



Additional Candidate Information

Western Jurisdictional Conference – July 13-16, 2016

Third Recommendation for: Lyda Pierce

Jorge Rodriguez Vasquez • Pastor • Oregon-Idaho Conference

I came to know the Rev. Lyda Pierce 20 years ago when she was a missionary in Honduras. We worked in the same organization, and Lyda earned the respect of the people with whom she worked. She impressed us with her solidarity with the most poor and her firm defense of the rights of women. Lyda did excellent work in training leaders in both the churches and the communities. I believe she would be an excellent bishop if elected. She loves people and she works for their empowerment.

Conosco a la Rev. Lyda Pierce hace casi 20 años cuando era misionera en Honduras. Trabajamos en la misma Organización y Lyda se gano el respeto de la gente con la quien trabajo; nos impresiono su solidaridad con los mas pobres y su firmeza en la defensa de los derechos de la mujeres. Lyda hizo un excelente trabajo en el área de formación de líderes eclesiales y lideres de las comunidades. Creo que será una excelente Obispo si es elegida para tal posición, ama a las personas y trabaja para que ellas sean empoderadas.



Bener Baysa Agtarap

Eligible Quadrennium according to 2012 Discipline ¶ 408.1:

Four:	2016-2020
	2020-2024
	2024-2028
	2028-2032

Probationary Membership:	5/22/1988
Full Membership:	5/27/1990
Ethnic Background:	Asian
Annual Conference:	California-Nevada Conference

Education:

- Undergraduate: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Philippine School of Business Administration, 1982
- Seminary: Master in Divinity, Union Theological Seminary - Philippines, 1987
- Master in Business Administration, Philippine School of Business Administration, 1995
- Doctor of Philosophy, Development Administration, Philippine Christian University, 2002

Professional Service Record:

- Church Planter, Kaunlaran Village, Caloocan City, Metro Manila, Philippines, June 1984 - May 1989
- Administrative Pastor, Church of the Savior UMC, Paranaque City, Metro Manila, Philippines, June 1989 - May 1993
- Administrative Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Tondo, Manila City, Philippines, June 1993 - May 1995
- District Superintendent, Southwest Metro Manila District - Philippines Annual Conference, June 1995 - May 2001
- Associate Pastor, Knox Memorial UMC, Sta. Cruz, Manila City, Philippines, June 2001 - May 2002
- Administrative Pastor, Cicero & Seymour UMC, Seymour, WI, June 2002 - December 2006
- Executive Director on Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN, January 2007 - December 2009
- New Church Strategist, Path 1/General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN, January 2010 - June 2012
- Conference Superintendent for Congregational Vitality, California-Nevada Annual Conference, West Sacramento, CA, 2012 - present

Other Relevant Experience:

- Incorporator, Food for the Hungry International - Philippines, Manila, Philippines, 1985 - 2002
- Member, Board of Director, Christian Mission Service Philippines Incorporated, Pasig City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1995 - 1997
- Commissioner, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1995 - 1997
- Member, Board of Director, Lingap Pangkabataan Incorporated, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1996 - 1998
- Founder & Incorporator, Southwest Metro Manila District Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Manila City, Philippines, 1996 - 2001
- Circuit Leader, Wisconsin Annual Conference, USA, 2003 - 2005
- Chairperson, Wisconsin Conference Board of Congregational Development, 2003 - 2006
- Project Manager, Path 1 Lay Missionary Planting Network, 2010 - 2012

General & Jurisdictional Leadership Roles:

- Alternate Clergy Delegate, Philippines Annual Conference, General Conference, Denver, CO, 1996
- Principal Clergy Delegate, Philippines Annual Conference, Cleveland, OH, 2000
- Convener, WJ Congregational Developers Group, 2015 - present

Community and Ecumenical Involvement:

- Incorporator, Food for the Hungry International - Philippines, Manila, Philippines, 1985 - 2002; Member, Board of Director, Christian Mission Service Philippines Incorporated, Pasig City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1995 - 1997; Commissioner, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1995 - 1997; Member, Board of Director, Lingap Pangkabataan Incorporated, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1996 - 1998; Founder & Incorporator, Southwest Metro Manila District Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Manila City, Philippines, 1996 - 2001

Organizational Endorsements:

- National Federation of Asian American United Methodists (NFAAUM)
- National Association of Filipino-American United Methodists (NAFAUM)

Why have you responded to this call?

- I responded to this call to episcopacy for the same reason that I responded to be an ordained Elder of the UMC: to be a witness to God's love. I will do what I trust is the best for the United Methodist Church. I will fight to stop all church laws that are incompatible with God's love, build a more perfect union within the church, reposition our unique genius as faith community and make it relevant in today's society, support local churches and extension ministries, empower the gifts and graces of lay people and the youth to lead in ministry, multiply new faith communities, and vitalize existing churches. We will be a church that is truly a welcoming and inclusive church, standing with people in the margins, and advocating for peace and justice in our communities around the world.

Tell about a time when your leadership made a difference.

- My leadership comes with a deep sense of gratitude to the UMC. I consider three incidents when my leadership made a difference. First, the launching of 16 new faith communities over a short span of three years in Cal-Nevada, which includes a house church that my family started—the first UMC in West Sacramento. Second, the introduction of the Lay Missionary Planting Network that seeks to identify, equip, and deploy lay people to lead in planting new churches in the United States. Third, leading 24 local churches in Manila to create more new churches in Cavite, Philippines. After six years, a new district was created in Cavite, which later became the Cavite Philippines Annual Conference. I pray constantly that many more people would experience the joy of being embraced by God's love.

What are your strongest spiritual gifts for ministry and how will they apply to the episcopacy?

- Administration, apostleship, and hospitality are my strongest spiritual gifts. With these gifts, my administration will be known for openness in welcoming strategic transitions, discovering new ways to develop generative ministry, and aligning church resources to support innovative and sustainable ministry. Creating new and multiplying vital congregations will make new disciples, and these new faith communities will embody the radical mission and reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ. I will lead in building bridges with different cultures and ethnicities while at the same time nurturing authentic ministry partnerships to achieve long-term growth. I thank God for these gifts and for giving me the opportunity to use these gifts to serve the Church and all God's children.

General Statement:

- If you believe that this is NOT the time to prolong the harm against our LGBTQIA sisters and brothers, to promote labels against each other such as conservative or liberal, to deny our youth and gifted lay people to become leaders in the church, to deprive our clergy of great theological education, to stay idle about the church's decline in the midst of increasing dissatisfaction towards religious institutions, to delay the creation of new places for ALL people, to neglect the plight of the often overlooked local churches that remain faithful in Christian service, or to give up our hope for the brighter future of the UMC, then I invite you to join me to declare that THIS IS THE TIME to make a difference. I'm ready to lead the way.

Recommendations for: Bener Baysa Agtarap

Jacob Dharmaraj • President, National Federation of Asian American United Methodists • New York Annual Conference

I strongly support the Rev. Dr. Bener Agtarap as a candidate for the office of episcopacy. Dr. Agtarap has the leadership skills to articulate values that will guide important decisions. He brings rich experiences as a pastor, scholar, and a bridge builder. He possesses unique experience with the connective ministries of the denomination, all the way from central and jurisdictional conferences to local church and general agency. His matchless experience in church growth and ecumenism will richly enhance the mission and growth of the denomination. Dr. Agtarap understands the complex challenges the church faces today and serves as a game changer in local and conference level outreach activities. He has a clear sensitivity and support of multicultural and multiracial churches in the denomination. His own life and ministry has been a model of inclusiveness and diversity. As an episcopal leader, he will be a blessing to The United Methodist Church and its constituents.

Rev Nestor S. Gerente • President, National Association of Filipino American United Methodists • California-Pacific Conference

This endorsement is not only on behalf of NAFAUM but it is also personal. I have known The Rev Bener Agtarap for over 25 years way back when we were both in the Philippines. He carries with him not only the desire of Filipino American United Methodists to offer the unique gifts of our people to the Church but he also brings a breadth of experience and profound commitment in growing and vitalizing the Church. His first appointment was to start a new church in a depressed community in Manila where he had the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel holistically - spiritual, emotional and physical. It is in his DNA to facilitate growth and vitality through relationships with a deep awareness of justice and appreciation for diversity. His fluency in Tagalog, the 3rd widely spoken language in the US, is an asset in reaching out to millions of Fil Ams. His rich ministry in the Philippines and USA has made him culturally competent necessary to be an effective bishop in the UM global connection.

Burt P. Yin • Dr./Annual Conference Co-Lay Leader • California-Nevada Conference

I heartily endorse the nomination of Rev. Dr. Bener B. Agtarap for the episcopal office of bishop. Bener is a committed God loving servant, a minister of Jesus Christ with a pastor's heart, a scholar's mind, and a leader's vision who shares his personal faith by living into and through our Annual Conference Mission statement, "Passion for Jesus Christ, Compassion for All". As Conference Superintendent responsible for Congregational Vitality, Bener extends his leading and teaching ministries in many events and activities across our racial ethnically and geographically diverse Annual Conference. He is a strong advocate for justice and mercy by providing his powerful witness in the work of the church for full inclusion of all people. He possesses numerous gifts and graces highly effective for ministry throughout the United Methodist Church. He articulates God's grace, peace and love and has a generous heart for all God's people. Our UMC will be greatly blessed with him as a bishop leader.

Cedrick Donyat Bridgeforth



Eligible Quadrennium according to 2012 Discipline (§408.1):

Five 2016-2020
2020-2024
2024-2028
2028-2032
2032-2036

Probationary membership: 6/2002
Full Membership: 6/2006
Ethnic Background: African-American
Annual Conference: California-Pacific

Education:

Undergraduate: Samford University, Religion, BA, 1997
Seminary: Claremont School of Theology, MDiv, 2000
Pepperdine University, Organizational Leadership, EdD, 2005

Professional Service Record:

Lead Pastor, Santa Ana UMC (2015-Present)
North District Superintendent, California-Pacific Conference (2012-2015)
Santa Ana District Superintendent, California-Pacific Conference (2011-2012)
Los Angeles, District Superintendent, California-Pacific Conference (2008-2011)
Senior Pastor, Crenshaw UMC (2003-2008)
Director of Alumni and Church Relations, Claremont School of Theology (2001-2003)
Senior Pastor, Bowen Memorial UMC (2000-2003)
Student Local Pastor, Bowen Memorial UMC (1999-2000)

Other Relevant Experience:

Board Member, Reconciling Ministries Network (2016-Present)
Board Member, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (2016-Present)
Member, Orders Executive Committee, California-Pacific (2015-Present)
Board Chair, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (2013-2016)
Member, Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group of the UMC (2012-2016)
Board Member, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (2011-2013)
Member, Conference Leadership Team, California-Pacific (2006-2008)
Member, Commission on Equitable Compensation, California-Pacific (2004-2008)
Member, Board of Congregational Development, California-Pacific (2003-2008)

Chair, Conference Committee to Strengthen the Black Church (2001-2004)
Course Instructor, Black Church Studies, University of La Verne (2001-2009)
Member, (Percept) Demographics Task Force, California-Pacific (2000-2003)

General and Jurisdictional Roles:

General Conference Delegate, 2012, 2016
Jurisdictional Conference Delegate, 2008, 2012, 2016
Member, General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (2012-Present)
Chair, Leadership Development, Western Jurisdiction (2012-2016)
Member, Western Jurisdiction Leadership Team (2012-2016)
Member, Nominations Committee, Western Jurisdiction (2012-2016)

Community and Ecumenical Involvement:

Presently: Member-Orange County Inter-Faith Group; Member-Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice-OC; Member-Alpha Phi Alpha Mentor Program and Advocacy Committee. Previously: Member-Los Angeles Religious Leaders; Supporter-Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice-LA; Opportunities Unlimited Youth Mentor Program; Volunteer-Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Volunteer- A Voteless People is a Hopeless People

Organizational Endorsements:

Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), Western Jurisdiction
Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de los Hispano-Americanos (MARCHA)
Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de los Hispano-Americanos West (MARCHA West)

Gammon Theological Seminary Alumni Association

Why have you responded to this call?

I have responded to this call because I trust the voice of God that often comes through the people of God. The encouragement and affirmation received from laity and clergy of the California-Pacific Conference and other places around the connection has opened my heart to whatever God may wish to do in this season. For a few years folks have asked if I would present myself for the episcopacy and as quickly as the thought crossed my mind, it was allowed to exit. However, in serving as a national caucus chair, I began to see how my voice and perspective was sought and valued. A sense of belonging and wanting to be an agent of transformation in and beyond the church became real to me. The idea of being called to offer myself as an episcopal candidate does not seem convenient, nor does it seem a natural thing. Therefore, I trust wholly in the Spirit of God to speak through the faithful in community and for our connection. I do so knowing the road ahead shall not be easy with the violence, hatred and mistrust that characterizes far too much of our world beckons a balm that my story and God's glory must engage and eradicate.

Tell about a time when your leadership made a difference:

As a DS there were many opportunities to dream and vision new ministry opportunities. However, so few materialized the way they were imagined. In my first year as DS (2008) I met with the pastor and staff of Hollywood UMC and we discussed options for them expanding their ministry to include an additional site. We named two possibilities and

drafted a tentative timeline for when one of those options might manifest. A year later we moved to discontinue one of the congregations as a step toward the plan we outlined. There were several obstacles that prevented that plan from moving forward, but we held to the idea. In 2012, I was assigned as DS in the adjacent district and in 2013, the conference voted to close a church in my current district, but not too far from the Hollywood UMC. We held a few meetings and discussed the possibility of Hollywood expanding to this site instead of those original ones we named. That may not seem like a big step but it was because it involved one district signing over property to a church in another district so ministry could once again flourish. It took those early conversations, knowing the congregation's dream and the pastor's capacity to remain open to trying something that is so simple, yet seldom tried.

What are your strongest gifts for ministry and how will they apply to the episcopacy?

My strongest gifts for ministry are teaching and administration, expressed with grace, compassion, equity and creativity. I am a curious person and I love learning new things with others. Organizing systems and inspiring persons and communities to be and to do more than they imagined they could brings joy and light in hopeless and mediocre settings. My gifts will apply to the episcopacy in that I view all of this as a journey we take together. We explore, expand, retreat, celebrate, study and pray together for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ – not to save the UMC or to teach any particular “camp” a lesson. My interest in being creative and finding equitable ways to include and invite those who may not have felt included or worthy would continue to be hallmarks of my service to the church.

General Statement:

I chose to be United Methodist and continue to wonder what God is doing in and with the UMC, but most importantly, I pray we are listening more closely to the Spirit of God than we are to the whims and desires of our own making. I dream of a church that expresses love and grace to all of humanity, and honors all of creation. I want to be an instrument of peace that ends the senseless violence running rampant in the US and around the world, and a voice for reconciliation within a church that is not currently living up to its sacred name. I am willing to work toward the unity of the church that is not ashamed of the love God insists upon and expresses toward all God's children regardless of where they were born or what labels society, family and the church has assigned. I simply want to be used by God to do the most good possible, for such a time as this.

Recommendation for: Cedrick Bridgeforth

A Recommendation for: REV. CEDRICK BRIDGEFORTH

By (Name, Position & Conference): KEN ELLIS: GC/JC Delegate, WJ Episcopacy,
Cal-Pac Bd of Ordained Min, Cal-PAC AC.

It has been a joy to watch his journey - moving from staff dcst, to serving local parishes, to DS for our North District and now stands at the door of another level of leadership in the UMC. His love of God, love of God's people and love of the church are his foundations. These framed with his spirituality & leadership skills ready him "to make a difference" in the UMC of tomorrow. I recommend that the Western Jurisdiction elect Cedrick a bishop of the UMC.

Ken Ellis



A vision and hope for the 21st century church.

A passion for the revitalization and renewal of the church.

A desire to cross boundaries of race, nationality, ethnicity, and age. A multi-cultural, bi-lingual, bridge-builder.

A vision to develop outstanding leaders for the future of the United Methodist Church.

Passion to form disciples who live out for the Good News of Jesus as global citizens.

A calling to build an all-inclusive church.

"He has an amazing ability to bridge cultures."

Awards & Recognitions

1985- Selected as a Representative of New Zealand Methodist Churches to the Asia Council of Churches

1993 – Named "Person of the Year" by Prime Minister David Lange, of NZ for his reconciling work with ethnic conflicts in Auckland, New Zealand.

1998 - Sanger City Council pass a resolution for his outstanding leadership and service to the City of Sanger

2004 – Honored with the key to the City of Sanger for outstanding Pastoral Service and Community Involvement.

2005 – California State Assembly Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Community Service

2008 - Rotary International Award "Four Avenues of Service Citation Award" for outstanding efforts in each of the four Avenues of Service.

2009 - Honored by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors by proclaiming June 26th, 2009 as Sifa Hingano' Day in Fresno County.

2013 – African American Bay Area Spirit of Service Award for outstanding Pastoral Service.

2015 - Bishop Talbert Award Cal-Nev Conference exemplifying a proactive stance in addressing, and working toward dismantling, racism in the church and society.



MLK March 2014 Hayward, California

Beyond The Boundaries

Rev. Sifa Hingano



2016

Episcopal Candidate

California- Nevada United Methodist Church Conference



"No matter the color of your skin,
there are more things that unite us than
divide us." – Rev. Sifa Hingano

Education

75-77 – Sia'atoutai Theological College,
Tonga: L.TH (License in Theology, Melbourne
College of Divinity, Australia)
78-80 – New Zealand Bible College
81-82 – St. John Theological College –
Auckland, New Zealand: S.TH (Scholar in
Theology)
ACPE from New Zealand – Interchurch
Council on Hospital Chaplaincy
94-95 – American Baptist Seminary of the
West

Ministry Journey

80-82 – Social Worker – Anglican and
Methodist Social Services, New Zealand
82-83 – Pastor in Papua New Guinea
83-89 – Pastor in New Zealand Methodist
Church
90-94 – Hospital Chaplain
96-present – Pastor Cal/Nev Conference
96-99 Biggs and Gridley UMC
98-09 Sanger UMC
09-15 Genesis UMC, Milpitas California
15-Present Laurel UMC, Oakland California

Conference Services

2016 WJ Delegate
2016 Reserve Delegate to General Conference
2012-2014 Chair of Cal/Nev Conference
Committee on Ethnic Ministries
2012 WJ Delegate
2012 Reserve Delegate to General Conference
2010-2014 Western Jurisdiction Ethnic Committee
2008 Episcopal Candidate
2008 Reserve Delegate to General Conference
2008 WJ Delegate
2006 Board of Ordained Ministry
2007-2016 Co-Chair of the Order of Elders
2004 Stewardship Development Ministry

Member of Cal/Nev Pacific Island Ministry Team
Member of Cal/Nev UMC Tongan Mission

Community Engagement

08-Present: Bay Area Pacific Islander LGBTQ
Community Chaplain
98-Present: Sanger Rotary Club
12-13 San Jose Rotary Club
06-08 Community of Caring Task Force
98-09 Sanger Chamber of Commerce
98-09 Sanger High School Football Chaplain
95-98 Biggs High School Chaplain

Ministry Milestones

Biggs UMC- Established thriving ministries which
resulted in church growth and the integration of
other ethnicities into the church.

Sanger UMC- Church Revitalization in Sanger,
attendance grew from 40 to over 200.
Established a Modern Evening Worship Service.
Transformed a mainline Caucasian church to a
multi-cultural church. Founder of Dance For
Christ - Polynesia Dance Group outreach program
which had over 150 plus students weekly.

Genesis UMC- Lead congregation to the
purchasing of new church building. Created a
Multi-Cultural Church. Directed DECODE (Youth
Conference) which has over 500 plus youth
attendees.

Laurel UMC – Lead the healing and reconciliation
of church members.

Missional Work – Lead and organized over 10
mission trips to Tonga. Together with his
congregations and the Rotary Club, Rev. Hingano
has built a total of 14 libraries, installed 5 Solar
Water Pumps, sent 2 ambulances, 2 tractors and
has refurbished countless classrooms at local
schools. Also, sent two containers of medical
supplies and church pews to Fiji.

