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90-41

Gambling an 'invisible'
addiction, speaker says

By Lonnie Wilkey

N-60
(Tenn.)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Gambling is emerging as one of the most dangerous addictions of our time, said an expert in the field.

Joseph A. Dunne told participants at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's annual seminar March 12-14 in Birmingham, Ala., that gambling is an "invisible addiction."

We may not see the gamblers, but they are all around us, said the former president of the National Council on Compulsive Gambling, based in New York City.

Although gambling has been around for thousands of years, Dunne said, the beginning of the "gambling mania" facing America today began in 1964.

That year the state of New Hampshire "defied the federal government on the grounds of state's rights and established a state lottery commission, which in turn contracted a company to run its lottery," Dunne said.

"That grand experiment" was watched by other states and soon was replicated in 30 other states plus the District of Columbia, he noted.

Ironically, Dunne said, the purpose of the lotteries was to raise funds for education. But "the interesting part of this approach is that the funds derived from gambling do not usually add to the budget of the state education office for more schools, teachers and equipment," he countered.

"These monies are used for 'auxiliary services' or an equal amount is deducted from the state education authorization and then used for other purposes."

Dunne provided conference participants a handout with information about compulsive gambling as an addiction. An interesting fact, Dunne pointed out, is that between 5 percent and 15 percent of problem gamblers are dually addicted. They drink or use drugs as well as gamble compulsively.

Gambling is "any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or skill," Dunne said, providing the definition of gambling as defined by victims of compulsive gambling.

Compulsive gambling has three phases, he said: the winning phase, where an individual is "trapped" with some early successes; the losing phase, where the individual borrows to gamble and tries to cover up and eventually is "bailed" out; and the desperation phase, where the gambler becomes alienated from family and friends and becomes involved in illegal acts to raise funds for the addiction.

At the end of the desperation phase is hopelessness, suicidal thoughts and attempts, arrests, divorce, alcohol abuse, emotional breakdown and withdrawal symptoms, Dunne said.

Recovery also has three phases -- critical, rebuilding and growth -- which can lead to a new life, he noted.

Stewardship Commission
OKs \$2.4 million budget

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(Tenn.)

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission adopted a \$2.4 million 1990-91 budget and elected a Virginia pastor as chairman during its annual board meeting March 15-16 in Nashville.

The \$2,432,600 budget is a 2.99 percent increase over the 1989-90 budget of \$2,361,890.

The commission is to receive \$489,479 in Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget receipts, a 1.89 percent increase. The remainder of the commission's income will come from publishing, fees and interest on investment.

Joe E. Burton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Radford, Va., was elected chairman, succeeding John Wallace, a layman from Morristown, Tenn., who was not eligible for re-election.

Also elected were Roy Moody, state stewardship director for the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, Topeka, Kan., vice chairman; and Dan Stowe, a layman from Mechanicsburg, Ohio, secretary.

In other actions, commission members:

- Approved the process of revising the agency's program statement.
- Adopted a philosophy, objectives and policies for investments.
- Heard a report from commission President A.R. Fagan that the commission is in "good, sound financial condition."
- Were given an update on "One for all," a five-year Cooperative Program strategy for churches.
- Authorized the request of \$550,000 in Cooperative Program funds for 1991-92.

The next meeting of the commission will be held March 14-15, 1991, in Nashville.

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Church can use Final Four
as Here's Hope follow-up

By Frank Wm. White

N-SSB

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--After the Southern Baptist Here's Hope simultaneous revivals in March and April, the Final Four Sunday school enrollment emphasis for June through September can help churches follow up with prospects discovered through the revivals, according to a consultant at the convention's Sunday School Board who developed the plan.

The Final Four is a four-month close-out project for Challenge 10/90, a five-year Sunday School enrollment emphasis, said Ron Pratt, consultant in adult Sunday school work.

"The summer often is a slump time for churches," Pratt said. "This year, it can be a good time to try to enroll prospects discovered through the simultaneous revivals as well as locate new prospects."

Many Southern Baptist churches have been using Bible distribution and evangelistic people search to locate prospects in preparation for Here's Hope revivals. But if they go through the summer without contacting those prospects, they probably will lose touch with them, Pratt pointed out.

By assigning the prospects to Sunday school classes for follow up, the Sunday school can provide the organization for the church's evangelistic outreach, Pratt said.

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Pratt emphasized the importance of enrolling prospects in Sunday school, noting, "Statistically, we know that one out of every two non-Christians who are enrolled in Sunday school is baptized within a year."

In the Final Four emphasis, every church member is encouraged to make a personal commitment to enroll people in Sunday school. Prospects from the Here's Hope revivals could be a likely place to start the enrollment emphasis, Pratt pointed out.

The plan suggests an additional prospect discovery emphasis June 17.

Although the plan recommends monthly visitation/enrollment rallies and special Sunday features with weekly age-group enrollment emphases during September, a church can select those features that fit its schedule, Pratt said.

Also, many Southern Baptist associations are conducting Final Four kickoff rallies in early May, he added.

At the end of the emphasis, associations will collect enrollment totals for reporting to the Sunday School Board's Sunday school division. A preliminary Southern Baptist Convention enrollment total then will be compiled.

Planning guides for the Final Four emphasis were mailed to Southern Baptist churches in January.

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Parks urges seminarians
to risk for missions

By Pat Cole

N-60
(SBTS)

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Christians must be willing to "risk success in the eyes of the world" if they are to follow the teachings and example of Jesus, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks told a seminary chapel audience.

"I'm talking about risking that which is temporary for that which is eternal," said Parks in an address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "I am talking about risking that which is self-centered for that which is Christ-centered."

Obedient Christians must be willing to risk their family relationships, community approval, physical well-being and even their lives, he said.

Parks' chapel address March 16 concluded Global Mission Week at the Louisville, Ky., school. In addition to chapel services focusing on foreign missions, more than 30 FMB staff members and missionaries conducted a series of informational forums, staffed foreign mission displays and lectured in 124 classes. Parks also spoke at the Kentuckiana Global Mission Rally March 13 on the seminary campus, an event co-sponsored by the seminary and the FMB for Kentucky and Indiana church pastors and mission leaders.

In his chapel address, Parks said American Christians have tended to define their faith "in terms of culture rather than defining culture in terms of Christianity." Thus, the expectations of Christianity now "move along the lines of comfort, luxury and worldly success," he said.

In order to do God's will, Christians must be willing to serve in any location, Parks said: "Once you have honestly committed yourself to Christ, you will recognize that none of us is prepared to serve in one place unless we are willing to serve in any place. None of us is ready to follow his will unless we are willing to look at God's total will for this earth."

Parks told students they could never "know with confidence" the will of God for their lives unless they are willing to serve anywhere. "My conviction is that when in open-hearted commitment you give him your all, he will call more of you to go beyond your home state, beyond this nation to a world for which Christ died," he said.

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At the conclusion of Parks' address, more than 40 people responded publicly to an invitation to commit themselves to mission service.

At the rally for pastors and church mission leaders, Parks said that recent reforms by foreign governments have created an unprecedented opportunity for world evangelization. "I say to you tonight that I believe God has set a time," he said. "He has chosen a people who would be alive at this time, and God is breaking down the barriers."

Parks noted that the methodology and resources are available to proclaim the gospel to the entire world. However, he expressed concern that Christians may be too unconcerned or too "busy fighting among ourselves" to seize the opportunities that exist.

During other chapel services, missionary speakers underscored the challenges and rewards of foreign missions.

"A recurring theme in mission history is that God brings good out of evil," said Joanne Goatcher, FMB consultant for missionary health. "Believers multiply when difficulties are the greatest, added Goatcher, a physician and former missionary to Thailand.

Thousands of refugees who fled to Thailand in the 1970s to escape the Cambodian civil war were converted, she noted, saying, "It was that terrible, chaotic rending of every facet of their lives that opened their hearts to the gospel.

The refugees responded to the gospel when people "incarnated the living, loving Lord who was the only one who could bring any meaning or healing back into the lives that had experienced such trauma," she said.

Larry Pumpelly, a Southern Baptist missionary to Uganda, said most ministers confine their places of service to areas where they find suitable circumstances.

"We get tied up in seeing the things of the world," he said. "There are things in our lives that keep us from being who God wants us to be."

Bob Wakefield, an itinerant missionary to South Asia and the Pacific, stressed the need for Christians to "focus on the fields" that are ripe unto harvest.

Yet Wakefield said he was frightened that Southern Baptists are more concerned with political infighting than proclaiming the gospel. "We came home to find the family fussing and fighting," he said.

Wakefield listed three major motivations for missions service: a "consuming love for people," a concern for a world dead in sin and the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice.

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Also contributing to this story were Ron Kline and Mary Driskill, staff members of Southern Seminary's office of communications.

Tentmaker program
reaches hard areas

By Ron Kline

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(SBTS)

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--After nearly a year, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's tentmaker program has no intention of camping on the most comfortable soil it can find.

Instead, it's pitching itself on much harder ground in countries often closed to traditional missionaries.

"We're leap-frogging to the front in terms of letting the world know the gospel," David Garrison, director of the FMB non-residential missionary program, said in an address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The address was part of the Louisville, Ky., school's Global Mission Week March 13-16. During the special emphasis, more than 30 foreign missionaries and FMB staff members talked with the campus community about missions.

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The tentmaker program, Garrison explained, builds on the New Testament examples of Paul, Aquila, Priscilla and others. It utilizes Christians who gain secular employment in a foreign country and who have the professed intention of winning disciples to Christ. Where possible, tentmakers attempt to establish and strengthen churches.

Designed for, but not limited to, countries that are closed to full-time missionaries, the program asks participants to sign a covenant indicating their intent to be involved in global evangelization.

Participants have no contract, since the only compensation a tentmaker receives from the FMB is counsel from a full-time missionary in the same region of the world, along with prayers from home.

Eleven Southern Baptist tentmakers in touch with the FMB work overseas now, with at least 150 strong prospects, Garrison said. Prospects must make connections both with an employer in a foreign country and the full-time missionaries who request them to come to the field.

Tom Prevost, FMB International Service Corps director, said the tentmaker program came out of an assessment of Southern Baptists' progress toward meeting the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's attempt to reach all people with the gospel by the year 2000.

FMB President R. Keith Parks "took a look at our goals, and said that if we're serious, we can't achieve them through business as usual," Prevost said.

The tentmaker can make "strategic inroads to places missionaries will never see," Prevost said, noting that the 117 countries in which Southern Baptists have missionaries represent less than half the world's nations.

"Some 1.3 billion people have never heard (the gospel) for the first time ... and that's unconscionable in our day and age," Prevost said.

Especially in closed countries, "being a tentmaker may take twice the effort of being a bivocational minister in the United States," Garrison said.

Unlike U.S. bivocational ministers, many overseas tentmakers must contend with governmental regulations that are averse to religion, he said. Tentmakers, he added, also must do without many amenities and resources that ministers in the United States enjoy.

Prevost described tentmaking as "incarnational witnessing." Tentmakers may have limited freedom to share Christ in the workplace, but they often can find a hospitable environment in homes, he said.

The FMB recommends that a tentmaker have strong witnessing skills, including MasterLife or similar training, and should be adept at home Bible study leadership. The board hopes to have 600 tentmakers relating to unreached people groups alone by the year 2000, Prevost said.

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Ron Kline is a staff member in Southern Seminary's office of communications.