



Facts And Action In Applied Christianity

An Occasional Bulletin In Christian Social Ethics

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ARKANSAS, CALIFORNIA REJECT GAMBLING BIDS

Constitutional amendments designed to permit legalized gambling were decisively rejected in the general elections by voters in Arkansas and California. In both cases, an intensive campaign was waged and the issues widely debated.

The Arkansas voters decided against a proposal to legalize casino gambling in Garland County, of which Hot Springs is seat. Californians voted down a proposal to establish a lottery that would give a private corporation exclusive license to operate within their state.

In the California election, there was an apparent shift in public opinion. Early in the campaign, the California poll had projected victory for the gambling interests, but the voters were 4 to 1 against legalization.

Editor J. Terry Young of the California Southern Baptist at Fresno warned that the election victory "by no means ends the gambling problem in California." Young pointed out much of the opposition to the gambling amendment centered against the private corporation which would control the gambling.

"Churches, businessmen and the state Baptist paper led out in fighting the issue," Young stated, "but much more needs to be done to arouse public conscience against the moral evil of gambling."

An organization known as Churches United Against Gambling received major credit for rolling back the bid to legalize casino gambling in the Hot Springs resort area. Erwin L. McDonald of Little Rock, Editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, credited the organization for counteracting a multimillion dollar propaganda effort by the pro-gambling interests.

"This was the finest interdenominational effort I have seen," said McDonald. He pointed to cooperation of Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Assembly of God and Christian churches.

"Anti-gambling statements in both of Little Rock's newspapers, articles in church papers, and full-page ads sponsored by businessmen all helped to create a climate against the gambling amendment," McDonald declared.

A Southern Baptist Convention official saw these efforts to legalize gambling as part of a massive national effort. Foy Valentine, Nashville, Executive Secretary of the Christian Life Commission, stated:

"It is increasingly apparent that gambling interests throughout the nation have launched an all-out program to remove those legal barriers which have thwarted their sinister profiteering. The lesson we must all learn from elections in California and Arkansas is that legalized gambling can and must be defeated through the creative response of an aroused Christian citizenry."

--Baptist Press

MORALITY, USA AS VIEWED BY SECULAR JOURNALISM

The U. S. is still a long way from the rugged debaucheries of Restoration England or the perfumed corruption of the Gallant Century in France. But Greeks who have grown up with the memory of Aphrodite can only gape at the American goddesses, silken and seminude, in a million advertisements. Indians who have seen the temple sculptures of Konarak can only marvel at some of the illustrated matter sold in American drugstores; and Frenchmen who consider themselves the world's arbiters on the subject, can only smile at the urgency attached to it by Americans. The U. S. seems to be undergoing a revolution of mores and an erosion of morals that is turning it into what Reich called a "sex-affirming culture."

Many others now live by what State University of Iowa Sociologist Ira Reiss calls "permissiveness with affection." What this means to most people is that: 1) morals are a private affair; 2) being in love justifies pre-marital sex, and by implication perhaps extramarital sex; 3) nothing really is wrong as long as nobody else "gets hurt."

When sex is pursued only for pleasure, or only for gain, or even only to fill a void in society or in the soul, it becomes elusive, impersonal, ultimately disappointing. That is what Protestant Theologian Helmut Thielicke has in mind when he warns that "a dethroned god seems to be staging his comeback in a secularized world." Eros is accorded high rank today, "a rank that comes close to the deity it once had." The spiritual danger is that Eros may leave "no room for agape, which lives not by making claims but by giving."

The Victorians, who talked a great deal about love, knew little about sex. Perhaps it is time that modern Americans, who know a great deal about sex, once again start talking about love.

--Time, January 24, 1964

There are teen-agers who are immune to the virus of vulgar advertising, and those who are spared push parents, but when we observe the temptations with which they are faced while growing up, it is a miracle that they aren't in more trouble than they are.

When are we going to gather the courage to come out and say that something is filthy if that's what we think it is? When are parents going to realize that in order to have moral children they must be raised in a moral climate, with moral examples to follow? When are we going to quit blaming teachers and society and everyone but ourselves for our children's failure to measure up?

--"Abby Talks On Teen Troubles"

Courier-Journal, Louisville, April 12, 1964

In our country, three institutions have the power--and the responsibility--to influence our morality: government, business (with the labor unions), and the churches. Each has failed to provide moral leadership and has helped to precipitate our moral crisis.

--Look, September 24, 1963

Modern science, salesmanship, and ancient human laziness have now combined to produce the ultimate miracle products--indulgence without penalties, experience without risk, deprivation without deprival. Gluttony can now be non-fattening, lust can be non-procreative, and even thought can be reduced to a complex of magnetic tapes, transistors, and computer cards.

--Newsweek, March 30, 1964

ATTACK ON ALCOHOLISM

In all seven principal operating agencies of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Public Health Service, Office of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, Saint Elizabeths Hospital, Food and Drug Administration, Social Security Administration, and Welfare Administration) there is deep involvement in the problem of alcoholism. But what are the agencies doing, and what do they plan to do?

One project that holds encouraging promise is the Cooperative Commission on the Study of Alcoholism, in California, with staff at the Institute for the Study of Human Problems, Stanford University. The Commission's 5-point enterprise involves (1) finding out what scientific knowledge is available, (2) examining the activities, programs, and resources now working on the problem, (3) studying the relationships between organizations primarily concerned with alcoholism, and other resources groups, such as those that work with mental health and tuberculosis, in professional schools, and others, (4) using the results to formulate policies and recommendations to improve treatment, education, and prevention, and (5) identifying what further research is needed.

Other NIMH projects that promise to develop new and useful guidelines for all of us involve:

- (1) a study of the influence of sociocultural patterns, which seeks to determine relationships between factors associated with deviant behavior on the one hand and drinking on the other, through analysis of data on an American Indian group, a Spanish-American, and an Anglo-American group;
- (2) a study, centering in San Francisco, of alcohol-usage patterns;
- (3) a project concerned with nomenclature that seeks to bring some order out of the present confused state of terminology in the field of alcoholism; and
- (4) a manual for health officers for the public health control of alcoholism now being developed by the American Public Health Association.

Some index to the kind of support the NIMH extends to state agencies for so-called technical assistance projects is disclosed in the following titles chosen from among eleven projects carried forward during the year: Alabama completed a project on Interagency Development and Coordination of Services for Alcoholics and their Families; New Hampshire finished a similar project on Planning for Coordinated Alcoholism Services on a State and Local Level; Oregon studied the Alcoholic and the Court; and North Carolina the problems of Alcohol as related to Youth.

The history of the development of public concern for and awareness of major problems in public health demonstrates that one of the most important roles the federal government can play is in removing the social taboos that shroud these problems. Public discussion and examination of the issues involved are needed before an effective plan of attack can be developed. As Dr. Eric Goldman said in dedicating the new Center for Alcoholic Studies at Rutgers University, "We cannot solve the unpleasant by hiding it in the attic."

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in the new steps it has taken over the past year, is moving forward vigorously to bring to the attention of the American people the seriousness of the problem of alcoholism and the need for effective measures to deal with it.

--From Concern, July 1, 1964

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON LEGALIZED GAMBLING

November 10-12, 1964 marked the Consultation on a growing American social issue: Gambling. The meeting was conducted in New York City by the Department of Social Welfare of the National Council of Churches.

Highlights of the topics considered: "Psychological Factors in Gambling," "Gambling and Organized Crime," "Gambling As A Tax Source," "Gambling and Morality," "Effective Change in Attitudes Toward Gambling."

Attending as observers from Southern Baptists were Dr. Jimmy Allen of the Texas Christian Life Commission, and Ross Coggins of the SBC Christian Life Commission.

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE CHURCHES AND SOCIAL WELFARE

More than 150 representatives of various Christian communions gathered at Warwick, New York, October 19-21, 1964 for a major consultation on church social welfare in a changing society. The seminar divided into discussion groups which exhaustively treated subjects such as: "Racial Integration in Church-Related Health and Welfare Services," "The Impact of Social Change on the Family," "Social Responsibility of the Church in Urban Areas," and "Long-Range Denominational Planning for Health and Welfare Programs."

Proceedings will be available in print in the near future. Attending as an observer was William M. Dyal, Jr. of the SBC Christian Life Commission staff.

EXPERIMENTAL SEMINAR ON CHRISTIAN SOCIAL CONCERNS

A unique approach to student evaluation of Christian social ethics in action will occur in New York City, January 27-31, 1965. Jointly sponsored by the Christian Life Commission, SBC, and the Student Department of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, the seminar will involve 40 selected collegians from North Carolina.

Against the backdrop of New York City, the themes for study will be international relations, race relations, citizenship, and social welfare. Features will be a study tour of the United Nations, a conference with Nigeria's Ambassador to the UN, a visit to East Harlem Protestant Parish, and a look at "Baptists in the Concrete City."

The seminar may provide the format for other such studies with student and other groups.

NOTEWORTHY

** The Argentine Baptist Convention is studying a proposal to establish a Commission to work in the area of Christian social ethics. When set up, it would be the first of its kind in Latin America.

** Summer conference dates and themes for 1965 have been set by the SBC Christian Life Commission. At Glorieta, August 12-18, the conference will be on Gambling. A long-range planning meeting in applied Christianity will also take place at that time with seminary Christian ethics professors participating. The Ridgecrest conference, August 26 - September 1, will deal with Alcohol.

** A Parent-Teen Code is being participated in by Baptist and other churches in the Louisville area. Described as a "bridge of understanding between two generations," the code is an attempt to harmonize family and community living with basic principles of religious conduct. The code treats dating, social activities, dress, drinking, and driving.

** Report On Man's Use of Alcohol, September - October 1964, cites: "In those states in which the sale of alcoholic beverages is permitted both by the drink and by the bottle, there is 23 per cent more alcoholism than the per capita consumption would warrant.

Also cited: Among the 25 top national newspaper advertisers in 1963 were three distilleries whose advertising expenditures in newspapers totaled \$20,993.601.

** School desegregation: Southern School News, October, 1964 reports that the 11 states of the South now have a total of 583 desegregated districts with policies to admit Negroes to the same schools with whites. Texas accounts for half of these.

MORALS IN AMERICA

Excerpts from The Baptist Training Union Magazine, September, 1964, A special issue on a Christian approach to key social problems.

"Christianity and Morality" -- Christian morality is both personal and social. It is first personal in the sense that the Christian accepts the lordship of Christ in every area and relationship of his personal life. It is then social in the sense that the Christian understands his responsibility to be his brother's keeper even as he walks daily in the moral light of God in Christ. Christian morality is an inward reality which inevitably seeks and invariably finds meaningful outward expression. -- Foy Valentine

"Crime and Delinquency" -- The enlightened Christian must see the anti-social acts and attitudes of the delinquent as symptoms of an illness of the mind, personality, and spirit. He is ill, and he is also wrong. He needs most of all "agape," God-centered love, and intelligent understanding.

The delinquent must be seen as a creature of God, worthy of every skill of science, medicine, and theology that will help to redeem him, heal his isolation, and restore his broken lines of communication with family, school, church, and God. In doing this, the mature Christian will recognize the vital importance for the delinquent to gain a knowledge of his own self, the selves of others, and the Divine Self. -- Walter Delamarter.

"The Flood of Filth" -- Sharing the responsibility for the pornography problem with those who produce and those who purchase the material are the millions of Americans who, because of indifference, allow the flood of filth to continue.

Numerous good people who would never consider purchasing pornographic material have contributed to its wide distribution by failing to fight against it. They have not sought information about the problem. They have not reported to the proper authorities obscene material which has come to their attention. They have not spoken out against obscenity. They have failed to encourage law enforcement

officials in their fight against the filth. Many have come to accept such material as part of our sex-saturated way of life and have thus paved the way for court rulings which are increasingly lenient in regard to obscenity.

Today, as always, the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing. And nothing is what most Americans have done about the pornography problem. -- Bill Pinson

"Growing Sex Revolution" -- Early dating leads almost inevitably to early marriage. In 1961, 800,000 teen-age girls were married; 400,000 were 18 years of age or younger. "Most shocking yet, there are more than 20,000 boys and girls between 12 and 15 currently married in America."

Pregnancy is the reason for many teen-age marriages. Studies have shown that as high as 57 per cent of high school marriages involved pregnant brides. "Premarital pregnancy is now involved in 85 per cent of all marriages in which both partners are high-school students."

The number of unwed mothers have increased every year in the past decade. There were 39.8 illegitimate births for each 1,000 live births in 1950. The number jumped to 54 for each 1,000 in 1960.

Early dating definitely contributes to present sexual promiscuity."

--C. W. Scudder

"Racism: Fact and Fallacy" -- Biblical teachings clearly expose the myth of racism. In keeping with modern science, the Bible teaches that there is one human race stemming from a common source (Gen. 1:27; 5:1). Paul, the apostle, stated that God "made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17:26) and that all--Jew and Gentile--are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). Peter made it clear that God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).

Paul summed up the principles of Christian human relations by saying, "Accept one another as Christ accepted us, to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7, The New English Bible). Here is the ethics ("accept one another") and theology ("as Christ has accepted us") of our treatment of others. -- Henlee Barnette

(Note: The "Plans for Christian Action" included in this special issue of the Training Union Magazine would be especially helpful in local church and associational programs.)

WANTED: ASSOCIATIONAL AND STATE
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Light would appreciate receiving a copy of your annual report. Highlights of these important reports will be shared in this newsletter for the mutual benefit of other committees.

SUMMER CONFERENCE ADDRESSES AVAILABLE

The booklet of addresses on "Christianity and Race Relations" is available for \$1.00 from the Christian Life Commission, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tennessee. The booklet comprises all the addresses given at the Commission's summer conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta.

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