

# Rodriguez to be nominee for BGCT 2nd vice president

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**By Marv Knox**

*Editor*

DALLAS—Robert Rodriguez, a veteran bivocational pastor from the Rio Grande Valley, will be nominated for second vice president of the [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) this fall.

Rodriguez, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista and chaplain with Heart of the Valley Hospice in Harlingen the past 15 years, will be nominated by [Ellis Orozco](#), pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen.

Robert Rodriguez
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The BGCT will hold its [annual meeting](#) in Dallas Nov. 13-14. Rodriguez is the third announced candidate for convention office. Steve Vernon, the BGCT's current first vice president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Levelland, [will be nominated](#) for president. Joy Fenner, executive director emeritus of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas, [will be nominated](#) for first vice president.

“Robert Rodriguez is a good, solid pastor—a strong leader in the Valley. He’s been there for a long time,” Orozco said.

“I want people to know we have good, strong leaders to offer from the Valley—strong supporters of the BGCT. Robert is an example of that. He’s fluent in both cultures and languages. He represents the small-church pastors and Hispanic pastors, and he also has a great relationship with the Anglo pastors. He lives well in both worlds.

“He’s been second vice president of the [Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas](#) and has proven his leadership. It would be a good thing to have someone representing South Texas in (BGCT) leadership.”

Rodriguez is willing to take on the office because he has been a beneficiary of the convention and because he has something to offer, he said.

“One of my pride and joys is I’m a product of [Vacation Bible School](#),” he explained. “I was saved at the age of 10 years old in VBS.”

Rodriguez comes from a family of 12 children who were reached by a small church in San Benito.

“We all came to know the Lord through VBS,” he recalled. “Then our parents became curious and came to the church and came to the Lord, too.” His father, Emiliano Rodriguez, eventually became an evangelist and still preaches the gospel.

Rodriguez is “an example of the great work Texas Baptists have done,” Orozco added.

“I would like to be able to bring trust and healing to the convention,” Rodriguez said. “I’m known in the Valley as one who brings people together.

“I also can bring clarity and straight talk—to be able to communicate well

with our convention about the needs we are experiencing as a convention.”

Of those needs, Rodriguez said: “My heart goes out to pastors, some who feel they are by themselves. I want to keep them informed.

And I would like to see, especially in the Hispanic community and among ethnic groups, more resources for leadership skills—that they know someone is available to them.”

Rodriguez himself has benefited from the availability of leadership resources. He’s a graduate of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio and Howard Payne University, through its extension center in Harlingen.

The challenges ahead of Texas Baptists are significant, but solvable, Rodriguez stressed. “I know Texas is a big state, but we want to reach every church, every pastor. I think we’re doing it with the new restructuring,” which placed congregational strategists, church-starting consultants and affinity-group specialists across the state, he said. “We’re doing it, but we need to put a little bit more manpower out there. ...

“Something wonderful is going on in our state—the church starts and many ministries. I can contribute to what is now happening in the state.”

At Heart of the Valley Hospice, Rodriguez works with terminally ill patients.

Before joining the hospice and becoming pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista, he was pastor of Iglesia Bautista Calvario in Harlingen for six years.

In addition to serving as a vice president of the Hispanic convention, he has been moderator of Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association, and he currently is a trustee of the Valley Baptist Missions/ Education Center and a member of the BGCT president’s council, which promotes the Cooperative Program

unified budget.

Primera's resident membership is about 300, he said. The church's total receipts were \$74,000, and it contributed \$5,240 to missions, according to the latest BGCT Annual.

Rodriguez and his wife, Sylvia, are the parents of three children—Kayla, 20; Isaiah, 12; and Jeremy, 9.

"I'm happy to be part of the BGCT," he said. "We want to move forward. I think God has wonderful things for us."

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