Baptist Student Center Groundbreaking

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The breaking of ground for construction of the permanent Baptist religious center on the campus of our University marks an important milestone not only for your religious group but also in the life of the institution. It brings to fruition the hopes, the aspirations and the religious ideals of all of your faith who have had part in the undertaking, but especially on this occasion meaningful to those of you who have the vision to foresee and plan this great accomplishment and also to those who with determination and devotion to the cause have, through the years, worked incessantly toward the accomplishment of this objective. The institutional congratulations which I bring in the absence of the President are therefore well deserved by you and by your works.
A wise and tolerant policy of our State Government whereby man's
inviolable freedom of religion is recognized and he is encouraged
in the exercise of that freedom to
worship in accordance with
his belief is being exemplified here
today. More than twenty years ago,
in 1928 to be exact, the
Louisiana Legislature declared its
policy favoring in favor of the
strengthening of the moral
influence of religion in the
lives of students at this University.
By Act 240 of 1928, the University
was given authority, through its
Board of Supervisors, to lean
for a term not to exceed ninety
nine year for each lease, to
religious organizations, any portion
of the grounds of the University
in order to permit such organizations
to erect and maintain student centers
with facilities for religious worship
and instruction, permanent
with the architectural plans for each
student center to be approved by the
Board of supervisors. The beauty
of your student center which has
been so authorized will enhance
the physical aspects of our
Campus, but religious student
centers are institutions for
spiritual guidance and we see
in this accomplishment further
vindication of a policy designed to enrich the moral life of our University. Through these facilities which you will construct, University students of the Baptist faith will in the years ahead find that enrichment in the life of the spirit which makes for the more completely educated man; the man who sees life as imbued with a Divine purpose and as part of a Divine plan. Thus Religious as a part is why, I think, that the work of the religious centers on our campuses are so important.

As early as 1819, Thomas Jefferson established the University motivated in part by a desire to express his protest against the then dominant sectarian influence in American higher education.
as it existed in that early day
prior to the rise of the
publicly supported institutions
of higher learning, as we know them.

Jefferson suggested though that the
Churches might establish agencies
about the University though not
organically connected with it. He
thereby gave his recognition to the
importance of religious influence in
the well-founded educational
development of the student. Today
at another great State University
we may say that 130 years later the
plan upon which you are
embracing combined in a marked
degree with the plan which
Jefferson visualized in the founding
of his University.

To the man of religious
convictions this ceremony is a thrilling
accomplishment. Who can measure the
potential influence for good implicit in such an undertaking as this. In the presence of the Almighty whose cause is here being advanced according to the religious beliefs of those of you who sponsor this project we praise and we are glad I join in expressing the wish that His choicest blessings be showered upon all who so unselfishly and sincerely work in advancing His Cause.

Your University derives keen satisfaction from this occasion. The sod of clay which you turn here will soon give way to a structure designed to endure for generations and through whose portals students may seek that guidance along the path of your faith to a stronger spiritual strength guiding their ways through life.
I congratulate the Louisiana Baptist
On behalf of the University I congratulate
the Louisiana Baptist Convention and
extend every warm and good wish to
your pastor and your activity leaders
on this important undertaking.