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Larry High Named
Editor in Maryland

LUTHERVILLE, Md. (BP)--Larry E. High, associate editor of The Maryland Baptist since September 1975, has been elected editor of the state Baptist paper, effective Oct. 1. The action came during a meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland's state mission board.

High, 29, succeeds Richard G. Puckett, who resigned July 31 to become executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Puckett served The Maryland Baptist for 13 years. High served as acting editor after Puckett's resignation.

He is the youngest of the current group of editors of 34 state Baptist newspapers, covering Southern Baptist work in 50 states.

A Maryland native, High is a graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park, where he earned the bachelor of science degree in journalism. He also holds the master of religious education degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

While a seminary student he served as staff intern for the Western Recorder, state Baptist paper for Kentucky, and publications editor for the Long Run Baptist Association. Following graduation from Southern Seminary in 1974, High was full time seminary news director and managing editor of the alumni publication, The Tie, until returning to Maryland the next year.

High is chairman of the Maryland history committee and is the state commissioner to the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. He has also served on the SBC's Committee on Committees.

A layman, High is a deacon at Woodbrook Baptist Church, Towson, Md. He is married to the former Jan Everett of Muleshoe, Texas, now director of Mission Friends, Girls in Action and Acteens for the Baptist Convention of Maryland's Woman's Missionary Union.

Maryland Baptists serve Southern Baptists in Maryland and Delaware. The Maryland Baptist also publishes the New England Baptist, which serves Southern Baptists in the six New England states. Until recently, The Maryland Baptist published the Penn-Jersey Baptist, which developed to the point of assuming its own production.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by The Maryland Baptist.

Action, Not Speeches
Will Help Human Rights

By Norman Jameson

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States could transform the face of the earth for the benefit of human society if it spent its energy toward human rights instead of speeches about human rights, according to a Notre Dame professor.

John J. Gilligan, former Ohio governor and former administrator of the Agency for International Development, told participants at a conference on The Church, the State and Human Rights in Washington that "we lost more on gambling tables in Las Vegas last year than we spent to feed the hungry in other nations."

That kind of commitment to Third World development, in light of America's claims of devotion to the starving, brings only curled lips of contempt from starving people, said Gilligan, who currently holds the Thomas A. White Chair of Law and Public Policy at Notre Dame University.

"Our efforts to advance the cause of human rights would be more convincing and more effective if we were to back our words with deeds," said Gilligan, "and if we were as ready to take the lead in devoting our resources to the task of global development as we are to take the lead in making speeches about human rights."

Gilligan told the primarily Baptist participants that the U.S. is spending less than one-fourth of one percent of its gross national product to help Third World nations develop. Thirty years ago, the U.S. devoted three percent of its GNP to help rebuild Europe, he said.

Even when help is given, Gilligan said, westerners too often believe that the rest of the world wants to be just like industrialized nations of the west.

"It must not be forgotten," he said, "that to many millions of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America...the industrialized western countries still represent the awful and disfiguring force of imperialism, colonialism, racism and militarism."

Gilligan told participants in the conference, held in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, that government policy toward the Third World should be three-pronged--to help nations feed themselves; to assist them in developing educational systems; and to help them put together health programs.

He called on the church to reaffirm that all of mankind is created in the image of God and "that men are no less human because they spring from a different race, reside in another part of the world, or profess another religion."

"We are further taught...that to mistreat or abuse another human being is to so treat Christ himself, and to shut up the bowels of mercy to our fellowman who is in need is to merit eternal damnation," Gilligan said.

He indicated the will of a nation can be discerned in the expenditures on human resources. He said the main economic competitors of the United States are Japan and West Germany, which the U.S. forbade to re-arm after World War II.

Consequently, they devoted their resources to technological advancement, while the U.S. continued to pour its resources into the maintenance of its gigantic military machine.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"If I could have just held on."

Like a recurring nightmare, this thought, says ministerial student Roger Kelsey, has tormented him since September 30 when a young suicide victim slipped from Kelsey's grasp and fell to his death in the Cumberland River.

The victim, a man in his early 20s who has not yet been identified, dangled some 15 seconds over the railing of the Shelby Avenue Bridge in Nashville, Tenn., before shaking loose from Kelsey's hold.

Kelsey, a religion major at Belmont College, a Baptist school, was driving back to school Sunday night with his fiancée Phyllis Williams after delivering the last sermon in a weekend revival at Fatherland Baptist Church. Crossing the river, they saw a slightly built young man standing on a pipe over the bridge's railing.

"At first I thought that somebody had already jumped in," he recalled the next day. "I thought the man on the railing was going to jump in after someone."

Kelsey stopped his car to see what was happening.

"As I was walking over to the man, another man rushed up to him and grabbed his arm. It was then that I realized what was happening so I ran those last few steps.

"As I got to him, he broke loose from the other guy. I had just grabbed his arm when he let his feet slip from the pipe he was standing on. He started jerking and after a few seconds got loose of me.

"As he was going down, he spread out so that he fell flat into the water."

"Ironically," said Kelsey, "I preached a sermon on suicide among young people at the revival on Friday night. I told the congregation that suicide is the third largest cause of death among people ages 17 to 24. That fact has certainly come home to me."

Kelsey, a member of Lockeland Baptist Church, expressed regret at not being able to try and talk the man out of jumping.

"Sometimes I feel that I should have been able to pull him up. At other times I am mad at the first man who rushed at him."

Kelsey says that his pastor at Lockeland Church, Herbert Higdon, is helping him to work through his "mixed emotions."

Admitting that he is confused that "God would allow me to be there and not be able to save the man's life," Kelsey, however, feels that the tragedy has given him "a stronger commitment to preaching and witnessing.

"Jesus Christ was this man's answer to what caused him to get on that bridge. And the sad thing is that for everyone that jumps off a bridge, there are thousands more dealing with the same problems."

Baptist Agency Honored
With Jewish 'Isaiah Award'

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs received the prestigious Isaiah Award for contributions to human rights from the Washington chapter of the American Jewish Committee at a luncheon here.

Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James E. Wood Jr. received the award for the Baptist agency, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary by sponsoring a Religious Liberty Conference on Church, State and Human Rights in the nation's capital.

Rabbi Matthew Simon of Temple B'nai Israel and a member of the executive board of the American Jewish Committee presented the two-foot-high wooden sculpture of the Old Testament prophet, declaring that the Baptist agency has spoken for 40 years "on every concern that is our joint concern."

Rabbi Simon praised Baptists generally, noting that Jews and Baptists share a common heritage of exile, dissent and commitment to the principle of separation of church and state. "We have learned well from the Baptists," he said.

The Jewish leader, speaking to nearly 300 Baptists and Jews at the joint luncheon, paid further tribute to Baptists for championing the cause of freedom in repressive countries and declared: "We need voices that can call the judgment of God upon men."

In his response, Wood paid tribute to the American Jewish Committee for its own human rights record, including its defense of religious liberty, aid to survivors of the holocaust, contribution to the creation of the State of Israel, efforts in having basic human rights guarantees written into the United Nations charter, and its role in refugee relief.

Wood, who also praised recent joint efforts by the Jewish committee and the NAACP to relieve tensions between blacks and Jews, said human rights was "the primary reason" for the Baptist Joint Committee's formation in 1939.

The veteran Baptist leader called religious liberty "the cornerstone" of all other human rights and the "linchpin of freedom." Other human rights concerns of the Baptist Joint Committee, he said, have included support for conscientious objectors in time of war; recognition of the rights of displaced persons; the right to food, shelter and clothing; equality before the law; nondiscrimination with regard to race, religion, national origin or sects; and the rights to privacy, work, education and vote.

Wood denounced the historic persecution of Jews, calling it "the saddest chapter in all the history of religion." He said that Jewish rights "were repeatedly, flagrantly and systematically violated in the name of religion. It is a tragedy which has endured for 2,000 years and has not yet ended."

He called on Baptists and Jews "to reach out to each other," saying that failure to do so "should be regarded as a denial of our common heritage and of our common affirmations of faith."

Congressman Calls Church
'Polite Captive of the State'

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Though the church is a "polite captive of the state," it shows signs of breaking away from dogmas and practices which separate it from human need, a Detroit congressman told participants in a Religious Liberty Conference.

U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., said he has "serious doubts" that the church in the United States is independent. If that is true, he went on, "it follows that it is exceedingly difficult to go as far as it wants" in changing the status quo.

Conyers added, however, that he is "optimistic about the future of the church...it is beginning to show signs it will break more drastically away from the dogma and practice which are at odds with the world of 1979, the world of the 80s and beyond," he said. "I see it finally beginning to nibble on the real questions of the day."

He admitted that he starts with the assumption that society provides democracy for only a few. "We live in a very undemocratic democracy," he said, noting that "most systems in government and the private sector are working poorly," including religious institutions.

As an extreme example of the breakdown of systems he cited prisons which, he said, "reflect our inhumanity in a way that staggers even those of us used to working with reality."

The congressman said his role is to "help alleviate the pressures in the church against progressivism so that we can deal with redistribution of resources and opportunities which is what it's all about."