

Ronny Marriott nominee for BGCT first vice president

April 20, 2023

Ronny Marriott, incumbent second vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and pastor of First Baptist Church in Burleson, will be nominated for Texas Baptists' first vice president.

Albert Reyes, president and CEO of Buckner International and a former BGCT president, will nominate Marriott at Texas Baptists' Family Gathering, July 16-18 in McAllen.

Reyes agreed to nominate Marriott after both of them learned the incumbent BGCT first vice president, Nebiye Kelile, will not seek a second term.

Kelile, pastor of both Pathway Church and Orchard Hills Baptist Church in Garland, previously served a one-year term as second vice president of the BGCT. The *Baptist Standard* contacted Kelile and confirmed he will not seek continued elected office at this time.

'Creative and innovative'

Reyes praised Marriott as "a good leader" who has shown himself to be "solid and consistent."

"He is one of us—an experienced Texas Baptist pastor" with first-hand knowledge about starting churches and revitalizing congregations, Reyes said.

Marriott's missions experience includes trips to seven countries and involvement in five church-planting projects, he added.

Quoting Rice University sociologist Stephen Klineberg, Reyes said Texas is “undergoing an epic demographic transformation.”

“That has implications for Texas Baptist ministries and for state and global missions,” Reyes said.

“We need leaders like Ronny Marriott who are in the trenches—creative and innovative pastors who are reaching the lost in their communities. We need pastors who are reaching people for Christ in contextually relevant ways.”

Emphases of BGCT and Burleson church align

Marriott said he has enjoyed his experience as second vice president since his election to that post five months ago, and he wants to be of continued service to Texas Baptists.

“The things Texas Baptists are focused on are some of the same things we are emphasizing at First Baptist Church in Burleson,” he said.

Under Marriott’s leadership, the church has launched a residency program for young ministers. The two-year program offers practical experience in a congregational context, and it also provides residents leadership training and a monthly stipend.

“We have a heart for calling out the called,” Marriott said.

In response to a recommendation from Texas Baptists’ Gen Z/Millennial Task Force, the BGCT approved a motion at the 2022 annual meeting in Waco to explore the development of a residency program in which “young ministers are mentored and trained by established ministers.”

Marriott hopes he can offer insights from his church's experience as Texas Baptists develop a residency program.

First Baptist Church in Burleson also has experience in helping to revitalize struggling congregations—another emphasis of the BGCT and its Center for Church Health.

"We have seen how these two programs can work together," Marriott said, noting residents at First Baptist have gained practical experience by helping other congregations in its region.

"Young people who feel called to ministry need experience. We need thriving churches, and we've seen how they can come fully alive with just a little bit of help," he said. "It's a win-win for everybody."

Marriott has led First Baptist Church in Burleson since 2016. Previously, he was pastor of First Baptist Church in Temple, First Baptist Church in Corpus Christi and Sunset Baptist Church in Dripping Springs.

He also served at Shady Oaks Baptist Church in Hurst—first as youth minister and later as senior pastor. His first experience in vocational ministry was serving on staff at Northlake Baptist Church in Dallas as youth pastor.

Marriott earned his undergraduate degree from Howard Payne University, and he holds a Master of Divinity degree and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has served on Texas Baptists' Theological Education Council, the BGCT Executive Board and the Christian Life Commission, as well as on the board of trustees at Howard Payne University.

He and his wife Robin have three children—Molly, Morgan and Ryan.