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June 6, 2003

Posted: 6/06/03

Four to be nominated for Hispanic Convention presidency

By Marv Knox

Editor

Four pastors are expected to be nominated for president of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas when it convenes in San Antonio June 22-24.

Baldemar Borrego, Alcides Guajardo and Angel Vela recently announced their candidacies. They join David Tamez, whose candidacy was announced earlier.

The new president will succeed Antonio Estrada of Houston, who will conclude three years as HBC president at the end of the San Antonio meeting.

Borrego, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza in Wichita Falls, was the HBC's first vice president from 1999 to 2001.

He currently is president of the HBC's Pastors' Conference. He has been a regional consultant for Texas Baptists' River Ministry.

Borrego is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors, as well as founder and president of Family Integration Ministry.

He has broadcast on the radio for five years and also was a pioneer of

Spanish television ministry in Wichita Falls.

He is a graduate of Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio. He and his wife, Aleida, are the parents of four children.

Borrego said the primary reason he is willing to serve as convention president is “to continue the work that has been done by the steering committee and the implementation team.” In 2001, the convention approved a 13-part strategic plan that is designed to develop leaders, make resources available to churches and help each church customize ministry to its community.

“I believe it is the right track for Hispanics in Texas,” Borrego said. “The plan is going to work fine; we're going to invite every church in the state to become participants. Some have only been a spectator, but with involvement, we can turn Texas upside down for Christ.”

He affirmed the contributions of leaders who have guided the convention through the years. “We are where we are because of their dedication and their constancy in the Baptist work,” he noted. “I have seen their tears, but also I have seen their joy when they see what has been accomplished, knowing that their work for the Lord has not been in vain.”

Borrego said he would use his presidential influence to “promote a dignified pastoral image, support a truthful unity among the Baptist churches in Texas and start implementing this program, that's going to work for every church in Texas.”

- ◆ Guajardo, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Beeville, has served in a variety of denominational and church ministry positions and was a Southern Baptist home missionary 31 years.

Prior to becoming pastor of the Beeville church in 1996, he worked on the staff of Union Baptist Association in the Houston area as Hispanic missions

leader, missions development director and ministerial training director.

Guajardo also has served on the staffs of the Greater Orlando Baptist Association in Florida; LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn.; El Paso Baptist Association; Corpus Christi Baptist Association; and Hispanic Baptist Theological School. He has been pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Pasadena and was pastor of several mission congregations while he was a student in college and seminary.

He earned degrees from the University of Corpus Christi, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has written for numerous denominational periodicals and translated other materials. He and his wife, Frances, have written for Nuestra Tarea, a missions magazine in Spanish published by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

The Guajardos have three daughters and 11 grandchildren.

One of Guajardo's motivations for serving as HBC president is gratitude. "If it had not been for the denomination, I would not have a college degree and a seminary education," he explained. "I have had an opportunity to serve at many levels in four associations, and I owe so very much to my denomination, which has given me all kinds of opportunities. Now, to the extent that I can, I would like to be able to give back."

Guajardo also would appreciate a chance to serve "on the other side of the fence" after a career as a denominational worker, he added. "In the past, I had opportunity to consult and advise denominational leaders and help them do their work. Now, if I have the opportunity, I am able to become personally involved in leading, working with and advising people who are doing the work."

He additionally would like to be able to “express my views (about Hispanic ministry in Texas) to people for whom those views would helpful,” he said.

As president, he would rely on his background in education to prepare pastors for effectiveness and train leadership for Hispanic churches, he said.

Guajardo also wants to see Hispanic churches “provide more resources necessary for the Baptist General Convention of Texas than we ever have before,” he said. “I think we can do a lot more to help support the BGCT in every way possible, but primarily financially.”

- ◆ Vela, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Westway in El Paso, is the HBC's current first vice president.

He is a native of Durango, Mexico, and immigrated to the United States with his wife, Delia, and their seven children in 1972. They are naturalized U.S. citizens.

He has been a pastor since 1977 and has been a full-time pastor for the past 12 years. Previously, he served bivocationally, driving buses while also leading churches in El Paso and Pecos.

That experience gave Vela a special sensitivity for the lives and ministry of bivocational ministers, he said.

In addition to his service as an HBC officer, Vela has been moderator of El Paso Baptist Association, where he's also been president of the Hispanic fellowship and served on committees.

Mrs. Vela has been president of the HBC pastors' wives' organization and has been chairperson of the Women Reaching Texas evangelism emphasis.

Vela earned a business administration degree in Mexico and also graduated from Southwestern Seminary.

Vela said he would want to use his experience to enhance the relationship between the Hispanic convention and the BGCT, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Convencion Nacional de Mexico and Union Bautista Latino Americana, as well as with the associations of churches statewide.

His experience as HBC first vice president would give him “the opportunity to continue the great job the president and the officers have done this far,” he said.

He also wants to place an emphasis on serving churches by helping their pastors. “My concern is the well-being of pastors and their families, because when the pastor is well taken care of, that's a sign of a healthy church, that in turn will produce healthy associations and consequently a healthy convention,” he said. “And when that happens, unity will be achieved as well.

“The situation of most of our pastors in Texas is very precarious, and we as convencion must do something to alleviate this problem, and we need to start at home first.”

- ◆ Tamez, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Tyler, has traveled widely in Spanish-speaking countries, training pastors.

He has been pastor of churches in Fort Worth and Tyler. He also has been professor of pastoral ministries at Seminario Teologico Bautista Mexicana, as well as director of the Christian education department and teacher at the Instituto Evangelistico de Mexico, both in Mexico. He has led pastor-training conferences in Argentina, Cuba, Honduras, Israel, Mexico, Nicaragua and Spain.

He has been a missions promoter for Tarrant Baptist Association in Fort Worth and president of the Hispanic Baptist Fellowship in Fort Worth and the East Texas Hispanic Baptist Fellowship.

He is a graduate of the Instituto Politecnico Nacional in Mexico and Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. He is a doctoral candidate at the University of Liverpool in England and Trinity Theological Seminary in Indiana.

He and his wife, Ruth, have three children.

Tamez said he is not seeking the presidency but will feel blessed to serve if elected.

“I am not looking for this, but I am looking to do the will of God, and if this is his will, I am available to serve in this position,” he said. “I believe in a sovereign God, and my life and ministry are in his hands.”

As president, Tamez would focus on his longtime calling to train and equip pastors for ministry, he said.

“I have a passion for pastors, and since the beginning of my ministry, the Lord has used me to minister with pastors,” he said. “Our convention has a vision to partner with the Mexican Baptist Convention and train pastors. ... One of the strongest needs is to develop the leadership, to train the pastors in order to lead the people.”

One of his goals would be to help unify Hispanic Baptists, Tamez said.

“Our churches are struggling with problems, and one of the main problems I can see is unity,” he explained. “We need to learn to work together for the sake of the gospel. If we want to impact our communities, state and the uttermost parts of the world, we need to learn to work together to accomplish goals.”

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