



Prayer Focus: What is a FIRE Torch Tour?

Contributing Writer: Tom Victor

What would motivate busy leaders to get up before dawn and drive across town on a weekend morning? It's the FIRE Torch Tour, calling pastors and congregations to deep and

sacrificial commitment to pray, and it's happening at 7:00 A.M. each Saturday morning.

Pastor Rickie Bradshaw (left, above), pastor of First Southwest Missionary Baptist Church and UBA Church Consultant, and Yemi Ayodele (right, above), pastor of Church of the Nations, spent three days in June of 2008 at the International Torchlight Training Summit sponsored by The Sentinel Group. Trained to return to their communities as catalytic agents of transformation, they responded to God's challenge to begin the FIRE Torch Tour in Houston. Bradshaw and Ayodele, joined at a planning session in the photo above by Intercessor Team Member Adrienne Billups from Together We Stand Baptist Church, are at the heart of the FIRE Torch movement in Houston.

Through the FIRE Torch Tour, each week leaders and congregations are challenged to a lifestyle of desperation with abandonment - together. Receiving the torch on one Saturday, the following Saturday they carry the FIRE Torch to a new leader and his congregation in the city. On September 27, Greater Mission Fellowship, organized by Rev. Weldon Simon in 2006, became the first stop on the Houston FIRE Torch Tour.

He and his team of intercessors then travelled the following Saturday on October 4 at 7:00 a.m. to meet with North Shore Community Fellowship of Faith, pastored by Rev. Robert Dixon. In a service of praise, worship, and prayer, the "torch was passed." Since the first congregation received the torch, a symbolic torch of commitment to prayer has been passed to 16 additional churches and one group of students from the Christian clubs of Alief ISD.



While almost a dozen of the participating congregations are affiliated with UBA, the FIRE Torch initiative is inter-denominational and city-wide. Reverend Noel Manito, pastor of Praise Papuri Christian Church, was deeply impacted when the Tour visited his church. Originally from the Philippines, he shared his sense of isolation from the larger body of Christ. He now says, "I've found my family." A busy pastor with regional responsibilities, he's committed to be part of the Tour each week.

In January, the FIRE Torch Tour visited Pastor Thomas Frank and the E.J. Simon Baptist Church in the 5th Ward, one of the toughest neighborhoods in Houston. As the meeting ended, leaders encouraged the congregation, prayed and passed the Torch. Pastor Frank says it was the greatest day in the history of the church.



As members of the Transform World Houston and the Houston Prays leadership teams, Bradshaw and Ayodele have been part of leadership initiatives in several nations. In July 2007 they were in Washington, D.C. as ethnic leaders committed to be catalysts for spiritual awakening in our nation. Now Bradshaw and Ayodele have a goal of calling 200 ethnic leaders and their congregations to be part of the Fire Torch Tour in Houston.

. . . . The Torch has been lit. A Fire is burning. Is God calling you to be a part of it?

FIRE Torch Churches at this writing:

Will your church receive the Fire Torch next?

- Jan 24 -Church of the Nations, Rev. Yemi Ayodele
- Jan 10 -E.J. Simon Baptist Church, Rev. Thomas Frank, organized January 1997
- Jan 3 -First Outreach Baptist Church, Rev. John Richardson, organized January 1974
- Dec 27 -New Bethel Baptist Church, Rev. Ira Coleman, organized January 1990
- Dec 20 -Body of Christ Fellowship, Rev. Sydney Pennie, organized September 2001
- Dec 13 -Greater New Hope Baptist, Rev. John Wilburn, organized December 1983
- Dec 6 -The Rock Church Fellowship International, Rev. Darryl Houston, organized Dec 2007
- Dec 6 -Iglesia Bautista Vida Nueva, Rev. Angel López, organized May 2002
- Nov 29 -Antioch Community Baptist Church, Rev. Sammie Morris, organized July 2001
- Nov 22 -Christian Clubs of Alief ISD including students from Elsie, Kerr, Taylor, and Hastings High Schools.
- Nov 15 -Grace Community Church, Rev. Steve Riggle
- Nov 15 -Bethany Baptist Church
- Nov 8 -Mt. Herman Baptist Church, Rev. Washington
- Nov 1 -Praise Papuri Christian Church, Rev. Noel Manito, Regional Director for Four-Square Church
- Oct 25 -Together We Stand Christian Church, Rev. Allen Rice, organized September 1996
- Oct 4 -North Shore Community, Rev. Robert Dixon, organized November 2006
- Sep 27 -Greater Mission Fellowship, Rev. Weldon Simon, organized January 2006

*For more information on the FIRE Torch Tour contact:
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Or go to the Union Baptist Association website at: www.ubahouston.org Click on the calendar. The information for the Fire Tour location for each Saturday will be posted here.