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Patterson says adios to Southeastern

By Steve DeVane

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WAKE FOREST—Paige Patterson hopes to do his part to bring revival to Texas, he told trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary July 21 as he departed for a new role in his home state.

“If there's a state anywhere that needs a great movement of God, it's my home state of Texas,” said Patterson, who will assume the presidency of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth Aug. 1.

Texas, like North Carolina, is only one of about three states where conservatives have not “overwhelmingly taken the day,” Patterson noted.

Patterson asked Southeastern's trustees to pray for Southwestern and for Texas Baptists. Based on media accounts of him, Texas might be expecting the worst, he noted, speculating some might be headed for their tornado shelters.

He asked trustees to pray that God will give him wisdom regarding “interpersonal relationships and decisions.” Despite his reputation, he said, it pains him to hurt people.

In asking for prayer for Texas, Patterson also noted that Robert Sloan, the president of Baylor University, is taking heat from some critics because he

is attempting to make Baylor “again an evangelical institution.”

Patterson told Southeastern trustees he is glad to have helped the North Carolina seminary return to “biblical Christianity.”

The transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention-owned seminary in the past 11 years has been “one of the most miraculous stories of the intervention of God in Christian history,” he declared.

Patterson thanked trustees for helping move Southeastern from “a seminary known for liberalism and neo-orthodoxy” to a school known for its “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Trustees voted unanimously to name their highest award the Paige Patterson Faithful Servant Award. They also named a professorship of women's studies for his wife, Dorothy. The campus center, under construction, will be named for the Pattersons.

Bart Neal, vice president for institutional advancement at Southeastern since 1993, was named interim president. He told trustees he would not be a candidate for president.

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