



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 3, 1978

78-68

Fourth in a Series of Seven

Legalized Gambling: A

Personal View of Corruption

By Robert O'Brien

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Frank Tejada, who has survived the knives and bullets of the barrio and the Vietnam battlefield, has learned that life is also hazardous for a state legislator who opposes legalized gambling.

But he discovered, during deliberations of a Texas legislative committee on a proposed bill to legalize parimutuel gambling, that anonymous, life-threatening phone calls he received had a decidedly more sinister note than previous dangers.

"My life was directly threatened, and I got the message loud and clear that I would gain financially and politically by agreeing to help vote the bill out of committee," said the 32-year-old attorney and U. S. Marine Corps veteran.

Despite those phone calls, which came in April, 1977, during deliberations of the state's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, Tejada voted against parimutuels and the bill died in committee. "I voted to defeat gambling in committee," he recalled in an interview, "but not before I had to wrestle with my personal ethics."

He said callers worded the threats differently but they said basically, "You won't make it if you don't vote for parimutuel gambling." He said implications also were strong that he would be shattered politically if he didn't give in.

"I wasn't concerned as much for myself as my family," he said. "When you grow up in a low income barrio (Spanish-speaking community), as I did, you learn to take care of yourself or you don't make it. I told the callers they knew where I lived and that I was ready for them."

Tejada, who finally decided to make the threats public, discussed them at the time they were made with Col. Wilson Speir, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety. But he refused Speir's offer for police protection because "I didn't want to be intimidated."

A year later, Tejada, co-chairman of the Anti-Crime Council of Texas, decided he could keep quiet no longer. He revealed the threats during a campaign urging Texas voters to decide for or against endorsing parimutuel gambling in a referendum on the ballots in both the Democratic and Republican state primaries.

After the issue lost in committee, pro-gambling forces launched a campaign to get parimutuels on the ballots of both parties. They needed either a favorable vote of the party executive committee or signatures representing five percent of the voters in the previous gubernatorial election. The Republican executive committee voted the issue on the ballot, but the Democrats required signatures on the petitions.

Even the petitions bore the mark of chicanery. A professional analysis of a statistical sample of the more than 96,000 signatures indicated 35 percent cannot be validated. The chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee's rules committee has sought court action to throw out the results of the election if illegality is proven.

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"I could keep quiet no longer," Tejeda said at a Corpus Christi news conference, "because of the continuing false claims during this campaign made by proponents of parimutuel gambling that it is a financial boon and will drive off illegal gambling and organized crime.

"If they would use the tactics they used on me, what kind of tactics will they use on the citizens of this state, if gambling interests get a stronger foothold through legalization?" Tejeda asked.

"I'm not saying that everyone in favor of legalized gambling is a crook, but I know from painful, personal experience that the criminal element badly wants gambling in this state as they do in state after state across the country. I know their tactics--tactics which oppress those not able to care for themselves and seek to corrupt and threaten those who stand in their way."

Tejeda, who struggled his way out of the barrio to earn a GED in the Marines and eventually a law degree at the University of California at Berkely, opposed gambling even before the threats. His opposition to gambling grew first out of his youth in the barrio, where he saw poor people suffer, and out of his research as an attorney and elected official.

"I know what it means for a community to be bled by gamblers more concerned with their own profits than the fact they're taking bread off the tables of hungry mothers and children," said the articulate Mexican-American state representative from District 57B.

"Study after study has proven that organized crime, which sucks the barrios and ghettos of this nation dry, is bankrolled by illegal gambling and loan sharking, which flourish even more when gambling is legalized," he added. "Even Joseph Valachi, who defected from La Cosa Nostra, said organized crime could live off of gambling and loan sharking, if it ever had to give up narcotics and prostitution."

As a youngster, struggling to survive and break free into a better life, Tejeda knew of bodies bloodied and lives terminated at the hands of mob-controlled loan sharks calling in a "bad debt."

Now, standing against personal threats, he has another reason to oppose legalized gambling-- a reason which lies at the heart of law enforcement and political life across the nation as more and more states legalize some form of gambling.

That reason is simply this: documented evidence of increasingly successful efforts of organized crime, flourishing even more in a legalized gambling environment, to corrupt police and government.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: This is part four of a seven-part series on the legalized gambling dilemma, by Robert O'Brien, news editor of Baptist Press. Succeeding stories in the series will explore casino gambling, how bingo--a game for "little old ladies"--has become a national scandal, and a Christian perspective on the gambling issue. The May, 1978, issue of "Home Missions" magazine and the August, 1978, issue of "World Mission Journal" will also report on legalized gambling.

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Virginia Board Affirms  
UR President, Trustees

Baptist Press  
5/3/78

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--University of Richmond President E. Bruce Heilman and the university trustees received a vote of confidence from the Virginia Baptist General Board in their handling of the situation surrounding controversial professor Robert S. Alley.

Alley raised the hackles of Virginia Baptists in December 1977 when he told a group of Richmond atheists that Jesus "never really claimed to be God or to be related to him."

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Those comments, reported in Richmond newspapers, brought protests from Virginia Baptists, some of whom demanded that Alley, then the tenured chairman of the university's religion department, be fired. Alley has since requested and received a lateral transfer out of the religion department to become chairman of a new area studies program. Tenured faculty can't be easily fired.

Some call was heard in the state for a severing of the ties between the school and the Baptist General Association of Virginia which provides the University of Richmond with about a quarter million dollars annually.

Heilman told the board the school's church relatedness is by choice and that either the school or Virginia Baptists can sever the relationship "tomorrow."

"But the fact is the university doesn't want to sever the relationship," he said. "It has nothing to do with money. We can replace the quarter of a million dollars tomorrow with money from those who would be happy for us to sever our relationship with the Baptists," said the Baptist layman.

"On the other hand, we would lose a lot. We would lose money; we would lose a history; we would lose a critic; we would lose a perspective and a spirit that provides a quality of integrity and an ethical system above and beyond academic elements."

According to a report in the "Religious Herald," Virginia Baptist newspaper, Heilman told the board that despite those who say the Alley situation is "still up in the air," it has been resolved. Heilman referred to a faculty resolution asking for Alley's reinstatement as chairman of the religion department.

Trustees met March 3 and took no action on the request. "They've acted in this case by not acting," said Heilman. "That is their decision." Earlier, the trustees, who reaffirmed the school's Christian purpose, said Alley's statements "in no way represent ... (the school's) historic, current or projected positions."

The Virginia Baptist Board passed a resolution affirming the valid ministries of all seven educational institutions associated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia and upholding their belief in the trustee form of governance.

Board members did change original wording in the resolution that said the trustees and administration of the University of Richmond had "appropriately resolved the recent controversy," to say "appropriately dealt with the recent controversy." They apparently didn't completely agree with Heilman's contention that the matter is "resolved."

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Carter Urges MSC Support;  
Allen Expects \$1 Million

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
5/3/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter challenged more than 200 prominent Southern Baptist laypeople to seize an "unprecedented" opportunity to support the newly-formed Mission Service Corps as part of the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust effort to evangelize the world.

Mission Service Corps, the Southern Baptist Convention's plan to place 5,000 volunteer missionaries on home and foreign mission fields by 1982 to supplement career missionaries, grew out of a videotape appeal made by Carter last year to the annual SBC meeting in Kansas City.

In an informal address at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, the president told the group of wealthy Southern Baptists that despite the denomination's pattern of consistent growth, much remains to be done "to carry the good news (about Christ) throughout the world."

Saying that his intention was not to be critical, Carter said, "Our progress has been mediocre at best, ... compared to what we could do if we plumbed the depths of our soul and made a total commitment to fulfill the great commission" of Christ to go into all the world.

Following the president's 40-minute appearance with the group, pledge cards totaling more than \$750,000 were presented to SBC President Jimmy Allen, who along with Owen Cooper, a layman and former SBC president from Yazoo City, Miss., invited the group to Washington.

Earlier in the day, President and Mrs. Carter received the group at an informal reception at the White House, spending more than an hour with them. Several of those attending expressed satisfaction at the relaxed atmosphere of the occasion. Allen said that when he and Cooper mentioned to the president the possibility of the group's coming to Washington, Carter responded by saying, "I'd like to have the folks over to my house."

At his evening appearance with the group, Carter urged them to become "pioneers in trying to inspire others who look to us for leadership to contribute their own lives and their own wealth...to furthering the kingdom of Christ."

The president told his well-to-do audience that "it would be a serious mistake for us to assume that in the financial support of this kind of program that we could rob our existing Cooperative Program (SBC unified budget for world missions) or ...the effective ministry of our own home churches." He urged them instead "to give above and beyond" the tithe and other normal giving, such as special mission offerings.

Declaring that "no one knows better than I the lethargy of a bureaucracy," the president indirectly urged denominational leaders to give more visibility to Mission Service Corps. Despite the fact that 2,500 persons have already volunteered for the program and 1,300 places for service have been identified, the president said, "the program has not yet been well-explained."

He invited the audience to join him and SBC leaders "to form a close-knit group" and "consider how you, led by the spirit of Christ, can join in this renewal...of the entire Southern Baptist Convention, indeed our whole nation, indeed perhaps all Christendom."

Carter again suggested that after leaving office, he and Mrs. Carter are contemplating some form of special volunteer mission service. "I wish in a way ... that I were free to do more and after my service in my present office...I intend to do more," he said.

Referring to the awkwardness of speaking out on such subjects while serving as president, Carter said: "My ability to exhort others and to provide leadership is quite limited because of a deep belief of all Baptists in the separation of church and state." He said his appearance before the group was as a "private citizen" and as a "fellow Christian who loves my Saviour."

The president's 20-minute speech was delivered in a low-key, extemporaneous fashion.

SBC President Allen told the group that in inviting them to Washington, he and Cooper had called on state Baptist executive secretaries, pastors, and others to recommend names of individuals of means whose commitment to missions was apparent. But he expressed the view that in reality, "the Father (God) got you here."

Allen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, expressed delight at the total pledged at the event, predicting that by the end of the month it will exceed \$1 million.

Participants were urged to fill out a pledge card indicating how many individual Mission Service Corps volunteers they were willing to support over the next several years.

Cooper, well-known as one of Southern Baptists' lay missions leaders, exhorted the group: "Each of us not only has a going ministry; we have a sending ministry."

Three individuals gave personal testimonies about their involvement in Mission Service Corps. One of them, Mrs. Robert Ayers, a member of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, has pledged \$150,000 over the next five years to support five MSC volunteers. She said that while she had never before wanted to talk about her giving, thinking it was a "private matter between me and the Lord," she had decided to tell of her involvement in the hope it would help others. "I want my participation to be costly," she said.

Two MSC volunteers, Doyle Pennington, a Mississippi businessman already serving in the evangelism division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and James McKinnon, an Albuquerque, N. Mex. insurance executive who will serve in Augsburg, Austria, also gave testimonies about their decisions to give two years of their lives as MSC volunteers.

Besides Allen and Cooper, other prominent SBC leaders who participated on the program of the event were Home Mission Board Executive Director William Tanner and Foreign Mission Board Administrative Associate Rogers M. Smith, representing Baker James Cauthen, executive director.

Special music for the occasion was provided by Russell Newport, a businessman from Springfield, Mo., accompanied by pianist Albin Whitworth, a professor of music at Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky.

**(BP)**

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MAY 5 1978

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