



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 6, 1990

90-33

Louisiana layman Boswell
to be nominated

By Lynn P. Clayton

N- CO
(La.)

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--Layman and former Louisiana Baptist Convention President Raymond T. Boswell of Shreveport will be nominated for second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the annual meeting in New Orleans this June.

Former LBC President Scott Tatum of Shreveport said he and a group of Boswell's friends "believe Boswell is uniquely qualified because of his denominational statesmanship. He has served with humility and effectiveness in all areas of Baptist life, without being identified with any political group."

The decision to nominate Boswell was reached "separate from either of the predominant political groups now in our convention," Tatum said. "We believe that whomever else may be nominated for this position, Raymond Boswell is the person who should be elected to serve."

When contacted by the Baptist Message, the Louisiana Baptist weekly newsjournal, Boswell said that he had agreed to be nominated. "It's always an honor to be considered for denominational service," he said. "I will not be running for the office, but I will not run away from the opportunity of service."

Boswell will not be the nominee of either side of the present SBC controversy, he said: "Southern Baptists have not authorized two political parties to decide who will be nominated for office. I believe people should come to the convention free to elect the persons messengers believe meet the qualifications for the office. People should vote for persons based on their history of commitment and involvement in denominational life."

"I would work with the president, whoever is elected by Southern Baptists, in whatever role I might fill as an officer of the convention."

Tatum said Boswell's friends decided to nominate the Shreveport layman because of his proven commitment and involvement in every level of Southern Baptist life. Tatum is pastor emeritus of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport and retired professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He is interim pastor at Ellerbe Road Baptist Church in Shreveport.

"He (Boswell) is a faithful deacon in Highland Baptist Church in Shreveport, and has been both Sunday school director and discipleship training director," Tatum said. "He has been chair of their last three pastor search committees, visits weekly and is a choir member."

"He is also current moderator of the Northwest Baptist Association and has been present at all of the last 42 annual meetings except two when he was fulfilling other denominational responsibilities."

"He was president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1984-85, and has served on numerous state committees and boards, including the executive board and as a trustee of Louisiana College. His presidential address challenged Louisiana Baptists to start 250 churches within five years. That challenge resulted in Mission '90, the most ambitious church-starting effort in our state convention's history. He is currently president of the LBC Church Site Corporation and is chair of Vision 2000, a state committee leading an effort to start new churches in the state."

"He was a member of the SBC Executive Committee from 1968 to 1975 and served as chair of its program committee in 1974-75. He also served on the SBC Committee on Committees in 1983 and on the Committee on Boards in 1980 and 1988."

In 1985, Boswell helped pull together a meeting of state convention presidents that led to the formation of the SBC Peace Committee. In 1988, SBC messengers declined to hear his minority report as a Committee on Boards member.

Boswell said he has agreed to be nominated to encourage greater use of the laity "to bring about a return to our Baptist distinctives. We (laypersons) are not theologians, so we are not involved in the theological controversy. We want to be involved in kingdom work by building our Sunday schools, starting new churches and missions, and supporting them through the Cooperative Program" unified budget.

"My position is not to go for the jugular vein," Boswell said, in reference to a quote from the early days of the convention controversy. "My position is that I am trying to massage the heart and keep it beating for missions and evangelism."

The person who will nominate Boswell has not been selected, Tatum said.

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CLC board approves
program statement change

By Louis Moore

N- (CO)
(CLC)

Baptist Press
3/6/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission trustees approved proposed changes in the agency's program statement to include religious liberty but adopted a resolution saying their action should not be misconstrued as advocating the change.

Last fall the commission was asked by the Southern Baptist Executive Committee to propose changes in its program statement to include religious liberty.

CLC commissioners needed to approve the proposed changes in order for the proposal to go to the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June in New Orleans.

The resolution adopted by commissioners at their March 1-2 meeting in Nashville said, "We go on record that the commission has not advocated a particular position on this recommendation from the Executive Committee but express our willingness to do the will of the Southern Baptist Convention as it is expressed by the convention in June, and further we recommend that our executive director and the executive committee of the Christian Life Commission be commended for their wise and discreet response."

It was adopted unanimously within minutes after the commissioners approved without amendment the proposed program changes.

The proposed change in the CLC's program statement would make it one of three entities authorized to speak on behalf of Southern Baptists on religious liberty. The other two are the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee.

During the meeting, CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land said the commission did not seek the religious liberty assignment but would be willing to undertake it if the convention desires.

"We want to do whatever the Southern Baptist Convention wants us to do," Land said. "If this proposal is voted down, we will continue to do what we have been doing. If this is approved, we will take our new religious liberty assignment very seriously and greatly expand our presence in Washington, D.C."

Land pointed out that the commission opened an office in Washington in 1987 at the specific request of the Southern Baptist Convention. The office has one full-time staff member.

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He explained to the commissioners that if the proposal is approved, the Southern Baptist Convention would still be the largest contributor to the Baptist Joint Committee and the CLC would continue to work in partnership with both the Baptist Joint Committee and the Public Affairs Committee, as it does now.

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Baylor suit reportedly
settled out of court

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
3/6/90

DALLAS (BP)--A lawsuit filed by a former Baylor University student alleging that she was forced to leave the Texas Baptist school because of a policy barring pregnant, unmarried students has been settled out of court, the school's student newspaper reported March 2.

"The case has been settled out of court and nothing else will be said about it," Baylor President Herbert H. Reynolds told the Baylor Lariat.

No additional information concerning terms of the settlement was made available by Baylor University.

Former Baylor student Dawn L. Bonner and the Dallas Civil Liberties Union filed suit last September, charging that Baylor officials had violated her civil and constitutional rights by forcing her to leave school in October 1987 because she was pregnant and unmarried.

In her suit, Bonner claimed Baylor failed to inform her of an "unwritten policy" requiring pregnant, unmarried women to leave school.

At the time, Baylor officials pointed to the university's 144-year-old set of general principles requiring students to conduct themselves "in accordance with Christian principles as perceived by Texas Baptists."

The general disciplinary policy, as published annually in the Baylor student handbook and the university's catalogs, states, "Personal misconduct either on or off campus by anyone connected with Baylor detracts from the Christian witness Baylor strives to present to the world and hinders full accomplishment of the mission of the university."

The policy notes that disciplinary action will be taken by Baylor in response to conduct that violates Christian principles, and it states that familiarity with the university's disciplinary policy is the students' responsibility.

Last October, Baylor trustees unanimously adopted a policy statement authorizing administrators to respond on a case-by-case basis to incidents of sexual misconduct by students, faculty or staff at the university.

The policy was approved following a report by a specially appointed committee to study the school's policy on sexual misconduct. The committee had been appointed after Reynolds asked the trustees at their May 1989 meeting to review the university policy on incidents of sexual impropriety.

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Baptist architect
Howard McAdams dies

N-SSB

Baptist Press
3/6/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Howard McAdams, 55, an architect in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department and a 20-year employee of the board, died Saturday, March 3, of an apparent heart attack while playing tennis.

McAdams was a partner in Turner & McAdams Architects in Dallas, prior to coming to the board in 1969.

His responsibilities as architect for the Southern Baptist architectural service included relationships with outside architectural firms and with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's loan approval process.

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He had major responsibility for "The Architect's Guide," a publication that provides background, program needs and design considerations for architects working with Southern Baptist churches.

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BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Prof notes apartheid
has engendered fear

By Pat Cole

N- (O)
(SBTS)

Baptist Press
3/6/90

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--While "enormous progress" has been made in the struggle for freedom in South Africa, a Southern Baptist professor said the country must now deal with the fear and suspicion engendered by the government's policy of apartheid.

John Jonsson, a South African native who teaches at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said white people are unfamiliar with black people and thus are apprehensive about new freedoms granted to blacks.

"It is purely because the apartheid system was so successful in completely screening off" the plight of blacks, and "99 percent of the white people have never been to a black township," said Jonsson, the W.O. Carver professor of missions and world religions at the seminary.

Jonsson, a naturalized American citizen, visited South Africa from December through early February while on sabbatical leave.

White South Africans "don't realize how patient and compassionate black people are," said Jonsson. "They don't need to fear them if they can only understand" black people apart from "the political descriptions their opponents give them."

Jonsson said he always thought it "would take a miracle" to effect change in South Africa. The miracle, he pointed out, has happened, but the rapidity of change has prompted worry both inside and outside South Africa that "things will go wrong."

However, "things have been going wrong" for 40 years of apartheid rule in South Africa, Jonsson said. "Now there is at least a possibility that things can go right, and we must major on that," he added.

Whites in South Africa fear the country will be dominated by blacks, he said. Yet Jonsson noted that African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela repeatedly has said he envisions a democratic nation that is dominated by neither blacks nor whites.

To ensure rights for all citizens, the government must begin to steer the nation away from a focus on group rights to human rights, he said.

Apartheid has emphasized group rights that mostly have served to guarantee rights for white people, Jonsson said. Noting South African President F.W. DeKlerk has made much progress by recognizing all groups have rights, Jonsson said the government must now shift to a policy that assures basic human rights for individual South Africans. Such rights, he explained, will help both blacks and whites.

"If you have human rights, the majority group must always take cognizance of the minority groups," he said. "That's the biblical concept of justice that you must remember that you were once a slave and therefore your laws must be exemplary and equitable, even to strangers."

While in South Africa, Jonsson, a longtime opponent of apartheid, was one of about 30 guests who was invited to attend the Conference for a Democratic Future. Representatives from 2,100 anti-apartheid organizations met to discuss how negotiations might take place with the South African government.

"This was the first time since 1956 that all the different fragmentations of anti-apartheid movements in South Africa were allowed to come together in a conference," he said.

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For apartheid to be dismantled, Jonsson said economic sanctions imposed against South Africa must be kept until "the structures of apartheid are addressed." He added that Christians in other nations must try to persuade the white churches in South Africa to step up their activity in fighting apartheid.

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BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southern Seminary

'Prelude' to precede
SBC music conference

By Charles Willis

N-SSB

Baptist Press
3/6/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--"Prelude," a conference for Southern Baptist church musicians, is scheduled to precede the annual Southern Baptist Church Music Conference prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this year in New Orleans.

Sponsored by the SBC Sunday School Board's music service, the June 7-9 Prelude conference at the Downtown Marriott will include reading sessions by music publishers, premieres of new music, concerts by music artists and choral groups and free music for participants.

The 34th annual Southern Baptist Church Music Conference will be June 10-11 at First Baptist Church, St. Charles Avenue at Napoleon, with the Downtown Marriott as headquarters hotel.

Mark Edwards, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Nashville and president of the SBCMC, said the church music conference program will "hold up the local church as the focus of the ministry by featuring church choirs, a pastor as preacher and every kind of church singing group we can think of."

Music for the Prelude sessions will be "eclectic by design," said Mike Wilkins, coordinator of the music service. "Our dream is for a conference that will unite Southern Baptists from every part of the denomination and unify us in proclaiming Jesus as king through diverse musical tastes."

Prelude reading sessions and concerts will be provided by Alexandria House, Sparrow, Genevox, Purifoy, Kirkland House, Lillenas, Shawnee, Zondervan and Word.

Major concerts at Prelude will include Steven Curtis Chapman, songwriter/singer from Sparrow, Inc. in Chatsworth, Calif.; Dennis and Nan Allen, concert artists from Franklin, Tenn.; Marvin Matthews, gospel singer, and Tim Sheppard, Christian artist/singer, both of Alexandria House, Nashville, Tenn.; and NewSong, a quartet from Word, Inc., Dallas.

SBCMC program features will include Dick Baker of Prestonwood Baptist Church of Dallas; Kurt Kaiser, composer and concert artist from Waco, Texas; Steve Roddy, First Baptist Church of Houston; Tony Weston and Bill Davis, artists/ministers of music from Arkansas; Randy Edwards of First Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.; and the Celebration Ringers of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

Church groups scheduled for the SBCMC meeting include the sanctuary choir of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark.; the senior adult choir of First Baptist Church, Clinton, Miss.; the chapel choir of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.; the orchestra of First Baptist Church, DeRidder, La.; the sanctuary choir of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; and the young musicians choir of West Jackson Street Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss.

Additional SBCMC program features will be the Louisiana All-State Youth Choir and the Seminarians of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Preacher for the conference will be Brian Harbour, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock.

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Participation in Prelude will provide a free first-year membership in SBCMC for people who are not members of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference. Registration for Prelude of \$110 before April 1 or \$135 after April 1 may be sent to Music Service, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Registration may be charged to Baptist Book Store charge accounts by calling (800) 368-7421. In Tennessee, call (800) 223-2966.

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Prelude
Marriott Hotel - Downtown, New Orleans
June 7-9, 1990

Thursday, June 7

12:00 noon Registration begins
6:30 p.m. Welcome
6:45 p.m. Concert -- Steven Curtis Chapman, Chatsworth, Calif.
8:15 p.m. Premiere -- Sparrow youth musical
9:30 p.m. Exhibit grand opening and reception

Friday, June 8

7:45 a.m. Registration opens
8:00 a.m. Devotional
8:30 a.m. Reading session -- Alexandria House
9:30 a.m. Reading session -- Sparrow
10:25 a.m. Exhibit break
10:50 a.m. Reading session -- Genevox
11:50 a.m. Luncheon -- Dennis and Nan Allen, Franklin, Tenn.
1:30 p.m. Reading session -- Purifoy
2:30 p.m. Exhibit break
2:50 p.m. Reading session -- Kirkland House
3:50 p.m. Reading session -- Alexandria House
4:45 p.m. Dinner on the Street -- Exhibits open
7:00 p.m. Premiere (Genevox musical, "Jericho" by Parkview Baptist Church choir, Baton Rouge, La., Robert Goodman, director
8:00 p.m. Concert -- Tim Sheppard, Nashville
9:00 p.m. Premiere -- Royal Tapestry musical

Saturday, June 9

7:45 a.m. Registration opens
8:00 a.m. Devotional concert -- Yo Yo Collins, Salina, Okla.
8:30 a.m. Reading session -- Lillenas
9:30 a.m. Reading session -- Shawnee
10:25 a.m. Exhibit break
10:55 a.m. Reading session -- Zondervan
12:00 noon Luncheon -- Marvin Matthews, Nashville
1:00 p.m. Reading session: Music That Ministers -- various publishers
2:00 p.m. Reading session -- Word
3:30 p.m. Free time
6:30 p.m. Worship -- First Baptist Church, New Orleans
7:00 p.m. Concert -- NewSong, Dallas
8:15 p.m. Premiere -- Word musical

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Southern Baptist Church Music Conference
 First Baptist Church, New Orleans
 June 10-11, 1990

Sunday Afternoon, June 10

- 1:45 Opening hymn
Call to order
Greetings
- 2:05 Concert - Louisiana Baptist All-State Youth Choir, Carroll Lowe/Tom Lott, directors
- 2:40 Concert - Church Orchestra, DeRidder, La., Joe Joslin, director
- 3:15 Exhibit break
- 3:45 Preview of "The Baptist Hymnal" - Wesley Forbis, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville
- 4:15 Concert - Kurt Kaiser, Waco, Texas
- 4:45 Dismiss

Sunday Evening, June 10

- 6:45 Concert - Church Choir, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., Bob Hatfield, director
- 7:00 Worship, with the congregation of First Baptist Church, New Orleans; Church choir, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; Preacher - Brian Harbour, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.
- 8:15 Concert - Tony Weston and Bill Davis
- 8:45 Reception, hosted by the church music department, Louisiana Baptist Convention, Carroll Lowe, director

Monday Morning, June 11

- 9:00 Concert - Celebration Ringers, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., Jim Whitmire, director
- 9:30 Concert - Senior Adult Choir, First Baptist Church, Clinton, Miss., Bill Bacon, director
- 10:00 Business session
- 10:45 Exhibit break
- 11:20 Concert - Young Musicians, West Jackson Street Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., Terry Hurt, director
- 11:50 Lunch at First Baptist Church
Exhibits open

Monday Afternoon, June 11

- 1:00 Division meetings
Election
Interest session
- 2:10 Concert - Randy Edwards, vibraharp and marimba; Letha Crouch, accompanist
First Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.
- 2:30 Concert - Seminarians, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Benjamin Harlan, director
- 3:15 Dismiss
Exhibits open

Monday Evening, June 11

- 6:45 Concert - Sanctuary Choir, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., Lynn Madden, director
- 7:00 Worship
Preacher, Brian Harbour; Music director, Mark Edwards, SBCMC president and minister of music, First Baptist Church, Nashville
- 8:05 Concert - Dick Baker, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas, with the Immanuel Baptist Church Choir of Little Rock, Ark.; Benjamin Harlan, organist
- 8:35 Concert - Chapel Choir, First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., Bob Morrison, director
- 9:10 Congregational singing of "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" (Lutkin)
Dismiss

Southern Baptists, Catholics
begin new round of conversations

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

DURHAM, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics have begun their fourth round of interfaith conversations.

Representatives from the two faiths met at a Catholic retreat center outside Durham, N.C., March 2-4, to lay the groundwork for the new talks, which will focus on the subject of biblical ministry.

The group will meet once a year for the next three years in informal sessions to explore common ground and differences in the way the two faiths address ministry issues. Subtopics scheduled for discussion include human dignity, sacredness of human life, sexuality and marriage, family values, and stewardship of creation.

The nation's two largest denominations began their interfaith conversations in 1978 with a discussion of "The Church: Its Nature and Function." The second session, begun in 1982, dealt with "The Life of Grace Within Us." The third session, begun in 1985, resulted in publication of a statement of agreements and disagreements on a range of subjects. That statement and a history of the first 10 years of dialogues was published in a 163-page edition of "The Theological Educator," the theology journal of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Southern Baptist participation in the conversations is facilitated by the interfaith witness department of the convention's Home Mission Board. However, participants do not represent an official position of the board or of Southern Baptists.

Southern Baptist participants in the fourth round of talks are James Leo Garrett, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; William Hendricks, professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Emmanuel McCall, director of the HMB black church extension division in Atlanta; Louis Moore, associate director of the Christian Life Commission in Nashville; William Richardson, area director for Brazil and the Caribbean with the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.; Bobbie Sorrill, associate executive director of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala.; Gary Leazer, director of the HMB interfaith witness department; and William Gordon, HMB national missionary for interfaith witness.

McCall and Sorrill were not able to attend the recent session. Barbara Elder of the WMU staff substituted for Sorrill.

Roman Catholic representatives are James Niedergeses, bishop of Nashville; Robert Dalton, vice president of Glenmary Home Missioners in Cincinnati; Jean-Marie Heisberger, director of the Institute for Pastoral Life in Kansas City, Mo.; William Norvel, pastor of Most Pure Heart of Mary Church in Mobile, Ala.; Carroll Stuhlmuehler, professor of Scripture at Chicago Theological Union; Yolanda Tarango, co-director of the Hospitality House in San Antonio, Texas; Jude Weisenbeck, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Nashville; Thaddeus Horgan, a staff member for the Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs in Washington.

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SSB President Elder explores
recovery from 'power failure'

By Brenda J. Sanders

N-CO
(MWBTS)

Baptist Press
3/6/90

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Christian ministers suffering from "power failure" -- a lack of energy and motivation due to the pressures of daily life -- can find a source of recovery through the power of God, said Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Everyone suffers from power failure from time to time, Elder told students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

"When the passing of the months pulls down the power supply in your life, how do you handle it?" he asked. "When the rigid and the frigid conditions of life demands extra power -- more than you can supply -- what do you do about it?"

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Pressures from a heavy workload, the demands one puts upon oneself and the expectations of others can overwhelm the Christian minister, Elder said. During such times, he advised, the Christian should return to biblical faith for strength and solace.

"Our biblical faith provides power for the inner man," Elder said. "Regardless of what the forces are against us, ... there is a gift of power down on the inside of us that comes with our biblical faith."

God's desire is that his unsurpassed power become a natural force in the life of every Christian, Elder pointed out. "The gospel of Jesus Christ ... brings us an energy in life than cannot be drummed up from human sources," he noted.

Some people suffer power failure by dwelling too much on the past, he suggested. "We're not to look at the past as if that's all God has to give to us," he said. "We're not to take any individual situation as if it's the end of our walk of faith."

"Whatever power there is around us and whatever authority there seems to be over us, we must be true to our biblical faith. ... The power to do that is from God, himself."

For Christian ministers doing the work of God in these days, "troubling though they might be," Elder said, "It is time for us to be at our very best, and we cannot be at our very best unless we have found from holy Scripture and biblical faith a way to recover from power failure."

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Low self-esteem leads
to cults, Satanism: Leazer

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press
3/6/90

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Addressing low self-esteem is a key to keeping young people away from cults and non-Christian religions, an interfaith witness leader said.

Gary Leazer, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, made the statement during the annual chaplain's conference at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. Leazer was resource person for the conference, which was sponsored by the HMB chaplaincy division.

Similar conferences were held at the five other Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. Leazer led the group through a manual prepared by himself, interfaith witness Associate Director Maurice Smith and former interfaith witness National Missionary James Browning.

Youths with low or negative self-esteem are prime candidates for cults, Leazer said, explaining that many non-Christian religions prey upon people with low self-esteem to attract interest.

"A young person with low or negative self-esteem often feels a great need to be accepted by his peers and may not have the inner strength to say 'no' to alcohol or other drugs, sex or destructive religious groups," he said.

Groups such as The Church of Scientology, The Way International and the New Age movements approach people at the point of self-esteem, he said. For example, these groups advertise with slogans such as: "You Can Gain Self Respect," "Abilities Beyond the Norm Can Be Yours," "What Stands Between You and Real Happiness?"

Likewise, the New Age movements teach that people can gain self-respect by realizing the god within themselves, he continued.

"Most of the time when people make decisions about religious groups, they do it for other than theological reasons," he said. "One of the issues we have to deal with is self-esteem, especially the lack of it."

Although not a licensed counselor or psychologist, Leazer said he speaks from personal experience interviewing and counseling people involved in cults, the occult, New Age movements and other religious groups.

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"Negative self-esteem is always present in people involved in satanic worship," he said. Likewise, "persons who have a well-balanced view of their own self-esteem do not get involved in New Age movements."

The decision to join a non-Christian religious group usually comes at a point of crisis for a young person who does not have a solid foundation of self-esteem to draw upon, Leazer said.

"A kid in crisis is going to try to get out of that some way: drugs, suicide, sex or self-destructive religions like satanism," he explained. "Every kid goes through times in his life when he is in crisis. Whether he makes it through depends upon the foundation that has been laid."

Heavy-metal rock music with obscene or violent lyrics also may play a part in this transformation, Leazer said: "When kids who have a bad self-esteem listen to this kind of music for hours on end, in their own minds it begins to give them permission to act out the feelings they're having during crisis."

"It doesn't cause them to do it, but it gives them permission."

Leazer called this a serious problem that makes him concerned for the future of America's youth. He called on parents and churches to impact their youths positively.

"A sense of self-worth is not something parents can just hand to their child," he noted. "It is something a child must develop for himself. However, parents can help make the process easier."

And while self-esteem is developed early in life, "effective ministry can help teens and adults eliminate negative self-esteem and develop positive self-esteem."

Leazer listed four actions parents and friends can take to help build positive self-esteem in their children as a weapon against self-destructive decisions and behavior:

-- Teach responsibility.

"Give a person meaningful tasks that are appropriate for his age and talents," he suggested. "Object lessons are often helpful in teaching responsibilities to a child."

-- Allow a person to make decisions.

"A person learns to make the right choices in life by making decisions himself -- even wrong decisions," Leazer explained. "Start the decision-making process early."

"For example, allow a child to choose between going to the zoo or the circus. Gradually, as his judgments mature, allow him to make decisions of greater consequences."

-- Offset peer pressure.

"Set a positive example," he said. "Don't let a child see you succumb to adult peer pressure and do things you know are unwise like smoking, using drugs or inappropriate language, or being lax in church attendance."

-- Communicate.

Adults should talk openly with their children about "taboo" subjects such as drugs, alcohol and sex, Leazer suggested.

"It is important that you listen, really listen, to what your child, teen or adult has to say," he said. "Especially listen if you don't agree."

In addition, parents should give their children specific praise for things they have done rather than dwelling on failures, he said.

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"It is possible that you may be sending a person the wrong messages without realizing it," he explained. "For example, do you thank them when they do household chores, or do you criticize what they've done incorrectly and redo the job yourself?"

"Caring and affirming communication is essential for a person to become a happy, productive and confident adult."

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Recreators urged to use
sports for evangelism

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

Baptist Press
3/6/90

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Sports has become an explosive means to achieve international evangelization, and Southern Baptist churches deciding to join the game could influence the world for Christ, the founder of the International Sports Coalition said at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Sports is a powerful method of reaching the world for Christ, but it is not being used by churches as it should, said Eddie Waxer. His coalition is a group of Christian recreators interested in using sports as a global means of evangelizing athletes.

Waxer spoke during a banquet and led sessions on reaching the world for Christ through sports during a Feb. 23-March 1 church recreation conference.

Southern Baptist churches should become more involved in sending Christian high school, university and professional athletes and coaches into other countries with sports programs and a Christian witness, he said.

"We are entering the amazing '90s as far as sports and recreation ministry in world evangelization is concerned," he added, citing changes occurring in recreation ministry in the last 25 years.

For example, in 1965, "probably 15 out of 3,000 professional athletes would stand up for Jesus Christ. In 1990, there are about 4,000 professional athletes, and about 1,000 of those will stand up for Jesus Christ."

In 1965, about 500 university athletes would publicly profess Christ. Today, that number is between 4,000 and 6,000, Waxer said.

In 1965, out of all Christian colleges, Bible schools and seminaries, only one school sent a sports team overseas to be involved in missions and evangelism, Waxer said. Today, 84 colleges are sending teams overseas.

In 1965, about 600 churches had sports facilities. Today that number has more than quadrupled to 2,700, Waxer said. Twenty-five years ago, churches having recreational ministerial staff people numbered several hundred. In 1990, they number several thousand.

"Things are changing. There is an amazing growth of resources, an amazing different world of recreation in sports in 25 years' time," he said.

"You and I hold the starting gun to get things going," he noted. "Probably every one of you have in your churches a large number of coaches or athletes that could potentially serve Christ in reaching unchurched believers, either at home or overseas."

Ray Conner, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department that sponsored the conference, said he hopes more churches will "catch a vision" of the significance of recreation as an outreach and evangelism tool. In addition to sports, he said recreation includes drama, puppetry, clowning, camping and fellowship.

Conner urged church leaders or athletes interested in learning about international avenues of outreach and evangelism through recreation to contact the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

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