

# Prayer and missions service characterize African-American Fellowship meeting

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THE COLONY—The African-American Fellowship of Texas annual meeting and evangelism conference began with prayer and ended with communion, involved participants in missions outreach and focused on the theme, “Making Christ Known.”

Along the way, participants worshipped together, elected officers and honored churches that excelled in missions giving.

Ponce Brown, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church of El Paso, was re-elected as president.

## **A unifying experience**

Brown characterized the meeting—held June 27-July 1 at Friendship Baptist Church in The Colony—as a unifying experience for the nearly 900 predominantly African-American congregations affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.



Michael Bell, senior pastor of Greater St. Stephen First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, addresses

participants at the Culp Banquet, held in conjunction with the African-American Fellowship of Texas annual meeting. He is pictured with Oscar Epps (left), pastor of Community Missionary Baptist Church of DeSoto, and fellowship President Ponce Brown (right), pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church of El Paso. (Photo / Joshua Minatrea)“The conference was unique in that we began with a prayer vigil on the opening night. We had an awesome time in the very presence of the Lord,” Brown said. “The challenges of life in this world were answered as we were encouraged with the hope given in the ministry of the word of God.

“The impact of the conference was great in that its influence could be measured and felt on many levels. It certainly served to focus us for the many challenges which we face presently with the many tragic events taking place in our country and around the world.”

Other newly elected fellowship officers are Vice President Elmo Johnson, pastor of Rose of Sharon Missionary Baptist Church in Houston; Treasurer Leonard Hornsby, executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield; and Secretary Michael Joseph, pastor of New Providence Baptist Church in Houston.



Byron C. Stevenson, pastor of The Fort Bend Church of Sugar Land, receives the Cooperative Program top giving church award, presented by Ronald C. Session, pastor of Shiloh

Baptist Church in Garland. (Photo / Joshua Minatrea)At the annual James W. Culp Banquet, four fellowship congregations were recognized as top-giving churches through Texas Baptists' Cooperative Program unified budget—The Fort Bend Church in Sugar Land, Cornerstone Baptist Church of Killeen in Harker Heights, Community Missionary Baptist Church in DeSoto and Bethlehem Baptist Church of Mansfield. Oscar D. Epps Sr., pastor of Community Missionary Baptist Church of DeSoto, spoke at the banquet.

### **Involved in missions and evangelism**

During the five-day fellowship meeting, participants engaged in missions and evangelistic activities throughout the area, including prayer-walking, packaging school supplies for Morningside Elementary School in The Colony and leading a Bible study at an independent living facility for senior adults.

Some participated in the Pray for Every Home initiative, praying by name for 800 residents in the neighborhoods surrounding Friendship Baptist Church, and 19 people registered to launch a similar effort in their own communities.

Others engaged in the Help Thy Neighbor campaign, working on 10 home-restoration projects, including lawn care, mending fences, painting and installing sheetrock.

“It was encouraging to see people respond to the theme ‘Making Christ Known’ by serving in these areas,” said Gerald Davis, Texas Baptists’ disaster recovery development specialist and organizer of mission outreach projects.

“Not only did participants serve in The Colony, but many were encouraged as they returned home to their own communities to do likewise.”

Claybon Lea Jr., pastor of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfield and Suisun City, Calif., was keynote speaker at the fellowship's annual meeting.

*Based on reporting by Kalie Lowrie of Texas Baptists' Communications.*