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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Local Pastor Passes Platinum Landmark: Ed Young of Fellowship Church marks 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of First Sermon at Start-up Church Plant in DFW Area**

**GRAPEVINE, Texas, January 25, 2010** –In a day of reflection and looking toward the future, Pastor Ed Young marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary preaching to a congregation that would eventually become the five-campus Dallas-Fort Worth/Miami mega-church, Fellowship Church.

“I am still the most surprised person that ever walked in the doors of Fellowship Church,” Young told the congregation in three weekend services at five locations. “I had absolutely no concept that Fellowship Church would be what it is today. No idea.”

Young was an associate minister in Houston when he felt a calling from God to the DFW area. According to Young, although everything in him said to turn and run, he listened to the higher call. And in January of 1990 he stood in front of an audience of 120 at Las Colinas Baptist Church to give a trial sermon entitled “Running the Race.” After the service, the congregation voted and Young became the lead pastor of the new church plant.

“During the past two decades, I have learned that ministry is ‘brutiful,” Young said. “There is a brutal side that most churches don’t talk about, including stress, anxiety and the pressure of living life in an aquarium. Something like 40,000-50,000 pastors leave the ministry each year due to conflict, congregational abuse and betrayal.”

“But there is a beautiful side to ministry, because nowhere else can you have court-side seats to life change, court-side seats to see what God is doing. This has been the greatest ride of my life as I’ve watched Fellowship Church grow from 30 families to nearly 20,000.”

Through the leadership of Ed Young, Fellowship Church has been repeatedly named one of the country’s most innovative churches by Outreach magazine. And in Outreach’s 2009 annual report on the largest churches in America, Fellowship Church ranked seventh, with an average weekend attendance of more than 18,350.

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During the service on Sunday, Young recounted some of the difficult days during his tenure at Fellowship Church, but also spoke about how in life you have to be committed, give everything to God, have a big picture mentality and be accountable. Young said that these were important qualities for him as a pastor and for those wanting to live “in a manner worthy of the Gospel.”

“If you’re willing to work and say, ‘I am not going to quit;’ if you pour into your life the currency of courtesy, honor and respect that comes from God, the blessings you will receive will be mind-blowing, earth-shattering, crazy good,” Young said. “I am living proof of that fact.”

Young has a gift for communicating complex ideas in simple terms. In 2008, “The New York Times” described Ed’s style as “provocative” and a “mix of humor, showmanship and Scripture.”

As an expert and counselor on marital issues and relationships, Young made national waves in 2008 when he challenged his married congregants to have sex with their spouse for seven straight days. He has also appeared on national network morning and late-night guest interview and news magazine programs as a result of the challenge.

“The greatest message I’ll ever preach is not on this stage. It’s with my marriage,” Young says. “And my marriage is simply a reflection of my relationship with Christ.”

While this weekend marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Young, the congregation will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Fellowship Church this September. In anticipation of this milestone, Young praised the congregation for being continually obedient.

“Every time I travel and talk to leaders and speak at conferences around the world, I take you with me,” Young said to the congregation. “And I want to thank you for your boldness and vision. Because of what God is doing, we simply are telling the story of Fellowship Church. So what’s happening right here is impacting people all over the world.”

Fellowship Church will also be hosting the annual Creative Church Conference (C3) on Feb. 17-19. At C3, thousands of church leaders from around the world, representing a variety of denominations, will gather for tips on how to strengthen and grow their individual ministries.

To listen to the service in its entirety or for additional information about Fellowship Church, visit [www.FellowshipChurch.com](http://www.FellowshipChurch.com).

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**Note to Editors:** For more information about Fellowship Church please visit [www.fellowshipchurch.com](http://www.fellowshipchurch.com) . To arrange an interview with Ed Young, please contact Julie Shutley at 972.267.1111 or via e-mail at [jshutley@alarryross.com](mailto:jshutley@alarryross.com).