

QUESTION AND SUGGESTIONS  
ON THE  
LOTTERY

*The following was composed by Ronnie W. Rogers to respond to a question, teach, or provide counsel. The content was typed but not proofread.*

- I Introduction
- 1 Joseph Napolitan is the name of the political consultant that helped bring casino gambling to Atlanta. BP article 4-6-95
  - 2 These are ideas that need to be modified based on your specific knowledge of the setting, debaters, etc.
  - 3 These questions are based on the premise that the essence of the issue is:
    - (1) Is gambling right or wrong?
    - (2) Is it right for the state to **promote** gambling among its constituents in order to support and expand its taxed supported endeavors?
  - 4 This paper is written for the dual purpose of suggesting questions or question stimulators and a position paper for Trinity Baptist Church on the lottery.
  - 5 The proposed questions, stimulators and supporting data are to assist in formulating questions in light of the particular context and goal, which I was not certain of i.e. qualifying or contextualizing the question.
- II I have divided the question/stimulators into the following four categories for the sake of demonstrating the broad spectrum of considerations that need to be included in all deliberations about a state sponsored lottery; however, there is obviously some overlap.
- 1 **Economic Considerations and questions:**

Does the lottery create more money or divert existing money?  
*The answer is, it diverts existing money:*

    - (1) Zero-sum gain: The lottery does not create new money, but rather changes the spending habits of lottery players which results in money being taken out of the private sector and placed into the hands of government agencies, including the lottery bureaucracy. Thus, money previously spent on goods and services is used to buy lottery tickets instead.
      - A Facts
        - a The argument that says, “Oklahoma should implement a lottery since people are going to bet on the lottery in another state anyway, which results in Oklahoma losing valuable revenue” is a fallacious argument.
          - (A) The amount spent on lottery tickets by Oklahomans in other states is so minute that it would not cover the administrative expenses of a part-time accountant much less warrant a state lottery. This can be demonstrated by the following:
            - (a) Convenience of purchasing lottery tickets is essential for lotteries to generate worthwhile revenue for the operator. People do not drive numerous miles or long distances to other

states in order to buy tickets unless it is convenient for them to do so.

i This reality is evidenced by the fact that states promoting lotteries never do so depending on people driving fifty miles for a day out at the lottery ticket counter.

ii This is why they do not sell lottery tickets at one or two places in the state—like casinos or horse racing tracks—but seek to sell them at every convenient location possible

(b) If the revenue leaving the state is vast, and the lottery proponents are only worried about the money that leaves the state, then they should promote placing ticket sales machines only on the state line and utilize that revenue for education. This has not and will not happen because lottery proponents know that the actual amount lost to other state lotteries is insignificant and that convenience is strategic to the success of a state run lottery.

i In addition, human nature being what it is, *many* will buy lottery tickets if it is in their area of convenience, but *few* will drive out of their way.

b “Some retail merchants in lottery states are appalled at the flow of dollars away from their merchandise to lottery tickets.... Circle K and Safeway representatives have said they would rather not be lottery retailers, but were forced to sell tickets because ‘the market down the street does.’”<sup>1</sup>

c One year after California started the lottery, Holiday Quality Food ran a newspaper ad that said, “Since the California state lottery program started..., we have sold in excess of \$1 million worth of lottery tickets. Our food business during this period of time has declined the same amount. Morally, we feel that it is wrong for us to offer our customers the opportunity to gamble with their food dollars and therefore we will no longer be selling California state lottery tickets.”<sup>2</sup>

(2) The loss of the multiplication effect

a This loss is due to the decrease in taxes that would normally be paid on the lottery money, which previously generated tax revenue as it was exchanged over and over within the economy.

(3) The cost of running the lottery

A “The National Center for Policy Analysis notes that states keep only about a third of the money collected through ticket sales.”<sup>3</sup>

a Therefore, in order for the state to benefit by \$200 million dollars, \$600 million will be taken out of the economy, meaning that businesses will forego at least this amount in sales, not including revenues from the multiplication effect, and lost tax revenue to cities, counties and states.

<sup>1</sup> Gaming and Wagering Business, March, 1987

<sup>2</sup> Concerned Women of America newsletter March 1987

<sup>3</sup> Baptist Press 10/07/02, “States lose big with lotteries, according to economic studies”, p1

- b In 1996, Money Magazine reported, “that since 1990 per capita taxes in lottery states have risen more than three times as fast as in non-lottery states.”<sup>4</sup>
- c “The New York Times reported in 1998 that as a rule, states rarely use lottery proceeds to supplement existing budgets for programs such as education. Instead, every \$1 received in lottery funds usually results in a \$1 reduction in general revenues going to education.”<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Logical considerations and questions

Do the rational arguments for a state run lottery make good sense?

The answer is no:

- (1) Lottery proponents argue that the Lottery should be passed in order to help our schools; in other words, to help our children.
  - A State sponsored lottery places the state in the contradictory position of seeking to instill a good work ethic in our young people through education while paying for that education by encouraging people to live by chance; therefore, it actually hurts our children because people learn by example and not merely by lectures.
  - B The message of the lottery to the children is: gambling, not fiscal responsibility, is the answer to economic problems.
  - C It potentiates an increase in gambling addictions in them as young adults.
    - a “Youth introduced early to gambling are particularly at risk for gambling addiction, which often begins with lottery play.”<sup>6</sup>
  - D “Families of addicted gamblers are at greatly increased risk for divorce, bankruptcy and domestic violence. The children--perhaps some of your own students--are more likely to be abused and neglected in the home, participate in delinquent activities and perform poorly in school.

Further, teens are highly vulnerable to gambling addiction themselves. The NGISC reported that 85 percent of adolescents have gambled, and up to 20 percent may already be experiencing some level of gambling problems. A study of Massachusetts high school students found that 5 percent had been arrested for a gambling-related offense, 10 percent experienced family problems due to gambling, and 8 percent had gotten into trouble at school or work as a result of gambling.”<sup>7</sup>

- (2) Lottery proponents argue that the lottery is a form of entertainment.
  - A No one gets addicted to riding ferris wheels
  - B No one commits more crime because of the presence of an amusement park

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<sup>4</sup> ibid p 2

<sup>5</sup> ibid p2

<sup>6</sup> National Gambling impact Study Commission, Timothy A. Kelly, Ph.D. Executive Director, 9/28/01, p1

<sup>7</sup> ibid

- C Just because someone likes to engage in a particular behavior does not make the behavior entertainment. If it did, we would be forced to label stealing, abuse, etc. as entertainment.
- (3) Lottery proponents argue that people are going to gamble anyway; therefore, the state should regulate and benefit by it.
- A By this logic, one may rightly conclude that we should legalize drugs, prostitution, etc.
- (4) Lottery proponents argue that people want more gambling.
- A There is no evidence that people want more gambling. What they want is the benefits promised by the gambling proponents. Therefore, it is the responsibility of public officials to operate their respective areas with the money raised through taxes.
- B Lotteries make governments who exercise little budgetary restraint bigger and less fiscally responsible.
- (5) Lottery proponents argue that, while gambling is a risk, so is all of life; therefore, gambling is no more wrong than investing in buildings, restaurants....
- A The comparison is fallacious because risks in gambling are artificially created. In other ventures, risk is a part of the creative process that is necessary to society's economic life and relies on more than chance in seeking to make a profit.

### 3 Moral considerations and questions

Does the state run lottery promote an ethic that is moral or immoral?

*The answer is, it promotes an immoral ethic:*

- (1) The state sponsored lottery promotes a something for nothing mentality—risking money needed elsewhere for the long shot—which is antithetical to the essential high work ethic needed to provide for families.
- A If all embraced the idea promoted by state lotteries, it would eventually destroy society because all would live by depending on the “possible” rather than the “probable”.
- B The state has no business promoting morals that, if embraced by its entire constituency, would result in the state self-destructing.
- (2) “A Harvard study estimates 15.4 million Americans already are suffering from problem and pathological gambling—also called gambling addiction—which is often devastating to the individual and their family. The national Academies of Science found that ‘pathological gamblers engage in destructive behaviors: they commit crimes, they run up large debts, they damage relationships with family and friends, and they kill themselves.’”<sup>8</sup>
- (3) “Each pathological gamMedicalbler on average costs the insurance industry \$65,468 for fraudulent claims; the annual loss due to fraud by pathological gamblers is estimated to be \$1.32 billion.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> National Gambling Impact Study Commission, Timothy A. Kelly, Ph.D. Executive Director, 9/28/01, p1

<sup>9</sup> The WAGER, Harvard School, Division on Addictions 4/9/96

#### 4 Religious considerations and questions

Would Jesus support a state sponsored lottery?

The answer is no:

(1) Knowing that:

- A While many who buy lottery tickets can afford it, many who purchase the tickets cannot afford to, and they thereby deprive their family of some essentials.
- B While it is true that a few will surely win the lottery and become instant millionaires, able to afford the finest of the finest; it is equally true that they will have acquired their wealth at the expense of some of the poorest people in our state.
- C The National Gambling Impact Study Commission (NGISC) reported, "Lottery players with incomes below \$10,000 spend more than any other income group, an estimated \$597 per capita. Further, high school dropouts spend four times as much as college graduates. Blacks spend five times as much as whites. In addition, the lotteries rely on a small group of heavy players who are disproportionately poor, black and have failed to complete a high school education."<sup>10</sup>
  - a How can you as a Christian reconcile promoting the lottery with Scripture and what Jesus said?
    - (A) "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker." (Proverbs 14:31)
    - (B) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39, NASB95)<sup>11</sup>
    - (C) "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you." (Luke 6:31, NASB95)<sup>12</sup>
    - (D) "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people...." (Galatians 6:10, NASB95)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [Teachers in Focus](#) magazine. Copyright © 2000 Focus on the Family. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. **Ronald A. Reno is the senior research analyst for Focus on the Family's Department of Legislative and Cultural Affairs.**

<sup>11</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. 1995. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*