

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 16, 1978

Fifth in a Series

78-77

Legal Casinos: 'Laundered'
Dollars; Washed Up Dreams

By Robert O'Brien

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Organized forces pushing casino gambling across the U. S. have laid odds that legalization of casinos in Atlantic City, N.J., will create a domino effect across the country.

"The domino effect will be similar to that experienced when New Hampshire adopted a state lottery" in 1963 (15 states now have lotteries), commented a recent issue of "Rouge et Noir," a gambling industry newsletter.

In fact, the domino phenomenon has caused one state after another to topple into the legalized gambling mire since that action by New Hampshire, as beleaguered legislators have sought a financial panacea.

To date, 44 states have legalized some form of gambling, and the push goes on, not only to increase that number to 50 but to proliferate the types of gambling available in each state. It goes on despite overwhelming nationwide evidence that legalization of gambling results in a financial drain--rather than blessing--and causes illegal gambling and organized crime to flourish.

Casino gambling offers no exception.

New Jersey has progressed from bingo to lottery to parimutuel horsetrack gambling to casinos. While those supposed financial saviors were being launched, the state hiked the sales tax, added a state income tax and beefed up expensive machinery to police and oversee legal gambling. One such investigatory group hired a \$40,000-a-year director and 140 accountants and lawyers, and another announced its need for a \$1 million budget. Now there's talk of legalizing jai alai wagering.

Meanwhile, police intelligence reports show that Mafia families battle over Atlantic City, that "jilted lady of tourism," which saw casino gambling as salvation from oblivion. Whenever they're unable to qualify for casino licenses, reveals "Monday Morning Report," mob figures seek control of liquor licenses and other service facilities important to the New Jersey gambling economy.

Organized crime has motivated the current drive to build a string of casinos from Florida to New Hampshire, although not all casino supporters are mob oriented, says Hank Messick, who spent two years studying organized crime under a Ford Foundation grant and has written 15 books on the Mafia.

The current effort to legalize gambling began after the famous Kefauver hearings in 1949-50 resulted in a federal crackdown across the U. S. on notorious regional gambling casinos in Hot Springs, Ark., Gretna, La., and other places, Messick told "The Christian Science Monitor."

He said that about two years ago, state investigators learned that organized crime figures, anticipating casino legalization, bought hotels in northern New Jersey and New York's Catskill mountains.

Investigations have shown that neither casino gambling, nor other types of gambling, will produce the economic revenue proponents claim, but that casinos will produce another kind of dollar flow: laundered money.

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Las Vegas, in addition to leading the nation in compulsive gamblers and suicide, has served for years as a "central bank," according to investigation, where mobsters "lose" ill-gotten gains from narcotics, prostitution and a variety of rackets. Once it passes over the green felt tables, it becomes "clean"--and untraceable--and returns to finance numerous illegal operations, including bribes and political payoffs.

"The Vegas transactions have gotten too heavy, the attention's getting too intense, so the underworld has the political pressure on pliant politicians to help them set up (through legalization) some casino bank branches in the East...for the same money-laundering, crime convenience purpose Vegas serves....," reports a recent issue of "Washington Watch." It adds that eastern politicians are generally receptive because casino branches provide "more and closer sources of unlimited campaign funds."

Jim Reid, Southern Baptist home missionary who serves as a chaplain on the Las Vegas strip, told Baptist Press that the bad rap on casino legalization hits the jackpot.

"If you're asking for all the weirdos to come to your town," Reid says, "vote in casino gambling. It draws every kind of parasite. On holiday weekends, for example, thousands of prostitutes fly in to fleece the crowds. Prostitution and drugs go along with it. That's not the official policy. But it's a fact.

"There's a sickness about gambling," he says. "Mesmerism. People don't think straight. I've seen people hit the jackpot and then go on feeding the same machine. I've seen little old ladies methodically feeding three slot machines. There's no joy in their faces. It's like they're in a trance, consumed by a lust.

"When government checks arrive in the large retirement community in Henderson, a Las Vegas suburb, that's the day all the old folks hit the bingo tables and the slot machines," Reid continues. "Soon they're broke."

The environment--"plastic, unrealistic, hedonistic"--also traps and depersonalizes gambling industry employees, says Reid, who has become close to many people in the industry in his ministry. "They live in an environment in which the more money they get the more they lust for. Everyone grabs for everything, from the high tippers to the house's gambling take.

"We have huge hotels and showrooms filled with people, doing business like crazy, and they're still going broke," he declares. "Why? Because everyone, from the guys on top to the cocktail waitresses, are skimming billions of dollars. That's a fact."

Another FACT (Floridians Against Casino Takeover) recently met in Miami to organize, fearing a Las Vegas-type environment will grow there if casino gambling proponents have their way. In a state which has already legalized betting on horses, dogs, bingo and jai alai, they know they have a tough battle.

But they do have the support of Florida Gov. Reuben Askew, who declares openly that casino gambling will drain economic resources, attract the criminal element, and result in "smaller paychecks, larger welfare rolls, broken homes and broken dreams."

The same Gov. Askew commented of the New Jersey governor's support of casino legalization: "If he believes he can keep the underworld out of casino gambling, he must believe in the tooth fairy."

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Three More Headliners
Join Vocation Breakfast

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ATLANTA (BP)--The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera soprano Irene Jordan, and Gen. Charles W. Bagnal of West Point will make program appearances at the National Conference of Baptist Men June 16 in Atlanta.

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Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission, conference sponsor, said the 95-member orchestra conducted by Robert Shaw will open a rally at 9:30 a.m. in the 16,500 seat Omni Coliseum where President Jimmy Carter is invited to speak.

Miss Jordan will sing at a breakfast for Baptists in the Arts at the Colony Square Hotel starting at 7 a.m.

Gen. Bagnal, assistant commandant of the United States Military Academy, will preside at a breakfast for Baptists in the Military at the Omni International Hotel.

The vocational breakfasts are two of 19 planned for Baptists attending the brief conference, scheduled the day following the annual session of the Southern Baptist Convention to provide Southern Baptist lay people with an opportunity to attend both meetings.

Other breakfast program personalities include: Jere Goldsmith, vice president of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith, business and professional positions, Sheraton Biltmore Hotel; Francis A. Dennis, ambassador to the United States from Liberia, government, Peachtree Plaza Hotel; Albert Brewer, attorney and former governor of Alabama, legal professions, Marriott Hotel; Bobby Bowden, football coach at Florida State University, sports, Hyatt Regency Hotel; and Ronald W. Mansdoerfer, former national sales manager for Campbell Soup and STP Oil Company, transportation, Atlanta Hilton Hotel.

Breakfasts are also scheduled for Southern Baptists in agriculture, church related vocations, communications, education, engineering, health services, law enforcement, management, retirement, sales, technical skills, and young adults in search of professional vocations.

Conference registration is \$12.50 which includes a vocational breakfast and the rally. The conference is open to women.

Tickets are available from the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn., 38104, and at the booth in the Georgia World Congress Center during SBC sessions. Persons should identify the breakfast they want to attend and enclose a check when ordering by mail.

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SBC Will Receive Human
Rights Declaration

By David R. Wilkinson

Baptist Press
5/16/78

ATLANTA (BP)--With a reminder that "Baptist history and heritage have been formed in a crucible which has both demanded and produced human rights," the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission will present a "Declaration of Human Rights" to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, June 13-15.

Christian Life Commission executive secretary Foy Valentine said the denomination's moral concerns agency will recommend adoption of the declaration "in the conviction that the issue of human rights is of grave importance both in our commitment to Bold Mission Thrust and in the divine imperative to do the gospel.

"The declaration," Valentine explained, "is not an attempt to catalog worldwide human rights abuses; rather, its purpose is to call attention to biblical principles for Christians to use in responding to specific human rights issues."

Valentine said the commission will present the declaration in its annual report to the convention during the Wednesday morning session, June 14.

The special declaration comes at a time when human rights has drawn international attention, due largely to the determination of Jimmy Carter, Southern Baptists' best known layman, to make human rights a major focal point of his administration's foreign policy.

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Southern Baptists, the declaration states, believe that basic human rights "are the gift of God" and that these rights "coincide with the Bible's teachings in support of justice, mercy, peace, and righteousness."

In a "call to action," the declaration challenges Southern Baptist churches to be "boldly involved in championing justice for the oppressed, providing food for the hungry, supporting changes in those laws and systems which manipulate the poor while providing welfare for the rich, doing the things that make for peace, and effecting change where change is needed to support basic human rights."

The declaration also calls upon Southern Baptist citizens to become involved in the political process on behalf of human rights. It urges Southern Baptist pastors to "preach the word of God without fear or favor as it highlights human rights," and asks Southern Baptist agencies to demonstrate "uncompromised and uncompromising commitment to human rights."

In addition to the call to action, a definition of human rights and a presentation of biblical bases for Christian involvement, the declaration also outlines the scope of human rights issues, expressing concern for human rights both at home and abroad.

"We are gravely concerned about the widespread denial of human rights at the hands of our political allies as well as our political adversaries," the declaration states. "Our concern for tortured, unjustly imprisoned and politically oppressed persons abroad is matched by our concern for the rights of women, blacks, ethnic minorities, the poor, the aging, the sick, and abused children in our midst."

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NOTE: The Christian Life Commission will mail a copy of the Human Rights Declaration to Baptist state papers.

Seminary Students
Buy Friend Trailer

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A new home is seldom more than a dream for many people. But for Polly Ballard, that dream came true recently when the Alabama Club at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary presented her with the keys to a new trailer.

Miss Ballard, an employee of the seminary's business office for more than 13 years, came to the city with hopes of finding that unusual job, the kind with a high salary and good job security. After many weeks, through the efforts of one of the local churches, she got a job at the seminary.

Since then, she has lived in a trailer that has deteriorated more and more each year. Her meager income as a single woman has not provided her with resources for improving or replacing the trailer.

Her trailer is in the campus trailer park for students so her conditions did not go unnoticed. Members of the Alabama Club, comprised of students who claim Alabama as their home state, became concerned about improving her situation and began a drive to buy a new trailer.

Contributions for the \$3,000 trailer came from Alabama Club members, Alabama churches, churches where several club members serve, and from members of the seminary family.

Miss Ballard, who has always believed God would help her through the good as well as the hard times, said that in the Alabama students, "God has been clearly visible...I am limited to trying to use a human language to express a spiritual feeling."

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state newspapers by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



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