

The Challenge

News of Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary

Fall 2006



Seminary Enrollment Continues to Increase

More than 160 students enrolled for fall classes in 2006. The enrollment figure includes both graduate and undergraduate students and exceeds the 138 students enrolled for fall classes in 2005.

Dr. Shun Au-Young, Master of Arts Religion student, says, *"I have noticed the increased enrollment especially in the parking lot! I like the teachers and the way they teach. They really show positive scholarly and pastoral attitudes. I learn much from the professors and from student discussions in the classroom."*

Lamar McKinney, Master of Divinity student, agrees, *"Much of what you get in the classroom exchange among students I wouldn't get on my own. The interaction provides opportunity for dealing with issues that might not even occur to you on your own."* He adds, *"The atmosphere at the seminary is professional yet relaxed. Courses are thorough and I have enjoyed the professors."*

Renee Barton, Bachelor of Arts in Religion student, says, *"I desired to go deeper in Bible study and have found that here. A graduate encouraged me to come and I have found a wonderful environment that really is a very accepting place for women."*

Enthusiasm Builds as BMATS Golden Jubilee Approaches

Enthusiasm for the upcoming Golden Jubilee (50th Anniversary) of BMA Seminary is increasing on the seminary campus. The Golden Jubilee will be celebrated during the 2007-2008 year in conjunction with the first seminary classes which were held on September 8, 1957 and the first graduating class in May 1958.

According to Dr. John W. Gregson, the seminary's first registrar and second president, a ground breaking ceremony was held on the seminary's property between the current Gregson Student Center and Kellar Library in October 1956.

"It is intriguing to know that the buildings we use today were not yet in existence 50 years ago. Since that time administrative facilities, a library, a chapel, a student center and an apartment complex have been built. Also, approximately 400 students have graduated and numerous others have attended classes and benefitted from a quality, conservative, Bible-based, and evangelical education. We look forward to celebrating the past and preparing for the future," says Dr. Philip Attebery, Seminary Dean.

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Dr. Curry (right) Speaks with Students

Harris-Curry Scholarship Established

BMA Seminary has joined with the Texas Educational Baptist Congress to establish a scholarship in the names of Pastor J.T. Harris and Dr. S.L. Curry.

Harris is the first Afro-American student to graduate with a master's degree from BMA Seminary. He earned the Master of Religious Education degree in 1980.

According to Rev. Dr. Jerome Milton, President of the Texas Educational Baptist Congress, Harris *"has established himself as an outstanding preacher/pastor who is committed in bringing the Word of God in the recesses of East Texas. He never forgets how he was able to rise above circumstances and achieve a unique goal for himself and for others to follow."*

Harris is pastor of the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Carthage, Texas and led the seminary's Brand Spiritual Emphasis Week in 1992.

Curry is the first Afro-American student to graduate from BMA Seminary and to later earn a doctoral degree.

Curry earned the BMA Seminary's Master of Religious Education in 1987 and the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry degree in 1998.

Curry is pastor of the New Zion Baptist Church in Winona, Texas and serves as a part-time professor for BMA Seminary.

Milton says, *"He continues to be a great influence to youth and young adults as they seek his direction in how God would use them for His purpose. He is a mentor to those who struggle with stumbling blocks."*

Bertram Cooper, BMA Seminary Development Officer, says, *"These names (Harris and Curry) will speak volumes to future recipients as to the importance of their call and the unlimited possibilities of their future education and ministries."*

Curry says, "It is an humbling thing to be considered as part of this scholarship along with Bro. Harris who 'blazed the way.'"

Dr. Philip Attebery, Seminary Dean, says the scholarship is both appropriate and timely. *"The scholarship is appropriate because both of these men have evidenced successful ministries and integrity for lengthy periods of time. It is timely because BMA Seminary is increasingly growing in its student enrollment from the Afro-American community."*

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, BMA Seminary leads similar institutions in the western United States in the enrollment of Afro-American students.

Fall 2006 Chapel

Chapel services are held each week to encourage the personal devotional lives of the seminary family. Special thanks to chapel guests scheduled for Fall 2006.

Dr. John Gregson, Dr. Tony Cleaver, Paul Heuermann, David Watkins, Dar Lee, Latrell Windam, Brent Smith, Jacksonville College Ensemble, Dr. Harold Brunson, Dr. Joe Pendleton, Tommy Oglesby, Allen and Rhonda Curry, Jeff Thompson, Ken Vanderslice, Stuart McAnally, Sheryl Hanna, Willie Houze, Greg Medenwald, and Grady Higgs.



Administration

Dr. Charley Holmes, President
Dr. Philip W. Attebery, Dean
James Blaylock, Library Director
Dr. Thom South, Extension Site
Bertram G. Cooper, Development
Janice Bryan, Business Manager

Faculty

Dr. Philip R. Bryan, Theological-Historical
Dr. Ronnie Johnson, Christian Education
Dr. Elton B. McCann, Church Ministries
Dr. Greg W. Parsons, Biblical Studies
Dr. James D. Shine, Biblical Studies

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"Earnestly Contending for the Faith"



Because of His Blessings

President, Dr. Charley Holmes

Dean's List Spring 2006

As this fall semester begins, I am excited as we anticipate celebrating our *Golden Jubilee Year!*

Enrollment

Because of HIS blessings, we have set a new record enrollment of 162 students. Our current student population includes students from China, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, India, Iraq, Kenya, South Africa, and Canada, as well as students from several states. As a result, the seminary's ministry is reaching around the world.

Finances

Because of HIS blessings, according to our latest audit, we have finished the year with a balanced budget. We want to thank God for the support of our churches and individual donors, who have been long-time, loyal friends and supporters of the seminary.

Facilities

Because of HIS blessings, we are entering a campaign to refurbish the Dorman Memorial Chapel and build a new library.

The chapel has been well used through the years, but it is now showing a lot of wear and tear and is overdue for a much-needed face lift.

The Kellar Library now contains over 92,000 items, including periodicals and other research materials, and is bursting at the seams.

We look at these needs as things that God can handle through the generosity of His People. Would you be willing to make a contribution to help fund one of these projects?

Golden Jubilee

Because of HIS blessings, BMA Seminary continues to "Earnestly Contend for the Faith." Dr. John W. Gregson has recently completed a history of BMA Seminary called *Earnestly Contending For The Faith.*

To quote Dr. Philip Bryan, President Emeritus and Professor of Biblical and Theological-Historical Studies, *"No living person would be more competent than Dr. John W. Gregson to research and record this vital information. Brother Gregson was with the school at the very beginning and on the original faculty and staff. For most of the past fifty years he has been connected in one way or another (even if not officially) with this school."*

Prayer

Would you pray for our BMA Seminary graduates who are serving our churches in the US and around the world as missionaries? Would you pray that they would be blessed with a harvest of souls and that this year's current student body and faculty will be the best ever at winning souls and making disciples?

Associate of Divinity

Linda Bower

Gary Bowman

Denise Doughtie

Lucy Kamau

Edgar Roberson

Bachelor of Arts in Religion

Patrice Anaab

Barbara Gust

Steven Marsh

Grady McDonald

Justin Owens

Philip Parks

Anthony Slack

Master of Arts Theological Studies

Jimmie Decker

Master of Arts Religion

Dustin Cameron

C.H. Collins

Timothy Gresham

Rasha Sara

Master of Divinity

William Dee Daniel

Chris George

Lamont Risner

Jake Vandenberg



Dr. Eugene Murphy

Graduate Spotlight: Dr. Eugene Murphy

This spotlight is focused on a member of the first graduating class of the BMA Theological Seminary, Dr. Eugene Murphy. Talking to Dr. Murphy one finds that conditions in the 1950's were very different from today. However, it is clear that students back then and students of today face many similar circumstances.

Dr. Murphy was saved in Temple Baptist church in Laurel, Mississippi. Pastors Gerald Bridges and V. D. Parnell encouraged him to get into school. Bro. Parnell offered to take him to Jacksonville College.

When he arrived, he was interviewed by Dr. Gerald Kellar, who asked, *"What do you feel like God wants you to do?"* Bro. Murphy's response was, *"Be a pastor."* Dr. Kellar outlined his course of study right then.

He and his wife moved from Laurel to Jacksonville in September of 1955 and he enrolled in the seminary division of Jacksonville College. Dr. Kellar, Dr. W. J. Dorman, and W. H. Hodges were professors and John Gregson was a student teacher.

He remembers being the only student from Mississippi in his first class. He expressed his call to the pastorate and need for help finding a church. He says, *"Before sundown that day I had gotten a call from Sand Prairie Baptist Church in Normangee to preach the next Sunday. The church called me as pastor and my wife and I moved again from Jacksonville to Normangee."*

Many students today can relate to commuting to class. *"John Gregson was pastor of Harmony Baptist Church in Normangee, so we took turns driving our cars to Jacksonville. We attended classes from Monday to Wednesday afternoon and we joked that our wives pastored the churches while we were in school."*

He remembers that housing was limited and usually reserved for full-time college students, so commuters had to make their own arrangements for Monday and Tuesday nights. The owner of an old hotel near the railroad tracks allowed him, John Gregson, Gordon Renshaw and Al Duncan to share a room each night for a dollar a piece.

As with many students today, finances were a major concern. At the time, *"You paid all of your tuition up front or you did not go to school. I remember coming home one day and sitting down to cry. My wife asked me what was wrong and I told her I was going to have to drop out of school because we don't have the money for tuition."* His wife wisely advised that they pray about it. The next day an unexpected check came in the mail for exactly the amount needed for tuition.

When the association created the national seminary and built the new building, the seminary became an independent institution, separate from Jacksonville College. Dr. Murphy is proud to have been in the first graduating class of the national seminary in 1958. He made lasting friendships with the nine other graduates.

Dr. Murphy says that his seminary education gave him excellent preparation in many ways. Always giving God the glory and credit, he said that his seminary training prepared him to be an effective pastor. After graduation he went back to Mississippi and became pastor of Lebanon Baptist Church in Laurel. The church experienced tremendous growth during his stay. He has been pastor of 14 churches in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. He has also been active in evangelism and conference ministry.

Besides general preparation for ministry, Dr. Murphy credits his education with helping him be prepared for service in associational positions. He has served in various leadership positions, on committees and trustee boards of state and national associations. He served as Director of Missions for the BMA of Mississippi for seven years and as president of Southeastern Baptist College in Laurel, Mississippi for 14 years. He credits seminary classes under Drs. Dorman and Brunson as helping him most as a Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Evangelism at Southeastern Baptist College.

Dr. Murphy currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the BMA Seminary and is especially glad to have had the privilege to serve on the board of trustees a number of years. Dr. Murphy had been married to his first wife, Bernice, 56 years when she passed away 3 years ago. Together they had two children, four grandchildren and one great grandson. He and his current wife, Faye, have been happily married just over one year.



1958 Graduating Class (Murphy 3rd from Right)

Seminary Professors Published

BMA Seminary is blessed with highly credentialed and respected faculty members who are active in writing for scholarly and practical ministry oriented publications.

Dr. Greg Parsons, Professor of Biblical Studies, has contributed to the *Word Study Commentary* by Victor Books. The commentary should be available in Spring 2007.

Parsons prepared word studies for the Book of Job. He says, "The whole format of this work seems to be unique. Key words are studied in their context of book and genre. It is intended for both pastors and seminary students."

Parsons has also contributed to the *Holman Christian Study Bible*, which is soon to be released. His commentary and introduction notes are used for the Books of Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Haggai.

Dr. Ronnie Johnson, Professor of Christian Education, contributed to the May/June 2006 issue of *Children's Ministry* with an article entitled "A Sharp Blade."

The article focuses upon the value of teachers keeping themselves "sharp" by self-evaluation and listening to the advice of others.

The article reads, "Don't let stress and dulling routine rob you of energy and productivity. Stay sharp . . . and keep close to the ones you serve and love."

Dr. Elton McCann, Professor of Church Ministries, has been a regular author of Adult Sunday School literature for the Baptist Publishing House.

Three books will be written by McCann for the 2007 year: *Words to the Wise*, *Devoted to the Gospels* and *Transformed*.

McCann, who teaches evangelism at the seminary is particularly excited about the Summer 2007 study which will emphasize evangelism.

He says, "This is more than a study of evangelism. It is an effort to involve people in the actual process of evangelism and to see them more involved in personal evangelism."

Dr. Philip Attebery, Seminary Dean, has recently contributed to a book by Debra White Smith entitled *It's a Jungle at Home: Survival Strategies for Overwhelmed Moms*. The book was published by Harvest House 2006.

Alicia Johnson, Public Services Supervisor for Kellar Library and wife of Dr. Ronnie Johnson, also contributed to the book.

It's a Jungle is promoted as highlighting "innovative solutions to handle life's problems and reveals the creativity and patience moms are famous for."



Drs. Johnson, Attebery, Parsons

January Motion Schedule 2007

Church History II (CH 512)

Dr. Thom South

January 8-12

Old Testament Introduction and Survey II (OT 512)

Dr. Greg Parsons

January 15-19

Register by November 17, 2006



Blaylock Recognized for Four Decades of Service

James Blaylock, Director of BMA Seminary's Kellar Library, was recognized for 40 years of service to BMA Seminary during the annual faculty appreciation dinner on August 24, 2006.

Blaylock has worked with every seminary president. He was hired by Dr. Gerald Kellar in 1966 as assistant library director. He began service as interim director in 1972 and became official director in 1980 when he earned his Master of Science in Library degree.

Blaylock also earned a Master of Religious Education degree from the seminary in 1977.

He says, "Working with the faculty to build a good collection for our students to use and trying to get the library on par with other theological libraries" has been most rewarding over the 40 years.

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