

# African American Fellowship hears call to ‘move on’

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WACO—The inability to “move on” beyond a painful past and “let go” of resentment plagues the nation in general and churches in particular, a Tennessee pastor told African American Texas Baptists.

Breonus Mitchell, pastor of Mount Gilead Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., was keynote preacher at the annual African American Fellowship Conference, July 8-11, at First Woodway Baptist Church in Waco.

## Robbed of birthright and blessing

“It’s not easy to move on,” Mitchell said, recounting the story of Esau and Jacob from the Old Testament book of Genesis.



Breonus Mitchell, pastor of Mount Gilead Missionary Baptist

Church in Nashville, Tenn.,  
preaches to the African  
American Fellowship  
Conference in Waco. (Photo /  
Ken Camp)

“Esau was robbed of both his birthright and his blessing,” he said. “Everything Esau thought he had coming to him he had taken away from him by his own brother, Jacob.”

Esau understandably wanted retribution, and Jacob fled to the home of his uncle, Laban, for refuge for an extended time at the insistence of his mother, Rebekah.

“Rebekah wanted to protect Jacob from getting what he deserved. In the process, she protected Esau from what he desired,” Mitchell said.

For three and a half chapters in Genesis, the narrative focuses exclusively on Jacob. But during that time, God changed the heart of Esau.

“While God was dealing with Jacob in the spotlight, he was working on Esau behind the scenes,” Mitchell said. “God does some of his best work behind the scenes. ... Jacob got a crippled hip (from wrestling with an angel of God). Esau got a changed heart.”

Before Esau and Jacob met again, Jacob sent a peace offering ahead, but Esau said he did not need what Jacob offered.

“God had put something in his hands. God didn’t need a birthright and a blessing to bless Esau. God can work beyond the scenes and around the systems,” Mitchell said.

# Learn how to 'let go'



Roy Cotton (third from left), director of African American ministries with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, welcomes newly elected officers of the African American Fellowship (left to right), President Kenneth O. Jackson, pastor of New Light Baptist Church in Lubbock; Vice President Edward Wagner, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Harker Heights/Killeen; Secretary Samuel J. Doyle, pastor of Greater New Light Missionary Baptist Church in Waco; Treasurer Leonard Hornsby, executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield; and Assistant Treasurer Michael Joseph, pastor of Marvelous Light Church in Houston. Not pictured is Assistant Secretary Gregory Trotter, pastor of

Friendship Baptist Church of The Colony, who was traveling internationally. (Photo / Eric Black)

When Esau and Jacob met face to face, Esau greeted his brother with a warm embrace and a kiss, telling him, "Let us move on."

"There comes a time in life when we need to learn to move on, not remain stuck in the circumstances and situations of the past," Mitchell said. "We have to learn how to let go."

Rather than looking in the rearview mirror at past offenses, God's people need to look ahead and live in grace, he insisted.

"We serve a God who is in the business of giving us grace after grace after grace after grace," Mitchell said.

As recipients of grace, God's people need to extend grace to others, he asserted.

"God doesn't want us to herald what has been done to us. God wants us to herald what he has done for us," Mitchell said.

New officers of the African American Fellowship installed at the conference were President Kenneth O. Jackson, pastor of New Light Baptist Church in Lubbock; Vice President Edward Wagner, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Harker Heights/Killeen; Secretary Samuel J. Doyle, pastor of Greater New Light Missionary Baptist Church in Waco; Assistant Secretary Gregory Trotter, pastor of Friendship Baptist Church of The Colony; Treasurer Leonard Hornsby, executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield; and Assistant Treasurer Michael Joseph, pastor of Marvelous Light Church in Houston.