

A Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Gambling

Gambling—defined as a paid game of chance—increasingly impacts more and more people all over the world. The concept of winning at the expense of others has become a modern curse. Society pays the escalating cost of associated crime, victim support, and family breakdown which erodes the quality of life. Seventh-day Adventists have consistently opposed gambling as it is incompatible with Christian principles. It is not an appropriate form of entertainment or a legitimate means of raising funds.

Gambling violates Christian principles of stewardship. God identifies work as the appropriate method for gaining material benefit; not the playing of a game of chance while dreaming to gain at the expense of others. Gambling has a massive impact on society. Financial costs result from crime committed to pay for the gambling habit, increased policing, and legal expenses, as well as associated crimes involving drugs and prostitution. Gambling does not generate income; rather it takes from those who often can ill afford to lose and gives to a few winners, the greatest winner of course being the gambling operator. The idea that gambling operations can have a positive economic benefit is an illusion. In addition, gambling violates the Christian sense of responsibility for family, neighbors, the needy, and the Church.¹

Gambling creates false hopes. The gambling dream of "winning big" replaces true hope with a false dream of a statistically-improbable chance of winning. Christians are not to put their hope in wealth. The Christian hope in a glorious future promised by God is "sure and certain"—unlike and opposite to the gambling dream. The great gain that the Bible points to is "godliness with contentment."²

Gambling is addictive. The addictive quality of gambling is clearly incompatible with a Christian lifestyle. The Church seeks to help, not blame, those suffering from gambling or other addictions. Christians recognize that they are responsible before God for their resources and lifestyle.³

The Seventh-day Adventist Church organization does not condone raffles or lotteries to raise funds and it urges members not to participate in any such activities, however well-intentioned. Neither does the Church condone state-sponsored gambling. The Seventh-day Adventist Church calls on all authorities to prevent the ever-increasing availability of gambling with its damaging effects on individuals and society.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church rejects gambling as defined above and will not solicit nor accept funding that is clearly derived from gambling.

1. 1 Thess 4:11; Gen 3:19; Matt 19:21; Acts 9:36; 2 Cor 9:8, 9
2. 1 Tim 6:17; Heb 11:1; 1 Tim 6:6
3. 1 Cor 6:19, 20

This statement was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM), for release at the time of the General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada, June 29-July 9, 2000.