
CHRISTIAN LIFE REPORT

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Living In Sodom

by
Michael J. Brooks

I heard a comedian say lately, "Lord, don't test me. You know I'm a 'C' student!"

We all make "A's" in some areas and "C's" in others. The key is to excel in the areas of greatest importance.

A good example is the Old Testament character Lot, the nephew of Abraham. In the New Testament, Peter calls Lot a righteous man. However, the Old Testament accounts show him failing the test of righteousness.

Abraham decided the two clans needed to part since no home is big enough for two families. He allowed Lot to choose the land he wanted and Lot selfishly chose the best land for himself. His territory bordered the legendary wicked city of Sodom. The Bible says Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom" in Genesis 13:12. Life in Sodom appealed to him. He wanted to be near enough to check it out and he eventually moved into the city.

Later God sent his angels to Sodom to determine if there were enough righteous people to merit saving it. Abraham had already bartered with God about the number of righteous who lived there. God agreed to spare the city if 50 righteous were found, but after Abraham's plea, he agreed to spare the city if he found only 10.

The evil men of Sodom wanted to have illicit relations with the angels, and this incident gave us the disturbing word "sodomy" in our English vocabulary. Lot, however, tried to deter his neighbors by offering his own daughters to them. Every father I know

would give his life for his daughter. Lot again displayed his selfishness.

Lot lost the godly influence he'd once had. He couldn't influence his intended sons-in-law (Gen. 19:14) or his wife (v. 26) who all perished, nor his daughters who were guilty of heinous sin (v. 33).

Lot's major mistake was that he thought he could live in Sodom, but Sodom wouldn't live in him. He was wrong! The Bible is clear: "Evil companions corrupt good character" (1 Corinthians 15:33). In the South, we say this with an old proverb: "You can't lie down with the dogs and not get fleas!"

Christians aren't supposed to look down on evil people like prideful Pharisees, but neither are we to be taken in by the world's philosophy.

Today we don't have to search out Sodom with a roadmap or GPS since Sodom comes into our homes via music, TV and magazines. Living in Sodom can cause us to lose our moral compass.

The Ephesian magicians burned their sorcery books after coming to Christ (Acts 20). They demonstrated their commitment to a new life of holiness and the truth of the little chorus, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back."

They are a much better example for modern Christians than Lot.

(Brooks is Associate Professor of Speech & Journalism and Assistant to the President for Public Relations at Judson College)

*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*

An Open Letter to the President on Alcohol

by
Dan Ireland

The following is a letter written to President Barack Obama by Dan Ireland, Executive Director of the American Council on Alcohol Problems. The letter states:

Dear Mr. President,

With your recent "Beer Summit" you have provided a tremendous complimentary boost to the alcohol industry at the public's expense. As the American Medical Association as well as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention point out, alcohol is a drug.

As reflected by the millions of alcoholic and problem drinkers in the United States, alcohol is an addictive drug as well as a killer drug. The Surgeon General says the nation averages 100,000 deaths a year due to alcohol abuse.

As I'm sure you are aware, underage consumption of alcohol is a grave concern in this nation and beer is by far the drink of choice among young Americans. The American Council on Alcohol Problems with its 30 state affiliates shares the concern of the U.S. Surgeon General and join his national efforts to reduce this major problem.

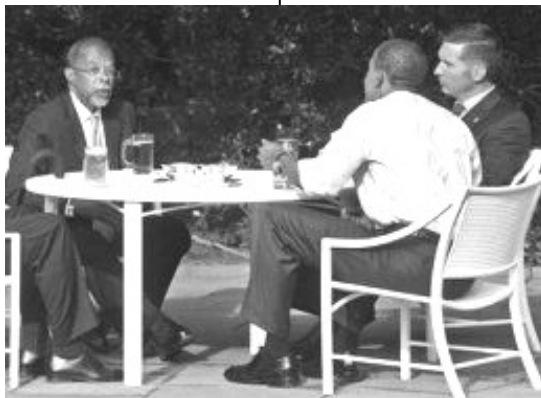
The Columbia University Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that underage drinkers account for 20 percent of all alcohol sales.

The same study concluded that excessive drinkers and teens account for nearly half of the billions of dollars spent on alcohol in one year. NIDA and NIAAA studies reveal that one in 20 Americans could be diagnosed for alcohol dependence or alcohol abuse.

The Marin Institute reports that alcohol is a leading cause of death among youth. The report also points out that every day, on average, 11,318 American youth (12 to 20 years of age) try alcohol for the first time.

Alcohol is by far the most used and abused drug among America's teenagers. According to a report in Surveillance Summaries, June 9, 2006, "Alcohol is a significant factor in the four leading causes of death among persons ages 10 to 24: (1) motor vehicle crashes, (2) unintentional injuries, (3) homicide, and (4) suicide.

According to a report of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "In spite of laws about underage drinking, 1.1 billion cans of beer are consumed by junior and senior high school students each year."



It is also reported that alcohol in all its forms causes one-third of all preventable deaths in the United States.

Mr. President, in addition to all the research revealing the multiplied negatives of alcoholic beverages it is appalling that you, as the President of the United States, would taint the high esteem of your office with a "Beer Summit" on public property by hosting a week of free advertising for the beer industry in the press, radio and television.

Dr. Joe Godfrey, Executive Director of the Alabama Citizens Action Program has well concluded, "When considering the lives that have been destroyed, the homes that have been broken, the job hours that have been lost and the health costs that have spiraled upwards as a result of alcohol use in America, it is regrettable that the President of the United States has given such unnecessary attention to this drug by hosting his recent 'Beer Summit.'"

Mr. President, a "Beer Summit" does not solve problems. The alcohol product intensifies problems. Local officials and our court systems are quite capable in solving problems without a "Beer Summit."

Public officials do not need to dignify killer drugs with public property summits. This display of approval, indeed, sends the wrong message to the general public, especially the underage group.

Legalized Gambling Unsound Approach

by
Bob Wilkerson

It is outrageous that gambling is being considered for legalization in the state of Alabama. Have our political and governmental leaders sunk so low that they are willing to use the methods that have long been associated with, and dominated by, criminals and organized crime to bring in more revenue?

Have our judges and political leaders become so blinded by money that they don't know what gambling is anymore?

Gambling should be against the law and looked upon as a crime throughout the state. Legalizing gambling does not limit it.

On the contrary, organized crime and criminal activity thrive where gambling is legalized. Gambling corrupts government. The large sums of money generated by gambling are often used to bribe state and local officials, and put people into office who favor gambling.

A *New York Times* editorial noted, "Gambling is a business so rich, so fast, so powerful, and perhaps inevitably unsavory, that it cannot help but undermine government."

In addition to the corruption it brings, gambling hurts a state's economy. It takes money which could be invested, loaned, used to start businesses, etc., and puts it in the pockets of multimillionaire owners of gambling establishments.

Gambling is bad for the people. It is a reverse Robin Hood: It takes from the poor and gives it to the rich.

One New York gambling agent said, "Seventy percent of those who gamble with me are poor, black or Hispanic." Two businesses that thrive in gambling areas are pawn shops and quick loan operations.

Gambling can be addictive like drugs and alcohol. There are at least 12 million compulsive gamblers in America today, of which 96 percent started before they were 14 years old. It is growing in popularity among young people today.

Gambling has a destructive effect on families. It often produces strife, divorce and bankruptcy.

Gambling is directly opposed to the Judeo-Christian ethic, and is contrary to biblical principles. Gambling promotes materialism; the Bible opposes it. Gambling encourages people to risk what they have in the hope of getting lucky. On the other hand, the Bible teaches honest work, integrity, savings, and benevolence.

Gambling should be vigorously opposed by all people of the Judeo-Christian faith, if for no other reason than the effect it will have on the weaker brother and how it will affect the community.

If you truly love "Sweet Home Alabama," you will do all that you can to keep gambling out of this state and to unseat those who are advocates of its legalization and spread.

(Wilkerson is pastor of Valley East Baptist Church, Pinson)



Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

January 17, 2010

Churches are encouraged to focus on the sanctity of human life during services on this special Sunday. Emphasis is given to a broad range of life issues, including abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, health care, child abuse and eldercare.

FACTS & ISSUES

Compiled by Joe Bob Mizzell, Director
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ALABAMA AMONG MOST CORRUPT STATES

Alabama was recently ranked fourth most corrupt state in America; consequently, public corruption, ethics reform, campaign finance reform and fiscal transparency in state government have become the defining issues for the state. There were several key initiatives that successfully passed during the 2009 Legislative Session. The most significant bill to pass and be signed into law by Gov. Bob Riley was "Transparency in State Spending" which mandates an online, searchable checkbook of state expenditures, state grants and state contracts.

*Alabama Policy Institute
2009 Mid Year Update*

GAMBLING IS NOT CHARITY

Gambling in Alabama continues to dominate the political scene. While Jefferson County District Attorney Brandon Falls raided a VFW bingo hall in the Birmingham Roebuck community, confiscating 920 machines and \$804,000, gubernatorial candidate and Agricultural Commissioner Ron Sparks is advocating gambling casinos in the state. Preliminary investigations show the Roebuck operation is making at least \$100,000 a day. An attorney for the bingo hall said VFW spent more than \$800,000 last year on veterans. Seems there is a great disparity in the amount to charity and who gets the rest of the money. Casinos are simply not a good idea.

*Southeast Law Institute
September 2009*

MOST BELIEVE ABORTION HARMS WOMEN

By a two-to-one margin, Americans believe abortion harms a woman more than it helps a woman, according to a recent public opinion poll.

The survey showed 53 percent of the more than 1,200 people surveyed by telephone think in the long term "abortion does more harm than good to a woman." Meanwhile, 26 percent believe "having an abortion improves a woman's life." Three percent think it does not make a difference, and 18 percent are unsure of an abortion's effect.

- ◆ 49 percent of Americans describe themselves as pro-life, an increase of 5 percent since October, and 48 percent identify themselves as pro-choice, a drop of 2 percent in that time span.
- ◆ 79 percent believe health-care professionals should not be required to perform abortions, a sentiment shared by 64 percent of those who call themselves strongly prochoice.

*Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission
July 28, 2009*

JUDGING AMERICA

How can God not judge America when she is legalizing abortion, gay marriage, experimentation on the unborn, and when her leader says America is not a Christian nation? You do not have to be a Christian to live here, but America's greatness has been founded on her goodness derived from moral absolutes. We must pray for mercy.

*Southeast Law Institute
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