



-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

February 17, 1978

Second in Series

Genetic Engineering:
Custom-Made People

By Henlee H. Barnette
For Baptist Press

With the discovery of the molecular structure of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) by James Watson and Francis Crick in the early 1960s, we are approaching the stage where it is possible to design desired people by genetic engineering. It sounds incredible, but it is a real possibility in the not too distant future.

Genes are molecules of DNA and the basic units of heredity. They carry the genetic code which determines our makeup in terms of the color of the eyes, hair, skin, and size.

Genetic engineering is the alteration of some aspects of the genetic structure. Goals of this procedure are (1) to enable people to give birth to a child; (2) to ensure that the child will be normal; and (3) to produce human beings with the finest possible genetic attributes.

Human genes become defective by mutation and chromosome aberration and are passed on to one's offspring. Some geneticists think that the gene pool in the United States is overly polluted with defective genes.

It has been estimated by some geneticists that the cells of every individual carry three to ten potentially harmful genes. About one person out of five has a genetic defect which will be passed on to the offspring.

Approximately 25 percent of our hospital beds are occupied by persons suffering conditions wholly or in part genetically related. About one-third of our hospital beds are occupied by mental patients and of these possibly 18 percent are due to defective genes. Fifteen percent of all cases of true mental retardation are genetic in origin.

Eugenics is the science concerned with the improvement of hereditary qualities. Four major types of genetic engineering control are used to achieve these qualities. Negative eugenics seeks to limit transmission of defective genes through adoption of children and sterilization. Positive eugenics uses the techniques of artificial insemination by AID (from donor other than husband) in case the husband carries defective genes.

Gene selection for test-tube babies and cloning is another method. Finally, there is the alteration of the genetic structure by chemical or microsurgical techniques. Rearranging the genetic structure and replacing defective genes with healthy ones could eventually eliminate many hereditary diseases.

Genetic counseling aims at preventing the conception of individuals with serious hereditary diseases and disorders. Genetic data are gathered and the counselor presents the facts to the counselees. Risks of having a genetically defective child are stated and alternatives presented. But the counselee must be the ultimate decision maker.

Genetic screening is the testing of an individual or a group of persons to determine carriers of defective genes. This testing can be done before or after birth.

The goals of such screening are to detect at an early stage genetic diseases and to guide those afflicted to medical help; to detect carriers of genetic diseases so that they can make informed choices about having children; and the alleviation of anxiety of non-carriers of hereditary diseases.

-more-

About five years ago biochemists developed a method for mixing genes from any two organisms to produce a whole new creature. This procedure, sometimes called "gene-splicing" or recombinant DNA, takes the DNA groupings and splits one from two different organisms and mixes them. Possible benefits of gene splicing include progress against genetic diseases and cancer; new forms of life for growing super-wheat and other plants that produce their own fertilizer; and combating pollution by cultivating organisms to eat oil spills.

Some possible dangers of recombinant DNA include the production of a disease-causing bacterium which resists an agent that normally controls it; the development of creatures which have the power to reproduce themselves and spread throughout the population, upset the delicate ecological balance, and cause new diseases in human beings and plants.

A bundle of ethical issues arises from genetic manipulation. In relation to genetic counseling and screening, who owns the data? Does the doctor or the patient own it? Does the counselor have the right to furnish data, say on a sickle-cell anemia patient, to an employer or an insurance company? Does society have a right to require genetic screening for carriers of defective genes? Does the state have the right to force carriers of defective genes to refrain from producing genetically defective children? Denmark does. Society's right transcends that of the individual. Marriage licenses are denied in Denmark to persons carrying certain genetic defects until one of the couple has been sterilized.

These are complex questions and there are no easy answers. The Bible does not speak directly to the issues raised by genetic manipulation. However, God wills the health of his children. This is a solid principle in Scripture. He desires human beings to be whole persons. When genetic engineering, in the control of competent and caring engineers, is used to improve mankind genetically, socially, and culturally, it is in keeping with God's will of love.

We can give our children bad genes as well as a bad environment. We can pass on a blessing or a curse. It is our duty to pass on to our children healthy genes. This responsibility is in harmony with God's will of love, the willing of the well-being of oneself and others (BP).

-30-

This is the second of a five-part series on Christians and biomedical issues, written by Henlee H. Barnette, Ph.D., Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Louisville School of Medicine. Barnette prepared these articles in consultation with the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

HMB Sends Relief Funds
To Snow-Covered States

####

Baptist Press
2/16/78

ATLANTA (BP)--In response to the devastating blizzard in several states, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has sent \$10,700 in disaster relief funds to Kentucky, New York and Massachusetts.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's state coordinator of disaster relief, A. B. Colvin, received \$4,500 from the HMB department of Christian social ministries assigned responsibility for dispersing relief funds.

The Baptist Convention of New York received \$5,000 requested by Jack Lowndes, executive secretary of the convention, for relief of individual needs.

Ada Young, Christian social ministries director in Northboro, Mass., received \$1,200.

The relief funds were the first sent by the HMB in 1978.

-30-



February 17, 1978

Guatemala Leaders Follow
Example Of Early Christians

78-23

By John J. Hurt

QUEZALTENANGO, Guatemala (BP)--Baptist church leaders in Guatemala are following the example of early Christians--making their livelihood in secular work while giving about half time to their churches.

One example is Juan Villagran, who leads church services somewhere almost every night in the year. But funds to support his family come from farming and marketing farm products for his neighbors.

Then there is Enrique Coyoy, a Quiche Indian living in a small wooden structure seven miles from this city, who converted a small barn-like structure behind his dwelling into a temporary chapel. Farming and some sawmill work are his main livelihood.

Nicholas Garcia, in the Indian town of Totonicapan, is a weaver by day but gives most of his weekends and many of his nights to visitation and training others to witness.

Luis Poz, another Quiche Indian, probably has the most brutal schedule of all. He serves the First Baptist Church of Cantel as pastor, works in a factory and is going to night school to get his high school diploma.

A. Clark Scanlon, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's field representative for Middle America, estimates that 70 percent of the national pastors in Guatemala have secular employment. Most of the churches have fewer than 100 members. A membership of about 150 is considered the minimum to support a full-time pastor.

Scanlon says laymen involvement is a big factor in the Baptist Convention of Guatemala's ability to organize five or six churches a year and achieve a baptism for every 6 or 7 members.

Two Southern Baptist missionary couples work with these local leaders, some ordained as ministers and others known as "first man." John and Nancy Laramore, from Georgia, work primarily with the Spanish-speaking Guatemalans. George and Helen Hardeman of South Carolina and Georgia respectively, speak Spanish and the Quiche language but are handicapped sometimes by the different dialects in their work with Indians.

Villagran's ministry is south of Coatepeque where he and his family reside in a house with an open-air basement. Wooden benches are shoved aside during the day for his business but are spaced out on Sunday afternoon for Bible study and frequently used for night meetings. Those enrolled are encouraged to attend the "mother church" in Coatepeque for an evangelistic service each Sunday night.

Coyoy and his people in the Llano del Pinal mission will soon move from his barn to a concrete block structure nearby built by volunteers from the states after the earthquake. All that remains is to cut wooden beams and place them to support a tin roof.

Visit the First Church of Cantel on a Saturday night and Luis Poz will preach first in Spanish and then in Quiche. The service will extend over two hours, interspersed with congregational singing and special music. The singing will attract a small group outside the entrance.

First Baptist Church in Quezaltenango is small by comparison with Southern Baptist missions. There were 92 in Sunday School on a recent Sunday morning with an offering of \$23.14. Joel Lopez, a law student in the city's university had his class of about 20 adults participate as he sketched the lesson outline on a blackboard. The class ended with their repeating the memory verse until they could take their turn with other classes in repeating it at the closing assembly.

-30-

Hurt, retired editor of Texas' Baptist Standard, visited Guatemala on a tour of Southern Baptist work in Middle America and the Caribbean.

(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist papers by Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355

W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2000
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

February 17, 1978

SBC Membership 13 Million,
Program Enrollments Drop

Hold for Release, Monday, Feb. 20

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention church membership topped 13 million for the first time in the denomination's history in the 1976-77 year, but losses were recorded in the number of baptisms and in enrollment for Sunday School, church training, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood.

The latest statistical reports show that church music was the only church program organization to experience a gain during 1976-77 and that total membership, number of SBC churches, mission gifts and total receipts also increased. SBC foreign mission work, not counted in SBC statistics, reported increases in membership, baptisms and churches.

The annual statistical report, compiled by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, was taken from reports of 34,849 Southern Baptist churches.

The total number of churches in the SBC increased by 0.5 percent, to 35,255, an increase of 182. The total includes 406 nonreporting churches.

Church membership in the SBC went up 1.2 percent, 160,594, to 13,083,199. Resident membership was reported to us 9,443,431.

Baptisms in the SBC dropped by 10.1 percent, a decrease of 38,806. The 345,690 baptisms was the lowest number in the SBC since 1949, but not as low as the 342,201 projected for 1976-77 in a recent report.

Total receipts for the convention increased by 9.2 percent, more than \$151 million, to a total of \$1.8 billion. Mission gifts went up by 10.3 percent, almost \$27 million, to a total of nearly \$290 million.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, said he was "encouraged by the continued climb in churches and the gain in membership but disturbed over the 10 percent drop in baptisms for the year."

Routh said "concern for Bold Mission Thrust is demonstrated by total missions gifts of \$290 million, with the percent of the collection plate dollar for missions climbing from 17.0 in 1976 to 17.1 in 1977." Bold Mission Thrust is the SBC emphasis to evangelize the world by the year 2000.

A separate report from the Foreign Mission Board revealed that membership in overseas churches related to Southern Baptist mission work topped the 1 million mark with 1,071,922 members, a growth of 165,380. Southern Baptist missions related work also recorded 98,715 baptisms, an increase of 14,266. Overseas churches increased by 516, bringing the total to 8,533. (Baptists overseas retain their national identity instead of becoming "Southern Baptists.")

The drop in Sunday School enrollment follows five consecutive years of gains, and directly follows an enrollment increase of 177,000 in 1975-76, the largest increase for Sunday School in 17 years.

The decrease in Sunday School enrollment of 0.4 percent represented a loss of more than 27,000 members, resulting in a total enrollment of 7,430,931.

Robert G. Fulbright, director of the Bible teaching division at the Sunday School Board, was "concerned over the loss, especially after the gain in 1975-76. A five year Sunday School growth strategy is now under development," Fulbright said, "by personnel in state Baptist conventions and Sunday School departments and the board's Sunday School department to show a gain in Sunday School enrollment."

Church training enrollment was off 3.9 percent from the 1975-76 total, to an enrollment of slightly less than 1.8 million, reflecting a loss of 72,227.

Roy T. Edgemon, newly elected director of the church training department at the Sunday School Board, said he believed "last year's decline in church training marked the beginning of the end of a downward trend in enrollment. I feel that pastors are now recognizing that the failure to train our people in Bible doctrine, discipleship and ministry is the cause of an erosion in all of Baptist life," Edgemon said. "I also believe that pastors are now ready to move aggressively to equip, build-up and grow their people in the Lord."

Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) enrollment dropped by 1.8 percent in 1976-77, a loss of 20,949 to a total of 1,118,085, while Brotherhood enrollment dropped 1.2 percent, or 5,672, to a total of 473,309.

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the WMU, said, "We are heart sick at the membership loss of more than 10,000 girls and 1,000 Girls in Action (GA) organizations. How can we talk about a Bold Mission Thrust and fail to provide missions training for children? I would like to ask every pastor whose church lacks GA or any other WMU organization to get in touch with us, so that we can correct the problem."

In church music, the 0.7 percent increase of 9,506 brought the total enrollment to 1,382,104.

William J. Reynolds, secretary of the church music department, said he was "grateful for the enrollment gains in church music." He added that "major contributing factors to the gain were recognition by church leadership of the significance of the church music program and the excellent work of state music departments."

Sunday School continued to lead in the number of churches reporting an ongoing program, with a total of 34,363. Church music was reported in the second highest number of churches, with 23,428, followed closely by WMU with 23,047. Church training was reported in 21,265 churches and Brotherhood in 15,359 churches.

The uniform church letters also reported 756 church type missions and 612 other type missions started during the 1976-77 year. More than 1,000 churches reported some kind of ministry to mentally retarded persons, with a total enrollment of almost 9,000. Deaf classes have an enrollment of more than 10,000 persons in 681 SBC churches, and church libraries were reported in 18,000 churches.

-30-

Summary of the 1977 Southern Baptist Convention statistics:

	<u>1976-77</u>	<u>1975-76</u>	<u>Gain or Loss</u>	<u>Percent Gain or Loss</u>
Churches	35,255	35,073	182	0.5
Total Membership	13,083,199	12,922,605	160,594	1.2
Baptisms	345,690	384,496	-38,806	-10.1
Sunday School Enroll.	7,430,931	7,458,375	-27,444	-0.4
CT Enrollment	1,778,179	1,850,406	-72,227	-3.9
WMU Enrollment	1,118,085	1,139,034	-20,949	-1.8
Brotherhood Enrollment	473,309	478,981	-5,672	-1.2
Church Music Enrollment	1,382,104	1,372,598	9,506	0.7
Total Receipts	\$1,797,139,698	\$1,645,959,837	\$151,179,861	9.2
Total Mission Gifts	\$289,372,474	\$262,373,823	\$26,998,651	10.3

#####

Retired Louisiana Leader,
L. T. Hastings, Dies

MONROE, La. (BP)--Luther Thomas Hastings, 93, past president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Monroe, died here on Feb. 15.

Funeral services for Hastings, pastor of the church for 24 years, were held Feb. 17.

He was the father of C. Brownlow Hastings, a staff member of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board interfaith witness department.

Hastings served on the board of directors for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; as state evangelist for Louisiana; and as pastor of churches in New Orleans and in Rusk and Jacksonville, Tex. He established the first church-owned radio station in New Orleans.

Upon retirement, he became professor of Old Testament and preaching at Clear Creek Mountain Preachers' School in Pineville, Ky.

Other survivors include three sisters, five grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

The family requested that memorials be made through First Baptist Church, Monroe, to the Clear Creek Preachers' School, designated for the L. T. Hastings Chair of Bible.

-30-

"Mountaintop"
To Air On ABC

Baptist Press
2/17/78

FORT WORTH (BP)--"Mountaintop," from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's "The Human Dimension" series, will be seen on national television Sunday, February 26, on the ABC program, "Directions."

"Mountaintop" is an anti-smoking film which includes "testimonies" from longtime smokers. They describe the damage to their health from smoking, and many offer excuses for not quitting.

"Directions" is an ABC public affairs program produced by Sid Darion. John C. Stevens, vice president of the Radio and Television Commission's television department, wrote and produced the script for "Mountaintop."

Local newspapers should be consulted for area viewing schedules.

-30-

Mrs. Guard,
Ring Donor, Dies

By Judy Touchton

Baptist Press
2/17/78

ATLANTA (BP)--Myla Koetter Guard, whose engagement ring may become a symbol of Southern Baptists' sacrifice for missions, died in a Macon, Ga., nursing home at the end of January.

Mrs. Guard, 91, struggling against cancer, sent her diamond ring to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB) in Atlanta in November.

Her gift arrived, uninsured in a tattered ring box, to be used "for some young missions woman or to best advantage."

-more-

Her selfless gesture touched the hearts of many at the HMB and around the country.

A Foreign Mission Board employee wrote offering to buy the ring and leave it in keeping of the HMB.

A 66-year old woman in Houston, Tex., read about Mrs. Guard's gift and called the HMB to say she would be willing to sacrifice to buy the ring herself.

A Kentucky pastor wrote suggesting the ring be sold with the understanding that the buyer permanently entrust it to the safekeeping of the HMB.

In response the HMB employees plan to buy the ring and give it to the board to keep the spirit of Mrs. Guard's sacrifice "in the HMB family." Staff members have indicated their gifts to purchase the ring will be "over and above" their gifts to the upcoming Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions.

Mrs. Guard, who was hospitalized in December for pneumonia complications to the lung cancer already taking her life, was transferred to a Macon nursing home on advice of her doctors. The pneumonia had cleared and the doctors were not sure how long she could live.

"At the risk of sounding 'not sad'," her daughter, Mrs. Myla Bennett, wrote to the HMB in February, "I was relieved to know Mother had passed away.

"She had always been a very active person, and for her, she had ceased living several weeks before. Besides, all of our family knew perfectly well that she had gone to be where she wanted to be. Death for her and for us was not the end of her life."

Even in death, Mrs. Guard proved her devotion to missions.

Her funeral, which she planned, was not mournful. Instead, the service, held in Fayetteville, Ark., had a theme of missions, according to her wishes.

The family asked members of the church in Watkinsville, Ga., and First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, where she had been a member, to send no flowers, but instead give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

"Mother would have shied away from publicity of her gift," said her daughter. "She was a private person who thought more of others than of herself.

"All of us will miss her," the daughter continued. "But I am perfectly sure of the fact that she is at this moment looking down from heaven, wondering why those 'slow' Southern Baptists don't do more for the cause of missions."

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

**460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219**

LYNN MAY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37203

HO

CD

FEB. 20 1978