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88-15

Jackson To Be Nominated
For SBC President

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (BP)--George Harris, pastor of Castle Hills First Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, told the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, last week he will nominate Richard Jackson for president of the Southern Baptist Convention when the convention meets in the Alamo city June 14-16.

Jackson, Harris said, would be "good for fundamentalists, good for moderates, good for all."

Harris, acknowledging he has been identified with the conservative group in the SBC controversy but denying he has ever been with them politically, said he feels Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, and a loser to Adrian Rogers for the presidency last year in St. Louis, is the man to "bridge the gap" and "end the feuding" in the controversy-plagued denomination.

Jackson, contacted by the Standard at his church in Phoenix, said simply, "That's fine with me," when told of Harris' intention.

He said he had talked with Harris about a month ago and Harris had asked if he thought he would be nominated again.

"When I said I probably would (be nominated), he talked about the possibility of him doing it," Jackson said. "Nobody knows me better than George -- we've been friends for more than 30 years -- so I said if he knew me as well as he does and is still willing to do it, then it would be okay."

Harris told Baptist Standard Editor Presnall H. Wood, "I plan to nominate Richard Jackson. In the past I have been identified with the fundamentalist movement because of my conservative stand theologically.

"I have not, however, been associated with the political fundamentalist group. Neither am I associated with the moderate political group.

"In an effort to bring peace and, hopefully, healing to our convention, I feel I would like to lead the way in recommending Richard Jackson, who has been identified by some as a moderate.

"I have known Richard for 35 years. We have differed on occasions, but I have never known him to do anything except what he thought was right. I feel like it is time that those who are supposedly on different sides to take a step toward unifying our hearts in a common goal, and I believe Richard is the man to do that. And I believe I am the man to nominate him."

Harris said Jackson is a biblical conservative who is sound on the Scriptures.

"I have no doubt he believes in the verbal inspiration of the word of God," he said. "Theologically he is a strict Calvinist, pre-millennialist and a soul-winner."

Harris said Jackson "will not have to be worried about having to pay back favors and will be fair to all. He will be controlled by no group. I have never known him to be legalistic or punitive and unkind for vengeance's sake."

Jackson is a role model of how to build a solid church, he said, noting the North Phoenix church was averaging about 600 in Sunday school when Jackson went there as pastor in 1968. It now averages almost 5,000 and it "has not been built on frills or fads," said Harris.

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North Phoenix baptized 1,206 in 1987 and gave \$1,062,000 to the Cooperative Program, both figures believed to be tops in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Harris said the election of Jackson would be "good for the fundamentalists, good for the moderates and good for all. He is the kind of man that can bridge the gap. I am pro-Richard and tired of feuding."

Jackson has been nominated three previous times for the presidency -- by James T. Draper Jr. of Euless, Texas in 1977, by John Sullivan of Shreveport, La., in 1980 and by Charles Redmond of Sulphur Springs, Texas, in 1987. He got 40 percent of the vote last year in losing to incumbent Adrian Rogers. The previous year in Atlanta Jackson nominated Amarillo pastor Winfred Moore, who also lost to Rogers.

The native Texan, who was pastor of First Baptist Church of Sulphur Springs before moving to Phoenix, has been considered the likely nominee of moderates. He was guest speaker at a rally sponsored by moderate leader John Baugh of Houston at San Marcos last fall.

He said he was aware some will see him as the moderate's man. But others, he says, knowing Harris' identification with the conservatives, are likely to think he has sold out to that group. He belongs to neither, he told the Standard.

"I have had 10 years to become somebody's man," Jackson said, "and I haven't done so.

"In the last 10 years I have nominated Bailey Smith (in 1981) who was in one camp; Winfred Moore who was in another; was willing to be nominated in 1980 to prove I belonged to nobody and last year because I felt it was the right thing to do.

"I have stood as my own man for 10 years. It should be pretty clear I haven't sold out to anybody."

If he should be elected -- "If God should so choose," Jackson said, his approach "would be to uphold the Baptist way of doing things -- to emphasize the authority of Scripture, the competency of the soul before God, the priesthood of the believer, the autonomy of the local church and separation of church and state."

"True Baptists hold all of these things," Jackson said. "I would simply champion the time-honored, God-blessed way of doing things."

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Sacrifice, Commitment Develop
Thriving Interior City Church

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
1/29/88

BARRA DO CORDA, Brazil (BP)--Although a Baptist missionary first gave access to a Bible to the people of Barra Do Corda about 100 years ago, the city was without a Baptist church until two years ago.

Now a church on a busy street corner in the Equatorial Brazil city of 50,000 is thriving with a Baptist pastor and a layman who have made personal sacrifices to reach the community.

Miquel Paiva became pastor of the church in December 1987 but already has goals to more than double the membership of 30 and develop a trained evangelistic force with the Sunday school.

He baptized 10 new members during his first month as pastor and hopes to have 40 new members within a year. Training sessions in the coming year for Sunday school workers will be a priority "because I feel Sunday school is the basis of the evangelism work we will do," Paiva said.

His previous church, about 150 miles from Barra Do Corda, had eight members when he arrived two years ago and had grown to 60 members when he left.

Paiva's involvement with evangelism and missions began years ago. Instead of a honeymoon, he and his wife, Annarita, spent 28 days on an evangelism tour of remote interior areas.

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Annarita's involvement in Barra Do Corda includes plans of filling the church on weekdays with 30 to 40 students learning "basic alphabet." The school will provide basic reading skills for children and outreach possibilities for the church, she said.

The pastor and his family live in the back of the church which originally was a spiritist hospital. The hospital building was purchased for \$5,200, a bargain that has allowed the church to establish a work much more rapidly than would have been possible otherwise, said Warren Rose, a Southern Baptist missionary who has assisted the church.

The church also has played a role in bringing a much-needed addition to professional medical services for Barra Do Corda. Jarbas Moraes, a Baptist layman and physician, moved his medical practice to the city from Sao Luis because he felt God wanted him to serve there.

Although he earned more money in Sao Luis, "leaving the comfort of the city to go to the interior was a step I was willing to take," he said. "The medical need and the Baptist work were things God had put together for me to be involved in here."

Moraes plans to start a Sunday school class for young people and has involved the pastor as a chaplain at the hospital.

"He'll attend to their physical needs and I'll attend to their spiritual needs," Paiva said.

The church's leadership has the benefit of groundwork laid by Brazilian and Southern Baptist mission efforts.

Baptists from Sao Luis, the state capital about 250 miles away, did a survey of Barra Do Corda in 1985. Six months later, the state convention, the Brazilian Home Mission Board and First Baptist Church in Imperatriz, a city across the state, purchased the building and a Brazilian home missionary moved to the town to begin the work.

The missionary had nine converts when an Arkansas partnership mission team arrived three months later. There were 25 new Baptists in the community when the Arkansas group left.

Students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and other Arkansas mission teams have returned to Barra Do Corda several times, according to Rose.

The team visits were part of an effort by Rose and Don McNeil, a Southern Baptist missionary who is state convention executive director, to target Barra Do Corda for priority work.

As an evangelist pilot, Rose is a crucial link with Barra Do Corda. With his single-engine, seven-passenger plane, he takes mission teams and others to the community on the eastern rim of the Amazon basin in less than an hour rather than the 12-hour trip by road from Sao-Luis.

The Baptists who helped establish the church apparently were received more warmly than the first missionary 100 years ago. Residents say that missionary fled the town after Catholic leaders threatened his life. Now, it seems Baptists are accepted and are in the 150-year-old city to stay.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Missionary Pilot Links
'Baixada' To Outside World

By Michael D. Chute

Baptist Press
1/29/88

SAO LUIS, Brazil (BP)--The white and brown Piper Saratoga makes a steep bank to the left. Missionary pilot Warren Rose squints against the glare of the Brazilian morning sun. He spots the thatched roofs of the village below amid a sea of green foliage.

Behind Rose rests the casket of a woman who died too young. She was only 18 years old. Ironically, a nurse in a health clinic, she died of tetanus. She's going home to Cajapio to be buried.

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The casket is wrapped in brightly colored purple and gold paper, a gesture from the Baptist church she attended in the capital of Sao Luis. The smell of formaldehyde is overpowering. Most Brazilians can't afford to embalm their dead and by law must bury them within 24 hours.

Beside the casket sits a 35-year-old black man. His face is creased and drawn. He looks much older. His body is too slender, racked with disease. His short breaths are deliberate and raspy.

"He's going home to die," Rose yells over the roar of the engine. "Tuberculosis. Hospitals can't do anything more for him."

The man gazes at the casket, his hand brushing lightly against its side. He's pensive, no doubt thinking of himself in such a box in a short time.

Rose spots the landing strip and noses the plane toward it. It's an overgrown dirt road. The twin ruts of red clay are visible only to a trained eye.

He eases the plane down but still the Piper bounces and lunges, kicking up a trail of red dust. Tops of weeds slap the belly of the plane. Palm trees at the end of the runway loom closer and closer.

"A plane crashed here in December," Rose said matter-of-factly, the usual broad grin missing from his face. "Bad airstrip" was his understatement.

This is the "baixada," the lowlands of Brazil's Maranhao state.

Maranhao is a place for contrasts. There's the modern, capital city of Sao Luis with its 1 million inhabitants. And there's the baixada on the edge of the Amazon jungle. The baixada is the reason Rose needs a plane.

"It's like turning the clock back 100 years," Rose explains. "A lot of 'old wives' tales' are practiced here. A lot of people die from such practices.

"People (in the baixada) are without hope. They don't see themselves breaking the cycle. They are very fatalistic."

One does not wonder why. Too many people die needlessly in Maranhao. Tetanus and tuberculosis are the greatest killers. Malaria is ever present. Leprosy still is a problem.

The infant mortality rate is about 30 percent, Rose says. One woman told him and his wife, Kathy, both from Covington, Tenn., she had given birth to 18 children, "but 'gracias a Deus' (thanks to God) only three had lived."

He estimates about 60 percent of those who undergo surgeries in a Sao Luis hospital later develop infections, many life-threatening.

When he arrived in Sao Luis in 1983, the former commercial pilot for the Louisville Flying Service quickly realized he needed medical skills to further his ministry.

"I've lost people (in the plane) that I feel I could have saved with proper training," he says.

While in the United States for furlough last year in Hendersonville, Tenn., he completed emergency medical technician training. He is exploring ways to become a certified physician's assistant and dreams of one day being a doctor. His wife, who often flies with him, also has grasped that vision. She, too, wants medical training.

But spiritual needs are as acute as medical needs. Both led Rose to establish contact with interior villages in the dense jungle and coastal areas of Maranhao.

"We never intended to do social work when we came here" five years ago, Rose admits. "Evangelism is our job. The gospel raises the vision of what can be."

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The pilot-evangelist is overwhelmed by the spiritual needs. His zeal and vitality have led him to places untouched by the gospel. He constantly looks for ways to reach more villages. During the first term, Rose baptized 200 people in the interior.

At one of the villages he visits regularly, he lands on the mayor's driveway. There is no airstrip in the town. He originally went in on an emergency call to evacuate an appendicitis case. He went back, and now there's a Baptist church in the village.

The fishing village of Vila Moreira is Rose's most recent target. A church was recently established there. The villagers built a landing strip for Rose that they proudly maintain. Besides his plane, the only other way out of the village is by boat, which takes 12 hours to reach Sao Luis.

Rose believes people closed to the gospel are reflecting a "mentality that comes from their closure to the outside world. The people here believe God exists. They believe Jesus is the Son of God. But making a life-changing commitment is another thing. The gospel gives them a vision that life can be better than what they think it can be."

Yet the trials of Maranhao are hard to escape. Just as the other Southern Baptist missionaries there -- Don and Wanda McNeall, Phil and Leann Smart, and Louise Donaldson -- the Roses live every day in danger of a minor medical problem becoming a life-threatening situation.

In October 1984, Rose rushed his wife to the United States for emergency kidney surgery. Last year, their 7-year-old son, Michael, was bitten by a spider, and infection was acute. Prayer rather than medical treatment pulled him through, they contend.

Maranhao can be especially unrelenting to a pilot, even one as careful as Rose. He constantly checks for water in the fuel, a recurring problem. The plane is serviced on a strict schedule. And he strives to keep himself mentally and physically alert.

Still, if trouble does develop, few adequate places to land are available.

In May 1986, the plane developed engine trouble just days after a routine maintenance check. Rose crash-landed his Piper in the backlands of Maranhao. Three of the Baptist leaders of the Maranhense Baptist Convention were with him. No one was hurt, and the plane wasn't damaged.

The worst part of the ordeal was the trip back to Sao Luis. Normally an hour by plane, it took them four days to travel back home, first by horse, then by Jeep and finally by bus. The experience emphasized Rose's need for the plane in his ministry.

The plane's engine repaired and his furlough completed, Rose is back in the skies over the baixada. He remains one of the few links some villages have with the gospel and the outside world.

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