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October 25, 2010

**RE: GAMBLING: The Low Road of Morality and Economics**

Dear Mayor McLaughlin and City Council:

*"Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief"*  
*- George Washington -*

In the interest of the moral and economic well-being of Richmond, The City of Pride and Purpose, I, along with the members of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, implore you make a unified stance against a casino in our city. I have seen young working adults become addicted to gambling at the casino in San Pablo. They have gambled away their transportation and housing at Casino San Pablo. I realize that gambling is a choice. The substance abuse and gun violence that plague Richmond and other cities are choices too.

I commend our Mayor for taking the moral and economic high road on this issue. I want the rest of you, the City Council, to get responsible and get on board with her. Let's do something positive and beneficial with Point Molate. At the last meeting I attended someone voiced an idea of building a university or research facility dedicated to environmental "green" research. We boast about Richmond's miles of coastline. Let's build something on it that will not only provide good employment during the construction stage, but will enhance the peaceful quality and natural beauty of the Point Molate ecosystem, and provide and attract above-median salary jobs for decades to come.

A casino is not only detrimental to our city from an economic perspective. Gambling is also an evil that violates biblical principles. Gambling is different from investing money in stocks, bonds, or real estate, etc. When you gamble, in the classic sense of the word, for every winner there must be a loser. Gambling is predicated on one person getting what another person has.

I keep hearing about a list of fifty ministers who support a casino at Point Molate. Others and I have asked to see the list, but no one has produced it. I'd like to see it. Have you seen it? If you have it, will you provide it to me? I'll verify the authenticity of it and present you with a list of twice as many Richmond pastors and ministers (2:1) who oppose a casino in Richmond. Gambling violates at least four biblical principles. I've read material by and heard great Bible preachers and teachers expound on what the Bible says about gambling. All Christians and especially ministers who support gambling should prayerfully consider God's Word as it relates to gambling.

**Gambling violates the biblical principle of love.** Jesus said in *Matthew 22:37-39*, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment and the second is like unto it, 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'*"

You cannot love your neighbor as yourself when you're seeking to take from your neighbor that which belongs to your neighbor. **No one can win in gambling without someone else losing.** Gambling absolutely transgresses the principle of love. To win is to lower yourself and to victimize your neighbor.

Love also tells us that gambling becomes such a compulsive habit that one out of every ten gamblers becomes a compulsive gambler. It is estimated that in the United States there are ten million gambling addicts whose addiction is as real as addiction to alcohol or crack. Richmond has people who are near and below the poverty level. Many of them will see gambling as a chance for instant wealth. They'll spend their coins and their dollars for the million and one chance or whatever chance it might be, that they are going to have that magic moment that will make them wealthy. Gambling is a form of regressive taxation. Many of the people who can least afford to gamble do gamble. It is no coincidence that the casinos in Atlantic City do their biggest business on the days when welfare checks are issued. Nevada is hailed as the gambling capital of the nation. It has a capital crime rate is double that of the national average and a suicide rate that triples it. Love says there is something wrong with something like that.

**Gambling violates the biblical principle of honesty.**

*Exodus chapter 20:15, "Thou shalt not steal." Exodus chapter 20:17, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house nor shalt thou covet thou neighbor's wife, nor his manservants, nor his maidservant, nor his ox nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."*

Gambling breaks the spirit of God's commands because in a sense gambling is robbery by mutual consent. Excuse the crude analogy, but suppose you and I decide to have a cowboy style shoot-out duel in an alley. One of us is faster than the other and shoots and kills the other. Do you think it makes it right because we mutually agreed to duel? Of course it's not right. God has commanded, "Thou shall not murder". Likewise, God has commanded, "Thou shall not steal". The fact that there is mutual consent, as it is in gambling, makes no difference. Somebody wisely said, "He who gambles and wins is a thief and he who gambles and loses is a fool".

**Gambling is wrong because it violates the biblical principle of old fashioned work,**

**W - O - R - K.**

*2 Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you this we commanded you that if any would not work neither should he eat."*

*Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which he is good that he may have to give to him that needeth."*

Gambling is an economic fraud, it produces no real wealth. It is a social leech, it is a parasite. The revenues that go to the gambler must have first been created by legitimate business and therefore ought to go back to other legitimate business.

**Last, but not least, gambling violates the biblical principle of trust in God's providence.**

*Isaiah 65:11* [God warns against those] "... who forsake the Lord, who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table for **Gad**, and who furnish a drink offering for **Meni**. (NKJV)

*Isaiah 65:11* [God warns against those] "who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for **Fortune** and filled cups of mixed wine for **Destiny**," (emphasis added).

12. *I will destine you for the sword, And all of you will bow down to the slaughter. Because I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not hear. And you did evil in My sight And chose that in which I did not delight.*" (NASB)

The gambler develops a dependence on the false gods and goddesses (idols/demons) of luck rather than the providence of God. Gad, Fortune, and "troop" are names of the Babylonian god of fortune, the planet Jupiter, answering to Baal or Bel; the Arabs called it "the Greater Good Fortune". Destiny, Meni, and "number" are names of the goddess of fortune who was thought to *number* the fates of men. God warned His people against trusting these false deities or idols. The demons of yesterday are present today under different names, but they have the same desires and appetites. They want us to trust and worship them instead of God. The consequences of turning away from God to these demons are violence and slaughter (see verse 12).

All cities have problems. Richmond is not the exception. We should not add to Richmond's woes by building a casino. The citizens of Richmond deserve and expect our leaders to develop a better short and long term plan for Point Molate. I realize that many people are not Bible-believing Christians so I will close this letter how I opened it with the words of the George Washington, the father of our country, "*Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief*".

Thank you for our time. My cell phone number is 510.367.5015.

Sincerely,



Rev. Udis G. Redit, Pastor  
Mount Zion Baptist Church

C: Richmond Christian Ministers