



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC36 Government-Related Gambling and Revenues Therefrom (1997G562)

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Rationale and Faith Base: Jesus, quoting the Old Testament, said (Mk. 12:30 TEV): "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself,'" Furthermore, Paul advised (Rom. 14:13 TEV): "You should decide never to do anything that would make your brother stumble or fall into sin."

WHEREAS individuals and families are hurt through personal gambling losses, through addiction to gambling, or through the participation of family members in gambling;

WHEREAS provincial governments are bringing in more and more forms of gambling and are claiming ever-larger profits therefrom;

WHEREAS gaining money by manipulating people's greed, weakness or addiction goes against the advice or commands of scripture quoted above, we find that governments have placed themselves in a questionable position; furthermore--

WHEREAS (while recognizing that we of the United Church, as a minority within society, have only limited propriety to petition governments with our "partisan" views, and while recognizing that "government of all the people, by all the people, and for all the people" is an American expression (Theodore Parker, Address, Boston, 13 May, 1854), nonetheless participation in government by all citizens and excluding none is an accepted principle in Canada today;

WHEREAS governments claim gambling revenues will be used for welfare, justice, health, etc. -- but are more likely to be used to reduce other forms of taxation -- and all such uses of revenue (welfare, justice, health, and lower taxes) are matters pertaining to general income and expenditure of the public purse in which all citizens participate and from which all citizens benefit;

WHEREAS for governments to gain money through gambling for public coffers forces Christians who are unwilling to exploit others to benefit financially from the losses individuals incur and thereby to participate in acts that are against their consciences and religion, we find that governments have placed Christians opposed to gambling in a compromising position; thus and in summary, while we doubt the propriety of a minority calling for a total ban on gambling, we do feel that -

WHEREAS governments, both to avoid the exploitation by government of a portion of their citizenry, and to preserve the religious freedom of the minority, should give up all participation in gambling (lotteries, casinos, VLT's) or else (at a minimum) give up profits therefrom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 36th General Council

1. reaffirm the 1977 General Council's Report on Gambling and Lotteries;
2. petition all Canadian governments to discontinue their participation in the gambling business;
3. urge all United Church members to refrain from participating in government sponsored gambling activity.

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