

African-American Fellowship celebrates togetherness

July 18, 2017

TYLER-With "Harambee: Bringing Us Together" as its theme and Psalm 133:1 as its inspiration, the 2017 African-American Fellowship Conference celebrated the joy of working and worshipping together during the July 10-13 annual meeting at Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Tyler.

"The Harambee theme was borrowed from the East African nation of Kenya," said Roy Cotton, director of African-American ministries with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "It means 'all put together.' Things really do go better when Christ's followers work together."

The event began with a "Sweet Hour of Prayer," a ministry model developed by Louis Rosenthal, pastor of The McKinney First Baptist Church in McKinney.

The conference "could not have started in a better way," Rosenthal said. "Anything we do, we want to bathe it in prayer before we get started."

Steven D. Young, pastor of The Cross Baptist Church in Tyler, emphasized the theme of togetherness at the 24th annual James W. Culp Sr. Banquet, held in conjunction with the statewide conference.

"We need to take our eyes off of the masters of the people, and keep our eyes on the Master that works miracle after miracle," Young said. "God steps in when we need him and when we don't know we need him. It was no one but God that brought us this far."

At the banquet, Chris Liebrum, director of the BGCT's Cooperative Program ministry office, recognized five churches for their giving to Texas

Baptists' Cooperative Program—The Church Without Walls in Houston; The Fort Bend Church in Sugar Land; Bethlehem Baptist Missionary Church in Mansfield; Cornerstone Baptist Church of Killeen in Harker Heights; and Community Missionary Baptist Church in DeSoto.

The fellowship elected Elmo Johnson, pastor of Rose of Sharon Baptist Church in Houston, as president. Other officers are Kenneth O. Jackson, pastor of New Light Baptist Church in Lubbock, vice president; Edward Wagner, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church of Killeen in Harker Heights, secretary; Michael Joseph, associate pastor of Fiesta Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, assistant secretary; Leonard Hornsby, executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, treasurer; and Steven D. Young, pastor of The Cross Baptist Church in Tyler, assistant treasurer.

In conjunction with the fellowship conference, many African-American Texas Baptists participated in missions and evangelistic opportunities, including serving at a local nursing home and volunteering to take food to the Salvation Army in Tyler for the homeless and hungry.