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HMB slates dedication
of new building June 21

By Eddy Oliver

Baptist Press
5/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The Home Mission Board will host an open house and dedication ceremony for its new facility in Alpharetta, Ga., on Wednesday, June 21, during the June 20-22 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta.

"Our trustees and staff are anxious to share this very special moment of the Home Mission Board's 150th anniversary with every Southern Baptist who supports our work and our missionaries," HMB President Larry Lewis said.

From 1 to 5 p.m., participants can take a self-guided tour of the five-story structure. A dedication ceremony is scheduled at 3 p.m.

Purchased in 1991 at a cost of \$1.3 million, the property is located in Alpharetta, an Atlanta suburb 25 miles north of downtown. HMB directors sold the midtown Atlanta site in 1990 for \$14.5 million, and has leased the space until completion of the \$20 million structure.

The 184,000-square-foot facility has many unique features designed to enhance efficiency and create a pleasant working environment. A lake with a one-half mile walking path is on the 34-acre site, and also serves irrigation needs.

Also included is a state-of-the-art video production facility and studio, 500-seat auditorium, training rooms, bookstore, library and prayer room. A dining facility will serve the needs of employees and guests, and adequate parking for 450 vehicles is available.

Participants in the dedication program include Stephen Swofford, HMB board of directors chairman; Morris H. Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; Ralph Smith, chairman of the site and building committee; Lewis; Danny Moore, director of the business division; Robert Banks, executive vice president for operations; and William Tanner, executive director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and former HMB executive director.

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Also on the program are Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union; James Williams, president of the Brotherhood Commission; and Jerry Rankin, president of the Foreign Mission Board. The Sons of Jubal brass ensemble will provide music.

Maps to the building will be available at the HMB's exhibit area in the Georgia World Congress Center during the Southern Baptist Convention.

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CLC's Land, others
decry gene patenting

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
5/22/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--The executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's ethics agency has joined leaders from many of the country's other religious groups in calling for a moratorium on the patenting of human and animal genes.

In a May 18 press conference in Washington, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's Richard Land and others charged as grossly unethical the U.S. Patent Office's policy of granting patents on human genes and genetically engineered animals to businesses, universities and individuals. They called for the patent office to enforce an immediate moratorium until Congress can determine the federal government's policy on the issue.

The patent policy rejects the long-held view life is a creation of God and makes it an invention of human beings, the spokesmen said. It also grants a monopoly of ownership on life, they charged.

While the CLC generally has supported advances in genetic science, such patenting is a "particularly egregious abuse of genetic technology," Land said. "Animal and human life are the creation of God. In fact, animals and human beings are 'pre-owned' beings.

"Our candid presupposition is that human beings, and even animals, are more than the sum of their DNA."

Under the revised policy, patents may be granted to an applicant for 17 years on human genes, cells, organs and embryos, as well as genetically engineered animals. Defenders of gene patenting argue patents do not grant ownership and they are necessary to continue the development of new cures and therapies.

"The next generation of modern medicines and cures will never get out of research labs if efforts to halt the patenting of genes are successful," said Carl Feldbaum, president of the Biotechnology Industry Organization, in a prepared statement.

Methodist Bishop Kenneth Carder said such an argument "ignores the deeper ethical issues. It assumes that anything profitable ought to be permissible.

"The patenting of human genes by those who identify the genes represents a form of biological colonialism in which the explorer claims ownership. Exploitation in the name of economic advantage tends to be the result," said Carder, bishop of the Nashville, Tenn., area of the United Methodist Church and chairman of the UMC's Genetic Science Task Force.

Saying they did not oppose continued genetic research, the religious leaders said patenting hinders, rather than helps, progress on finding cures by giving a monopoly to a researcher.

In addition to other problems, gene patenting "commodifies" human beings and their body parts, Land said.

"Marketing human life is a form of genetic slavery," he said. "Instead of whole persons being marched in shackles to the market block, human cell-lines and gene sequences are labeled, patented and sold to the highest bidders."

Only an ethic founded on the sanctity of human life will protect people against a technology based on the "greatest good for the greatest number," Land said.

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Among the experimental procedures which violate the sacredness of humanity, he said, is the introduction of animal genetic material into human genes. Such experimentation is a "form of genetic bestiality," Land said.

The possibilities are nightmarish, he said.

"This isn't a slippery slope," Land said. "This is a drop into an abyss.

"We believe (genetic engineering) is going to dwarf the pro-life debate within a few years. We are on the threshold of mind-bending debates about the nature of human life and animal life. We see altering life forms, creating new life forms, as a revolt against God's sovereignty and the attempt by humankind to usurp God and be God."

The U.S. Patent Office has granted patents on nine animals and has requests on another 200, said Jeremy Rifkin, an organizer of the religious protest

After ruling in 1987 animals could be patented, the office granted its first animal patent in 1988 to DuPont Co. on a genetically engineered mouse. The mouse contained genes found in human beings, chickens and other animals. It was engineered to contain a variety of cancer-causing genes.

The Supreme Court unknowingly opened the door for such patent office rulings in a 1980 opinion. The justices ruled in a 5-4 decision a microbe designed to consume oil slicks could be patented, but all nine justices agreed the opinion was a narrow one which should not impact future research.

The religious leaders' opposition was announced after a two-year effort by the Foundation on Economic Trends, headed by Rifkin, a frequent critic of biotech companies, and the UMC's General Board of Church and Society.

While Rifkin said there are plans for action in the courts as well as Congress, Land and other leaders said they will seek to inform the members of their groups on the issue so they can influence public policy makers.

Among the 187 signers are many Catholic bishops, as well as leaders of most of the mainline Protestant denominations; various evangelical bodies; American Baptist Churches, USA; National Baptist Convention USA; and representatives of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu groups.

The text of the statement they agreed to is:

"We, the undersigned religious leaders, oppose the patenting of human and animal life forms. We are disturbed by the U.S. Patent Office's recent decision to patent human body parts and several genetically engineered animals. We believe that humans and animals are creations of God, and as such should not be patented as human inventions."

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Land: Medical research
points to man's corruption

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
5/22/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Calling research in the area of human genetics the "technological equivalent of the Tower of Babel," Richard Land told graduates at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary May 12 America is in the midst of a "full-scale revolt against the deity of God."

"I cannot think of a time in the history of the American nation when we have been at a more critical juncture -- and we haven't seen anything yet," said Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Attempts to patent the discovery of genetic codes and the formation of new human and life forms by U.S. companies are evidence we are "literally in a realized walking-talking version of Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World,'" said Land, in remarks during the spring baccalaureate service on Southeastern's Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

"If there was ever a time that God has sent watchmen to stand watch on the walls -- to sound the alarm -- it is now," Land continued, encouraging the graduates to stand by their convictions even when they are standing alone.

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"When you are God's man, there are times when no one understands. That is why the Bible tells us we do not have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was tempted in all ways like as we are; yet he was without sin."

Likening it to Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane, Land said, "When you're on your face in prayer and everybody else is asleep and has turned their back on you and no one understands -- he understands. And it makes all the difference in the world when he kneels to lift you up -- for he does it with a nail-scarred hand. He understands. He's been there."

The church must call the nation to return to the old paths and stand in the right ways according to Scripture, Land said, bemoaning the spiral of sin that is dragging unrepentant man downward.

"In the first chapter of the Book of Romans, Paul writes of the downward spiral of sin: The only thing that is perhaps more awesome about sin than its consequences is its ability to beget ever more heinous sin," Land said.

Borrowing from the words of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, Land said of mankind in the late 20th century: "They have no shame at all; they have lost their ability to blush." Science seeks to create life not only in man's image but in some new image, Land said, "shaping living idols for his own whim according to his finite ideas of perfection and beauty and utility."

"It is not that we no longer believe in God. It is not that we no longer want to rebel against God. It's that we want to be God!" Land thundered.

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Kenya gunmen shoot, rob
Baptist missionaries

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
5/22/95

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Jo Scales, a Southern Baptist missionary in Kenya for 25 years, was seriously wounded May 21 by gunmen who sprayed the vehicle she was driving with automatic weapons to force the car to stop.

The men did not aim at the tires but shot through the doors and windows. Several bullets were deflected by the doors and others punctured the roof and windows on trajectories that indicated they passed within inches of Scales, from Shreveport, La., and her husband, Louie, from Lubbock, Texas.

Her right leg was shattered by one of the bullets and, according to doctors, she will probably require a bone graft to bridge a one-inch gap in the femur presently held in place by a metal plate. She also was wounded in the left leg and on the right hand.

"I'd say she's in stable but still serious condition," Sam Turner, administrator of the Baptist Mission of Kenya, said. "She's fully alert but there's a real danger of infection, blood clots and other complications." Since surgery she has been in a "high dependency unit" of Nairobi Hospital.

Around 5 p.m. on May 21, the Scaleses were returning to their home in Embu, Kenya, after a mission committee meeting in Nairobi. About one hour north of the Kenya capital, a car began to tailgate them. Scales had just commented she wished they would go ahead and pass instead of pressuring her, when the car pulled alongside them and the men brandished guns.

When the Scaleses did not stop immediately, the men opened fire, shooting out both rear windows and the front window on the driver's side and shooting holes in the front windshield, both right doors and the door post on the left side. One gun had a banana clip on it and the other appeared to be an Uzzi, the Scaleses said.

They ordered both missionaries out of the car but when Mrs. Scales collapsed they concentrated on Scales, ripping his pockets to grab his money. That satisfied them (Scales had withdrawn cash from the bank the previous day) and the thieves fled in their car.

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Within minutes Kenyans working in nearby fields, who heard the shooting and Mrs. Scales' screams, came to their aid. They helped her husband bandage the wounds with a small first aid kit the couple keeps in their car, then lifted her into the back seat.

In a state of shock Scales drove the approximately 40 miles back to Nairobi and straight to Nairobi Hospital and found the emergency room staff standing by. Unknown to him, friends from Meru had witnessed the robbery from their car and had driven straight to a telephone to call the hospital.

Another Kenya missionary, Marcia Richardson, was at Nairobi Hospital visiting her husband, Jim, who has pneumonia, and saw Scales drive up. She alerted Turner and within 30 minutes five Southern Baptist missionaries with the proper blood type were at the hospital to give blood.

Missionaries who saw the car marveled at near misses -- describing how some bullets were deflected by seemingly too-thin sheet metal and how other bullets had traveled on a trajectory that seemed to be en route to the Scaleses in the head or chest.

"They both are alive," one woman said simply, "by the breath of God."

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(BP) photos (two mugshots) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

'95 SBC Book of Reports
available electronically

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
5/22/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It's everything you ever wanted to know about the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting -- including reports from all the denomination's agencies, what will be voted on, names of all the officers and the constitution -- and it is now available on SBCNet, the convention's data communications network.

The 1995 SBC Book of Reports, 263 pages in book form, is available to subscribers to SBCNet in the Library Section, General Ministry B Forum, SBC 95, according to Ernest Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee. The Book of Reports is prepared each year by the Executive Committee under the supervision of SBC Recording Secretary David W. Atchison, Brentwood, Tenn.

Messengers to the annual meeting receive a copy without charge when they register; however, extra copies are \$5 each, Mosley said. The importance of the document's availability on SBCNet is Southern Baptists have a chance to scan the book one month prior to the annual meeting in Atlanta, June 20-22. It is especially helpful, Mosley said, to be able to read before the meeting most of the recommendations scheduled for a vote.

SBCNet, a private forum on CompuServe, also provides, without extra charge, the software to read the document, which is in Adobe Acrobat page format. The "Adobe Acrobat Reader 2.0," for both Windows and Macintosh formats, is found in the Library Section, General Ministry A Forum, in the Computer Support section, according to David Haywood of the Baptist Sunday School Board and coordinator of the network.

SBCNet recently expanded, Haywood said, to three forums, adding more message and library areas. It allowed offering of the Book of Reports, a relatively large data file. SBCNet now has two ministry forums, A and B, plus a forum for state Baptist conventions. The network has nearly 5,000 subscribers, Haywood said.

The network may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed free by the Sunday School Board. Kits, which provide access to service of CompuServe and SBCNet, contain software, account information and a monetary credit toward initial charges. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions.

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The cost of SBCNet and CompuServe are at economical, flat monthly rates. A monthly charge of \$7.95 is made for unlimited use of SBCNet. This feature enables users to read and download files and participate in the on-line conferences without per-minute charges. The services include supplemental teaching helps for adult and youth Sunday school lessons; Baptist Press, the daily news service of the SBC; a News Room with news, photos and features stories from SBC agencies and state conventions; Facts & Trends, the Sunday School Board's newsletter for church and denominational leaders; CompassionNet, a worldwide electronic prayer network sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board; and many others.

The CompuServe monthly flat rate is \$9.95 and provides SBCNet access and unlimited use of more than 120 basic CompuServe services, including a limited time each month on the Internet. People who are already members of CompuServe may join SBCNet by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt.

To order an SBCNet kit or to obtain additional information, call 1-800-325-7749.

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Social worker recounts
baby's heavenly adoption

By Kellie Crowe

Baptist Press
5/22/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The telephone rang at 2 in the morning. A voice on the other end of the line explained there was a young mother in ICU with half of her skull crushed. She had been brought in from the streets badly beaten and barely alive. Doctors had to perform an emergency caesarean section to save the severely bruised baby who now lay in the neo-natal unit fighting for each tiny breath. The young mother, Mary, (not her real name) wanted to talk with Teri Blanton.

"She (Mary) had gotten my name from a fellow cellmate whom I had met with in prison just days before," Blanton explained. Immediately, Blanton rushed to the hospital to be with Mary.

Within 15 minutes of being released from prison, Mary had been beaten severely by her pimp. "He was angry because she had lost him money for the five days that she had been in jail," Blanton said.

"I walked in the room and introduced myself and she just started crying. She begged me to help her place her baby for adoption."

Blanton, director of the adoption and maternity services division of Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Dallas, makes it a rule to schedule appointments in pencil. She plans for the unexpected.

"There is nothing typical about my weeks. I may meet with a young woman who is facing a crisis pregnancy, I may be in court testifying to terminate parental rights or I may be helping a family finalize their adoption," Blanton said.

She begins her workday at 7:30 a.m. and often does not leave until well after 9 p.m. She is on call 24 hours a day.

In her mind, this is nothing special. She added, "as disciples of Christ and ministers, we are all on call 24 hours a day" doing kingdom work.

Blanton graduated in 1989 with dual degrees -- the master of arts in church social services from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and the master of science in social work from the University of Texas at Arlington.

"I wanted to be a professional but I also wanted to be a minister," Blanton explained. "The whole purpose of getting the dual degree is so that the secular world will see you as an equal -- as a professional. While building on your foundation of social work, you can integrate the Christian faith to appropriately balance the two for ministry."

At Buckner, Blanton ministers to what is called the "triad," comprised of the birth mother, the baby and the adoptive family.

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"We try to help all three members realize that they have a common thread of loss and grief," Blanton said. The birth mother is not alone in her pain. According to Blanton, a grieving process takes place for the adoptive family as well.

"It is our responsibility to help the family come to a point of peace about their infertility and to know that it is not a punishment. It does not mean that (either of them is) any less of a person. It just means that for one reason or another, they are unable to have children. God still has grace in their lives.

"God will provide healing through the grief and loss that the triad members experience through his grace and mercy," Blanton emphasized.

Blanton views her call as an opportunity to share the gospel incarnate to a grieving, hurting and, at times, dying world.

Just hours after leaving the side of Mary, the young mother severely beaten by her pimp, Blanton received another emergency phone call from the hospital. It was the nurse explaining that they were losing Mary and that she needed to come quickly to the hospital.

Blanton said Mary was crying, yet conscious when she entered the room. "She told me, 'I want to know that peace. I want to know that love.'" Blanton led Mary in a prayer to receive Christ as her Savior.

Before dying an hour later, Mary asked Blanton to write her infant daughter a letter. Hurriedly, she scribbled as the young mother told her child how much she was loved and that she wanted a better life for her than she had experienced.

"The nurses let me spend some time with the baby after her mother died. I prayed that the Lord would bless this child and assure this child of what a special mother she had and that she was loved," Blanton said. "I asked the Lord to find a special home for her."

After leaving the hospital, Blanton received another phone call several hours later. The baby, too, had died of complications.

"I really had a hard time with that. I kept praying 'Lord, WHY? Why when there is so much potential and hope? Why would the birth mother and baby die?' In my flesh I could not understand.

"The truth is that on that day, Mary was holding her child in heaven herself and was able to tell that little girl how much she loved her. What better family to be adopted into than the family of God," Blanton said. "What better family for the baby than with our Lord?"

Blanton said the experience with Mary and her baby confirmed her call to minister through adoption. "It really helped me to put into perspective that all of us are touched by adoption. It may not be human adoption, but it is a spiritual adoption. Adoption is a very special gift from God. It shows his mercy, his grace and his love in the most beautiful manner that you can ever imagine."

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet and upon request from the Southwestern's office of public relations.

1996 Olympics ministry
to stretch beyond Atlanta

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Ministry to the millions of 1996 Olympic fans doesn't have to be limited to those in Atlanta, said a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board evangelism specialist.

A new "interactive pocket guide" to the Olympics can be used by churches anywhere, said Toby Frost, HMB associate director of mass evangelism. Frost also is chairman of the evangelism committee for Atlanta International Ministries '96, Olympic ministry coordinators sponsored by the Home Mission Board, Georgia Baptist Convention and local Baptist associations.

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The 32-page booklet lists world and Olympic records for sporting events from archery to yachting. It includes space to record the 1996 winners as well as a four-page explanation of the plan of salvation.

The four-color guide will be distributed in Atlanta during the Olympics and will be used by Christian groups in at least 40 other countries, Frost said.

Woman's Missionary Union groups in Georgia and South Carolina already have ordered copies, Frost said. Members plan to distribute the guides at interstate rest stops as people drive to Atlanta for the games. Some will be distributed at sites throughout the Southeast where athletes from other countries will come to train for the Olympics.

Churches also can give one to every household in their communities, Frost said. People can use the guide as they watch the Olympics on television.

Each guide includes a tear-out postcard to request more information about Christianity. The postcards will be sent to local churches for follow-up on people who express an interest, Frost said.

More than 2 million guides already have been ordered, Frost said. Each guide costs 25 cents with orders of 1,000 or more. The cost decreases with larger orders, with a minimum cost of 11.5 cents per copy.

To order interactive pocket guides, call the AIM '96 office at (404) 872-0096. Or call Frost at (404) 898-7786 or (404) 410-6227 after June 9.

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Rankin: Today's graduates may be
last generation to reach world

By Mary Ellen Price

Baptist Press
5/22/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--"You may very well be the last generation of Christian witnesses that has the privilege of being used by God to complete the task and touch the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin told 198 graduates during Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's 175th commencement May 19 in Louisville, Ky.

Drawing on his experience as a foreign missionary and citing Southern Baptist efforts to evangelize the world by the year 2000 through the Bold Mission Thrust, Rankin declared understanding the end times from the perspective of missions "portends the imminent return of Christ as never before."

"It just may be that you are finding yourself completing this era of equipping and education in the final quinquennium of this century because God has called you to be a part of that generation that finally reaches our world for Jesus Christ," said Rankin.

In his address, Rankin compared the graduates to Paul "who was not an apostle in that original group that laid the foundation of the church and proclaimed the gospel to extend and establish the kingdom, but who was an end-times kind of apostle -- one called to complete the task. "

Rankin named three elements necessary to be "an end-times" kind of apostle: a vision to evangelize the nation, an empowerment for one's calling and task and a total focus of one's life on Jesus Christ.

Rankin urged graduates not to impose boundaries on their ministries.

"Paul did not restrict his ministry by drawing a circle around the church to which God had called him to serve in Antioch," he said. "It was Paul who broke the gospel out of the Jewish tradition in those narrow cultural contexts of the early church.

"And you have the opportunity of seizing that vision or forfeiting the opportunity," Rankin told the graduates. "The ones that God will use to complete that task, to reach the world, to be that last generation are not those who seek to build their own kingdom and satisfy their own egos for recognition and success, but those who are willing to humble themselves before God."

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During commencement, the seminary marked a milestone related to advanced study in its school of church music. Angela Easterday of Knoxville, Tenn., became the 100th person to receive the doctor of musical arts degree from Southern. The seminary awarded its first doctoral degree in church music in 1962.

In addition, John D. Hendrix, Basil Manly Jr. professor of Christian education at Southern, was presented the Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Award for Teaching Excellence. The award, named for a retired Southern Seminary Christian education professor and his wife, is presented annually to a Southern professor. The selection is made by a committee composed of students, faculty and alumni.

In a separate ceremony later that day, Boyce Bible School, a division of Southern Seminary that provides ministerial training for people without college degrees, presented associate of arts degrees to 17 graduates. Boyce presented certificates or diplomas to an additional 38 graduates.

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John Hendrix receives
Southern Seminary honor

Baptist Press
5/22/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor John D. Hendrix is the 1995 recipient of the Louisville, Ky., school's Findley B. and Louvenia Edge Award for Teaching Excellence.

Hendrix, the seminary's Basil Manly Jr. professor of Christian education, received the honor May 19 during the seminary's 175th commencement. He has taught at Southern Seminary since 1984.

Prior to joining Southern's faculty, Hendrix worked for 18 years on the staff of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. He also has served on the ministerial staffs of Southern Baptist churches in Missouri and Louisiana.

Hendrix earned the B.A. degree from William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., the M.Div. degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., and the M.R.E. and Ed.D. degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Edge award, named in honor of a retired professor of Christian education at Southern Seminary and his wife, has been endowed by the Edges and friends of the couple. The recipient receives a cash prize of \$2,500.

The honoree is selected by a committee of students, faculty and alumni on the basis of effective teaching, personal care for students and demonstrated concern for students' spiritual development.

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New Orleans Seminary
dedicates Georgia campus

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
5/22/95

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary officially dedicated its new North Georgia Campus Monday, May 15.

Located on Columbia Drive in Decatur, the 6.5-acre property and 50,000-square-foot buildings are a gift from the members of Columbia Drive Baptist Church. Church members voted Sept. 11, 1994, to give their property and facilities to New Orleans Seminary. On Sept. 13, 1994, seminary trustees voted unanimously to accept the gift. Renovations and equipment expenditures on the part of New Orleans Seminary now make the value of the property approximately \$5 million dollars.

Principle speaker for the occasion was Landrum P. Leavell II, interim president of New Orleans Seminary. Leavell expressed gratitude to the Columbia Drive church for the gift of property and facility. Church members continue to hold their regular services in the building. He also thanked Nelson Price and the Roswell Street Baptist Church for the 15 years they served as host for the North Georgia extension center of New Orleans Seminary.

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Two women were honored during the service. Ondine Gallman was presented a book commemorating the 75 years of New Orleans Seminary history. Mrs. Gallman is the widow of Lee Gallman Sr., first director of Southern Baptist Convention seminary extension work. Maurice Graham was honored in like fashion. Her husband, Harold Graham, was the first director of New Orleans Seminary's North Georgia Extension Center.

Also dedicated was the Nelson Price Communication Center, which houses the state-of-the-art compressed interactive video (CIV) equipment. Through the use of multiple cameras, microphones and large-screen monitors, students at the North Georgia Campus can interact in person and in real time with professors and classmates on the main campus.

New Orleans is the first SBC seminary to implement CIV technology.

The seminary began offering classes at the new facility in January. Current enrollment is 337. Summer school classes will be offered for both undergraduate and graduate students at the North Georgia Campus from the last week of May through the first week of August.

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Baptist cooperation affirmed
even if lacking 'Baptist' name By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press
5/22/95

SAN DIEGO (BP)--Harmony broke out in the San Diego Southern Baptist Association May 15, averting a fight in part over whether a member church must call itself "Baptist."

Messengers attending the association's mid-annual meeting overwhelmingly approved a compromise worked out in advance to peacefully settle a brewing disagreement over guidelines covering the relationship between the association and its member churches.

Among other things, the settlement dropped a requirement that churches applying for membership in the association include the word Baptist in their names. Instead, use of the Baptist label will be "strongly encouraged."

The compromise changed language in three documents adopted by the association's executive board Jan. 31.

"We are a healthy association," B. Wade McKinley, director of missions, told messengers after the vote. "When we have differences we can discuss them, talk about them, argue about them and we can reach a consensus and move forward."

Other guidelines urge member churches to identify with Southern Baptist work by:

- endorsing the "Baptist Faith and Message;"
- "giving money to the association and the Cooperative Program" through California Southern Baptist Convention;
- participating in association and state convention meetings; and
- including information about their "Baptist orientation and affiliation with the San Diego Southern Baptist Association" in classes for new members.

Still others direct how the association's missions funds may be administered.

Phil Hester, pastor of Northstar Community Church, told messengers why some in the association felt written guidelines were needed.

"A handshake, which was the way we did business as Americans and Southern Baptists for generations in the past, was somehow inappropriate as we moved into the 21st century," Hester said. Without written guidelines, he said, the association was "flying by the seat of our pants."

One issue the guidelines sought to address was a continuing trend for some new congregations to adopt "community church" identities while still cooperating in Southern Baptist missions and ministry programs. Ironically, the disputed proposals were first recommended during the association's annual meeting last year at Daybreak Community Church in Carlsbad.

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The vote approving the compromise is seen as affirming traditional Southern Baptist polity while embracing innovative approaches to Baptist work by non-traditional congregations -- even those which choose to be known by names other than Baptist.

Details of the compromise were revealed during the association's executive board meeting held before the mid-annual meeting of messengers from San Diego Association churches.

"Our Lord said we could be identified by the way in which we love one another. It is in that spirit that we make these changes and present them to you," Hester told his fellow pastors.

Several who had opposed the original proposals agreed the new ones were better.

"The document that has emerged is not so much a compromise as it is a synthesis," said Dwight Simpson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mira Mesa. He said it "takes us out of the role of being policemen" while more clearly and completely stating what it means to be cooperatively involved in Southern Baptist work.

During discussion, some messengers questioned whether one proposal would allow the association to seize the assets of any church the association's executive board deems to have ceased cooperating with the association.

"That is not the desire of the association," replied Carl Whitlock, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pacific Beach. "This document is about helping the churches in the future."

Among hundreds attending the mid-annual meeting, only two stood to vote against the revised guidelines which just hours earlier received unanimous approval by the association's executive board.

Speaking during the executive board session, McKinley commended the core group of pastors on both sides of the issue who worked together for several months to resolve their differences. He also got approval to host an appreciation dinner for those pastors and their wives at the association's expense.

"This also tells me that this association is not mine. It is the churches' and that's the way it ought to be, and that's the way I want it, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart," McKinley said.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "SBC resolutions committee asks to preview messengers' proposals," dated 5/18/95, please correct the name in the second paragraph to Charles T. Carter, not Charles Cater.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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