	76				
Tundra, Canton	101	165		1		
Woodland, Splendora	51	160			1	

KEY: S-Sunday School, W-Morning Worship, B-Additions by baptism, L-Additions by letter, P-Professions of faith, St-Additions by statement
lease report your statistics by *MONDAY @ 5 p.m.* of each week by visiting www.baptistprogress.org and clicking "CHURCHES IN REVIEW," call 972-923-0756 or e-mail your statistics to info@baptistprogress.org.

'Sad day': Senate passes Don't Ask, Don't Tell repeal

By **MICHAEL FOUST**
Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (BP)--In a landmark moment for the homosexual movement, the Senate Dec. 18 sent President Obama a bill overturning the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, a move that will lead to open homosexuality in the military and will harm religious liberty, readiness, privacy and retention, critics say.

The Senate's 65-31 vote during the lame duck session capped a nearly year-long effort by the Obama administration to reverse the 17-year-old policy, which was adopted in 1993 as a compromise between conservatives and President Clinton, who wanted homosexuals to be able to serve openly but faced resistance from Congress and the Pentagon. As part of the '93 compromise, homosexuals would not have to disclose their sexuality on the front end -- as had been required -- although they would be required to keep their homosexuality secret while serving.

The U.S. military has never allowed open homosexuality.

Obama urged Congress during his January State of the Union address to reverse the policy, and the Pentagon studied the issue for 10 months before releasing a much-debated survey on the final day of November. Opponents of the current policy rushed to pass the bill during the lame duck session after Republicans -- most of whom supported the current policy -- made significant gains on Election Day. New legislators will be sworn in Jan. 4.

Obama has not said when he will sign the bill. The bill previously passed the House, 250-175.

"This is a very, very sad day for America," Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told Baptist Press. "It is an honor and a privilege, not a right, to serve in our nation's military. There are multitudes of reasons why the military is the most respected national institution in American life. I have heard from privates and seamen all the way through generals and admirals that this will cause significant numbers of people to resign from the military -- in the middle of two wars."

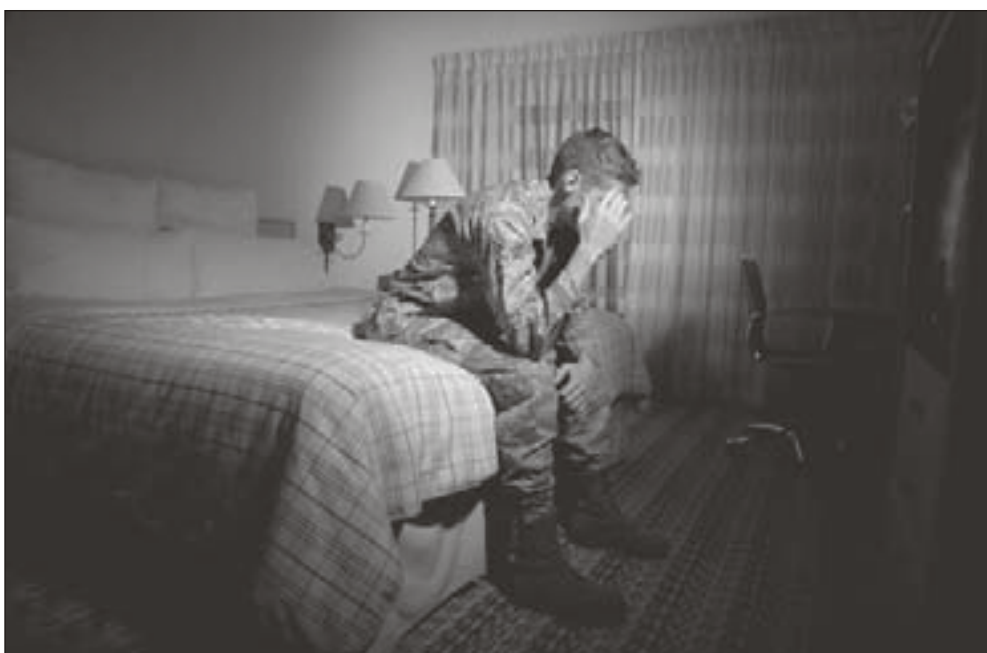
Technically, the policy won't be repealed even when Obama signs the bill. A complete repeal will require certification by Obama, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen that it won't harm the military. All three, though, supported the bill.

Democratic support carried the bill in both chambers. In the Senate, all 31 "no" votes came from Republicans, and eight Republicans joined 57 Democrats to support it. In the House, 235 Democrats and 15 Republicans voted for the bill, while 160 Republicans and 15 Democrats opposed it. (The Senate vote tally is available at <http://ow.ly/3rnp9>, the House tally at <http://ow.ly/3pU6e>.)

Religious liberty was at the forefront of conservatives' concerns. More than 60 retired chaplains had signed a letter to Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warning that a repeal would marginalize "deeply held" religious beliefs of military personnel and present a conflict when

some chaplains, while preaching, "present religious teachings that identify homosexual behavior as immoral." They warned that changing the policy could influence chaplains not only in what they could preach but in what they could say in a counseling session. A repeal, the letter further said, would harm morale because it would be casting "the sincerely held religious beliefs of many chaplains and Service members as rank bigotry comparable to racism."

Chaplain (Col.) Keith Travis, chaplain team leader for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board, told Baptist Press after the Senate vote that "we



intend to remain fully engaged with chaplaincy in the U.S. Military."

"Our primary concern is that our chaplains be allowed to counsel and teach using Scripture in its entirety," Travis said. "It will be interesting to see how the military will balance this new policy with religious freedom."

Already, Christian legal organizations, such as the Alliance Defense Fund, are pledging to defend any chaplains who encounter problems.

"No Americans, and especially not our troops, should be forced to abandon their religious beliefs," Alliance Defense Fund attorney Daniel Blomberg said in a statement. "We hope that our nation's leaders will work to ensure that none of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are ever made to choose between serving their country or obeying their God as result of this damaging policy decision. And ADF stands ready to defend service members if they are ever unconstitutionally required to make that choice."

The Pentagon's survey of military personnel found significant resistance to a repeal from those serving on the front lines. For example, among those in the Marine combat arms and Army combat arms, 57 percent and 47 percent, respectively, said having an openly homosexual person would negatively impact "how service members in your immediate unit work together to get the job done."

More than a third of Marines (38.1 percent) and nearly a fourth of all personnel (23.7) said they would either leave the military or think about doing so earlier than planned if

the policy is reversed. That number jumped to 48 percent for Marines on the front lines.

Concerns among Marines are part of the reason Marine Commandant Gen. Jim Amos, one of the four service chiefs on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned that implementing a repeal during the current war environment could cost lives because it would serve as a distraction.

"Such findings should make it impossible for President Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen to 'certify' that no harm will be done by implementation of their own plans for repeal,"

Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, said in a statement. "The president's political promise to LGBT Left groups has been assigned highest priority, at the expense of Army and Marine combat troops whose voices were heard but ignored."

Privacy, too, was a concern, as a significant number of personnel expressed concern with sharing bathrooms, and open bay showers, with an openly homosexual person. Only 29 percent of all personnel said they would "take no action" if they found themselves in a similar situation.

The New York Times ran a story Dec. 20 that included interviews with Marines in training. "Many said that introducing the possibility of sexual tension into combat forces would be disruptive," the story said.

The day before the Senate vote, Land sent Obama a letter, urging the president to be guided by his Christian faith on the issue.

"We believe it to be contrary to Scripture to commend open homosexual relationships in general, including within the military ranks," Land's letter reads. "Our nation has moved from God in so many ways and we are deeply concerned that an increasingly affirming policy toward homosexual behavior will provide further impetus for God's judgment on our nation."

Land told Baptist Press that the conservative-leaning composition of the military will lead to resignations.

"The reality is that in America today, an all-volunteer military is significantly disproportionately from red-state America," Land said. "And the resignations from the military will be disproportionately from red-state America. So, quite rapidly the military will go from an organization in which homosexuals are underrepresented in ratio to a percentage of the population to an institution where they are overrepresented, which will only accelerate the rate of resignation. Legislators who voted for this disproportionately never served in the military. The opposition was led by legislators who have served."

The eight Senate Republicans who supported the bill were Sens. Olympia Snow and Susan Collins (each of Maine), Richard Burr (N.C.), John Ensign (Nev.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Scott Brown (Mass.), Mark Kirk (Ill.) and George Voinovich (Ohio). The retiring Voinovich is in his final days as a senator.

Spring Semester Approaching at Jacksonville College

By **DR EDWIN CRANK**
President, Jacksonville College

The spring semester for Jacksonville College begins Jan. 7 and Jan. 10 for staff in-service. Testing for new students will also be on Jan. 10. Registration for students who have not pre-registered will be Jan. 11. Classes will begin Thursday, Jan. 12. Commencement is scheduled for May 6 at 7:30 p.m.

The fall semester seemed to be very short. One has to take seriously the admonition of the Bible about “redeeming the time.” Time cannot be bought back. Time is a precious commodity. It must be carefully budgeted and utilized. Good stewardship must be practiced.



Athletic Schedule

When these lines are read some pre-conference basketball games will have already been played. Below are schedules for JBC men and women. Support the teams if they are in your vicinity.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>SITE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
January 8	Lon Morris*	Lon Morris	2:00/4:00 p.m.
January 12	San Jacinto*	HOME	5:30/7:30 p.m.
January 15	Trinity Valley*	HOME	2:00/4:00 p.m.
January 19	Kilgore*	Kilgore, TX	5:30/7:30 p.m.
January 22	Tyler*	HOME	2:00/4:00 p.m.
January 26	Paris*	Paris, TX	5:30/7:30 p.m.
January 29	Panola**	HOME	2:00/4:00 p.m.
February 2	Navarro*	HOME	7:30 p.m.
February 2	Kilgore*(W)	HOME	5:30 p.m.
February 5	Bossier Parish*	Bossier, LA	4:00 p.m.
February 5	Trinity Valley*(W)	Trinity Valley, TX	2:00 p.m.
February 9	Angelina*	HOME	5:30/7:30 p.m.
February 12	Blinn*	Brenham, TX	2:00/4:00 p.m.
February 16	Lamar PA*	HOME	7:30 p.m.
February 19	Lee*	Baytown, TX	4:00 p.m.
February 19	Panola (W)	Panola, TX	2:00 p.m.
February 23	Lon Morris*	HOME	5:30/7:30 p.m.
February 26	San Jacinto*	Pasadena, TX	2:00/4:00 p.m.

*-Denotes Region XIV Games **-Denotes Homecoming (W)-Denotes Women's Games

Homecoming

Homecoming is not too far away. Homecoming activities will begin on Friday evening Jan. 29, 2011. The Saturday schedule will begin with the Purple and Gold breakfast on Saturday morning followed by the alumni business meeting and program. The various alumni chapters will have lunches at noon at locations to be announced at a later date.

No college can be stronger than the alumni. Please make plans to attend. Jacksonville has four relatively new hotels. The hotels have given some special rates for homecoming as follows:

Best Western Executive Inn,

1659 S. Jackson St.
(903-586-0007)
\$55.00 + tax

Comfort Inn,

1848 S. Jackson St.
(903-589-8500)
\$55.00 + tax

Holiday Inn Express,

1923 S. Jackson St.
(903-589-8900)
\$69.00 + tax

La Quinta Inn & Suites,

1902 S. Jackson St.
(903-586-6504)
\$75.00 + tax

Perhaps even better rates can be negotiated for senior adults or for members of certain hotel chains. Contact information is provided for individuals to make contacts.

Please take note that students who attended JBC the years of 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 will be featured at homecoming. Because addresses are hard to come by, please pass the information on to former classmates. Check the Jacksonville College website for other information.

The ballgames and crowning of the homecoming queen will be in the afternoon. The Lady Jaguars play at 2 p.m. and the Jaguars play at 4 p.m.

First, Palmer Moves to New Location and Celebrates 138 Years of Ministry

By **DAVID PITTMAN**

Church Relations Coordinator, BMA of Texas

First, Palmer marked their 138th Anniversary a few weeks ago with a move to a new location. The church has relocated to a renovated facility that housed the church supported community day care center in recent years. The church scaled back the daycare to before and after school care this fall.

The move was prompted by their aged downtown building. The inaugural service in the new facility included special music from the GMA group, the adult choir and a touching testimony of Thanksgiving from a single mom thanking the church for their support of her through difficult days.

The contractor for the renovation project and many other workers were recognized for their help in getting the facility completed on time and under budget. The service was well attended with additional chairs being placed to accommodate the crowd. The church plans a formal dedication service in the near future. David Gradberg serves as pastor with the support of his wife Rhonda Caldwell Gradberg, a native of Palmer.



First, Palmer holds initial service at new location.



David and Rhonda Gradberg

A New Year Challenge

The New Year brings many challenges and opportunities for spiritual growth. A casual study of the Bible reveals that God does not intend for our spiritual growth to be in a vacuum—in fact growth becomes stagnate in a vacuum—it reproduces by interaction with others.

Here is a true story about challenge and diligence. For all of his seventy-six years, Romanian-born Liviu Librescu met life's challenges head-on. As a child in Romania during World War II, he was confined to a Jewish ghetto while his father was sentenced to a forced labor camp.

But he survived the Holocaust, determined to fulfill his dream of becoming an engineer. And he did, in spite of the Communist Party ruling Romania during his young adult years. He completed an undergraduate engineering degree at the Polytechnic University of Bucharest and then a PhD at the Institute of Fluid Mechanics at Romania's Academy of Science. He soon received wide esteem as a brilliant professor—within Romania. Communist rule prohibited him from publishing his research outside of Romania. At great risk, he smuggled his papers out of Romania to publishers in other countries.

After three years of overcoming obstacles, Dr. Librescu and his wife were granted permission to immigrate to Israel in 1978. After teaching at Tel-Aviv University for seven years, he accepted a one year position as a visiting professor in the Virginia Tech (Virginia) Department of Engineering and Mechanics.

In 1958 his family joined him in Blacksburg, Virginia, and they became part of the university family. He became one of Virginia Tech's most popular and respected professors and researchers in the field of aeronautical engineering. Throughout his career, Dr. Librescu compiled a list of awards and recognitions too long to detail here.

Although Dr. Librescu was Jewish, for all of his seventy-six years, he exemplified in his life the kind of diligence that reflects the image of God in human beings. Dr. Ishwar Puri, head of Dr. Librescu's department at Virginia Tech, said of his colleague, "He loved his position as a professor. A prolific researcher and wonderful teacher, he devoted himself to the profession, solely for the love of it."

When the professor himself was asked, in 2005, why he continued to work so hard, he said, "It is not a question of organizations or calculations. If I had the pleasure to do this, then I will put time aside to do this. It is personal freedom. If you are limited, then you miss the freedom. And I—I would like to be

fluid. I would like to be free as a bird and fly everywhere."

The way Dr. Librescu lived his life—overcoming obstacles for more than seven decades to give his all to what he loved—would be a lesson by itself in diligence. He continued to teach at Virginia Tech well past retirement age because life itself was a challenge for him. He never gave himself permission to stop as long as his students needed him. In fact, it was his diligence that cost Dr. Librescu his life, and served as the ultimate illustration of what it means to live with no reservations.

On April 16, 2007, when a heavily armed, deranged student entered the classroom buildings on the Virginia Tech campus and began randomly killing and wounding students and staff, Dr. Librescu was teaching a class of around twenty students.

As soon as it became obvious that the shooter might target his classroom, the seventy-six-year-old professor immediately threw himself against the inside of the classroom door while instructing the students to flee out the windows to safety. One of the last students to exit the classroom remembers seeing the professor leaning against the door and then falling, fatally wounded by bullets that came through the door. All twenty students, some with broken legs from the two-story fall, survived.

What would make someone sacrifice himself for the sake of others? For Liviu Librescu, it was the culmination of a life of overcoming challenges and remaining diligent to the end. After the attack, a student summarized the professor's actions: "It's one of those things where every little thing you do can save somebody's life."

Dr. Puri, his department head said, "Professor Librescu was an extremely tolerant man who mentored scholars from all over our troubled world. The professor was not a stranger to trouble, but he wasn't intimidated by it. From childhood his commitment to living for others created peace in "our troubled world."

Christians live in the same world. And we are called by God to take up our cross and march into the trouble for the sake of Christ—not knowing but that one little thing we do might save someone's life in time or for eternity.

Our challenge is learning to live an exceptional life—a life of sacrifice, diligence and generous commitment. We learn about such a life in the Bible, and those who read it every day learn how to face life's challenges and impact others with the Gospel. This is a process that never ends.



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HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM

TEXAS WMA

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DISTRICT NEWS

The Polk County District WMA met Oct. 21, 2010 at First, Livingston. President Gloria Richardson opened the meeting by reading, "What If God Had an Answering Machine?" The attendance banner was given to Holly Grove. The percentage banner went to Soda and the host church. David Phillips' Band including Stonewall Jackson and Charles Palmer presented special music. Literature Chairman Barbara Benton made suggestions of good books to read with the Bible as always the most important. Bro. Bruce Baker, pastor of First, Livingston, presented the program. Melena Burress presented beautiful bookmarks to everyone.

TEXAS WMA PROJECT 2011

The Texas WMA Project for this year is a van for the girls' cottage at the Texas Baptist Home for Children. The goal is \$20,000. This project is very worthy and needed to transport the girls to the various functions that they must attend. It is important to have a safe, dependable vehicle in which to carry the girls where they need to go. There are so many fun things that you can do to raise money for this van. Get your church involved in having a chili supper. Plan a Valentine banquet. Have a silent auction. Have "Sundaes on Sunday" or a pancake breakfast on Saturday. Plan a movie night in the fellowship hall and provide popcorn, candy and drinks for purchase. Give a donation to the project in your pastor's name and send them a card informing them of it. Offerings for the project should be marked "Project" and sent to: Dian Brooks, 303 Sioux Place, Waxahachie, Texas 75165.

Church Planting continued from p. 1



Workshop Participants

of work to do in North America, and frankly our time is running out. We believe the most effective way to start new churches is through our existing churches. We really want to see that happen in a major way in the near future.”

In an effort to lay a solid foundation for a “church planting movement” the BMAA recently hosted a two-day intensive coaching workshop to train leaders who will serve as coaches to existing and future church planters. The workshop was led by Dr. Steve Ogne, co-author of *TransforMissional Coaching*. Ogne trains leaders from a three-tier approach. He relates it to the three wheels of a tricycle - Assessment, Coaching and Training. Ogne states, “I use a tricycle analogy because while these three things are taking place, you want the entire effort to be moving in a positive direction.”

BMA of Texas representative David Pittman, along with other associational leaders and pastors from several states attended the training held Dec. 15-16 in the BMAA Missions Office. Attendees were taught specific skills in listening, visioning and strategizing. Topics also included evangelizing, gathering, shepherding, building community, training, multiplying, assembling, celebrating, leading and managing.

Ogne describes his teaching material as “a holistic approach to coaching that is especially empowering to young and emerging leaders. Rather than telling leaders what to do or how to do it we strongly advocate that coaches utilize the art of listening and asking great questions as an effective vehicle to engage and empower the leader.”

Research shows that productivity, skill development, morale and working relationships all improve dramatically when training is combined with coaching. In the business world those with training alone show improvement of around 22%. Those who receive training and the benefit of a coach improve at 86%. A recent Southern Baptist study of 601 planters between 1997-2002 showed that when a coach was involved in a church plant, that plant size doubled in comparison to those who plant without a coach.

The idea of coaching has been utilized in the BMA of Texas Missions Department in recent years with some measureable results. Church planters are assessed, assigned a coach and required to participate in continual training. A missional approach to local church ministry is very important for impacting unbelievers in our communities. Prayer support for all our missionaries: state, national and international is vital. Every member in every BMA church should participate in a church planting movement among BMA churches. This is fundamental to our future impact on the world.

BMAA Missions Symposiums Scheduled

By **DR JOHN DAVID SMITH**
Executive Director, BMAA Missions

The 2011 National Missions Symposiums will be held January 11 and 12 at the Central Baptist Church in Conway, Arkansas and January 18 and 19 at the Keltys First Baptist Church in Lufkin, Texas. We pray that we will see you at one of these choice locations. You will hear numerous BMAA missionaries from around the world, as well as hearing the values and vision for the future of our global missions program. For more information please call the BMAA missions office at 501-455-4977.

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Sound Advice for Young Preachers

By TOMMY HALL

Pastor, Davis Street, Sulphur Springs

In just over two months I will retire from the pastorate. I will continue to serve where God leads me, but have no plans to pastor again. For the last 57 years I have pastored Baptist churches. Nearly everything I have learned, I have learned the hard way, by making mistakes. Over the years I made note of my mistakes and what I had learned from them. I wrote them down and stored them away. May I share with you, and especially young preachers, some “do’s and don’ts” that experience has taught me?

1. Behave yourself. Build a life of integrity. Don’t live recklessly.
2. Prepare yourself. Give God a portion of each day.
3. Never be an embarrassment to your church. Dress your best. Be courteous and friendly to everyone.
4. When your church members are sick or have a death in their family be there. They will never forget you. If you are not there when they are in trouble, they won’t forget that either!
5. Don’t play the cliques. Treat everyone the same. You are pastor to all, not just a few.
6. When visiting the hospital never, never, ask a lady why she is in the hospital. It will save you an embarrassing moment. Pledge your prayers and leave.
7. Hospital visits aren’t social calls. Don’t wear out your welcome. If you sit down they will over estimate the time you stay. If you stand up, they will under estimate the time you stay. Be brief in your visit.
8. Guard your heart against pride and jealousy. Be humble and submissive.
9. Exercise care in your relationship with the ladies of your church.
10. Pay your bills! Cut up all your credit cards. If you don’t have the money to make a purchase, save for it!
11. Develop and maintain a close relationship with God. Spend time with Him.
12. Cultivate a good sense of humor. Laugh at yourself and laugh with others.

Which Crown will Stand the Test of Time?

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

—1 Corinthians 9:25.

By PAUL GAUNTT

Would most everyone be in agreement that we are living in a sports-mad world? A student excels in a sport in high school and finds himself or herself going to college on a “full-ride” promising to use those talents in a sports arena for the school.

Later, some of those athletes will gain the attention of a professional scout, and before they know what’s happening, they’re signing up to play for a team for unreal amounts of money. High schools are spending into the hundreds of millions of dollars for sports complexes and stadiums while the arts, sciences, music and languages take a lower tier of importance.

Even in Christian institutions, one only needs to compare the sports budget with that of the Bible department and conclude something in our society has gone awry.

Something is woefully amiss when a football jock signs a \$150,000 million contract for five years to chase a ball down a field while a New Testament or Old Testament professor teaches precepts that have eternal value and consequences for less money than a plumber earns.

Something is also woefully amiss when an institution of higher learning places far more value on how far the team makes it in conference play – because after all, the farther they advance, the more income the school will reap from its concessions – while emphasis on the Bible is diminished more and more with each passing year.

Something is woefully amiss when a national renowned sports figure goes to prison for participating in an interstate dog-fighting ring, and comes out and resumes his football career without missing a beat. But let a pastor or denominational leader have an indiscretion in his life and he’s pretty much done in the ministry.

One other issue that illustrates how out of kilter our society has become is when we see local sports fields crawling with little league and pee wee football teams – while parents sit in lawn chairs on the sidelines watching them on Wednesday nights. There was a day when no organization in the community would dare trifle with the church’s schedule.

Those days have gone by the wayside. To borrow

an old movie title and adapt it a little, we’ve become a “mad, mad, mad, mad world of sports.”

I would venture to say that more people today have a greater knowledge of the batting averages of top baseball players than how many Christians are in America today.

And of course, the electricity that is felt in a giant stadium by 100,000 screaming fans is considered the norm, but let someone get happy in the Lord in church, and they’re fanatics.

To salve our consciences, we lightheartedly referred to the Apostle Paul as a sports fanatic, because he obviously frequented the Isthmian Games held in ancient Greece which were held in honor of the pagan sea-god Poseidon, because he seemed to glean many of his illustrations from those games. He even refers to shadow boxing in 1 Corinthians 9:26; *“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.”*

I believe it’s clear that Paul saw through the superficiality of the games. He referred to that corruptible crown that the athlete strove for – which was nothing but dried wild celery stalks – and it was all in honor of a false god.

But Paul used the analogy of the believer’s walk as including keeping their bodies in subjection to Christ, just as the athlete disciplines his or her body – knowing that when believers crossed the finish line, they would receive an incorruptible crown – a crown that would shimmer throughout eternity. Five-thousand years from today, those wild celery stalks used for crowns for winning athletes will have been incinerated. Five thousand years from today, none of us will remember who won Super Bowl 44 – but we will continue to bask in the victory Christ gave us over death and hell.

Now I’m not saying “ignore a good ball game on TV – or even go see one in person when possible – but let’s focus on what really matters in life.

Paul Gauntt is the former director of Church Ministries for the BMA of Texas. He has also served as the pastor of several churches in the BMA of Texas. Contact him at 627 Tulane Drive, Waxahachie, Texas 75165 or 972-935-6352.



Paul Gauntt

Repent!

By GARY HOUSE

Date: January 9, 2011

Text: Jeremiah 3: 6, 10; 4: 14-19, 22.

Lesson in Brief: God's desire is for His people to turn from their sin and idolatry to Him. God offered repentance to sinful Israel, and He promised, if they would turn from their sins, He would bring them back to Zion. The message to the nation of Judah from Jeremiah was that their sin would have a price as well. Turn your heart to God to avoid a similar judgment.

The prophet Jeremiah, whose name means, "*Jehovah establishes*" is known as the "weeping prophet." He ministered to Judah for 40 years, through five kings. The focus of his prophecy was to urge Judah not to follow the path that led to Israel's (the northern kingdom) fall.

Jeremiah 2:19, "*Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee...*" Sin had caused Israel to be divided, and the northern tribes to be carried off in captivity to the Assyrians. Yet, though sin had caused so much grief, God is still interested in their redemption. God is stating through Jeremiah Judah's need to return in full devotion to Him before sin costs them too high a price.

A plea for Repentance (3:6-25, 4:14). Judah had succumbed to the identical sin of their northern brethren, the worship of false gods. God says, "*You watched Israel commit idolatry, you witnessed the judgement that befell them, yet you did the same thing.*" Judah had continued to disregard the Lord's word and warning (verse 10).

A second appeal is given in Jeremiah 4:14, "*O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*" Jeremiah cries out to Jerusalem to repent and be saved. It is as if he is saying, why can't you see why this trouble is coming? They imagine a vain thing. They appear to be caught up in their own values, overlooking the needs of others. God wants man to be saved so badly, that He sent His only Son to save us.

God's grief over his wayward people (3: 19-25). The Lord intended good for Judah, but she would have none of His blessings. Jeremiah compared Judah to an adulterous wife who dealt treacherously with her husband (verse 20). The prophet likened Judah to a rebellious son, and his Father pleaded with the rebel offspring to return to his Father's house and receive the healing of the Lord (verse 22).

The shameful lusts of the defiant son brought only chastisement, shame, dishonor, and rebuke (verses 24-25).

A Promise of Punishment (4:14-19, 22). God told Jeremiah to sound the trumpet of alarm and judgment over the land, because a mighty nation from the north would soon serve as God's instrument of judgment upon Judah (verses 5-9). The neo-Babylonians may be performing the physical battle, but it is really God Himself who has come against Judah.

Jeremiah is grieved over the news of the imminent destruction of the capitol. Yet, the populous seemed oblivious to the pending disaster, as shown in Jeremiah 4:22, "*For my people [is] foolish, they have not known me; they [are] sottish children, and they have none understanding: they [are] wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*" The word "sottish" means silly or fool. These are children, who have made foolish decisions. They have chosen dumb idols over the true God. They have gone out of their way to sin. These are a people whose understanding is darkened. They had the Light of the world, and chose darkness over Light.

Application: We must learn from history. How gracious and loving is God! Though we forsake Him, He pleads for our return. The confrontation of our sin is often uncomfortable and awkward. But it is a show of mercy that God is reaching out to us trying to spare us. God knows the horrible consequences of sin to us and our loved ones. He stretches out His hand to rescue us in His love and compassion. There are those who have turned from God. They may be keeping up appearances as Judah did, but God knows our hearts. He is appealing to us, urging us to be restored to Him.

It is strange that we are so slow to respond to God's loving-kindness. Perhaps that is because we don't want to admit our sin and repent of it. In Jeremiah 2:24, God compares us to wild donkeys who won't return until we're ready. God requires that we confess our sin and turn from it (Proverbs 28:13). There is nothing that we can do to free ourselves from the bondage of sin. All that we do to hide it and justify it only makes matters worse. The only reasonable alternative is to seek the forgiveness and cleansing from God. "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us*" (1 John 1:9-10).

God wants a personal relationship with us. Everything He does is to counter what sin has ruined. It is never too late to repent of sin, receive the forgiveness of God, and live for Him.

Gary House is the writer of the Sunday school lessons for Baptist Progress. He serves as pastor of Tundra Baptist Church in Canton. Contact him at Tundraparson@aol.com.

A Ride in the Hearse

By GARY HOUSE

Date: January 16, 2011

Text: Lamentations 5

Lesson in Brief: The momentary enjoyment of sin is never worth the price tag it carries. Sin not only affects us, it affects all those around us. Sin is a matter that we cannot allow ourselves to take too lightly. Jeremiah's sorrow over Judah allows us to see this like no other book in the Bible.

Lamentations, which means wailing, great mourning, or weeping, was written by the prophet Jeremiah soon after the horrible destruction and captivity of Jerusalem by the Babylonians led by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Jeremiah, a person who had deep feelings about his people, and one who greatly loved his native land, graphically details the consequences of Judah's continued rebellion against God. Lamentations symbolically describes the sorrow the nation of Judah experienced in Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah, an eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem, proclaims that Judah's bondage was the consequence of her sin.

Chapter 5 presents a prayer for mercy and deliverance, and records the prayers of Judah's survivors for God to remember their plight. The underlying theme of the last chapter of this sad book is the hope of restoration through heartfelt confession.

The High cost of Sin (5:2-15). Jeremiah recounts on behalf of the people the tragedy they have encountered. God used the leadership of Moses and Joshua to drive other nations out of the land because of their wickedness, giving it to the Israelites "as their inheritance" but the inheritance has now reverted to its previous inhabitants. He showed himself in the past to be a God who "defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow", but now he has brought this fate on his own children.

Political costs (5:2, 5, 6, 8). The Promise Land was now the barren land. A kingdom of peace was now a persecuted kingdom. A proud nation was now a pitiful nation. A free nation was now a nation of slaves and servants.

Personal costs (5: 3, 10, 14). Pathetic orphans. Physical hunger. Personal abuse. Public disgrace. Painful burden. Personal freedom.

Economic costs (5:4, 9). Paying a premium for necessities (such as water). Gained bread (food) by placing their lives in jeopardy.

Spiritual costs (5:15). The joy of salvation was gone. The privilege of worship was removed. The fellowship of God's people as absent.

The people admit that their tragedy was a result of pursuing a life without God. Verse 7 suggests that they are still "in denial" to some degree about their present state. This is not their fault; their ancestors sinned, but they are suffering for it. It reflects a common human reaction. Somebody else's crimes always seem worse than our own. Some other car was going faster than ours, but the traffic cop has pulled us over.

Repentance and renewal. There is a momentary turn toward repentance in verse 16.

They admit that God's chastening is a proper judgment for the sins of their fathers. Jeremiah did not blame his forefathers for his own sin, but assigned the afflictions of his people to their sins against God. Confession of sin is the key to forgiveness.

The lament closes with a **prayer of hope** that God would restore them to their days of old. As the Israelites found out, sin always fails to deliver on its promises. Sin lures us with the promises of lasting joy and satisfaction, but all it is able to deliver is a temporary joy and it robs us of all that makes life truly worth living.

Lamentations stands as a reminder that the path of sin and disobedience leads us away from God toward destruction and heartache. The road toward God brings peace, joy, contentment and eternal life. The question we all need to ask is, "What path are we currently traveling? Is it worth the cost?"

Someone tells the story of a boy who was rebelling against his dad constantly. This boy was destroying his own life by his rebellion, but he refused to heed his father's words.

One day, the dad said to the boy, "I want to show you what you're doing to your life. I'm going to put a wooden post in our front yard. Every time you rebel, I will put a nail in this post. Every time you obey, I will pull out one nail."

The first thought from the boy was, "I'm going to do everything I can to fill that post with nails." And he did. In two months' time, he filled that post with nails. But he also began to feel the damage he was doing to his own life and to his parents' lives.

With true remorse, the boy began to obey his father. One by one, the nails came out. When the last nail came out of the post, the boy broke down in tears. The dad asked, "Son, why are you crying?"

And the boy replied, "I got rid of the nails, but I can't get rid of the holes."

God the Father saw the nails and the posts of our lives, and He saw our helplessness against sin. So He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to gather the nails and the posts from those who would let Him. And because of His love for us, Christ allowed Himself to be nailed on the posts, where He willingly paid the consequence of our sin.

Romans 6:23 tells us, "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" And this gift comes with God's Spirit to train us to live holy lives.

The Book of Lamentations

1. Begins with disaster.
2. Ends with honest and hopeful petitions.
3. In the middle reminds us of goodness (Lamentations 3:22-23).

We need to listen clearly to Jeremiah's message, for it gives us a timeless warning, "Sin can never deliver what it promises." God is the only one that can deliver lasting joy and contentment.

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United Thanksgiving Offering Update



On Nov. 21, churches across Texas received contributions toward the annual BMA of Texas United Thanksgiving Offering. The 2010 UTO was named in honor of Owen Dry who served as a State Missions district coordinator as well as a pastor and interim pastor of several BMA of Texas churches.

Thus far, \$75,270 has been received. At this time last year, only \$71,740 had been sent to the BMA of Texas office. If your church has not yet mailed in funds received for the 2010 UTO, please do so as soon as possible. All funds should be mailed to BMA of Texas, P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168.

The UTO benefits all departments of the BMA of Texas. Each department depends on the UTO to meet budgeted needs. If your church did not receive an offering for the UTO, please consider receiving an offering now. The goal for the 2010 UTO was set at \$125,000. Only \$49,370 more is needed to meet the goal. Will you help?

Want to Make a Gift That Keeps Giving?

The Lifeword Foundation provides that opportunity. Your gift is never spent, it is invested and only the earnings are used to help carry the Gospel around the world. Your gift keeps giving until the Lord returns. For more information, call the LifeWord Development Office at 501-472-2183.

Directory and Handbook Deadline Approaching

By **BOBBY HUDGENS**
DiscipleGuide Church Resources

DiscipleGuide Information Services is nearing the end of our church survey phase. The deadline for turning in your 2010 annual church letter form is February 1, 2011. After that we will turn our attention to processing information and doing the layout work for the 2011-12 *Directory and Handbook*.

Currently church letter submissions are running 18.4% below this time last year. Offerings are 16.6% below what they were this time last year. The alarm is sounding; we need your help.

If your church did not submit your 2010 DiscipleGuide church letter form and an offering (between August 1, 2010, and the present), please do so soon. Remember that this is the *Directory and Handbook* of the BMAA. If BMAA churches don't support it with offerings, this fine resource simply cannot be produced.

Thank you, and if you have suggestions for improving the directory, e-mail us at info@DiscipleGuide.org.

Every Sunday Bulletin Service is now being offered through Baptist Progress!



Simply set up your account with *Baptist Progress* for the number of bulletins you regularly need on Sunday, and they will be shipped right to your door. We have a wide selection offering six bulletin styles in various sizes to fit the worship style of nearly any church. Extra bulletins are available to add to your regular order for special days such as Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, etc. To order or for more information, give us a call at 972-923-0757 or send an e-mail to info@baptistprogress.org.