

Juan García nominated for CBF moderator-elect

June 23, 2023

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship nominating committee selected Pastor Juan L. García of Primera Iglesia Bautista de Newport News, Va., to serve as moderator-elect in 2023-24.

The multicultural congregation includes people from Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

A native of Puerto Rico, García has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan and a Master of Divinity degree from the John Leland Center for Theological Studies in Arlington, Va.

In 2006, García planted Primera Iglesia Bautista de Newport News with 15 people, and the congregation now has more than 100 active members. Prior to his tenure as pastor, García worked for the U.S. Department of Treasury in Washington, D.C. as a financial program specialist.

García has a history of extensive community involvement in Newport News, including serving as a member of the Hispanic Advisory Committee to the City Manager and on the board of directors of Southeastern Virginia Health System. He has partnered with the city of Newport News and local organizations to host free health and resources fairs for the Hispanic community.

He is a member of the CBF governing board and has also served on the CBF Toward Bold Faithfulness collaborative response team, the CBF theological education commission, the executive coordinator search committee, and the steering committee of Familia, CBF's Latino network.

García also helped facilitate numerous CBF Dawnings congregational visioning retreats for pastors and lay leaders in Texas, California, North Carolina and the Dominican Republic.

García and his wife Monica have two children, Natalia and Daniel.

CBF Executive Coordinator Paul Baxley expressed his support to the nominating committee for selecting García.

“Juan has been deeply involved in CBF life and over the last several years has offered critical leadership in some of our most transformative work,” Baxley said. “I have come to highly respect Juan. He is a deeply committed Baptist Christian and a gifted pastor. He is willing to ask important and hard questions when doing so is necessary to make the best decisions.

“Juan is incredibly committed to the renewal of congregations, the discovery of more faithful ways of preparing ministers, the growth of our Fellowship and a truly holistic global mission. I look forward to leading with him.”

García expressed his excitement to serve Cooperative Baptists as moderator-elect.

“It is a great honor and responsibility to be considered for the position of Moderator-Elect, especially as the first Latino to hold such a position in our CBF family,” García said.

“Since the moment I participated in my first general assembly, I felt myself at home being welcomed and included. I am very grateful for the openness with which I have been received, as well as for the many opportunities given to me to serve, to have my voice heard and to be part of the present and the future of our Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

“I am excited for what God is doing and will continue to do in the years to

come. I look forward to the work ahead as we continue to position CBF for what God has in store for us.”

The CBF Nominating Committee will present García for approval from the general assembly, June 29-30, along with additional nominees to serve on the Fellowship’s governing board, missions council and ministries council.

Additionally, the CBF governing board will present recommendations to serve on the nominating committee, council on endorsement and board of the CBF Foundation.

Texans nominated to serve are:

- Brad Jernberg, minister for administration at South Main Baptist Church in Houston, and Israel Loachamin, associate pastor of Spanish ministry at First Baptist Church in Waco, on the governing board.
- Eric Howell, senior pastor of DaySpring Baptist Church in Waco, on the missions council.
- Christopher Adams, resident chaplain at Covenant Baptist Church in Garden Ridge, on the ministries council.
- Deborah Reeves, pastor to children and their families at First Baptist Church of Austin, on the CBF council on endorsement.
- Zach Graves, auditor and a member of South Main Baptist Church in Houston, on the CBF Foundation.