

\*\*\*\*\*

A S S O C I A T E D   B A P T I S T   P R E S S

\*\*\*\*\*  
Phone: (904) 262-6626   Fax: (904) 262-7745   CServe: 70420,73

July 1, 1993

IN THIS ISSUE:

- \* FMB trustees, Rankin take optimistic view of future
- \* House upholds modified ban on federally funded abortions
- \* Senate confirms Flynn as Vatican ambassador
- \* Quest for dinosaurs raises creation questions
- \* Bible scholar outlines 5 views of creation
- \* "Jurassic Park" could spark kids' questions about dinosaurs
- \* Belief in literal Bible declining, Gallup reports
- \* Hinson says Baptist hope rests with American Baptists
- \* ABC delegates address variety of social issues
- \* American Baptist receives religious-liberty award
- \* Chicago church leads march against Bulls-related violence

FMB trustees, Rankin take  
optimistic view of future

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, claiming the agency has put aside past controversy, welcomed their new president to his first meeting June 28-30.

"I am thrilled about what God is going to do through Southern Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board," Jerry Rankin told trustees in his first report as president.

Rankin, 51, was elected June 14 despite some trustee concerns that his alleged charismatic leanings would be divisive throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. The 23-year missions veteran drew 14 opposing votes, five short of the 25 percent necessary to block his election.

But those concerns didn't surface in the late June meeting, as trustees and staff predicted a reinvigorated foreign mission enterprise led by the new chief executive.

And in keeping with the mood, they postponed a potentially controversial and expensive organizational study until their August meeting.

"I'm excited about the way things are headed," said trustee chairman John Jackson of Fairfield, Calif.

"We have turned the corner and are on our way," agreed Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener, who has served as acting president for the past eight months.

John Cheyne, associate director in the board's research and planning department, told trustees the board's staff breathed "a sigh of spiritual relief" following Rankin's election. "My perception of the staff is that we stand behind him (Rankin) to support him and look with excitement to the future," he said.

If the optimistic assessments prove accurate, the board may see the end

of several years of disagreement over missiological strategy between trustees and staff. The conflict, marked by widely publicized resignations of five top administrators, including President Keith Parks, dampened staff morale and raised questions among some Southern Baptists about the future of their premier missions agency.

Benefitting from the spat was the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the organization of moderate Southern Baptists, and its fledgling missions program, now headed by Parks.

But Rankin pledged to end the conflict between staff and trustees, predicting he and trustees will "work together in unity."

"There will not be an adversarial relationship between staff and trustees," he told the board. "I would ask that we all cleanse our thinking of perceptions created and ingrained from past experiences."

Rankin rejected Parks' claim that trustees at times overstep their policy-making role and assume administrative responsibilities. The charge has been made at other Southern Baptist agencies over the past 12 years, as conservative trustees have taken an active role in steering Baptist agencies in a more conservative direction.

But, said Rankin, "I am not concerned about guarding the dichotomy between the role of administration and the role of trustees. Our manual and policies define those roles, but invoking them legalistically does not result in the kind of teamwork and trust which we must have to have God's blessing."

He added: "We welcome your (trustees') involvement, as you follow the appropriate procedures of trustee meetings, but also in an ad hoc role at any time you are available to meet in any administrative forum of our day-to-day operations."

However, he urged trustees to avoid involvement that would "result in bureaucratic delays" and warned against "strategic decisions" based on "superficial awareness, inadequate perceptions and limited channels of information."

He also asked the board to respect input from staff, whom he said are characterized by "a deep, lifelong commitment and call to missions, extensive experience which shapes our convictions, and a professional level of competency."

Rankin will have opportunity to influence a proposed study of the FMB's staff structure following the trustees' decision to delay hiring a consulting firm.

The board agreed last December to retain a consultant to study FMB staff structure. In April, its policy subcommittee heard presentations from four consulting firms, whose cost estimates ranged from \$160,000 to \$500,000.

Some trustees found those figures troubling in light of the board's recent staff layoffs and elimination of some volunteer programs due to revenue shortfalls.

When the policy subcommittee met at the end of June, it tabled a motion to select a consulting firm. Board chairman Jackson predicted the issue will be discussed again when trustees meet Aug. 16-18 in Richmond.

In other action, trustees appointed 38 new missionaries and reappointed three others during a service in Colonial Heights, Va., June 29. The additions bring the board's total mission force to 3,978.

Mission personnel committee chairman Pat Bullock said FMB missionaries will number more than 4,000 by the end of the year, based on staff assessment of candidates currently being considered. The board has a goal of 5,000 missionaries by the year 2000.

Also, trustees presented a plaque of appreciation and a check for \$2,000 to Don Kammerdiener for his service as acting president.

House upholds modified ban  
on federally funded abortions

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- In a highly charged and bitter battle, the U.S. House of Representatives upheld June 30 a 16-year-old ban on federally funded abortions for poor women.

Representatives voted 255 to 178 to approve a modified version of the Hyde amendment that has banned federal funding for abortions except to save the life of the mother. The new version adds exceptions in the cases of rape and incest.

The provision was adopted as part of an appropriations bill (H.R. 2518) that authorizes funding for the Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Education for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1994.

During debate Rep. Carrie Meek, D-Fla., called the policy unjust and said that it had victimized poor women for more than a decade.

"The right to abortion should not be based on income," she said. "Some taxpayers may object to federal money going to pay for abortion, but they don't think twice about their insurance premiums paying for another policyholder's abortion."

Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., and author of the amendment, said that providing a constitutional right to an abortion does not mean taxpayers have to pay for it.

"We have a right of free speech," Hyde said. "Does that mean the government has to buy us a personal computer? A typewriter? A megaphone?"

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., said, "The right to choose is meaningless without the means to choose."

Hyde countered, "About those people that say the poor are discriminated against, you know what we do? We tell poor people, 'You can't have a job, you can't have a good education, you can't have a decent place to live. I will tell you what we will do. We will give you a free abortion.'"

Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., responded, "I say to the gentlemen from Illinois (Hyde) that women are not beasts, and that is what we are really hearing here."

James Smith, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said passage of the amendment "is a firm rebuke of Bill Clinton's abortion policies and a major win for the pro-life movement."

Smith said abortion opponents have not won a complete victory, however, because the amendment will be harder to pass in the Senate, where opposition to abortion funding is not as strong.

In other congressional action, the House narrowly approved an appropriations bill for the District of Columbia that permits the D.C. government to fund abortions for poor women. The bill was approved 213 to 211.

A provision for an insurance program for "domestic partners" that would have included homosexual partners was defeated.

The D.C. bill likewise will go to the U.S. Senate for action.

Senate confirms Flynn  
as Vatican ambassador

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Senate confirmed Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn as the next U.S. ambassador to the Vatican June 30.

Confirmed one day after receiving a favorable recommendation from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Flynn will be the third person to fill the post since President Ronald Reagan appointed William Wilson in 1984 after Congress repealed a legislative ban on U.S.-Vatican ties in 1983.

Flynn's nomination by President Bill Clinton has been criticized by Baptists and others who oppose formal ties between the United States and the Roman Catholic Church.

One Baptist senator, Jesse Helms, R-N.C., spoke against the post of ambassador to the Vatican but not against the nominee himself.

"I judge him to be an intelligent and personable man . . .," Helms said of Flynn. "Just the same, I remain persuaded that the United States has no business sending an ambassador to any religious entity, be it Baptist or Methodist or, as is the case here, the seat of the Catholic Church."

Helms said he wanted his opposition on the record because Flynn was confirmed by voice vote. He also put in the Congressional Record a resolution opposing diplomatic ties with the Vatican that was approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in its recent annual meeting in Houston.

The resolution acknowledged Southern Baptists' commitment to religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The resolution urged senators to reject the nomination and the president to reconsider it.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission took an early stand against Clinton's Vatican appointment in a December letter to the president-elect. "It's disappointing that a Southern Baptist president has just entrenched for the foreseeable future a policy which violates church-state separation," said James Smith, CLC director of government relations, after Flynn's confirmation.

Smith said more could have been done to stop Flynn's appointment if the "religious left," traditional proponents of church-state separation, had vigorously opposed Flynn's nomination. "I think the religious left gave Clinton a free ride on it," Smith said.

The Baptist Joint Committee, a Washington, D.C.-based religious-liberty agency, also denounced the Flynn confirmation.

"This action confers special privileges on and grants special access to one particular denomination," said Oliver Thomas, BJC general counsel. "Both President Clinton and the Senate ought to know better."

Thomas said the BJC led the fight against re-establishing the U.S. Vatican ties in 1983 and remains steadfast in its opposition.

Flynn, during his testimony before the Senate committee, said he intends to advance human rights, democracy and social justice as ambassador to the Holy See.

"In my opinion, and I feel strongly about it," he said, "government is society's tool for balancing the scales of social and economic justice.

"In my view, we are elected to public office to become stewards of society's nobler impulses: to create economic and social justice where injustice prevails, and to look out for the sick, the hungry, the needy and the victims of discrimination."

Quest for dinosaurs  
raises creation questions

By Mark Wingfield

(ABP) -- Dinosaurs may fascinate children, but they can perplex adults who want to reconcile the existence of dinosaur fossils with the biblical account of creation.

Any discussion of dinosaurs and the Bible taps into one of the most controversial debates ever to touch the church: evolution vs. creationism, science vs. religion.

Yet this touchy topic is likely to surface in Christian homes across America this summer due to the popularity of the blockbuster movie "Jurassic Park," which depicts dinosaurs roaming the earth in special-effects splendor.

The topic is so controversial that many of the Southern Baptist theologians interviewed for this article declined to be quoted by name. The possibility of their views being misunderstood in such an article, they said, is too great in the current political climate of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The one thing almost everyone now agrees on is that dinosaurs did exist at some time in the past.

From that common agreement, two main schools of thought part company quickly. And then various interpretations are to be found within each of those groups.

The main dividing point depends on whether a person accepts a young-earth or old-earth model.

-- Young earth model.

The young-earth model -- favored by biblical literalists and those commonly known as "creationists" -- says the earth was created in six literal days, six 24-hour periods.

According to this view, the earth was created about 6,000 years ago. Archbishop James Usher popularized this idea in the 17th century by calculating all the genealogies of the Old Testament to determine that the earth was formed in the year 4004 B.C.

Despite scientific evidence to the contrary, creationists insist that this young-earth model must be accepted if the Bible is to be believed.

The fossil record -- layers of ancient sediment, bones and forms scientists study to understand the past -- appears the way it does due to the worldwide flood of Noah's day, creationists assert. This explains why dinosaur bones and other relics are compressed and preserved the way they are, said Bill Hoesch, public relations director for the Institute for Creation Research in San Diego, Calif.

Dinosaurs were created by God, Hoesch said. "I know they were created by God because the Bible says in Exodus 20:11 that God created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them. And that means everything.

"There were no prehistoric ages," he continued. "Man and dinosaurs must have occupied the earth at the same time if the Bible is true."

Then why are dinosaur bones and human bones located in different strata of the fossil record?

"I don't know," Hoesch explained. "Perhaps it had to do with the mobility of man running to higher ground (during the flood) ... That doesn't bother me too much."

But the flood did not wipe out the dinosaurs, Hoesch said in explaining the creationist point of view. This can be learned by reading Job 40 and 41, he said.

Those passages describe two giant beasts God talks to Job about creating, in the context of helping Job see how small he is in comparison to

God.

"Look now at the behemoth which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips. And his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar," one passage says.

In another passage God says to Job, "Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? ... His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning."

If dinosaurs were still around in Job's time, Hoesch noted, that means Noah must have taken some of them on the ark during the flood.

"There aren't that many of the dinosaur types that are the really huge ones," he reasoned. "And there's no reason why they had to be adult forms. They could have been juvenile dinosaurs (on the ark)."

Many biblical scholars who affirm the inerrancy of the Bible differ with the strict creationist point of view, especially as it relates to the Job passage. "Behemoth" is considered by some to be an unknown animal or perhaps a very large form of a hippopotamus. Likewise, "Leviathan" is considered to be another unknown creature, or perhaps a very large form of crocodile.

-- Old earth model.

Those who reject the young-earth model of creation in six literal days adopt a variety of other explanations for the Genesis creation story. The most common interpretations are that the days represent epochs of time or are symbolic language to describe stages of creation.

Using radioactive dating techniques, most modern geologists now believe the earth is about 4.5 billion years old. Christians who reject the literal-day theory of creation generally claim to explain their views of Genesis as compatible with modern scientific evidence about the age of the earth.

"The totality of the evidence just does not point to the earth being only a few thousand years old, no matter how ardently creationists might wish that it did," wrote Davis Young in his book, "Christianity and the Age of the Earth." "No amount of juggling can change the overwhelming weight of the evidence."

Young, an evangelical Christian who teaches geology at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., is a firm believer in the old-earth theory.

"I ... want to persuade fearful Christian brethren that they should not fear the idea of the antiquity of the earth," he wrote. "They should not be afraid that the overwhelming available evidence that the earth is billions of years old is somehow damaging to Christianity. The available evidence from science in no way undermines the Bible or our Christian faith."

Biblical scholars who advocate the old-earth theory say it is important to realize the Bible makes no claims to be a book of science or geology but rather is a book about God's relationship to humans. Thus, for elements of scientific history to be condensed or even omitted from the Bible does not make either the Bible or science less true, they contend.

According to the old-earth view, dinosaurs lived after God created the earth but before he created humans. This perhaps puts the creation of dinosaurs on what the Bible calls the fifth day or early on the sixth day.

Genesis 1:21 says that on the fifth day "God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded." On the sixth day, the Bible says, God created "the beasts of the earth" and then humans.

So why doesn't Genesis specifically mention dinosaurs and help clear up the confusion? Probably because dinosaurs were extinct long before the Bible was written, one Baptist scholar explained.

Modern scientists say dinosaurs dominated the earth for 165 million years and were wiped out by a planetwide climate change or the effects of a catastrophe such as an asteroid smashing into the planet.

For Christians to accept an old-earth theory does not require accepting the theory that humans evolved from apes, another Baptist scholar explained. While some old-earth advocates do embrace the whole concept of evolution, others do not, he said.

"There are old-earth advocates who are non-evolutionists, sometimes called progressive creationists," the scholar said. "There are others who are theistic evolutionists, who accept an old earth and macro-evolution as the means by which God created."

-30-

Bible scholar outlines  
5 views of creation

(ABP) -- How does one reconcile the book of Genesis with modern geological findings that the earth is billions of years old?

Biblical scholars offer a variety of explanations, including these five common views of creation cited by Millard Erickson in his book "Christian Theology":

-- Gap theory. This view holds that there was an original, complete creation of the earth billions of years ago. But due to some type of catastrophe, the creation became empty and unformed. That would require a "gap" of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. God then re-created the earth a few thousand years ago in a period of six days. The apparent age of the earth and the fossil records are to be attributed to the first creation.

-- Flood theory. According to this view, the earth is only a few thousand years old. During a tremendous flood at the time of Noah, waves with a velocity of 1,000 miles per hour picked up various forms of life and deposited them under tremendous pressure. The various strata of the fossil record represent various waves of the flood. Under these unusual circumstances, there was accomplished what normally would require three billion years to accomplish.

-- Ideal-time theory. This theory says that God created the world in six literal days a relatively short time ago but made it look as if it were billions of years old.

-- Age-day theory. This concept is based on the fact that the Hebrew word for "day," while most frequently meaning a 24-hour period, is not limited to that meaning. So the days referred to in Genesis 1 represent epochs, or long periods of time.

-- Pictorial-day theory. This idea, also known as the literary framework theory, views the days of creation as more of a logical structuring than a chronological order. Either God's revelation to Moses came in a series of six pictures or the author arranged his material in logical groupings.

-30-

"Jurassic Park" could spark  
kids' questions about dinosaurs

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Imagine this scene now playing in a Sunday school room near you:

Little Johnny has just seen this summer's hit movie, "Jurassic Park," and perhaps feasted on the related "dino-size" fries and hamburgers at a nearby McDonald's. So on Sunday morning, filled with wonder about the world of dinosaurs, he eagerly asks his teacher a deep theological question.

"Mrs. Jones, where are the dinosaurs in the Bible?"

Think it won't happen?

Think again, says Kathryn Chapman, professor of Christian education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Chapman, who recently led a seminar on current issues in ministry with children, said she spent a considerable amount of time discussing how to deal with questions exactly like that.

With a reported \$100 million expended on publicity, and with promotional tie-ins lurking everywhere a parent turns, Steven Spielberg's "Jurassic Park" is nearly unavoidable this summer. And since many children seem naturally interested in dinosaurs anyway, the special effects in this larger-than-life movie are bound to heighten children's questions about dinosaurs, Chapman said.

How a teacher answers Johnny's question will depend largely on the teacher's own understanding of creation and the age of the earth.

Some students may be content to be told dinosaurs are not mentioned in the Bible. In some cases, however, teachers may feel comfortable giving further explanations, depending upon the age of the child, the knowledge of the teacher and the real intent of the child's question, Chapman added.

"When talking to children about issues that are larger than life, the proper way to respond is to let them lead by letting them ask the questions," she said. "Don't try to unload on them an explanation they're not ready for.

"Another thing is always to listen for the question behind the question," Chapman continued. "For example, when a child who is 5 or 6 asks about death, they may not be asking about eternal life; they may be worried about who will take care of them if their parents die."

Many times children's questions are raised out of fear, she said. So since the people-chomping animals of "Jurassic Park" could incite fear in children, a teacher might respond to Johnny by saying, "Are you afraid dinosaurs might come back?"

That could open a door to find the child's real agenda and avoid getting bogged down in unnecessary theological explanations, she counseled.

There's also a positive side to such questions, noted William Hendricks, professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary. If properly nourished, a child's fascination with dinosaurs can show a love for God's creation, he said.

-30-

-- By Mark Wingfield

Belief in literal Bible  
declining, Gallup reports

PRINCETON, N.J. (ABP) -- One of the most dramatic shifts in religious belief in America is the way people view the Bible, according to pollster George Gallup.

Just 30 years ago, two-thirds of American adults said they believed the Bible was the actual word of God, to be taken literally word for word, he reports in a copyrighted article distributed by Religious News Service.

Today, less than half (49 percent) the adult population holds that view.

A similar trend is seen among teenagers, Gallup says.

"Although some young people continue to interpret the writings of the Bible literally word for word, the majority now are more likely to view scriptural writings as inspired accounts that sometimes must be interpreted figuratively," he reports. "Young people also are less likely than their

elders to accept biblical accounts of the creation of human beings and the universe as being literally true."

When asked to identify their view of how humans came to be, only 40 percent of adults and 35 percent of teens say they think God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years.

Another 46 percent of adults and 52 percent of teens believe humans developed from less advanced forms of life, but that development was guided by God.

The view that humans developed from less advanced forms of life not guided by God is held by 9 percent of adults and 10 percent of teens.

-30-

Hinson says Baptist hope  
rests with American Baptists

SAN JOSE, Calif. (ABP) -- The Baptist tradition is an endangered species whose many hopes now rest with American Baptists, according to a Southern Baptist church historian.

Glenn Hinson, professor of spirituality, worship and church history at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (Va.), analyzed the effect fundamentalism has had on the Southern Baptist Convention and its potential threat to the ABC.

"The Southern Baptist Convention is Baptist in name only and not in reality, and there is no likelihood of recovery of the Baptist tradition for the denomination as a whole," said Hinson, formerly a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hinson was the featured speaker at a June 24 meeting of American Baptists that focused on preservation of Baptist principles. About 350 people gathered for the meeting, which was held during the biennial session of the American Baptist Churches in the USA.

"The Baptist tradition has not fared well in the last two or three decades in the United States, for it has fallen to fundamentalism in the largest Baptist denomination, indeed the largest Protestant denomination in the country," Hinson said.

Its survival, however, will depend on other Baptist groups, he said, adding, "I have been resting much of my hope on the American Baptist Churches and their leadership in this critical period."

Hinson said that American Baptists would appear to be immune from such a takeover, but they are not.

He urged American Baptists to cling to Baptist principles that are at the heart of their tradition: freedom for the Word of God, religious liberty, separation of church and state, and voluntary association to fulfill the Great Commission.

"Let me impress upon you that the heart of the Baptist tradition is freedom for the Word of God, a conviction which stands in direct conflict with fundamentalism."

As a historian with more than 30 years experience in the SBC, Hinson said he believes the same factors that created confusion about identity in the SBC can do so in every other Baptist body. Some of the factors are social and cultural, while others are internal, he said.

One factor is pluralism, he said, adding that Americans previously thought in terms of Catholics and Protestants but now must recognize the presence of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others.

A second factor is the "mottled character of all churches. Nearly every

congregation in America is a hodgepodge of religious traditions." Baptist churches have several members who have had no exposure to their tradition and principles, he said.

A third factor is the "blurring effect of the so-called electronic church." TV evangelists may profess some kind of denominational affiliation, but they deliberately downplay it to appeal to a wider audience, Hinson said.

Hinson said that a fourth factor is the surge of the political religious right that came into its own in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"What is perilous for the Baptist tradition is the fact that this movement covets a return to the Puritan vision for America. The Puritans came to the American colonies as religious refugees, but they did not intend to extend liberty to persons of differing outlook from their own."

Instead they founded a "holy commonwealth" in which dissenters -- including Baptists -- were persecuted and imprisoned.

Another factor is the deliberate effort of some within the Baptist fold to redefine and realign the Baptist tradition with "evangelical" Christianity, he said. This view holds up the inerrancy of the Scriptures and a "selectively literal application of their teachings."

Diminishing awareness of Baptist tradition also can be linked to the deterioration of education in Baptist heritage, he said.

The last factor working against the survival of the voluntary tradition of Baptists, he said, is the "corporation mentality," which says the institution must be saved even if truth and integrity are to be sacrificed.

"All of these negatives notwithstanding, I think we have some grounds for optimism," Hinson said.

He encouraged the American Baptist delegates and visitors to take steps to prevent a takeover in their denomination:

- Take the threat seriously.
- Educate your people in the Baptist heritage and idea.
- Practice the voluntary principle.

"For the sake of our sons and daughters, for the sake of Christ's church, and for the sake of the world, I ask whether you will pass on to another generation this fragile heritage."

-30-

-- By Pam Parry

ABC delegates address  
variety of social issues

SAN JOSE, Calif. (ABP) -- Gambling, health care, economic justice and sexual misconduct by church leaders were among the issues addressed by delegates to the biennial meeting of the American Baptist Churches in the USA in San Jose, Calif., June 22-25.

The meeting, which drew 3,754 delegates and visitors, focused on the theme "Renewed for Mission," emphasizing worship and fellowship. The delegates elected new officers, adopted statements of concern and heard from a variety of speakers.

Delegates overwhelmingly voted in favor of five statements of concern, which express the sentiment of a body of delegates but do not carry the force of policy.

-- They voted 934 to 36 to approve a statement that criticized "the disparity between reality and the promises ... by gambling's promoters" and "the subversion and corruption of ethical values that occur in gambling." It calls on American Baptists to oppose gambling as a means of raising revenue.

-- Delegates also voted 853 to 110 to affirm the responsibility for national health care, calling for a careful examination of the various national proposals. The statement urges American Baptists to participate in the development of an acceptable plan to provide health care for all people.

-- Another statement, affirmed 751 to 151, recognized a "permanent underclass of persons who feel disempowered and can no longer envision the opportunity for upward mobility." Delegates pledged "to work to redirect national priorities toward a more equitable sharing of resources."

-- Sexual misconduct of professional church leaders was addressed by another statement, approved by a 912 to 1 vote. The statement says that "it is always the responsibility of American Baptist professional church leaders to maintain ethical boundaries," calling on the ABC's Commission on Human Sexuality Resources to promote preventative educational resources on the issue.

-- Voting 1,000 to 20, delegates also acknowledged the value of small churches.

Delegates voted on several other statements ranging from advocacy for women as pastoral leaders to gun violence, but the results are not yet available.

In an opening sermon June 22, ABC General Secretary Daniel Weiss launched both the ABC's biennial and the denomination's new emphasis, "ABC 2000: Renewed for Mission."

"A people renewed for mission worship the God who transforms them," he said. In many churches, worship becomes routine, drab and humdrum. At others it is so self-consciously creative that more attention is focused on the participants than on God.

"A renewed church is a movement on fire ... a denomination on fire, churches on fire -- alive, crackling, unpredictable, bringing light, fueled by the Spirit. So enkindled by contact with the central fire of Christ that in turn the whole world is set ablaze.

"Nothing can stop a genuine movement of the Spirit of God."

Prior to the Biennial Meeting, the ABC General Board held its semiannual session, affirming statements encouraging denominational inclusiveness, continued sanctions in South Africa, and dialogue on issues of human sexuality.

On June 24, Hector Gonzalez, a layman from San Bruno, Calif., was elected president of the 1.5 million-member ABC. Currently serving as the ABC's vice president, Gonzalez will begin a two-year term as president Jan. 1.

An active member of First Spanish American Baptist Church in San Francisco, Gonzalez has been president and vice president of the ABC of the West. Nationally, he has served eight years on the denomination's General Board and as a member of its Hispanic Caucus.

Kate Penfield, co-pastor of First Baptist Church in America, Providence, R.I., was elected vice president. She has been a member of the ABC's regional and national Ministers Council and Senate. In Rhode Island, she has been president of the State Council of Churches.

Anne Mills, a former IBM executive from Castle Rock, Colo., was confirmed by delegates as budget review officer. She is a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Denver.

The ABC's next Biennial is scheduled for June 20-23, 1995, in Syracuse, N.Y.

-- Based on reporting by Richard Schramm, director of American Baptist News Service. Pam Parry contributed to this story.

American Baptist receives  
religious-liberty award

SAN JOSE, Calif. (ABP) -- Wesley Forsline, a retired American Baptist pastor from Minneapolis, was honored June 23 with the J.M. Dawson Religious Liberty Award of the Baptist Joint Committee.

Forsline, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Minneapolis for 18 years and former BJC chairman, received the award during the biennial meeting of American Baptist Churches in San Jose, Calif. Forsline chaired the Washington, D.C.-based religious-liberty agency in 1986-1987.

In presenting the award, BJC Executive Director James Dunn noted that Forsline was honored because of his "commitment to beliefs most surely held by Baptists ... soul liberty as it issues in the priesthood of all believers, affirmation of women in ministry, the right of private interpretation of Scripture, the guarantee of choice undergirding freedom (and) the religious liberty of all protected by the separation of church and state."

As BJC chair during its "most difficult days" shortly before the Southern Baptist Convention withdrew funding, Forsline "always remained the peacemaker, the gracious gentleman," Dunn said.

Dunn added that he knew the great champion of liberty, J.M. Dawson, and that, "Wes, you're just like him."

Forsline is the first American Baptist and the fourth person to receive the award.

-30-

Chicago church leads march  
against Bulls-related violence

CHICAGO (ABP) -- Armitage Baptist Church organized a "prayer march" June 23 through the streets of the church's Chicago neighborhood where three days earlier the celebration of the Chicago Bulls' NBA championship turned to violence.

During the post-victory celebration June 20, Julio Castillo was shot and killed. The assailant has not been caught.

"Bulls win. Kid dies. It doesn't equate," Pastor Charles Lyons told the 300 marchers, most members of Armitage Church, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We can't blame the president, the governor, the mayor or the police," Lyons said. "There are some things we can only do for ourselves. We must be responsible citizens.

"The fact that this crime took place in the middle of a main thoroughfare at the height of the celebration in front of hundreds of onlookers, and the police have no one willing to talk, simply is an indication of how badly society has deteriorated," Lyons said.

The purpose of the march, which involved nine other neighborhood organizations in addition to the church, was to "demonstrate spiritual aggression" against the killing and call on witnesses to come forward, Lyons said. Posters placed around the neighborhood asked witnesses to contact police.

The march, called "Saints in the 'Hood," covered five city blocks and attracted wide media coverage. Arriving at the corner where Castillo was shot, the marchers prayed and sang.

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*