
CHRISTIAN LIFE REPORT

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On Storms and Grief

By Rick Mitchell

“What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.”

The storms that struck the state of Alabama on April 27, 2011, left the citizens of our state with unprecedented losses and an unprecedented degree of grief. The grief remains fresh even as recovery work is well under way. As we look to our Lord, his word, and his people for strength and renewal some practical steps are helpful to keep in mind.

Think It Over – As you reflect back on the storm events, think it over in light of the support of friends and church, the testimony of the Scriptures, and the knowledge of God’s provision. Choose a daily focus that anchors your thinking not in what was lost, but in what God has done and will do. Stay close to those who positively support your personal recovery.

Talk It Out – Some people cope by talking and others by reflecting, but for all there is a value in speaking. Whether you choose your pastor, your spouse, your one best friend in the world, or a group of trusted confidants, talk it out so that others can give you encouragement and feedback. Their insight can add to your perspective the wisdom you need for a complete picture.

Write It Down – As Peter Lord says, the “shortest pen is more reliable than the longest memory.” Whether you record your thoughts and impressions in a nicely bound journal or on pages from an ordinary note pad, write down key thoughts and feelings that capture your story. It may be well worded sentences or a bullet-point list of dates, times, and words to jar your memory later. After the healing

process is far along, your notes will help inform the story of God’s activity in your life of faith.

Let It Process – Grief is like the common cold and must run its course to heal. Stuffing emotion makes a compost heap of the soul. Some people are comfortable with public displays of emotion and others prefer to grieve privately and quietly. Whether you cry openly or weep quietly — let it out. Whichever style of grieving and emotional release is comfortable to you, know that letting it out helps free the soul of emotional pain.

Pray It Through – Prayer is our conversation with God that voices faith in the One who is unshakable. It is not what others hear us say but when God hears from us that our faith connects us to the healing power of Christ and the cross. I know many who pray freestyle and as their thoughts occur, and others who write letters to God and then read it as a form of prayer. Some popular devotional books have a suggested prayer at the end of each daily thought. Yet another approach to praying through is to reword a passage of Scripture in personal terms and pray it back to God. However you choose to pray it through, give the time to telling God your story; how you think, what you think, how you feel, and what you are doing to heal.

Scripturally, hope is not an uncertain possibility but the assurance and expectation that what God promises will come to pass. In this moment, hope reminds us that things can get better. And they will!

(Rick Mitchell is pastor of Holt Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama)



*The articles in this issue were gathered from various sources
The opinions in the Christian Life Report are not necessarily the opinions of the Christian Life Commission*

George Washington Opposed Gambling

by Peter A. Lillback

Washington opposed gambling.....

Even as a young man, he could see gambling's corrosive influence. He wrote this letter as Colonel Washington to Governor Richard Dinwiddie when he was in his twenties, February 2, 1756:

I have always, so far as was in my power, endeavored to discourage gambling in camp, and always shall while I have the honor to preside there...

Later, as head of the U.S. Army, George Washington issued this directive against gambling on October 2, 1775:

Any officer, non-commissioned officer, or soldier who shall hereafter be detected playing at toss-up, pitch, and hustle, or any other games of chance, in or near the camp or village bordering on the encampments, shall without delay be confined and punished for disobedience of orders. The General does not mean by the above to discourage sports of exercise or recreation, he only means to discountenance and punish gaming.

In a similar vein, Washington recognized the great danger of gambling in civilian life. As he gave counsel to his nephew, heir, and future Supreme Court Chief Justice Bushrod Washington, he wrote:

The last thing I shall mention, is first of importance and that is, to avoid Gaming. This is a vice which is productive of every possible evil. Equally injurious to the morals and health of its rotaries. It is the child of Avarice, the brother of Inequity, and father of Mischief. It has been the ruin of many worthy families; the loss of many a man's honor; and the cause of suicide. To all those who enter the list, it is equally fascinating; the successful gamester pushes his good fortune till it is overtaken by reverse; the loosing gamester in hopes of retrieving past misfortunes, goes on from bad to worse, till grown desperate, he pushes at everything; and loses his all. In a word, few gain by this abominable practice (the profit, if any, being diffused) while thousands are injured.

(Excerpts from *George Washington's Sacred Fire* by Peter A. Lillback, Copyright 2006)

Response to Gambling Trial

by Joe Godfrey



Though the gambling corruption trial resulted in no convictions for the nine defendants and a mistrial has been declared on several of the counts, the fact remains that gambling and corruption go hand-in-hand. It is always difficult to prove intentions when money changes hands.

The fact that the gambling bosses gave large sums of money to various legislators and candidates was never denied; all that happened is that the prosecution could not prove the money was associated with particular votes on gambling. It must also be remembered that two of the original eleven defendants pled guilty to the corruption charges.

We can be confident that the gambling bosses will likely continue to identify candidates, incumbent legislators and constitutional officers they can support financially in order to affect the laws of Alabama to

be favorable to their multi-million dollar gambling establishments. If, eventually, they are not convicted on any of the counts, they are also likely to continue applying tremendous pressure on legislators in the hallways of the Alabama State House.

During the 2009 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature, one particular pro-gambling bill tied up the Senate for an entire 10 days out of 30 total legislative days (one third of the Regular Session)! During the 2010 Regular Legislative Session, the gambling bill, which led to the FBI investigation and the corruption charges, monopolized the entire session.

The citizens of Alabama must make sure to elect people who are pro-life, pro-family and pro-moral, and especially, men and women who oppose legislation that promotes gambling.

(Godfrey is executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP))



Casinos Curse Alabama

by Joe Bob Mizzell

For many years, Alabama has been cursed with legal and illegal gambling. The curse has reached high levels in our state government and brought senators, lobbyists, casino owners and state employees to the courts. The corruption caused by gambling has blighted our state and given us cause to worry.

Casino gambling is a curse, not a blessing, to anyone who practices it, regardless of whether they are black, white or red.

It moves money from the many to the few. It creates more losers than winners. It wastes resources that could be invested. It makes people desperate and

more likely to turn to crimes such as burglary or robbery, either to satisfy their addiction or to pay off their growing gambling debts. In short, it creates more victims than beneficiaries.

Even if casino gambling were legal in our state, I would discourage people from taking part in it because it does more harm than good. Whoever engages in gambling, especially casino gambling, engages in what I believe to be a stupid and socially damaging practice.

(Mizzell is director of Christian Ethics/Chaplaincy Ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions)

Abortions are Coming Down

by Joe Bob Mizzell



The number of abortions has gone down by 22 percent between 1990 and 2005 according to Michael New, political science professor at the University of Alabama. He says, "An important reason is the restrictions that more and more states are passing." New believes states opting not to fund abortions through Medicaid dropped state abortion rates by about 9 percent.

The informed-consent laws, which require abortion providers to inform a woman about the potential risk to her health, fetal development and available assistance before the abortion is performed, reduces abortion by about 5 to 7 percent. Also, parental involvement laws, which require a minor to either tell or get permission from their parents before having an abortion has reduced the numbers among minors.

Among the deterrents to abortion are the ultrasounds. They allow the woman to see that the child inside

her is a real person. It is hard to take the life of a person especially if you know that person feels pain during an abortion.

Public opinion is turning against abortions. For the first time public opinion is against abortion since Gallup began asking the question in 1995. In 2010, 47 percent of Americans called themselves pro-life, while 45 percent identified as pro-choice.

Maybe this country will finally come to the conclusion that a pre-born baby is a person. When this happens, it will be the greatest thing to happen since the abolishment of slavery in the United States.

Note: This article is based on an article in *Christianity Today*, June, 2011.

(Mizzell is director of Christian Ethics/Chaplaincy Ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions)



World Hunger Sunday

October 9, 2011



Last year donations to the World Hunger Fund were the lowest they have been in 20 years. We are now at a 'red alert' time for our human needs funding. 1.02 billion people in the world do not have enough to eat; this means one sixth of humanity is undernourished. **100% of every dollar given to World Hunger Fund is used to help hungry people. Please give from your heart today.**

"Offer yourself to the hungry" - Isaiah 58:10

For information and downloadable material please go to www.alsbom.org/worldhunger

FACTS & ISSUES

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DISTURBING STATISTICS ABOUT CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND EXPLOITATION:

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

- Of those arrested for child pornography crimes between 2000 and 2001, 83 percent had images involving children aged 6 to 12; 39 percent had images of children aged 3 to 5; and 19 percent had images of infants and toddlers
- Approximately 20 percent of Internet pornography involves children; more than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted on the Internet every week
- Child pornography is estimated to be a \$3 billion-a-year industry
- Research indicates that one in five girls and one in ten boys is sexually victimized (*Enough is Enough—enough.org*)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING FACTS

- The U.S. State Department estimates at least 600,000 to 800,000 human beings are trafficked across international borders each year—numbers within national borders are much higher
- The United Nations claims that the trafficking of human beings has surpassed the drug trade to become the second largest source of money for organized crime, after the illegal arms trade
(*The Salvation Army's Initiative Against Sexual Trafficking—iast.net*)
Citizen Magazine. April 2011

GAMBLING ADDICTION

When it comes to severity, America's gambling addiction isn't too far behind the nation's drug problem and it's growing. In 2007, Americans lost more than \$92 billion gambling, about nine times what they lost in 1982, and almost 10 times more than what moviegoers in the U.S. spent on tickets that same year, says Sam Skolnik, author of the newly released book *High Stakes: The Rising Cost of American's Gambling Addiction*. In 2005, an estimated 73 million Americans patronized one of the country's 1,200 casinos, card rooms or bingo parlors—20 million more than just five years earlier, says Skolnik.

Sheryl Nance-Nash, 07/22/11, *DailyFinance*:<http://srph.it/qIMJ0f>

WOMEN AND WORK

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently put out a Spotlight, *Women at Work*. Does it surprise anyone that young women (15-19) do less housework than other women? Or that older women (65+) spend more time on leisure activities? Or that women suffer fewer workplace fatalities than men? In 2009 only 319 women died on the job, compared to 4,021 men.

The percentage of women in the workforce continues to rise. In 2009, 59 percent of women were working, up from 43 percent in 1970. They are better educated. In 1970 fewer than one in four had attended college. Now two out of three have. In 1970, a third of female workers had less than a high-school education. That percentage has dropped to about 7 percent.

The BLS projects that women will continue to increase their work force participation. By 2018, about 6.5 million more women will be working, an increase of 9 percent. More surprising: The biggest increases are likely to occur among older women, with labor force participation of women 65 to 74 increasing 90 percent. The BLS projects that over 300,000 women 75 and older will be working: that's a 61 percent increase.

Women are outstripping men in the race to earn college degrees. When they were 23 years old, 23 percent of young women had a B.A. or higher, compared to just 14 percent of young men.

Susan Olasky, *WORLD Magazine*, April 23, 2011

DRUNK DRIVERS

In 2009, 280 people in Alabama were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver. Over five years, 1,733 died in traffic accidents involving a drunk driver. To put that number in perspective, it is more than seven times the number of people killed in the horrific tornado outbreak that hit the state.

Montgomery Advertiser Editorial, May 13, 2011



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