Christian Discernment

We are confronted with ethical choices and moral complexity. We must apply biblical principles to these social and political issues. And we must avoid the pitfalls and logical fallacies that so often accompany these issues.

 *This article is also available in Spanish.*

Turn on a television or open a newspaper. You are immediately presented with a myriad of ethical issues. Daily we are confronted with ethical choices and moral complexity. Society is awash in controversial issues: abortion, euthanasia, cloning, race, drug abuse, homosexuality, gambling, pornography, and capital punishment. Life may have been simpler in a previous age, but now the rise of technology and the fall of ethical consensus have brought us to a society full of moral dilemmas.

Never has society needed biblical perspectives more to evaluate contemporary moral issues. And yet Christians seem less equipped to address these topics from a biblical perspective. The Barna Research Group conducted a national survey of adults and concluded that only four percent of adults have a biblical worldview as the basis of their decision-making. The survey also discovered that nine percent of born again Christians have such a perspective on life.{1}

It is worth noting that what George Barna defines as a biblical worldview would be considered by most people to be basic Christian doctrine. It doesn't even include aspects of a biblical perspective on social and political issues.

Of even greater concern is the fact that most Christians do not base their beliefs on an absolute moral foundation. Biblical ethics rests on the belief in absolute truth. Yet surveys show that a minority of born again adults (forty-four

percent) and an even smaller proportion of born again teenagers (nine percent) are certain of the existence of absolute moral truth.{2} By a three-to-one margin adults say truth is always relative to the person and their situation. This perspective is even more lopsided among teenagers who overwhelmingly believe moral truth depends on the circumstances.{3}

Social scientists as well as pollsters have been warning that American society is becoming more and more dominated by moral anarchy. Writing in the early 1990s, James Patterson and Peter Kim said in *The Day America Told the Truth* that there was no moral authority in America. "We choose which laws of God we believe in. There is absolutely no moral consensus in this country as there was in the 1950s, when all our institutions commanded more respect."{4} Essentially we live in a world of moral anarchy.

So how do we begin to apply a Christian worldview to the complex social and political issues of the day? And how do we avoid falling for the latest fad or cultural trend that blows in the wind? The following are some key principles to apply and some dangerous pitfalls to avoid.

Biblical Principles

A key biblical principle that applies to the area of bioethics is the sanctity of human life. Such verses as Psalm 139:13-16 show that God's care and concern extend to the womb. Other verses such as Jeremiah 1:5, Judges 13:7-8, Psalm 51:5 and Exodus 21:22–25 give additional perspective and framework to this principle. These principles can be applied to issues ranging from abortion to stem cell research to infanticide.

A related biblical principle involves the equality of human beings. The Bible teaches that God has made "of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17:26). The Bible also teaches that it

is wrong for a Christian to have feelings of superiority (Philippians 2). Believers are told not to make class distinctions between various people (James 2). Paul teaches the spiritual equality of all people in Christ (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). These principles apply to racial relations and our view of government.

A third principle is a biblical perspective on marriage. Marriage is God's plan and provides intimate companionship for life (Genesis 2:18). Marriage provides a context for the procreation and nurture of children (Ephesians 6:1-2). And finally, marriage provides a godly outlet for sexual desire (1 Corinthians 7:2). These principles can be applied to such diverse issues as artificial reproduction (which often introduces a third party into the pregnancy) and cohabitation (living together).

Another biblical principle involves sexual ethics. The Bible teaches that sex is to be within the bounds of marriage, as a man and the woman become one flesh (Ephesians 5:31). Paul teaches that we should "avoid sexual immorality" and learn to control our own body in a way that is "holy and honorable" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). He admonishes us to flee sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18). These principles apply to such issues as premarital sex, adultery, and homosexuality.

A final principle concerns government and our obedience to civil authority. Government is ordained by God (Rom.13:1-7). We are to render service and obedience to the government (Matt. 22:21) and submit to civil authority (1 Pet. 2:13-17). Even though we are to obey government, there may be certain times when we might be forced to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). These principles apply to issues such as war, civil disobedience, politics, and government.

Biblical Discernment

So how do we sort out what is true and what is false? This is a difficult proposition in a world awash in data. It underscores the need for Christians to develop discernment. This is a word that appears fairly often in the Bible (1 Samuel 25:32-33; 1 Kings 3:10-11; 4:29; Psalm 119:66; Proverbs 2:3; Daniel 2:14; Philippians 1:9 [NASB]). And with so many facts, claims, and opinions being tossed about, we all need to be able to sort through what is true and what is false.

Colossians 2:8 says, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." We need to develop discernment so that we are not taken captive by false ideas. Here are some things to watch for:

1. Equivocation – the use of vague terms. Someone can start off using language we think we understand and then veer off into a new meaning. Most of us are well aware of the fact that religious cults are often guilty of this. A cult member might say that he believes in salvation by grace. But what he really means is that you have to join his cult and work your way toward salvation. Make people define the vague terms they use.

This tactic is used frequently in bioethics. Proponents of embryonic stem cell research often will not acknowledge the distinction between adult stem cells and embryonic stem cells. Those trying to legalize cloning will refer to it as "somatic cell nuclear transfer." Unless you have a scientific background, you will not know that it is essentially the same thing.

2. Card stacking – the selective use of evidence. Don't jump on the latest bandwagon and intellectual fad without checking the evidence. Many advocates are guilty of listing all the points in their favor while ignoring the serious points

against it.

The major biology textbooks used in high school and college never provide students with evidence against evolution. Jonathan Wells, in his book *Icons of Evolution,* shows that the examples that are used in most textbooks are either wrong or misleading.{5} Some of the examples are known frauds (such as the Haeckel embryos) and continue to show up in textbooks decades after they were shown to be fraudulent.

Another example would be the Y2K fears. Anyone who was concerned about the potential catastrophe in 2000 need only read any of the technical computer journals in the 1990s to see that no computer expert was predicting what the Y2K fear mongers were predicting at the time.

3. Appeal to authority – relying on authority to the exclusion of logic and evidence. Just because an expert says it, that doesn't necessarily make it true. We live in a culture that worships experts, but not all experts are right. Hiram's Law says: "If you consult enough experts, you can confirm any opinion."

Those who argue that global warming is caused by human activity often say that "the debate in the scientific community is over." But an Internet search of critics of the theories behind global warming will show that there are many scientists with credentials in climatology or meteorology who have questions about the theory. It is not accurate to say that the debate is over when the debate still seems to be taking place.

4. Ad hominem – Latin for "against the man." People using this tactic attack the person instead of dealing with the validity of their argument. Often the soundness of an argument is inversely proportional to the amount of ad hominem rhetoric. If there is evidence for the position, proponents usually argue the merits of the position. When evidence is lacking,

they attack the critics.

Christians who want public libraries to filter pornography from minors are accused of censorship. Citizens who want to define marriage as between one man and one woman are called bigots. Scientists who criticize evolution are subjected to withering attacks on their character and scientific credentials. Scientists who question global warming are compared to holocaust deniers.

5. Straw man argument – making your opponent's argument seem so ridiculous that it is easy to attack and knock down. Liberal commentators say that evangelical Christians want to implement a religious theocracy in America. That's not true. But the hyperbole works to marginalize Christian activists who believe they have a responsibility to speak to social and political issues within society.

Those who stand for moral principles in the area of bioethics often see this tactic used against them. They hear from proponents of physician assisted suicide that pro-life advocates don't care about the suffering of the terminally ill. Proponents of embryonic stem cell research level the same charge by saying that pro-life people don't care that these new medical technologies could alleviate the suffering of many with intractable diseases. Nothing could be further from the truth.

6. Sidestepping – dodging the issue by changing the subject. Politicians do this in press conferences by not answering the question asked by the reporter, but instead answering a question they wish someone had asked. Professors sometimes do that when a student points out an inconsistency or a leap in logic.

Ask a proponent of abortion whether the fetus is human and you are likely to see this tactic in action. He or she might start talking about a woman's right to choose or the right of women

to control their own bodies. Perhaps you will hear a discourse on the need to tolerate various viewpoints in a pluralistic society. But you probably won't get a straight answer to an important question.

7. Red herring – going off on a tangent (from the practice of luring hunting dogs off the trail with the scent of a herring fish). Proponents of embryonic stem cell research rarely will talk about the morality of destroying human embryos. Instead they will go off on a tangent and talk about the various diseases that could be treated and the thousands of people who could be helped with the research.

Be on the alert when someone in a debate changes the subject. They may want to argue their points on more familiar ground, or they may know they cannot win their argument on the relevant issue at hand.

In conclusion, we have discussed some of the key biblical principles we should apply to our consideration and debate about social and political issues. We have talked about the sanctity of human life and the equality of human beings. We have discussed a biblical perspective on marriage and on sexual ethics. And we have also talked about a biblical perspective on government and civil authority.

We have also spent some time talking about the importance of developing biblical discernment and looked at many of the logical fallacies that are frequently used in arguing against a biblical perspective on many of the social and political issues of our day.

Every day, it seems, we are confronted with ethical choices and moral complexity. As Christians it is important to consider these biblical principles and consistently apply them to these issues. It is also important that we develop discernment and learn to recognize these tactics. We are called to develop discernment as we tear down false arguments

raised up against the knowledge of God. By doing this we will learn to take every thought captive to the obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Notes

1. “A Biblical Worldview Has a Radical Effect on a Person’s Life,” The Barna Update (Ventura, CA), 1 Dec. 2003.
2. “The Year’s Most Intriguing Findings, From Barna Research Studies,” The Barna Update (Ventura, CA), 12 Dec. 2000.
3. “Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings,” The Barna Update (Ventura, CA), 12 Feb. 2002.
4. James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991).
5. Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2000).

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“What’s Your Position on Creationism?”

Kerby,

Thanks for coming to the Worldview Weekend. I know you don’t hold to evolutionism, per se. But after the conference in Wichita last week, I was wondering, do you agree with the Bible’s chronology of the earth being older than the sun. That the record in Genesis (and Ex. 20:11) of the six days of creation are to be understood as ordinary days. Finally, do you agree with the idea of no bloodshed and disease before the fall of man? In other words, should I believe the Bible or what I have been taught?

The reason why I am asking is I know that I have compromised in these areas of Genesis and lead many down a road of disbelief because of that.

Please send me your answers with Biblical references.

Thank you for your e-mail. You might want to visit the Probe web site (www.probe.org) and read two articles. One deals with different views of science and earth history. The other deals with why we believe in creation. I think these two will help you think through the issues and would accurately represent the perspective of all of us on Probe Ministries staff.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

Islam and Political Correctness

All of us are trying to learn more about Islam, but sometimes political correctness has clouded our thinking about Islam. Are Jesus and Muhammad the same? Is Islam a religion of peace? Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God? Kerby Anderson looks at some of these politically correct beliefs.

Muhammad and Islam

Nearly everyone can remember what they were doing on September 11, 2001. That fateful day affected all of us and certainly increased our desire to know more about Islam. In the years following, we have all learned more about the world's second largest religion. But sometimes, political correctness has

clouded clear thinking about Islam.

We hear that “Islam is a religion of peace.” Some even say, “The God of Islam is the same God as the God of the Jews and the Christians.” So what is the truth about these statements about Islam?

I want to look at some of these statements and provide a biblically-based response. We need to know the facts about Islam and this current war on terror.

The first statement we will address is often heard in religion classes on college campuses. That is that “Muhammad is like every other religious founder.” This simply is not the case. For example, nearly every major religion in the world teaches a variation of the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Islam does not have a Golden Rule. Instead, it makes very definite distinctions in the way Muslims are to treat believers and unbelievers. The latter are called infidels and are often treated harshly or killed. This religious perspective is very different from other religions.

For a moment, let’s compare Jesus and Muhammad. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the final prophet from Allah. He is referred to as the “seal of the prophets” (Sura 33:40). But while he is revered as the greatest of the prophets, most do not teach that he was sinless. The Qur’an does not make the claim that he was sinless, and there are passages that teach that Muhammad was a man like us (Sura 18:110) and that Allah told Muhammad that he must repent of his sins (Sura 40:55).

By contrast, Jesus claimed to be God and claimed to have the powers and authority that only God could possess. The New Testament provides eyewitness accounts or records of eyewitness accounts of the claims that Jesus made and the miracles he performed. Moreover, the New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ lived a perfect and sinless life (2 Cor.

5:21).

Muhammad's every action is to be imitated by Muslims. His life is a model for these believers. Some Muslims even avoid eating food that Muhammad avoided or never was able to eat. In fact, Muhammad is so revered by Muslims that no perceived criticism upon him or even his likeness (e.g., through a cartoon) may be allowed.

Muhammad also taught that Muslims are to fight in the cause of Allah (Sura 4:76) and fight against the unbelievers (Sura 9:123). By contrast, Jesus taught that Christians are to love their enemies (Matt. 5:44) and turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:39).

In conclusion, we can see that the life of Muhammad is different from many of the other founders of religion. Moreover, the life of Muhammad and the life of Jesus Christ are very different.

Islam: A Religion of Peace?

One politically correct phrase that is often repeated is that "Islam is a religion of peace." While it is true that many Muslims are peace-loving, is it also true that Islam is a religion of peace? To answer that question, it is important to understand the meaning of *jihad*.

The word *jihad* is actually the noun of the Arabic verb *jahidi*, which means to "strive hard." This verse is an example: "O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, and evil refuge indeed" (Sura 9:73).

Although some Muslims understand this striving to be merely intellectual and philosophical, the usual translation of jihad involves a holy war. That has been the traditional interpretation since the time of Muhammad.

Jihad was to be waged on the battlefield. Sura 47:4 says, “When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield, strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.” Sura 9:5 says, “Fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleager them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem.”

Consider some of these other passages concerning jihad. Faithful Muslims wage jihad against unbelievers: “O ye who believe! Fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you; and know that Allah is with those who fear Him” (Sura 9:123).

Muslims are also to wage jihad not only against unbelievers but against those who have strayed from the faith: “Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their home: and evil fate” (Sura 9:73).

Another way to understand the term “jihad” is to look at the historical context. After Muhammad’s success in the Battle of Badr, he set forth various principles of warfare. For example, according to Sura 9:29, jihad is a religious duty. He taught in Sura 9:111 that martyrdom in jihad is the highest good and guarantees salvation. Sura 9:5 says that Muslims engaged in jihad should not show tolerance toward unbelievers. And acts of terrorism are justified in Sura 8:12.

While it may be true that there are peaceful Muslims, it is not true that Islam has always been a peaceful religion. The teaching of jihad and the current interpretation by radical Muslims of this concept can easily be seen in the acts of terrorism around the world.

The Qur’an and the Bible are Both Violent

Books

Whenever verses of the sword from the Qur'an are quoted, you can be sure that someone will quickly point out that the Old Testament calls for violence. But are these two books morally equivalent? Let's look at some of these passages and see.

The Qur'an calls for jihad against the unbelievers (or infidels). Sura 9:5 says, "Fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleager them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem."

Sura 9:29 says, "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Prophet, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the *jizyah* [per capita tax imposed on non-Muslim adult males] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

Sura 47:4-7 says, "When you meet unbelievers, smite their necks, then, when you have made wide slaughter among them, tie fast the bonds; then set them free, either by grace or ransom, till the war lays down its loads…And those who are slain in the way of God, He will not send their works astray. He will guide them, and dispose their minds aright, and He will admit them to Paradise, that He has made known to them."

In the Old Testament, you have a call for military action against specific groups. Deuteronomy 7:1-2 says, "When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them."

1 Samuel 15:2-3 says, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

While there are some similarities, notice the difference. In the Old Testament, there was a direct and specific command to fight against a particular group of people. These passages do not apply to you unless you are a Hittite, Girgashite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite, Jebusite, or Amalekite. These commands given during the Old Testament theocracy apply only to those people at that time.

However, the passages in the Qur’an apply to all unbelievers at all times. Notice that there is no time limit on these universally binding commands to all Muslims at all times.

No Christian leader is calling for a Holy War against infidels. But many Muslim leaders cite the Qur’an for that very action. Osama bin Laden, for example, quotes many of these verses of the sword just cited within his various *fatwas* [legal pronouncement].

And contrast this with the New Testament which calls for believers to love their enemies (Matt. 5:44) and turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:39). In conclusion, the Bible and the Qur’an are very different in regard in calling to an act of violence.

Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?

One politically correct phrase that is often repeated is that “Christians and Muslims worship the same God.” It is understandable that people might say that. Both Islam and

Christianity are monotheistic, even though a foundational difference is the Christian belief in the trinity.

Certainly the most foundational doctrine in Islam is monotheism. This doctrine is encapsulated in the creed: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.” And not only is it a creed, it is a statement of faith that routinely heard from the lips of every faithful Muslim. It the creed by which every Muslim is called to prayer five times a day.

Because of this strong emphasis on monotheism, Muslims reject the idea that God could be more than one person or that God could have a partner. The Qur’an teaches that Allah is one God and the same God for all people. Anyone who does not believe this is guilty of the sin of *shirk*. This is the quintessential sin in Islam. According to Islam, God cannot have a partner and cannot be joined together in the Godhead with other persons. Muslims therefore reject the Christian idea of the Trinity.

Muslims and Christians also differ in their understanding of the nature and character of God. The God of the Bible is knowable. Jesus came into the world that we might know God (John 17:3).

Islam teaches a very different view of God. Allah is transcendent and distant. He is separate from His creation. He is exalted and far removed from mankind. While we may know His will, we cannot know Him personally. In fact, there is very little written about the character of God. Allah is the creator and sustainer of the creation, but He is also unknowable. No person can ever personally know and have a relationship with Allah. Instead, humans are to be in total submission to the will of Allah.

Moreover, Allah does not personally enter into human history. Instead, he deals with the world through His word (the

Qur’an), through His prophets (such as Muhammad), and through angels (such as Gabriel).

If you ask a Muslim to describe Allah, most likely they will recite to you a key passage that lists some of the names of God (Sura 59). The Qur’an requires that God be called by these “beautiful names.” This passage describes him as Most Gracious, Most Merciful, The Sovereign, The Holy One, The Guardian of Faith, The Preserver of Safety, The Exalted in Might, etc.

Finally, a Christian and Muslim perspective on God’s love is also very different. Christians begin with the belief that “God so loved the world” (John 3:16). By contrast, Muslims grow up hearing about all the people Allah does not love. Sura 2:190 says, “For Allah loves not transgressors.” Sura 3:32 says, “Allah loves not the unbelievers.” And Sura 3:57 says, “For Allah loves not the evildoers.”

In conclusion, we can see that Christians and Muslims do not worship the same God.

Are the Bible and Qur’an the Same?

A student in a university religion class may hear that all religions are basically the same. They only differ on minor details. This leads some to argue that the Bible and the Qur’an are compatible teachings. This is not true and is a disservice to both Islam and Christianity.

We should acknowledge the few similarities. Both the Bible and the Qur’an claim to be divine revelation. And both books claim to have been accurately preserved through the centuries.

But it is also true that the Bible and the Qur’an disagree with one another on major issues. The two books make contradictory claims about God, Jesus, salvation, and biblical history. Both claims cannot be true. They both could be false,

but they cannot both be true because the accounts contradict each other. Here are just a few examples of these contradictions:

- The Qur'an teaches (Sura 5:116) that Christians worship three gods: the Father, the Mother (Mary) and the Son (Jesus). But the Bible actually teaches that there is one God in three persons (the Trinity).
- Muslims say that Abraham was going to sacrifice Ishmael, while the Bible teaches that Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac.
- The Qur'an teaches (Sura 4:157) that Jesus was not crucified. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross.

Before we conclude, we should also mention that many of the statements in the Qur'an are also at odds with historical facts that can be verified through historical accounts.

- The Qur'an says (Sura 20:85-97) that the Samaritans tricked the Israelites at the Exodus and were the ones who built the golden calf. For the record, the word Samaritan wasn't even used until 722 B.C. which is several hundred years after the Exodus.
- The Qur'an also states (Sura 18:89-98) that Alexander the Great was a Muslim who worshiped Allah. Alexander lived from 356 B.C. to 323 B.C. which was hundreds of years before Muhammad proclaimed his revelation which became the religion of Islam.

In conclusion, we can see that the Bible and the Qur'an are not the same and do not have compatible teachings.

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“Will Computers Take Over Humanity to Produce Spiritual Machines?”

I would appreciate hearing your views on *The Age of Spiritual Machines* by Ray Kurzweil. If you’ve not yet seen it, this is a rather disturbing book which was brought to my attention at a recent dinner I attended on campus last month. During the dinner conversation I heard discussion between Dr. Rita Colwell (Director of the National Science Foundation) and Larry Smarr (Director of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications) that really took me by surprise. To hear some of today’s most influential scientists discussing the reality of software taking over humanity within the next century was a more than a little disturbing. Their consensus seemed to be that “the software takeover is inevitable.” The discussion was prompted by a recent article by Bill Joy in *Wired* Magazine titled “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us.” You can read the article online at http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy.html (Bill Joy is the cofounder and Chief Scientist of Sun Microsystems).

I’d really appreciate some clear thinking from a Christian-minded perspective on this subject.

Thank you for your e-mail about “The Age of Spiritual Machines.” I have not read this article by Ray Kurzweil, but plan to do so in the future. That is an ominous statement about software taking over humanity.

In the meantime, I thought I might forward a portion of my recent book on a related subject. In *Moral Dilemmas*, I have a chapter on technology and address the issue of computers and

the computer revolution. Here is section I wrote on the interface of computers and human intelligence:

Fourth, computers should not replace human intelligence. In *The Society of Mind* Marvin Minsky, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, says that "the mind, the soul, the self, are not a singly ghostly entity but a society of agents, deeply integrated, yet each one rather mindless on its own." (Richard Lipkin, "Making Machines in Mind's Image," *Insight*, 15 February 1988, 8-12). He dreams of being able ultimately to reduce mind (and therefore human nature) to natural mechanism. Obviously this is not an empirical statement, but a metaphysical one that attempts to reduce everything (including mind) to matter.

The implications, however, are profound. Besides lowering humans to the material process, it begins to elevate machines to the human level. One article asked the question, Would an Intelligent Computer Have a "Right to Life?" (Robert Mueller and Erik Mueller, "Would an Intelligent Computer Have a 'Right to Life?'" *Creative Computing*, August 1983, 149-161). Granting computer rights might be something society might consider since many are already willing to grant certain rights to animals.

In a sense the question is whether an intelligent computer would have a soul and therefore access to fundamental human rights. As bizarre as the question may sound, it was no doubt inevitable. When seventeenth-century philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz first described a thinking machine, he was careful to point out that this machine would not have a soul—fearful perhaps of reaction from the church. (Danny Hillis, "Can They Feel Your Pain?" *Newsweek,* 5 May 1997, 57). Already scientists predict that computer intelligence will create "an intelligence beyond man's" and provide wonderful new capabilities. (Robert Jastrow, "Toward an Intelligence

beyond Man's," *Time*, 20 February 1978, 59). One of the great challenges in the future will be how to manage new computing power that will outstrip human intelligence.

The Bible teaches that humans are more than bits and bytes, more than blood and bones. Created in the image of God, human beings have a spiritual dimensions. They are more than complex computers. Computers should be used for what they do best: analyze discrete data with objective criteria. Computers are a wonderful tool, but they should not replace human intelligence and intuition.

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Thanks for writing. I will continue this discussion in the future.

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Probe Ministries

Ethics and Economics

Often we separate the ideas of ethics and economics, but there is a moral aspect to economics. There are economic as well as moral consequences to governmental policies and our ethics, economics, private property, and government economic decisions.

What does the Bible have to say about economics? As we will see, the Bible does provide a firm moral foundation for economics. Previously we have talked about what the Bible has to say about economics.{1} In this article we will discuss the ethical implications of economics, drawing many principles from the book *Bulls, Bears & Golden Calves* by John E. Stapleford.{2}

We should begin by establishing that there is a moral aspect to economics. This question was an important one a few centuries ago, but today economics is usually taught without any real consideration of an ethical component.

Paul says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). He adds that this will enable the people of God to be equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). Certainly that would include economic works.

James calls on believers to be “doers of the word, and not merely hearers” of the word (James 1:22). This command applies to more than just our church life and family life. This would apply to doing good works in the economic realm.

There are obvious moral implications to issues often discussed in relation to economic issues. For example, in previous radio programs we have talked about the morality of such topics as drugs, pornography, and gambling. We have also talked about the importance of Christians learning to be good stewards of the environment. Each of these topics has an economic component to it, and thus implies that we should apply ethics to economics.

Legalizing drugs has economic consequences, but it also has moral consequences as well.

In previous programs, we have talked about the pornography plague.{3} The Bible teaches that we are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). We should, therefore, flee the temptation of pornography (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim 2:22).

We have in previous programs also talked about what the Bible has to say about the subject of gambling.{4} The Bible teaches that we are to work by the sweat of our brow (Gen. 3:19). This is God’s command as well as an opportunity. Work can be fulfilling to us as we accomplish a task and is an essential

element of human worth and dignity. Gambling undercuts the work ethic by emphasizing greed (Rom. 1:29), materialism, laziness (Prov. 19:15), and covetousness (Ex. 20:17).

Private Property

What does the Bible say about property, and especially about private property? First, the Bible clearly teaches that everything in the world belongs to the Lord. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”

At the same time, the Bible also teaches that we are given dominion over the creation (Gen. 1:28). We are accountable to God for our stewardship of the resources.

Because God owns it all (Ps. 24:1), no one owns property in perpetuity. But the Bible does grants private property rights to individuals. One of the Ten Commandments prohibits stealing, thus approving of private property rights. The book of Exodus establishes the rights of property owners and the liabilities of those who violate those rights.{5} Financial restitution (Ex. 22) must be made to property owners in cases of theft or neglect. Physical force is allowed to protect property (Ex. 22:2). Lost animals are to be returned, even when they belong to an enemy (Ex. 23:4). Removing landmarks that protect property is clearly forbidden (Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 22:28; Hos 5:10).

Some Christians have suggested that the New Testament rejects the idea of private property because the book of Acts teaches that the early Christians held property in common. But this communal sharing in the New Testament was voluntary. Acts 2:44-47 says, “And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in

the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

The early Christians did not reject the idea of private property. Notice that they still retained private property rights until they voluntarily gave up those rights to help other believers in Jerusalem. This was a specific leading of the Holy Spirit to meet the increasing needs of the growing New Testament church.

We can see that they retained property rights in the actions of Ananias and Sapphira. Their sin was not that they retained control of some of their property but that they lied about it. Acts 5:4: "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Also notice that Paul called for voluntary charity toward believers in Jerusalem when he called New Testament believers to give to the needs of those within the church. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 says, "For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality—at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; as it is written, 'He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack.'"

Work

What is the place of work in economic activity? First, we see that God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to work. God commanded them to work it and take care of it (Gen. 2:15-17). They were given an explicit command to exercise stewardship

over the creation.

However, when sin entered the world, God's curse brought toil, sweat, and struggle to work (Gen. 3:17-19). But we still maintain the responsibility to work the land and cultivate it. We are also given the privilege by God of enjoying the earth and deriving profit and benefit from what it might produce (Gen. 9:1-3).

Second, we are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), so we can find work rewarding and empowering. At the same time, we should also be held accountable for the work we do or fail to do. Paul says, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thess. 3:10, NIV).

Third, there is also a satisfaction in work. It not only satisfies a basic human need but it also is a privilege provided by the hand of God. Ecclesiastes 2:24 says, "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God."

Fourth, we are to work unto the Lord. Paul admonishes believers to "work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col. 3:23). He also says, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord' (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

We also learn from Scripture that without God's involvement in

our work, human labor is futile. Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” God’s blessings come to us through our labors.

Finally, with work there should also be rest. The law of the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11) and the other Old Testament provisions for feasts and rest demonstrate the importance of rest. In the New Testament also we see that Jesus set a pattern for rest (Mark 6:45-47; Luke 6:12) in His ministry. Believers are to work for the Lord and His Kingdom, but they must also avoid being workaholics and take time to rest.

Government

What is the role of government in the economic arena? In previous radio programs, we have discussed the role of government in society.{6}

First, Christians are commanded to obey government (Rom. 13:1) and submit to civil authority (1 Pet. 2:13–17). We are called to render service and obedience to the government (Matt. 22:21). However, we are not to render total submission. There may be a time in which Christians may be called to disobey government leaders who have set themselves in opposition to divine law (Rom. 13:1-5; John 19:11). We are to obey civil authorities (Rom.13:5) in order to avoid anarchy and chaos, but there may be times when we may be forced to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Second, we understand that because of the fall (Gen. 3), all have a sin nature (Rom. 3:23). Government must therefore administer justice in the political and economic realm. It must also protect us against aggression as well as provide for public works (1 Kings 10:9).

As we have discussed in previous articles, the reality of sin nature dictates that we not allow a political concentration of power. Governmental power should be limited with appropriate

checks and balances. Government also should not be used in a coercive way to attempt to change individuals. We should not accept the idea that the state can transform people from the outside. Only the gospel can change people from the inside and so that they become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17).

In his book *Bulls, Bears & Golden Calves*, John E. Stapleford sets forth many functions of government in the economic realm. Government must ensure justice in the following ways:

• "Weights and scales are to be honest, a full measure (shaken down) is to be given (Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:15; Prov. 20:23; Lk. 6:38), and currency is not be debased by inflationary monetary policy or other means (e.g., mixing lead with silver)."{7}

• Procedural justice requires that contracts and commitments be honored (Lev. 19:13).

• Government must also ensure justice when people are cheated or swindled. In these cases, the cost of restoration should be borne by the guilty or negligent party (Ex. 21:33-36; 22:5-8, 10-15). Government should also deal with those who give a false accusation (Deut. 19:16-19).

• Government should also prevent economic discrimination. This would apply to those of different economic class (James 2:1-4) as well as to those of different sex, race, and religious background (Gal. 3:26-29). Government can exert a great influence on the economy and therefore should use its regulatory power to protect against discrimination.

• That being said, the primary function of government is to set the rules and provide a means of redress. The free market should be allowed to function with government providing the necessary economic boundaries and protections. Once this is done in the free enterprise system, individuals are free to use their economic choices in a free market.

Conclusion

What is the connection between economics and ethics? The fact that we even refer to these as separate issues is an indication of the times in which we live. In the past, ethics and economics were interconnected.

Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica,* addressed economic issues in a moral and theological way. He wouldn't just ask about prices and markets, but also asked the fundamental question, What is a just price?

John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* also devoted whole sections to government and economics. These were issues that he believed Christian theologians should address.

Today if moral questions about economics are discussed at all, they might be discussed in a class on economic theory. While we might hope that such discussions might surface in a seminary, usually those classes focus on theological questions rather than economic questions that deserve a moral reflection.

We have shown that economic issues often have a moral component. You can't just talk about the economic consequences of legalizing drugs, promoting pornography, or promoting gambling without dealing with the moral consequences.

We have also seen that the Bible has a great deal to say about work. Through the creation and the fall, human beings have a right and an obligation to work.

We find that the Bible also warns us of the consequences of idleness. Proverbs 24:30-34 says, "I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, A little

folding of the hands to rest, Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man."

People are supposed to work and should be held accountable for the work they do or fail to do. Paul says, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thess. 3:10, NIV).

The Bible also teaches that God has endowed individuals with different gifts and talents (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12). Even within the body of Christ, there are different members even though we are all one body in Christ.

When these differences in gifts and abilities are expressed within a free market, their respective value in terms of supply and demand means that they will receive different remuneration (1 Tim. 5:18). So it is not surprising that there are economic distinctions among individuals. Proverbs 22:2 says, "The rich and the poor have a common bond, The Lord is the maker of them all."

Ethics and economics are related, and Christians would be wise to begin exploring the moral implications of economic behavior and the impact it is having on them and society.

Notes

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Globalization and the Wal-Mart Effect – How Wal-Mart Changes the Way Products are Sourced and Sold

Kerby Anderson helps us understand the foundational principles and some the current factors which make Wal-Mart the dominant force in consumer sales in the world. Wal-Mart has fundamentally changed the way products are sourced and sold as shown in the examples presented in this article. Kerby does not take a position for or against those changes but encourages us to consume in ways that consider the impact of our consumption.

Introduction

In this article, we revisit the issue of global trade and the process of globalization. In an earlier article I asked, Is the world flat?{1} I talked about the various things that have made our world flat and used Wal-Mart as one of the examples.

I would like to further develop our discussion by using Wal-Mart as an example of what is happening in our world. Thomas Friedman, in his book *The World is Flat*, says that if Wal-Mart were an individual economy, it would rank as China's eighth-biggest trading partner, ahead of Russia, Australia, and Canada.{2}

Often I will be referring to many of the facts and figures

from Charles Fishman's book *The Wal-Mart Effect*.{3} For example, he points out that more than half of all Americans live within five miles of a Wal-Mart store. For most people, that's about a ten- to fifteen-minute drive. Ninety percent of Americans live within fifteen miles of a Wal-Mart. In fact, when you drive down the interstate, it is rare for you to go more than a few minutes without seeing a Wal-Mart truck.

Wal-Mart has over 3800 stores in the United States. That is more than one Wal-Mart store for every single county in the country.{4} And they don't exactly fade into the landscape. They sit on vast aprons of asphalt parking and stand out because of their sheer size.

Wal-Mart has also become the national commons. Every seven days more than one hundred million Americans shop at Wal-Mart (that's one third of the country). Each year, ninety-three percent of American households shop at least once at Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart's sales in the United States are a bit more than $2000 per household. And Wal-Mart's profit on that amount was just $75.00.{5}

The size of this company is hard to grasp. Wal-Mart isn't just the largest retailer in the nation and the world. For most of this decade, it has been both the largest company in the world as well as the largest company in the history of the world.

In 2006, Wal-Mart will be bumped from the number-one spot on the Fortune 500 list of the largest companies by ExxonMobil, whose sales will surge past Wal-Mart's because the world price of oil rose so much in the last year.

But if you consider payrolls, there is no comparison. ExxonMobil employs about 90,000 people worldwide. Wal-Mart employs 1.6 million.{6} And there's another difference. ExxonMobil is growing by raising prices. Wal-Mart is growing despite lowering prices.

Put another way, Wal-Mart is as big as Home Depot, Kroger, Target, Costco, Sears, and Kmart combined. Target might be considered Wal-Mart's biggest rival and closest competitor, but it is small in comparison. Wal-Mart sells more by St. Patrick's Day (March 17) than Target sells all year.{7}

The Wal-Mart Effect

Ask people to give you their opinion about Wal-Mart and you are likely to get lots of different responses. They may talk with enthusiasm about the "always low prices." Or they might talk about the impact Wal-Mart had on small businesses in their community when the first store arrived. They may even talk about the loss of American jobs overseas. Believe me, most will have an opinion about Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart had its creation in the mind of Sam Walton who promoted a single idea: sell merchandise at the lowest price possible. It began with Wal-Mart working hard to keep the costs of their company as low as possible. This idea moved from their company to their suppliers as they asked them to be as frugal as possible. As the company grew in size, they began looking for every way to wring out the last penny of savings from materials, packaging, labor, transportation, and display. The result was "the Wal-Mart effect."

Consumers have embraced "the Wal-Mart effect." As a store moves into a community bringing lower prices, it drives down prices in other stores. And either they compete or close their doors. And it also reshapes the shopping habits of those in the community.

But with "the Wal-Mart effect" comes fears of "the Wal-Mart economy." This is the nagging feeling that there are social and economic costs to be paid for "always low prices." Critics talk about low wages, minimal benefits, and little chance for career advancement.

The company has found itself under attack from many quarters. There is a lawsuit on behalf of 1.6 million women who have worked at Wal-Mart that alleges systematic sex discrimination. Add to this the allegations that managers have required employees to work off the clock and even have locked employees in stores overnight.

There is also the constant complaint that Wal-Mart does not provide adequate health care benefits. Last year, for example, the Maryland legislature passed a bill that forces companies with more than 10,000 employees to spend at least eight percent of their payroll on health care or pay the state the difference. Since Wal-Mart is the only employer with over 10,000 employees in the state, it is easy to see that the legislation was only targeting Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart recently settled a federal investigation of its use of illegal aliens to clean its stores. The company made a record-setting payment to the federal government.

Sam Walton's goal from the beginning was an unrelenting focus on controlling costs in order to provide "always low prices." He instilled in his employees core values like hard work, frugality, discipline, and loyalty.{8}

In his book *The Wal-Mart Effect*, Charles Fishman says these values have become inverted. He points out how the company has changed. When Sam Walton died in 1992, Wal-Mart was a $44 billion-a-year company with 370,000 employees. The number of employees has now grown by 1.2 million, and sales have grown by $240 billion. "Wal-Mart is not only not the company Sam Walton founded, it is no longer the company he left behind."{9}

Out of the Box

You probably never thought about the packaging around deodorant, but Wal-Mart did. Until the early 1990s, nearly

every brand of deodorant came in a paperboard box. Most consumers opened the box, pulled out the deodorant container, and tossed the box into the garbage. Some of us recycled them, but we were a very small minority.

In the early 1990s, Wal-Mart (along with a few other retailers) decided the paperboard box was a waste. The product came in a can or plastic container. These were at least as tough as the box. The box took up wasted space, and it wasted cardboard. Shipping the weight of the cardboard added weight to trucks and wasted fuel. And the box itself cost money to design and produce. It even cost money to put the deodorant into the box.

Wal-Mart began to apply pressure on the suppliers to eliminate the box. Deodorant manufacturers calculated that the box cost about a nickel for every consumer. Wal-Mart split the savings. Deodorant makers keep a few pennies, and Wal-Mart passed a couple of pennies savings on to the consumers.

Walk into Wal-Mart today and look at the deodorant aisle. You will probably find eight shelves of deodorant, sixty containers across. In this sea of nearly five hundred containers of deodorant, not one box.

Consider the impact of this one decision. First, there is the environmental impact. Whole forests were not cut down to provide a box that consumers did not use. A few recycled them, but the vast majority threw them away seconds after they removed their deodorant. Was Wal-Mart’s pressure to unbox deodorant a good thing? It certainly was, if you are concerned about environmental issues. And Christians should be concerned about our stewardship of the environment.

The economic impact was also considerable. A savings of one nickel might seem trivial until you multiply it by the two hundred million adults in the United States. If you just account for the container of deodorant in every American

bathroom, you have a savings of $10 million, of which consumers got to keep half. But don't forget that the savings is recurrent. Americans are saving $5 million in nickels about five to six times a year.

But there is also a third impact. The impact this decision had on jobs. So far the decision looks like a win-win. But you might not feel so excited about the decision if you work in the forestry industry or are in the paperboard box business.

This story illustrates only so well the problem with providing a clear, unambiguous analysis of consumer behavior in American markets and, even more so, the ethics of corporations in a global market. And this story is probably easier to analyze if your first priority is the environment. But the ethics of other situations that arise from globalization aren't quite so easy to evaluate.

Wal-Mart illustrates the world in which corporate entities significantly influence our decisions and even transform an economy. While we might like the outcome of saving paperboard boxes, we certainly don't like other aspects of "the Wal-Mart effect." The company has grown so large and evolved in unexpected ways that it is difficult to predict what the future holds. And when we begin to ask moral questions, it isn't so easy to always determine whether the outcomes are good for us or the country.

Salmon

Americans love to eat salmon. In fact, we eat more than 1.75 million pounds of salmon a day.{10} We eat it at home and when we go out to a restaurant.

And Americans buy lots of cheap salmon from Wal-Mart. But they are probably unaware of the impact their purchase has on the environment. Most of the salmon served in the United States is Atlantic salmon (which is a species that is not only found

wild but is also the species of choice for salmon farmers).

The salmon that you buy in Wal-Mart is "a factory product." In other words, they are hatched from eggs, raised in freshwater hatcheries, and then grown to maturity in open-topped ocean cages in cold coastal waters.{11}

Wal-Mart sells more salmon than any other store in the country. Wal-Mart also buys all its salmon from Chile. In fact, they purchase about one-third of the annual harvest of salmon that Chile sells. Wal-Mart sells the salmon for $4.84 a pound. It seems incredible that they can sell it for so little, but there are hidden costs.

Atlantic salmon are not native to Chile (its coastline runs along the Pacific). It's an exotic species that is literally farmed and processed by thousands of Chileans. The labor conditions are certainly a concern (long hours, low pay, processing of salmon with razor-sharp filleting instruments).

Another concern is the environment. Salmon farming is already transforming the ecology of southern Chile "with tens of millions of salmon living in vast ocean corrals, their excess food and feces settling to the ocean floor beneath the pens, and dozens of salmon processing plants dumping untreated salmon entrails directly into the ocean."{12}

When we buy salmon from Chile are we contributing to this environmental damage? Charles Fishman asks, "Does it matter that salmon for $4.84 a pound leaves a layer of toxic sludge on the ocean bottoms of the Pacific fjords of southern Chile?"{13} After all, these salmon are raised in pens (with as many as one million per farm). They are fed antibiotics to prevent disease. As a result, you have quite a mess. One million salmon produce about the same amount of waste as 65,000 people. And add to that additional waste from unconsumed food and antibiotic residue. In essence, the current method of salmon farming creates a toxic seabed.

So how do we change this? The answer is simple: by changing consumer behavior. If shoppers won't buy salmon until Wal-Mart insists on higher standards, Wal-Mart will insist on them. The same company that created this huge market for salmon can also change it. But this will only happen if consumers voice their concerns and back it up with their behavior.

Consumer Behavior

As I said earlier, mention the name Wal-Mart and you are likely to get lots of varied reactions. While shoppers love the "always low prices," critics point to the impact that the company has had on the economy and the environment.

In fact, it is a bit misleading to think of Wal-Mart as merely a company. In reality it's a global market force. Without a doubt it is one of the most efficient entities at improving its supply chain not only in this country but around the world. Most of us just shop at the store and don't think of the implications of what we buy and where we buy it.

The size of Wal-Mart gives it the power to do many positive things. It recently announced fuel-savings plans for its stores and trucks. This could provide a model for the nation.

Wal-Mart also provided a model of how to deal with a disaster like Hurricane Katrina. Even though they had 171 facilities in the path of the storm, they were able to recover and reopen eighty-three percent of their facilities in the Gulf area within six days.{14}

One key to Wal-Mart's success was associates who were dedicated to their communities. The local connection helped it deliver goods when the government failed. Wal-Mart sprang into action even before the hurricane hit. Whenever there is a possibility of a hurricane, its supply chain automatically adjusts and sends in plenty of non-perishable food and generators.

What is Wal-Mart's effect on the local economy? One famous study found that the arrival of a Wal-Mart store had a dramatic impact. "Grocery stores lost 5 percent of their business, specialty stores lost 14 percent of their business, and clothing stores lost 18 percent of their business—all while total sales were rising 6 percent, mostly due to Wal-Mart."{15}

Critics of Wal-Mart say that it forces small businesses into bankruptcy. But if you think about it, it is the consumers who put people out of business. We vote with our wallets. Shoppers are the ones who have made it possible for Wal-Mart's phenomenal growth. And we are the ones who need to pay attention to what we buy and where we buy it.

In this article, we have identified a few economic and environmental issues that result from "the Wal-Mart effect." Previously, we have produced articles discussing the Christian's responsibility towards economics{16} and the environment.{17}

Our consumer behavior can have a positive impact on our world. As individuals, we have a minimal impact, but collectively we have an impact on our lives and our economy every day when we spend money. For too long, Christians have been willing to separate ethics from economics. Yet in earlier centuries theologians asked important questions about the relationship of morality to money.

It is time to return to that moral reflection, especially in this age of globalization. Christians should be alert consumers in this global economy.

Notes

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President Kennedy's Speeches

Recently I was invited to speak at a dinner hosted by a Christian group at the Kennedy Museum in Dallas. They asked if I might speak about President John F. Kennedy and relate it to some of the issues we are dealing with today.

I began by asking them to imagine what might happen if we could bring President Kennedy in a time machine to our time and place. What would he think of what has happened in America?

Of course, we cannot accurately predict what he might think, but we do have his speeches that give us some insight into his perspective on the major issues in the 1960s. And as I re-read his great speeches, I think the audience concluded that they said more about the change in America than anything else.

I think it would be fair to say that President Kennedy's speeches illustrate what was mainstream (perhaps even a bit progressive) back in the 1960s. Today (with perhaps the exception of his speech on church/state issues) most of his ideas would be considered right wing. And if I might be so bold, I think it is reasonable to say that many of the leaders of his party today would reject many of the ideas he put forward more than forty years ago.

Foreign Policy

Let's first look at President Kennedy's perspective on foreign policy. One of his best known speeches is his inaugural address on January 20, 1961:

> *Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing*

> *of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.*
>
> *Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.*

In his day, the great foreign policy challenge was communism. The threat from the Soviet Union, as well as Red China, was his primary focus. And he made it clear that he would bring an aggressive foreign policy to the world in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.

Today the great foreign policy challenge is international terrorism (which is a topic that President Kennedy addressed in his day). And there are still threats to America and the need to address the issue of human rights that he talked about more than forty years ago. America still needs a foreign policy that aggressively deals with terrorists who would threaten our freedom and dictators who keep whole nations in bondage.

It may surprise many to realize that more than forty years ago President Kennedy understood the threat of terrorism. Here is what he said to the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 25, 1961:

> *Terror is not a new weapon. Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail, either by persuasion or example. But inevitably they fail, either because men are not afraid to die for a life worth living, or because the terrorists themselves came to realize that free men cannot be frightened by threats, and that aggression would meet its own response. And it is in the light of that history that every nation today should know, be he friend or foe, that the*

> *United States has both the will and the weapons to join free men in standing up to their responsibilities.*

Terrorism is with us in the twenty-first century, though the terrorists today are primarily radical Muslims. And President Kennedy rightly understood the threat terrorism posed to freedom. As we just saw, he proposed an aggressive foreign policy to deal with these threats. He knew that "free men cannot be frightened by threats."

President Kennedy also spoke to the issue of human rights. In his inaugural address on January 20, 1961, he quoted from the book of Isaiah to illustrate his point:

> *Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to "undo the heavy burdens . . . and to let the oppressed go free."*
>
> *And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.*

He envisioned a future world where people were not enslaved by communism and held behind an Iron Curtain or Bamboo Curtain. When he spoke in West Berlin on June 26, 1963, he addressed the importance of freedom:

> *Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. When all are free, then we can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one and this country and this great Continent of Europe in a peaceful and hopeful globe. When that day finally comes, as it will, the people of West Berlin can take sober satisfaction in the fact that they were in the front lines for almost two decades.*
>
> *All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich*

> *bin ein Berliner.”*

President Kennedy saw the day when men and women on both sides of the Berlin Wall would be free.

Economic Policy

President Kennedy proposed a significant cut in taxes. Here is what he said to the Economic Club of New York on December 14, 1962:

> *The final and best means of strengthening demand among consumers and business is to reduce the burden on private income and the deterrents to private initiative which are imposed by our present tax system—and this administration pledged itself last summer to an across-the-board, top-to-bottom cut in personal and corporate income taxes to be enacted and become effective in 1963.*
>
> *I’m not talking about a ‘quickie’ or a temporary tax cut, which would be more appropriate if a recession were imminent. Nor am I talking about giving the economy a mere shot in the arm, to ease some temporary complaint. I am talking about the accumulated evidence of the last five years that our present tax system, developed as it was, in good part, during World War II to restrain growth, exerts too heavy a drag on growth in peace time; that it siphons out of the private economy too large a share of personal and business purchasing power; that it reduces the financial incentives for personal effort, investment, and risk-taking. In short, to increase demand and lift the economy, the federal government’s most useful role is not to rush into a program of excessive increases in public expenditures, but to expand the incentives and opportunities for private expenditures.*

He so believed in the need to cut taxes that he focused whole

paragraphs of his 1963 State of the Union speech on the same topic. Here is one of those paragraphs:

> *For it is increasingly clear—to those in government, business, and labor who are responsible for our economy's success—that our obsolete tax system exerts too heavy a drag on private purchasing power, profits, and employment. Designed to check inflation in earlier years, it now checks growth instead. It discourages extra effort and risk. It distorts the use of resources. It invites recurrent recessions, depresses our Federal revenues, and causes chronic budget deficits.*

In the last few decades, many Democrat leaders have criticized President Reagan and President Bush for comparing their tax cut proposals to those of President Kennedy. But there are significant similarities. President Kennedy was not just proposing a quick fix or an economic "shot in the arm." He saw that taxes exert "a drag on growth" in the economy. If that was true in the 1960s when the taxes on the average American were lower than today, then it is even more true today.

Church and State

Church and state was a major issue in his campaign since he was Catholic. So he chose to speak to the issue in front of the Greater Houston Ministerial Alliance on September 12, 1960:

> *I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute; where no Catholic prelate would tell the President—should he be Catholic—how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote; where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference, and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him, or the people who might elect him.*

> *I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish; where no public official either requests or accept instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source; where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials, and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.*
>
> *For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been—and may someday be again—a Jew, or a Quaker, or a Unitarian, or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that led to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today, I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you—until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart at a time of great national peril.*

We can agree with President Kennedy that religious leaders should not demand that a politician vote a certain way. But we live in the free society, so pastors should be free to express their biblical perspective on social and political issues.

That is one of the reasons Representative Walter Jones has sponsored legislation known as the "Houses of Worship Freedom of Speech Restoration Act" to make this possible. Back in 1954, then-Senator Lyndon Johnson introduced an amendment to a tax code revision that was being considered on the Senate floor. The amendment prohibited all non-profit groups—including churches—from engaging in political activity without losing their tax-exempt status. The bill by Representative Jones would return that right to churches and allow pastors and churches greater freedom to speak to these issues.

Social Issues

One issue that surfaced during Kennedy's presidency was the subject of school prayer. In 1962, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Engel v. Vitale*. This was President Kennedy's response:

> *We have in this case a very easy remedy, and that is to pray ourselves. And I would think it would be a welcome reminder to every American family that we can pray a good deal more at home, we can attend our churches with a good deal more fidelity, and we can make the true meaning of prayer much more important in the lives of our children.*

At the time, this may have seemed like an isolated and even necessary action by the Supreme Court. Few could have anticipated that this would be the beginning of the removal of prayer, Bible reading, and even the Ten Commandments from the classrooms of America.

So how would John F. Kennedy stand on the issue of abortion? Well, we simply don't know, since abortion was not a major policy issue in 1963.

We do know that as a Catholic, he and the other Kennedys valued life. In the 1968 election, Robert F. Kennedy was asked about the subject of contraception. The Supreme Court handed down its decision on contraception in the case *Griswold v. Connecticut* in 1965, and so Bobby Kennedy was asked about his views on the subject. Kennedy at that time had ten children. He used the Kennedy wit and turned the question into a funny line. He replied, "You mean personally or as governmental policy?"

We do know that President Kennedy did nominate Byron White to the Supreme Court. It's worth noting that he and Justice Rehnquist were the only two dissenting votes in the case of *Roe v. Wade*.

By the way, when Justice White left the court and President Clinton nominated Ruth Bader Ginsberg, you didn't hear anyone in the media talk about the court shifting to the left. Byron York, writing for *National Review*, did a Lexis-Nexis search and did not find one major media outlet that talked about this shift. By contrast, he found sixty-three times in which the media lamented the potential shift of the court to the right with the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito.

As we have looked at some of President Kennedy's speeches, it is amazing how much of the political dialogue has moved. But to be more precise, it is America that has moved.

It reminds you of the story of a middle-aged man and wife. One day as her husband was driving the car, she began talking about how it used to be when they first dated. They always held hands, they had long talks, and they used to sit next to each other as they drove along the countryside. Finally, she asked her husband, "Why don't we ever sit together anymore when we drive?" He glanced over and said to her, "I'm not the one who moved."

Reading President Kennedy's speeches remind us that America has moved. Maybe it's time to get back to where we belong.

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Mind, Soul, and Neuroethics

Neuroscience is the next frontier for research, and Kerby Anderson urges Christians to pay attention to these findings and provide a biblical perspective to the research and an ethical framework for its application.

Let me begin with a question. Imagine that our medical

technology has advanced enough that we can transplant a human brain. If we exchanged your brain with that of another person, would you wake up in your body with someone else's thoughts and memories? Or would you wake up in the other person's body?

Or consider the following questions concerning brain research:

• Scientists are beginning to work on a "smart pill" that would increase your memory and intelligence. If such a pill existed, who should take it?

• Scientists are working to develop brain fingerprinting to reveal a person's knowledge of events. If perfected, should these brain scans be used like polygraph tests to detect if people are lying?

• Pharmaceutical companies are working to develop chemicals that block the formation of memories. If perfected, should these pills also be used to erase memories that people don't want to have?

• Areas of the brain can be stimulated or suppressed by placing a device over the scalp. Should doctors use these devices to control your brain?

These are just a few of the questions being raised in a relatively new ethical field of discussion known as neuroethics.

In the past few years, neuroscience has been making discoveries about the human brain at an incredible rate of speed. Advances in neuroscience and imaging methods have made it possible to observe the brain more directly. And advances in neurosurgery have also made it possible to intervene more precisely and effectively.

This new arena of neuroethics is beginning to deal with the hard questions about our rapidly growing knowledge of the human brain and our ethical and social responsibilities

concerning this new information. Doctors, scientists, lawyers, politicians, and theologians are all interested in neuroethics. But as you can see from the above examples, the implications of these concerns should extend to all of us since we will ultimately be affected by the moral and legal decisions concerning neuroscience.

In developing a Christian perspective on neuroethics, we should begin with a proper understanding of the mind and brain. Nearly all scientific investigation begins with the *a priori* assumption that we are material, not spiritual. Thus, scientists assume there is only a brain and not an immaterial mind. Put another way, they assume there is only a body and not a soul.

Dualism

Are we merely a brain or are we both brain and mind? This is a fundamental question in science, philosophy, and theology. New advances in science seem to be challenging the notion that we are both mind and brain.

Most Christians are Cartesian dualists in that they believe that the soul inhabits the body. The name Cartesian dualism comes from the philosopher René Descartes who four hundred years ago argued that identity and thought were distinct. He is famous for the phrase, "I think, therefore I am." In other words, the fact that he could think about himself showed that there was something distinct from him. He was doing something with his brain, but he was also distinct from his brain because he was having thoughts.

A quarter century ago, Probe Ministries published a book that showed that we are both mind and brain. The book, *The Mysterious Matter of Mind*, by Dr. Arthur C. Custance presented experimental evidence that led scientists to conclude that the mind is more than matter and more than a mere by-product of

the brain.{1}

One of the most famous findings in this field involved the research of Wilder Penfield. Although he was born in the U.S., he did most of his research in Canada and was later celebrated as “the greatest living Canadian.”

In 1961, Penfield reported a dramatic demonstration of the existence of a mind that is separate from the brain. He found that the mind acted independently of the brain under controlled experimental conditions. His subject was an epileptic patient who had part of the brain exposed. When Penfield used an electrode to stimulate a portion of the cortex, here is what he reported:

> *When the neurosurgeon applies an electrode to the motor area of the patient’s cerebral cortex causing the opposite hand to move, and when he asks the patient why he moved the hand, the response is: “I didn’t do it. You made me do it.” . . . It may be said that the patient thinks of himself as having an existence separate from his body.*
>
> *Once when I warned a patient of my intention to stimulate the motor area of the cortex, and challenged him to keep his hand from moving when the electrode was applied, he seized it with the other hand and struggled to hold still. Thus, one hand, under the control of the right hemisphere driven by the electrode, and the other hand, which he controlled through the left hemisphere, were caused to struggle against each other. Behind the “brain action” of one hemisphere was the patient’s mind. Behind the action of the other hemisphere was the electrode.{2}*

This experiment (and others like it) demonstrates that there is both a mind and brain. Mind is more than just merely a by product of the brain.

Neuroscience: Opportunities and Challenges

Neuroscience has been making discoveries about the human brain at an incredible rate of speed, and this provides both new opportunities and major ethical challenges. For example, existing brain imaging methods provide scientists with some very powerful tools to discover the structure and function of the human brain. These tools can detect various brain abnormalities. They can also help in the diagnosis of various neurological disorders.

Scientists have also been using these brain imaging machines to study emotions, language, and even our perceptions. It is possible that eventually these machines could even be used to read our thoughts and memories.

Scientists who have developed a brain fingerprinting machine believe they will be able to determine a person’s knowledge of events. By measuring electrical activity within the brain, they can see the response of a person to certain stimuli (words, sounds, pictures). Analysis of these responses might be helpful in various investigations.

Sometimes crime investigators use a polygraph machine to detect lies. But these devices are not completely foolproof. Scientists believe they might be able someday to develop accurate readings from functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to determine whether a person is telling the truth.

What are the implications of this? Is it possible that one day people who are suspected of a crime will be required to submit to a brain scan? Could brain scans be used to determine high-risk employees, potential criminals, even terrorists? For now, this is mere speculation, but neuroscience may force us to deal with these questions in the future.

Some have even speculated that measurements from these

machines could help in distinguishing true memories from false memories. In some experiments, certain areas of the brain appear to respond differently to true memories and false memories.

Could brain scans be used to predict certain neurological disorders? Scientists using fMRI have found that people with schizophrenia have different sizes of key brain structures (e.g., larger lateral ventricles, reduced hippocampus, etc.) than those people without this mental disorder. Many of the ethical questions already surrounding the use of genetic screening would no doubt surface with the application of brain scans that would screen for neurological disorders.

A related question in this growing field of neuroethics is the use of mood altering drugs. Psychopharmacology has already provided pills to treat depression, anxiety, and even attention deficit disorder. Future development in this area will no doubt yield other mood-altering and brain-altering drugs.

In the future, it might be possible to genetically engineer drugs or even genetically engineer human beings to treat and even cure mental disorders. This same technology might also allow scientists to increase memory and perhaps even increase intelligence. For now, the idea of a smart pill is just science fiction. But what if we develop such a medicine? Who should get the pill? Under what conditions would it be administered? These are all questions for the twenty-first century in this growing field of neuroethics.

Erasing Memories

In the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, a couple (played by Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet) undergo a brain procedure that allows them to erase each other from their memories because their relationship has turned sour. The story

develops when Joel discovers that his girlfriend, Clementine, has undergone a psychiatrist's experimental procedure which removes him from her mind. Joel then decides to undergo the same procedure. In the process, however, he rekindles his love for her.

Although the film is science fiction and essentially a thought experiment, erasing memories is something scientists are pursuing right now. They are already testing a pill that, when given after a traumatic event, seems to make resulting memories less intense. The pill appears to blunt memory formation and could be very useful as a treatment. For example, this pill could be used if a person experiences a horrible event (such as a rape or witness to a murder). It would also be helpful to those who have endured an earthquake, hurricane, or tsunami.

Doctors also believe that it would help victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This was a problem first recognized in the Vietnam War and a disorder diagnosed in men and women who have been serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those affected often experience mental symptoms (flashbacks) and physical symptoms.

When a traumatic event occurs, the brain is flooded with stress hormones (such as adrenalin) that actually store these memories in different ways than the manner in which memories are normally preserved. These memories seem to be stored in our brain's hard drive, and therefore seem nearly impossible to erase.

The new pills are a class of drugs known as beta blockers which can cross the blood-brain barrier. They can actually dull the impact of the memory formation by getting to the place where stress hormones work to form these traumatic memories. Scientists believe that they can not only blunt the impact of these memories, they might even prevent PTSD. Some physicians believe it might be possible to cure PTSD by

triggering these memories and then administering this new drug to eliminate them.

Not everyone is excited about the prospects of erasing memories. Already we have a variety of drugs that can alter a person's personality. Antidepressants and tranquilizers are used by millions of people every day. Antipsychotic drugs are used to treat people with such mental disorders as schizophrenia. Erasing a person's memory with certain drugs would certainly change their personality. Would that change always be for the better?

When researchers working in the area of erasing memories were asked to testify before the President's Council on Bioethics, there was deep concern. Chairman Leon Kass argued that painful memories serve a purpose and are part of the human experience.

Biblical Perspective

Advances in the field of neuroscience certainly raise new ethical dilemmas for the twenty-first century. But they also challenge the biblical understanding of human nature. Neuroscience is beginning to explain a great deal of human behavior by mapping the human brain. Scientists are locating regions that influence personality, character, and even spirituality. Does this challenge the concept of Cartesian dualism? Can we explain mind as merely a by-product of brain?

One researcher in this field thinks the research does challenge this biblical foundation. She says you "can still believe in what Arthur Koestler called 'the ghost in the machine'." But she concludes that "as neuroscience begins to reveal the mechanisms of personality, character, and even sense of spirituality, this Cartesian line of interpretation becomes strained. If these are all features of the machine, why have a ghost at all? By raising questions like this, it seems likely that neuroscience will pose a far more

fundamental challenge to religion than evolutionary biology."{3}

So if you think evolution has been a challenge to Christianity, just wait until the findings of neuroscience reach the society at large. There are large and significant issues that need to be addressed. So what is a Christian perspective on these issues of mind/brain and body/soul?

First, the Bible teaches that when the soul leaves the body, the body is dead (James 2:26). And if the soul returns to the body, the whole person comes back to life (Luke 8:55). This dual nature of the body and soul is documented in many passages of Scripture (Matt. 26:41; Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 5:5; 6:17, 20; 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:17).

Second, the New Testament also talks about the resurrection of the body, and Paul elaborates on the nature of this body (1 Cor. 15:35-44). We have the most complete picture of this resurrection body by observing what the Bible tells us about Jesus Christ after His resurrection. Paul tells us this is the body we will have (Phil. 3:20-21).

This resurrection body of Jesus Christ was able to freely pass through physical barriers (walls, locked doors). But it could also be examined for purposes of identification. It is a body that is able to communicate with the physical world (can be seen, heard, felt). Likewise, we can anticipate that our bodies will be able to share a meal and then disappear only to reappear in another location. It will also be a body that can act upon the physical world by moving objects, going for a walk, even starting a fire.

The Bible teaches that we are more than matter. We are both body and soul, mind and brain. Neuroscience is the next frontier for research, and Christians must pay attention to these findings and provide a biblical perspective to the research and an ethical framework for its application.

Notes

1. Arthur C. Custance, *The Mysterious Matter of Mind* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Probe, 1980).

2. Wilder Penfield, in the "Control of the Mind" Symposium, held at the University of California Medical Center, San Francisco, 1961, quoted in Arthur Koestler, *Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchison Publishing Group, 1967), 203-4.

3. Martha J. Farah, "Neuroethics," Op-Ed, American Medical Association, www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/12727.html.

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Intelligent Design and the Bible

Jan. 16, 2006

Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God. Romans 1 reminds us that the creation shows His divine attributes. So we shouldn't be surprised that scientists are finding evidence of design in nature.

The subject of intelligent design is in the news due to school board decisions and court rulings. So it is important that Christians be thinking clearly about this important topic.

When I have an opportunity to speak on the subject of intelligent design, I find that most Christians don't exactly know what to make of this research. On the one hand, they appreciate that scientists working in such diverse fields as astronomy and biology are finding evidence of design. Whether

you look in the telescope at the far dimensions of space or in a microscope at the smallest details of life, God's fingerprint can be found.

But I also find that Christians are ambivalent about the idea of intelligent design. If you go to the websites of many creationist groups, you will find them to be critical of intelligent design research because it doesn't identify a creator. They want the scientists to connect the dots of their research to the God of the Bible. I would like to suggest another way of looking at this issue.

Those of us who defend the historical reliability of the Bible often use the good work done by archaeologists. These archaeologists uncover historical evidence that gives us a better picture of the ancient near east. We then take their research and show how it fits with the biblical description of history. Although some archaeologists are Christians, many are not. But that doesn't keep us from using their research to show the truthfulness of the Bible.

We can think of scientists working on intelligent design in the same way. They are pursuing a line of research that shows design in nature. We can then take their research and show how it fits with the biblical description of creation. Although many of the scientists working on intelligent design are Christians, some are not. That shouldn't keep us from using their research. We can take their research and connect the dots.

In their book *The Privileged Planet*, Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards show that the earth is positioned in the best place in our galaxy for complex life to exist. They also show that the earth is also positioned in the best place for scientific discovery. Christian theologians and apologists can take this research and point to the fact that God created the heavens and earth and they show His divine care.

Michael Behe in his book *Darwin's Black Box* shows that there are numerous molecular motors within the cell that intricately assembled. He demonstrates that they have irreducible complexity. Christian theologians and apologists can take this research and show that there is evidence of design. Design implies a designer, and the Bible tells us that God is the designer of life.

Scientists working on the subject of intelligent design may not be willing to identify the Creator. But that shouldn't keep us from using their research to connect the dots and lead people to the Creator.

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American Indians in American History

Colonial America

Two dark chapters in American history are slavery and the treatment of the American Indian. We have an article on slavery, and in this article we will focus briefly on the story of the American Indians (or Native Americans).

It is difficult to estimate the number of Indians in the Western Hemisphere. In Central and South America, there were advanced civilizations like the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru. So it is estimated there was a population of about twenty million before the Europeans came. By contrast, the Indian tribes north of what is now the Mexican border were "still at the hunter-gatherer stage in many cases, and engaged

in perpetual warfare" and numbered perhaps one million.{1}

One of the best-known stories from colonial America is the story of John Smith and Pocahontas. John Smith was the third leader of Jamestown. He traded with the Indians and learned their language. He also learned how they hunted and fished.

On one occasion, Smith was captured by the Indians and brought before Chief Powhatan. As the story goes, a young princess by the name of Pocahontas laid her head across Smith's chest and pleaded with her father to spare his life. This may have been an act of courage or part of the Indian ceremony. In either case, Smith was made an honorary chief of the tribe.

Although the Disney cartoon about Pocahontas ends at this point, it is worth noting that she later met an English settler and traveled to England. There she adopted English clothing, became a Christian, and was baptized.

Another famous story involves Squanto. He was originally kidnapped in 1605 and taken to England where he learned English and was eventually able to return to New England. When he found his tribe had been wiped out by a plague, he lived with a neighboring tribe. Squanto then learned that the Pilgrims were at Plymouth, so he came to them and showed them how to plant corn and fertilize with fish. He later converted to Christianity. William Bradford said that Squanto "was a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation."{2}

These stories are typical of the some of the initial interactions between the Indians and the colonists. Relations between the two were usually peaceful, but as we will see, the peace was a fragile one.

Many of the settlers owed their lives to the Indians and learned many important skills involving hunting, trapping, fishing, and farming. Roger Williams purchased land from the Indians to start Providence, Rhode Island, and William Penn

bought land from the Indians who lived in present-day Pennsylvania. Others, however, merely took the land and began what became the dark chapter of exploitation of the American Indians.

Indian Wars in New England

Let's take a look at the history of Indians in New England.

One of the leaders in New England was Roger Williams. He believed that it was right and proper to bring Christianity to the Indians. Unfortunately, "few New Englanders took trouble to instruct Indians in Christianity. What they all wanted to do was to dispossess them of their land and traditional hunting preserves."{3}

Williams thought this was unchristian and argued that title to all Indian lands should be negotiated at a fair price. He felt anything less was sinful.{4}

Because of this, his Rhode Island colony gained the reputation of being a place where Indians were honored and protected. That colony managed to avoid any conflict with the Indians until King Philip's War.

King Philip's War was perhaps the most devastating war between the colonists and the Indians living in the New England area. There had been peace until that time between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag tribe due to their peace treaty signed in the 1620s.

The war was named for King Philip who was the son of Chief Massasoit. His Indian name was Metacom, but he was called King Philip by the English because he adopted European dress and customs. In 1671, he was questioned by the colonists and fined. They also demanded that the Wampanoag surrender their arms.

In 1675, a Christian Indian who had been working as an informer to the colonists was murdered (probably by King Philip's order). Three Indians were tried for murder and executed. In retaliation, King Philip led his men against the settlers. At one point they came within twenty miles of Boston itself. If he could have organized a coalition of Indian tribes, he might have extinguished the entire colony.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1675, Philip and his followers destroyed farms and townships over a large area. The Massachusetts governor dispatched military against the Indians with the conflict ending in the fall of 1677 when Philip was killed in battle.

The war was costly to the colonists in terms of lives and finances. It also resulted in the near extermination of many of the tribes in southern New England.

The Pequot War in the 1630s developed initially because of conflict between Indian tribes. It began with a dispute between the Pequots and the Mohicans in the Connecticut River area over valuable shoreline where shells and beads were collected for wampum.

Neither the English nor the nearby Dutch came to the aid of the Mohicans. Thus, the Pequots became bold and murdered a number of settlers. In response, the Massachusetts governor sent armed vessels to destroy two Indian villages. The Pequots retaliated by attacking Wethersfield, Connecticut, killing nine people and abducting two others.{5}

The combined forces of the Massachusetts and Connecticut militia set out to destroy the Pequot. They surrounded the main Pequot fort in 1637 and slaughtered five hundred Indians (men, women, and children). The village was set fire, and most who tried to escape were shot or clubbed to death.{6}

Post Revolutionary America

Chief Tecumseh was a Shawnee chief who lived in the Ohio River Valley and benefited from the British. During the War of 1812, the British had a policy of organizing and arming minorities against the United States. Not only did they liberate black slaves, but they armed and trained many of the Indian tribes.{7}

As thousands of settlers moved into this area, the Indians were divided as to whether to attack American settlements. Tecumseh was not one of them. He refused to sign any treaties with the government and organized an Indian resistance movement against the settlers.

Together with his brother Tenskwatawa, who was also known as "the Prophet," he called for a war against the white man: "Let the white race perish! They seize your land. They corrupt your women. They trample on the bones of your dead . . . . Burn their dwellings—destroy their stock—slay their wives and children that their very breed may perish! War now! War always! War on the living! War on the dead!"{8}

Tecumseh and "the Prophet" met with other Indian tribes in order to unite them into a powerful Indian confederacy. This confederacy began to concern government authorities especially when the militant Creeks (known as the Red Sticks because they carried bright red war clubs) joined and began to massacre the settlers.

General William Henry Harrison was at that time the governor of the Indiana Territory (he later became president). While Tecumseh was recruiting more Indian tribes, Harrison's army defeated fighters led by "the Prophet" at the Tippecanoe River. This victory was later used in his presidential campaign ("Tippecanoe and Tyler too").

American settlers as well as some Indian tribes attempted to

massacre the Creeks in the south. When this attempt failed, they retreated to Fort Mims. The Creeks took the fort and murdered over five hundred men, women, and children and took away two hundred fifty scalps on poles.{9}

At this point, Major-General Andrew Jackson was told to take his troops south and avenge the disaster. Those who joined him included David Crockett and Samuel Houston. Two months after the massacre, Jackson surrounded an Indian village and sent in his men to destroy it. David Crockett said: "We shot them like dogs."{10}

A week later, Jackson won a pitched battle at Talladega, attacking a thousand Creeks and killing three hundred of them. He then moved against the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend. When the Indians would not surrender, they were slain. Over five hundred were killed within the fort and another three hundred drowned trying to escape in the river. Shortly after this decisive battle, the remaining Creeks surrendered.

Trail of Tears

The Cherokee called Georgia home, and they were an advanced Indian civilization. Their national council went back to 1792 and had a written legal code since 1808. They had a representative form of government (with eight congressional districts). But the settlers moving into the state continued to take their land.

When Andrew Jackson was elected president in 1828, it sealed the fate of the Indians. "In his inaugural address he insisted that the integrity of the state of Georgia, and the Constitution of the United States, came before Indian interests, however meritorious."{11}

In 1830, Congress passed the "Indian Removal Act." This act forced Indians who were organized tribally and living east of the Mississippi River to move west to Indian Territory. It

also authorized the president to use force if necessary. Many Americans were against the act, including Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett. It passed anyway and was quickly signed by President Jackson.

The Indian tribes most affected by the act were the so-called "civilized tribes" that had adopted many of the ways of the white settlers (Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee). The Cherokees had actually formed an independent Cherokee Nation.

Cherokee leader John Ross went to Washington to ask the Supreme Court to rule in favor of his people and allow them to keep their land. In 1832, Chief Justice John Marshall and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation was not subject to the laws of the United States and therefore had a right to their land. The Cherokee would have to agree to removal in a treaty (which would also have to be ratified by the Senate).

A treaty with one of the Cherokee leaders gave Jackson the legal document he needed to remove the Indians. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty by one vote over the objections of such leaders as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.

In one of the saddest chapters in American history, the Indians were taken from their land, herded into makeshift forts, and forced to march a thousand miles. Often there was not enough food or shelter. Four thousand Cherokees died on the march to Oklahoma. This forced removal has been called "the Trail of Tears."

The Seminole resisted this forced march. Their leader Osceola fought the U.S. Army in the swamps of Florida with great success. However, when the Seminoles raised the white flag in truce, the U.S. Army seized Osceola. He died in prison a year later.

Those who made it to Oklahoma did not fare much better.

Although Oklahoma was Indian Territory, settlers began to show interest in the land. So the government began to push Indians onto smaller and smaller reservations. The final blow came with the Homestead Act of 1862 which gave one hundred sixty acres to anyone who paid a ten-dollar filing fee and agreed to improve the land for five years.

Indian Wars in the West

Until the 1860s, the Plains Indians were not significantly affected by the white man. But the advance of the settlers and the transcontinental railroad had a devastating impact on their way of life. The railroads cut the Great Plains in half so that the west was no longer the place where the buffalo roam. Prospectors ventured onto Indians lands seeking valuable minerals. So it was inevitable that war would break out. Between 1869 and 1878, over two hundred pitched battles took place primarily with the Sioux, Apache, Comanche, and Cheyenne.

The impact of an endless stream of settlers had the effect of forcing the Plains Indians onto smaller and smaller reservations. Even though the government signed various treaties with the Indians, they were almost always broken. Approximately three hundred seventy treaties were signed from 1778 to 1871 while an estimated eighty or ninety agreements were also entered into between 1871 and 1906.{12}

One of the most famous Indian battles was “Custer’s Last Stand.” Sioux and Cheyenne warriors, led by Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, fought against Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer. The Battle of Little Big Horn actually wasn’t much of a battle. Custer was ordered to observe a large Sioux camp. But he decided to attack even though he was warned they might be greatly outnumbered. It turns out they were outnumbered ten to one. Within an hour, Custer and all his men were dead.

Custer’s defeat angered many Americans, so the government fought even more aggressively against the Indians. Many historians believe that the anger generated by “Custer’s Last Stand” led to the slaughter of Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee in 1890. After the death of Sitting Bull, a band of Sioux fled into the badlands, where they were captured by the 7th Cavalry. The Sioux were ordered disarmed, but an Indian fired a gun and wounded an officer. The U.S. troops opened fire, and within minutes almost two hundred men, women, and children were killed.

The Apache leader Geronimo led many successful attacks against the army. By 1877, the Apache had been forced onto reservations. But on two separate occasions, Geronimo planned escapes and led resistance efforts from mountain camps in Mexico. He finally surrendered in 1886.

Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé in the Northwest built friendships with trappers and traders since the first expedition by Lewis and Clark. He refused to sign treaties with the government that would give up their homeland. Eventually fighting broke out, so Chief Joseph led his people to Canada. Unfortunately, they were surrounded by soldiers just forty miles from Canada. Chief Joseph died at a reservation in Washington State in 1904.

This is the sad and tragic story of the American Indian in American history. We cannot change our history, and we should not rewrite our history. Neither should we ignore the history of the American Indian in the United States.

Notes

1. Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 7.
2. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation,* c. 1650.
3. Johnson, 47.
5. Johnson, 76.

6. Alden T. Vaughn, *The New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians,* 1620-1675 (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1965).
7. Reginald Horsman, “British Indian Policy in the North-West 1807-1812,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* April 1958.
8. J. F.H. Claiborne, Mississippi as Providence, Territory and State, 3 quoted in Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom 1822-32*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), i.
9. H. S. Halbert and T. S. Hall, *The Creek War of 1813-14* (Tuscaloosa, 1969), 151ff.
10. David Crockett, *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee,* 1834.
11. Johnson, 350.
12. Charles M. Harvey, “The Red Man’s Last Roll-Call,” *Atlantic Monthly* 97 (1906), 323-330.

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