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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Legalized Gambling: A  
Magnet for Organized Crime

By Robert O'Brien

**DALLAS (BP)**--Backers of legalized gambling are parroting a claim in many states facing the issue that legal gambling will drive away its illegal counterpart and fend off organized crime.

It's the same claim, among a litany of others, which arises everytime pro-gambling forces attempt to push through some form of legalized gambling--ranging from bingo to casinos, pari-mutuel horse race gambling, and lotteries.

Despite that debate, which creates confusion in the minds of voters and legislators, what does the record show in the states which already have legalized some type of gambling?

"I've got just one response to that question," declared Phil Strickland of Dallas, an attorney on the staff of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, which is spearheading a statewide campaign to convince voters to defeat pari-mutuel legalization in a May 6 referendum.

"As one observer put it, and I agree: 'To claim--as does gambling's big lie--that flowing dollars will fend off organized crime is like saying that a bleeding swimmer will repel sharks or that wounded prey repulses vultures,'" he said.

The record in state after state, which has legalized some form of gambling, shows document d case histories of increase in illegal activities following legalization of gambling.

The Massachusetts Crime Commission, for example, has reported that bookmaking did not even exist as a crime problem worthy of mention until pari-mutuels were legalized. "There is considerable evidence to indicate that legalization of pari-mutuel gambling represented a greater boon to the mob than prohibition," the commission said. "Betting at the tracks fostered betting off the tracks and gambling mushroomed quickly into a multi-billion dollar business..."

Billions of dollars in gambling revenue, numerous authoritative sources have proven, bankrolls the activities of organized crime. Even Joseph Valachi, a defector from La Cosa Nostra and its annual take estimated from \$7 billion to \$50 billion a year, said, "Organized crime can live on its gambling and loan sharking, if it has to give up prostitution and narcotics."

Wherever legalized gambling, which has been called a "kindergarten" for neophyte gamblers, flourishes, illegal gambling "finishing schools" increase dramatically--offering juicier "action," more exciting odds, higher paybacks, no income tax, and "easy credit" from loan sharks.

A privately circulated white paper by the New York Police Department, according to a "New York Times" report, concluded that off-track betting (OTB) led to a 62 percent increase in illegal betting and brought more mob-connected figures into bookmaking.

"A climate has been created to gamble," Chief Paul F. Delise of the Public Morals Division of the NYPD's Organized Crime Control Bureau, told the Times. "Because it is now possible to bet on the horses, thousands of people who never in the world would have thought of betting on football or basketball or baseball are now betting with the bookies."

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James Ritchie, executive director of the Commission on the Review of National Gambling Policy, told a U. S. House of Representatives committee that tens of thousands of Americans were attracted to illegal gambling after being introduced to gambling by legalized state-run games.

"Wherever legal gambling exists illegal gambling increases," said Ritchie, noting that off-track betting, state-run lotteries and numbers games educate individuals about wagering and then propel them to illegal bookmakers who offer better odds and more return.

Study after study also reveals that gambling interests systematically corrupt police departments. "To protect its gambling income, organized crime spends millions of dollars bribing and suborning law enforcement officials," declared "Easy Money," a report of the Task Force on Legalized Gambling sponsored by the Fund for the City of New York and the Twentieth Century Fund. "The pattern of corruption varies, but the practice is pervasive."

The report adds: "Gambling does not have to be illegal to result in official corruption. In the legal sector, the stakes are somewhat different--track licenses, extra racing days, state tax favors, authority to hold bingo games--but the public record raises serious questions about the ability of the political system to police the gambling industry. 'Human frailties being what they are,' a special New York Investigating Commission wrote in 1962, 'it is difficult to predict whether the area of legalized gambling will ever be successfully administered and controlled.'"

Organized crime has motivated the current drive to build a string of casinos from Florida to New Hampshire, Hank Messick, who spent two years studying organized crime under a Ford Foundation Grant and has written 15 books on the Mafia, recently told the "Christian Science Monitor."

And the "Wall Street Journal" quoted Peter Echeverria, chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission, as advising New Jersey to stay away from casino gambling. Warning of underworld elements which create problems in Nevada and would do so in New Jersey, he said, "I don't think they (New Jersey) will arrive at effective (gambling) control in my lifetime."

Even the so-called "little old ladies' game"--bingo--has been infiltrated by organized crime, according to a number of reports. Ritchie of the Commission on the Review of a National Gambling Policy said, "Bingo in this country borders on outright theft. I'd ban it if I could."

The "Christian Science Monitor" reported that "Law enforcement officials (across the U. S.) complain that mobsters and professional gamblers have moved into these 'harmless' social activities in almost every state" (34 states have legalized bingo) and adds: "Most clergymen and other sponsors are not aware of the fraud involved in games being played" under their auspices.

Even Jimmy The Greek, who makes his living setting odds, opposes legalized gambling, according to a recent interview of The Greek by "Braniff Place" magazine.

"Wherever I go I speak against legalized gambling," declared The Greek, who emphasized that he is neither a gambler nor a bookmaker. "I'm not talking about Nevada," he continued. "There are other areas that are talking about legalizing gambling, and I'm against it because it doesn't make sense...When you put legalized gambling into a community you ruin the community around it."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Baptist Press will mail an analysis of legal gambling's economic aspects on Monday, April 24. The May, 1978, issue of Home Missions magazine will carry a complete analysis of the legalized gambling dilemma.



Anderson Strategies  
Boost Sunday Schools

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Andy Anderson believes churches should grow.

Dissatisfaction with a stagnant Sunday School enrollment in his church, Riverside Baptist in Fort Myers, Fla., prompted him to explore ways of leading his church to effectively reach more people.

From his two years of study and experimentation with mass enrollment efforts was born ACTION, an open enrollment plan to reach people for Sunday School and for Christ.

ACTION revolutionized Riverside Baptist Church which grew dramatically in the two years--from a Sunday School enrollment of 1,094 to 2,600 and from an average attendance of 400 to 1,150.

ACTION caught the attention of Sunday School leaders in Florida and eventually throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. Anderson left Riverside in 1975 to join the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as the ACTION promotion specialist.

ACTION resists the principle that a person should visit the Sunday School three times before being allowed to join. It promotes instead the practice of enrolling persons for Sunday School in their homes, and by making contacts at work, social events, recreational happenings, anywhere.

As Anderson saw some churches enroll people with ACTION then have problems actually involving them in the Sunday School, he began working on a system to develop a total growth plan. The result is the "Growth Spiral."

The Growth Spiral helps churches set quarterly goals for growth in Sunday School enrollment, teaching units and visitation participants. After the goals are set, leaders then calendar events which will enable them to reach the goals. Progress must be evaluated quarterly.

Anderson's "basic laws of Sunday School growth" suggest that the most effective way to reach persons is to have an adequate number of Sunday School classes and departments, sufficient trained workers, adequate space and at least one person in each class participating in weekly visitation.

The first church which Anderson directed in the Growth Spiral experienced a 300 percent increase in Sunday School enrollment in one year--matching their goal almost perfectly.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1977, East Side Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Fla., grew from 130 to 532 enrolled in Sunday School. And it increased from five to 17 teaching units, from 13 to 52 trained workers, from five to 17 rooms and from five to 24 persons visiting each week. Attendance in morning worship, weekly offering and baptisms also increased.

As part of a pilot test, Anderson is personally directing several churches in the Growth Spiral and says each has worked according to the formula.

Use of the Growth Spiral can positively impact a church in at least five ways, according to Anderson.

He says it accelerates growth, both in quantity and quality. "Fifty percent of people enrolled through ACTION are unsaved and nearly 50 percent will attend Sunday School through effective follow up," he says.

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The Growth Spiral can be a tool for improving the quality of the Sunday School organization. For example, if the correct ratio of one worker for every eight members does not exist when goals are set, the Spiral is adjusted to achieve that ratio within nine months.

Third, the Growth Spiral helps a church to establish a visitation program. "A teaching unit without at least one person visiting each week is sick," Anderson says.

The Growth Spiral aids long-range planning. When growth goals are established, a church will know exactly what quarter it will run out of space. Finally, use of the Growth Spiral results in more persons accepting Christ.

While ACTION and the Growth Spiral are changing Southern Baptist churches, they also have dramatically altered Andy Anderson's life.

From being a busy pastor, husband, father and grandfather in Fort Myers, where he still lives while travelling for the board, Anderson, 50, has logged 250,000 miles a year since 1975. He has averaged one speech per day and one Sunday he preached at seven different churches.

During a recent 27-day trip in which one week was to be spent in Nashville, Anderson flew his wife to Tennessee so they could have a few days together. Now that their fourth and youngest child has graduated from high school, "my wife is travelling with me more," he says.

Despite the furious pace, he says he's experiencing more personal fulfillment than at any other time in his life. "It's satisfying to help pastors find a useable plan for growth, knowing that more persons are won to Christ where growth plans are used," he says.

Believing a person should minister wherever he is, Anderson enjoys meeting people, to be of help if needed and to share his faith with them--on plane flights, in airports or wherever he happens to be. He says, "I try to win one person to Christ every day."

Anderson's work with ACTION led to the creation of a growth section in the Sunday School Board's Sunday School department which organizes major growth emphases around the country.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Sunday School Board of Baptist Press.

Georgia Baptists Plan  
Open House at SBC

ATLANTA (BP)--A special open house for messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention will be held at the Georgia Baptist Center, Wednesday, June 14, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

The SBC meets in Atlanta's World Congress Center June 13-15.

Since no SBC session is planned for Wednesday afternoon, the new \$6 million Georgia Baptist Center will be open for any who wish to visit. Georgia Baptist Convention employees will conduct tours and answer questions.

Searcy S. Garrison, Georgia Baptist executive secretary-treasurer, said, "Many people across the Southern Baptist Convention have heard about our new Baptist Center, and have expressed an interest in seeing its accommodations. We believe a large number will come."

The Georgia Baptist Center, completed in 1975, is the newest and largest state convention office building in the SBC, Garrison said. It is located at 2930 Flowers Rd., S., near the intersection of Interstate 85, NE, and Chamblee-Tucker Rd.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers.

CORRECTION

In graph 2 of BP story mailed 4/18/78, entitled "Baker James Cauthen Finds 'Honor in His Own Country,'" change Dr. Cauthen's age from 69 to 68.