

## **RTCA Expands to Canada**

**For Immediate Release:  
March 25, 2004**

The Ontario Canada Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association approved funding last week that will allow the Race Track Chaplaincy of America to place a full time Chaplain at Woodbine racetrack this year.

"The RTCA brings a genuine love and passion for all participants in the thoroughbred industry," said Ontario HBPA Executive Director Nick Coukos. "Canada has waited a long time to be touched by such an organization."

The Ontario HBPA approved \$60,000 for the one-year pilot program and RTCA Executive Director, Dr. Enrique Torres, said much of the groundwork in forming a local council that will oversee the outreach ministry has been done and that he is in the process of screening and interviewing potential chaplain candidates.

"Woodbine Entertainment Group offers some of the best racing in the world and also has one of North America's largest backstretches, so placing a capable and experienced chaplain there is very important to our organization," he said. "We have been blessed by the wonderful reception our friends in Canada have given us and plan to work closely with Nick Coukos and the HBPA leaders there to insure this new outreach ministry is a success."

Woodbine's thoroughbred season opens April 17 and ends December 12. Chaplains are ministers, licensed to perform the ordinances of the church. They also provide a wealth of social and advocacy services to racing's workforce. Founded in 1971, the RTCA sanctions and oversees 48 chaplains who serve at 78 tracks and training centers. Last year the organization implemented outreach ministries to racing farm workers for the first time when it started chapters in Lexington, Kentucky and Ocala, Florida.

"The Lord has truly blessed us," said Dr. Torres. "For the first time in our history, we have officially extended RTCA services outside the United States. This is a benchmark in our development and with the assistance of our many donors and persons such as those that sit on the Ontario HBPA board, we hope to fill the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs to racing related workers around the world."

**For more information contact RTCA Development Director, Ed Donnally at 310-419-1640 [edonnally@racetrackchaplaincy.org](mailto:edonnally@racetrackchaplaincy.org).**