

Chayasirisobhon nominee for SBC first vice president

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LA PALMA, Calif. (BP)—California Southern Baptist Convention President Victor Chayasirisobhon will be nominated for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the 2022 annual meeting in Anaheim in June.

Abel Galvan, senior pastor of Faith Fellowship church in La Palma, told Baptist Press of his plans to nominate Chayasirisobhon.

“Pastor Victor loves the Lord. He loves our convention and has served it proudly,” Galvan said. “His desire is to see our convention continue to grow stronger as we move out of COVID and into the future, as we come together as a family to try and reach our world for Jesus Christ.

“His hope is that we will serve God as one convention, one kingdom, where we’re not separated by race or political agendas, but where we come together for the sake of the next generation who will continue to build on the legacy we leave behind.”

Chayasirisobhon has served as pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Anaheim since 2005. He concurrently serves as president of the California Baptist Convention and as associational mission strategist for the Orange County Southern Baptist Association.

“I am incredibly excited and honored to be nominated as first vice president and grateful that there were men and women that I really look up to who wanted to nominate me,” he told Baptist Press. “I was initially surprised that they wanted to, but after great prayer and meditation I am glad to accept the nomination and glad that Pastor Abel Galvan will be the

one nominating me.”

Limited involvement with network

As recently as the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting, Chayasirisobhon was listed on the Conservative Baptist Network website in a leadership role with the organization’s California chapter, but his involvement was limited to attending one Zoom meeting and agreeing to support friend and fellow Southern Baptist Greg Davidson, he told Baptist Press on Feb. 15.

After the 2021 SBC annual meeting, Chayasirisobhon asked the Conservative Baptist Network to remove his name from their website, he said, and the group did so.

“I’m not involved with them anymore,” he said. “My friend invited me to a Zoom meeting. I attended a Zoom meeting because my friend told me this was about sola scriptura, making sure the ... supremacy of the Bible ... was something very important to our denomination. That’s why I attended the (Zoom) meeting. That seemed to be what they were talking about.”

When he attended the 2021 annual meeting, he said, he discerned Southern Baptists were still sola scriptura, so there was no reason to be involved in the Conservative Baptist Network. Chayasirisobhon never agreed to serve in any position with the network, he said, and doesn’t know why he was ever listed on its website.

“In order to be a bridge builder, you’ve got to know both sides of the bridge and where people are coming from,” he said. “I never attended more than one meeting. I don’t want to say that like, slashing, destroying them either. That’s not the point here. The point is to not take a side.”

Desire to ‘bridge the gap’

Chayasirisobhon said he is allowing himself to be nominated for the SBC first vice presidency because God put it on his heart, because he wants to bridge the gap among various ethnic groups comprising Southern Baptists, and because he desires to demonstrate that these various ethnicities can work cooperatively in ministry. He describes himself as Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese and French, born in Canada and raised in the United States.

“Many times in the past, people of my ethnicity and culture have thought about running for these positions, and they have shied away because of language or cultural barriers,” he said. “In their desire to serve, they have created important parallel organizations where they serve in their heart language, and I totally respect and appreciate the example they have set in perseverance, mission and giving.

“I want to help bridge the gap for the sake of unity in our SBC family between these organizations and to inspire a new generation to step up, be represented and heard on the national stage. We are better together.”

First Southern Anaheim gave \$21,900 to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program in 2021, Chayasirisobhon said. The Annual Church Profile records the church’s 2021 undesignated receipts as \$112,871, and records total Great Commission Giving as \$36,000, a figure Chayasirisobhon said includes the Cooperative Program contribution.

In announcing his intention to make the nomination, Galvan said Chayasirisobhon has led First Southern Anaheim to plant, adopt or sponsor a church each of the 17 years of his leadership. First Southern Anaheim oversees four churches, including Spanish, Thai and Kenyan congregations.

Chayasirisobhon, age 44, holds 10 academic degrees, including three doctorates and five master’s degrees. He also serves as chief administrator

of Anaheim Discovery Christian Schools.