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Texas Lottery Appears Dead;
Pari-Mutuel Veto Rumored

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--With the proposed Texas state lottery temporarily defeated and veto of a pari-mutuel bill rumored, opponents of gambling may have been tempted to breathe a very tentative sigh of relief when the first special session of the Texas legislature ended at midnight, Sept. 4.

"But until the veto is in hand, we cant afford to relax," said Weston Ware, associate director of the Texas Christian Life Commisson.

Legislation that would have called for a November 1986 referendum on a state lottery passed the Senate, but it died in the House Committee on State Affairs as legislators worked through the Labor Day weekend. A two-thirds vote would have been required in the House, and observers noted the bill lacked that level of support.

However, because the lawmakers failed to come up with any solution to the state's budget crisis during the special meeting, Gov. Mark White is expected to summon them back to the capitol Sept. 8 for a second special session. Gambling opponents do not rule out the possibility of the lottery bill's reintroduction at that time.

The first special session was called by White primarily to consider a temporary sales tax increase to help bridge the state's anticipated \$3.5 billion deficit.

Although the House and Senate passed and sent to White legislation that would legalize pari-mutuel gambling pending a statewide referendum in 1987, House speaker Gib Lewis reportedly said the governor plans to veto the bill. White supposedly announced his intentions to Lewis and Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby during a private luncheon Sept.2.

House Speaker Pro Tem Hugo Berlanga, sponsor of the House version of the betting bill, reportedly said White also told him during a private meeting Sept. 3 that it was very possible he would veto the measure.

White has 20 days from the close of the session either to veto the bill, sign it or allow it to pass into law without his signature.

The pari-mutuel legislation would call for a referendum in November 1987 on horseracing throughout the state and on greyhound races in three Gulf Coast counties. If gambling wins on the general ballot, counties wanting pari-mutuel betting then would have to gain voter approval on a local-option basis.

However, if the bill passes into law, it could come into effect without a statewide referendum if courts rule the referendum illegal. Some maintain the referendum is an unconstitutional intrusion on the legislature's authority to make laws in Texas.

White repeatedly has said he will not sign any pari-mutuel gambling bill unless it includes a statewide referendum, local option elections and strong safeguards against organized crime.

"We're urging the governor to veto this very flawed piece of legislation," said Ware, noting the bill was not a part of White's original call for a special session.

Ware termed the referendum stipulation fraudulent; he said the bill would make no significant contribution to solving the state's immediate fiscal crisis; and he claimed the legislation does not include strong provisions safeguarding against the intrusion of organized crime.

"The bill is a bad bill, but most of all, the governor should veto it because it simply is bad public policy," Ware said.

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N-BSSB

Youth Study Plans
Materials For 90s

By Frank Wm. White

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LAKE BARKLEY, Ky. (BP)—While most Sunday school workers are more concerned about plans for next Sunday, a conference at Lake Barkley, Ky., focused on what youth Sunday school will be like in 1991.

Fourteen youth Sunday school workers from across the Southern Baptist Convention participated in the "Youth Sunday School for the 90s" conference to suggest ideas for new youth Sunday school curriculum design.

The conference was part of an evaluation of all Sunday school literature produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to consider possible changes to be introduced in 1991. Final recommendations for changes will be completed next spring.

The youth design conference followed several months of surveys and evaluations by the youth Sunday school sections at the board.

The evaluations have been helpful in discovering what Southern Baptists think about youth Sunday school materials, but the greatest benefit in the process has been the contact with church workers, said Louis Hanks, supervisor of the board's youth Sunday school curriculum section, and Myrte Veach, youth Sunday school program section supervisor.

Almost 250 churches responded to a mail survey with 36 questions about youth Sunday school curriculum. Other survey responses were collected from youth attending Centrifuge camp sessions and a Texas youth evangelism meeting this summer.

Listening sessions were conducted in 15 Baptist district associations to allow church workers to express comments about youth Sunday school literature. Ten additional listening sessions were conducted with churches which currently do not use Southern Baptist literature.

Responses from these and other evaluations indicate a wide variety of needs exist, Hanks said, noting, "Our challenge and almost impossible task is to provide materials to meet the needs of those people."

The needs of youth workers in different size churches and workers with various levels of experience represent a particular challenge for literature development, Veach said.

"How do you help a church with six enrolled and one with 200 enrolled using the same materials?" she asked. "Our challenge is to minister to those extremes and those in the middle at the same time."

Workers participating in the design conference considered those and other concerns in the two-day work session. The workers represented a range of churches, including a small Alaskan church with 11 youth, two of the largest churches in the convention, a pioneer church in New England, two ethnic churches and some who do not use Southern Baptist youth literature as well as a veteran writer of youth Sunday school material.

Suggestions from the workgroups included plans to deal with the particular problems of sixth graders making the transition into adolescence and high school seniors planning for adulthood.

Some suggested topical Bible study relating specifically to youth concerns and problems. Book studies that were suggested focused on a six-year plan to cover all or most of the books of the Bible so youth have an opportunity to deal with the content of the Bible during their years in youth Sunday school.

The group suggestions will be considered along with other evaluation data in making final recommendations for the development of new youth Sunday school literature designs.

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"We will find there are some things we can implement right now. The big flow of changes will not be seen until 1991," Veach said.

"The critical time for the design plan is between now and when we complete the recommendations. That is when the tough decisions will be made," she said.

Single Parents, Divorced
Couples Need Care, Love

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
9/5/86

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Separation and divorce not only is a crisis for persons who experience it but also can be difficult for fellow church members, a Christian counselor from New Orleans said at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"Often churches just do not know how to respond in positive ways," Rod Kennedy said during the Single Adult Labor Day Conference. "Sometimes you feel like it would have been a lot easier if your spouse had died, because everybody in a Baptist church knows what to do during death."

Kennedy, a former Baptist minister who went through a divorce while a pastor, led a conference for divorced persons at the annual conference sponsored by the family ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Kennedy said a couple going through a divorce makes for an uncomfortable situation around friends and peers. "People don't know what to say or do. It's much easier just not to talk about it," he explained.

Kennedy emphasized the biblical ideal is one woman, one man for life. At the same time, he said, divorce is not an unpardonable sin: "The Bible teaches that divorce is wrong and that it's a sin. But it does not teach that divorce is an unforgivable sin. God forgives divorce.

"Do not believe that God is going to say because you are divorced you do not have a right to a second chance. We build on our past mistakes."

Kennedy said most divorced couples experience guilt, a sense of loss, rejection, confusion, anger and bitterness. A divorced person usually experiences a cycle of grief which begins with shock and withdrawal and runs a gamut of emotions until the person finally reaches the point of acceptance, he noted.

Charles Smith, an Asheville, N.C., marriage and family counselor, said divorced parents experience a great sense of grief as well as a lot of guilt.

"Single parents look upon raising their children as partially compensating for what they conceive to be a failure in their lives," Smith said. "One may cease to be a husband or wife, but one never ceases to be a parent."

Smith said single parents have the added pressure of experiencing task, emotional and responsibility overloads. "You must refuse to let anything or anybody push you beyond your limits," he said. "Being a single parent is like having two full-time jobs. There is no time of day you can say is truly yours."

Smith advised single parents to accept their loss and move on: "Moving on is healthy and wholesome and it's also good for your children. How long it takes to heal depends on your emotional health, the meaning of the relationship and the willingness to invest time to put everything back in perspective."

"Take plenty of time; don't short circuit."

Busy Singles' Schedules
Intensify Daily Pressures

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Traffic jams, long lines, stuck zippers and relationships that go awry all add to the pressures of life.

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But for single adults that pressure is intensified, said Debby Murrell, a minister to college and single adults at First Temple Terrace of Zion Baptist Church in Temple Terrace, Fla. Murrell led a conference on "Pressure Points Never-Married Singles Face" at the Single Adult Labor Day Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. The conference and a simultaneous one at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center were sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

The two conferences drew 5,400 persons, with 3,000 at Ridgecrest and 2,400 at Glorieta.

Singles are busy people, Murrell said, and adding problems to an already busy life can aggravate existing pressure.

She told the 150 singles attending her first conference to "look at these everyday pressures and ask, 'God, what do you want me to learn in this circumstance?'"

The best tactic to take when feeling pressured is "to find a quiet place alone somewhere," she said. "Be still, get everything out of your mind, cool it and then respond to the next command. Take life one step and one day at a time."

But Ron Kemp, a Springfield, Mo., psychologist serving as counselor during the weekend conference, said never-married singles face problems which register beyond everyday pressures.

Many singles confront the problem of peer acceptance, he said.

"I've dealt with several interpersonal issues this weekend," said the marriage and family therapist. "Men have asked 'Why don't women like me,' and women have come in asking, 'Why don't men like me?'"

Because some singles have low social skills, they tend to isolate themselves from their peers, he said, adding, "Many times singles alienate themselves from others. It's a type of social isolation."

In her conference, Murrell vowed, "It's OK to be single; nothing is wrong with it." But Kemp said he believes, "Culturally, being single is not accepted."

Kemp said he acknowledges and supports the move in society toward acceptance of the single lifestyle, but at present he said, "It's awfully hard to do a solo, when everybody expects a duet."

He said he believes "every person must accept his or her singleness before they are ready to deal with life or marriage. Accepting yourself sets you free. Singles are lonely because they reject their singleness," he added.

Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder, a program speaker for the weekend, said the value system of single adults has a lot to do with how they view their lives.

"Values are built by choices," Elder said. "A judgment must be made about who or what will be Lord over your life."

Elder said if singles choose a good value system, they subsequently will be stating they have a high regard for themselves. "A value system is more than a rule book or a code of ethics. It is what gives you your identity, your completeness and wholeness," he explained.

Murrell said singles can accept themselves better if they "use the strength of Jesus Christ and spend quiet time with him."

She said leaving "everyday tension behind by deprogramming yourself an hour before you go to bed" also helps.

Missions, Medicine Unite
Along Texas-Mexico Border

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

DALLAS (BP)—The life of an unborn child was saved, and the life of his prostitute mother was transformed, thanks to the gospel witness and healthcare services of Rio Grande River Ministry.

Medical services are just one part of the River Ministry, an ongoing ministry of Texas Baptists supported through their unified Cooperative Program budget and the Mary Hill Davis Centennial Offering for State Missions.

Eliseo Vega, healthcare coordinator for the Laredo, Texas, area, recalled the day a young Hispanic woman came to a River Ministry clinic in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, requesting an abortion.

"I talked with her and told her my position. I explained that I couldn't do what she wanted because I'm a Christian," said Vega. "I told her, 'The Lord has a purpose for your baby, and he has a purpose for you.'"

The woman began sobbing and saying she did not know how she would survive. Confessing she was a prostitute, the young woman told Vega that she had four boyfriends and all of them had failed her, just as she felt everyone else in life had done.

Vega told her how Jesus could change her life and give her a reason for living. She accepted Christ, was baptized and became a member of a church in Nuevo Laredo.

"Later she got married to a man who understood her background and who accepted her. She and her baby boy are very happy today," Vega reports. He notes the woman now helps keep records in the same clinic where she once came wanting an abortion.

Vega says changed lives are characteristic not only of the patients at the clinic, but also of the doctors with whom he and other River Ministry healthcare coordinators work.

"We're able to minister to doctors, to seek to lead them to the Lord," says Vega. "They are surprised to hear why we do what we do. They are touched by the way we act toward people and by our attitudes. They notice there is something special about Christians.

"One female doctor we worked with believed that she was a Christian because she was doing good for people. We helped her to realize there is more to it than that," he says. The woman became a Christian and recently was baptized.

The weaving together of evangelism and healthcare services comes naturally to Vega. As a lay preacher, he was pastor of a Monterrey, Mexico, church while attending medical school there. During his last year and a half of medical school, he also divided his time between his studies and volunteer work at the Nuevo Laredo clinic.

Vega became healthcare coordinator in February of 1985. He travels to 15 clinics along a 150-square-mile stretch of border country from Del Rio to Laredo, distributing supplies, dispensing medicine and working with local professionals and volunteer teams in helping to provide medical services.

"I feel like a fish in the water. This is where I belong," says Vega. "Jesus' instruction to the disciples in Luke 10:9-11 is to 'heal...and tell.' That's what our purpose is—missions and medicine."