

Ethiopian Baptist pastor nominee for BGCT second vice president

August 28, 2014

A Filipino-American pastor from the Houston area will nominate an Ethiopian-American pastor from the Dallas area as second vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.



Bedilu Yirga Ernest Dagohoy, executive pastor of First Philippine Baptist Church in Missouri City and vice chair of the BGCT Executive Board, announced plans to nominate Bedilu Yirga, pastor of Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church in Garland, for the post.

“I believe he will represent our ethnic churches well,” Dagohoy said. “He is a proven leader among ethnic churches, and he has served our convention well.”

BGCT Executive Board member

Yirga serves on the BGCT Executive Board and as chair of the BGCT’s affinity groups and cultural connections committees. He also is a board member and treasurer of the Ethiopian Evangelical Christian Association of America and secretary of the All-Ethiopian Pastor’s Associations in North

America.

“He is a person of integrity who will follow up on what he promises to do and serve Texas Baptists well as our second vice president,” Dagohoy said.

If elected, Yirga said, he hopes to promote greater involvement of ethnic churches within the larger Texas Baptist family.

Wants greater community involvement

“I have a burden for unity and a desire to see greater community engagement by our ethnic churches,” he said.

Since Yirga became senior pastor at Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church in 1998, the church has grown from about 140 members to more than 800 adults and 300 children.

Previously, he served as associate pastor of Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church in Dallas.

Yirga has traveled internationally and to multiple states to train Christian leaders.

“I am interested in teaching and training pastors, teachers and leaders in local churches. I am also involved in church planting and training indigenous church planters,” he said.

Under his leadership, the Garland church worked with Howard Payne University and Wayland Baptist University to establish a ministry school where students can earn up to 18 credit hours toward an undergraduate certificate program. So far, 42 students have completed the program, and 15 are enrolled.

Native of Ethiopia

Yirga was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and he served in Ethiopia as an auditor and senior accountant for World Vision International.

He earned his undergraduate degree from Southwestern Assembly of God University in Waxahachie, his master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and his doctor of education degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

He and his wife, Almaz, have one daughter, Essey, and two sons, Levi and Addis.