# Christian Rumors

## Madalyn Murray O'Hair

No doubt you've heard them and wondered if they were true. Stories about Madalyn Murray O'Hair's campaign against Christian radio, Janet Reno's definition of a cult or Charles Darwin's supposed deathbed conversion. Are they true or not?

Believe me—I see more than my share of these myths and rumors. Because of my public visibility and presence on various web pages, I probably get a lot more e-mail messages than most people do. So I probably see a higher percentage of myths and rumors than most. Yet, I am amazed at the number of rumors flying around the Internet.

And we get lots of phone calls at Probe from people wondering if various stories they have heard are true. Others forward e-mail messages they receive and ask if they are true, before they forward them to others.

Many of these messages are relatively harmless ones like the promise that you will get free M&Ms if you forward an e-mail message to someone. This apparently has mutated into the belief that IBM will send you a free computer if you forward a particular e-mail. Supposedly IBM is doing this because of a recent merger between Hewlett-Packard and Gateway. As my teenage daughter likes to say, "Yeah right!" Oh, and don't forget about the GAP offering free clothing because of a supposed merger with Abercrombie and Fitch.

Some other rumors are harmful to companies. One example would be the false rumor that an executive with Proctor and Gamble announced he was a Satanist on the *Sally Jesse Raphael Show*. The original rumor had this happening on *The Donahue Show*. And then there's the rumor that the designer Liz Claiborne told the *Oprah* audience that she donates profits to the Church of

Satan. None of these rumors are true, yet these e-mails still show up in Probe's inbox on a fairly regular basis.

In this article I want to address what I consider to be the major myths and rumors that are spread by the Christian community. With so many, I had to be selective; so I tried to focus on those persistent myths spread by Christians and some of the rumors which seem to nearly have a life of their own.

The most persistent rumor in the Christian community over the last few decades is the mistaken belief that atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair has been trying to ban religious broadcasting through petition RM 2493. Back in December 1974, there was a petition by Jeremy Lanaman and Lorenzo Milam to investigate radio stations with non-commercial educational licenses. The FCC unanimously rejected the petition in August 1975. But somehow the original information mutated into the current rumor that Madalyn Murray O'Hair was trying to remove Christian radio stations from the airwaves. The rumor wasn't true when she was alive, and certainly isn't true now. Nevertheless, the FCC has received millions and millions of bogus petitions. Let me state once again, the rumor isn't true and all of us should do what we can to stop the rumor.

## Janet Reno, Enemy of Christians

I am trying to address what I consider to be the major myths and rumors that are spread by the Christian community. Many of these show up in e-mails, while others are repeated by Christian speakers and believed to be true, even though they are false.

One persistent rumor has been attributed to former Attorney General Janet Reno, who supposedly defines Christians as belonging to a cult. Let me quote from one variation of the e-mail.

*Are you a cultist, ACCORDING TO JANET RENO?? . . . I*

*certainly HOPE SO!! Attorney General Janet Reno, "A cultist is one who has a strong belief in the Bible and the Second Coming of Christ; who frequently attends Bible studies; who has a high level of financial giving to a Christian cause; who home schools their children; who has accumulated survival foods and has a strong belief in the Second Amendment; and who distrusts big government. Any of these may qualify a person as a cultist but certainly more than one of these would cause us to look at this person as a threat, and his family as being in a risk situation that qualified for government interference." Janet Reno, Attorney General, USA Interview on 60 Minutes, June 26, 1994 Do you qualify? Are you (as defined by the U.S. Attorney General) a threat? If any of these apply to you then you are!! This worries me. Does it worry you? Let's impeach her too!!! Everyone in this country "The land of the free" with computer access should copy this and send to every man, woman and child who can read.*

The quote is a hoax, but that didn't stop many Christians from trying to send this e-mail to nearly everyone they knew that had access to the Internet. Even now that Janet Reno is no longer Attorney General, this e-mail still circulates on a fairly regular basis.

Here are the facts. According to CBS, Janet Reno did not appear on *60 Minutes* in 1994. And it is doubtful that she would ever say something so inflammatory on this program or any other program. If she had, certainly it would have made front-page news to define millions of Christians as "cultists" and a "threat" to society.

The Office of Legislative Affairs in the Justice Department says they believe the quote first appeared in the August 1993 edition of the "Paul Revere Newsletter" published by the Christian Defense League in Flora, Illinois. The group has been described by some as a "far right hate group" holding to

racist and anti-Semitic views. The newsletter subsequently ran a retraction.

This is the unfortunate origin of this persistent e-mail message. Unknowingly, Christians circulated a rumor started by a group bent on attacking the Attorney General. They did so because Christians were attacked as being cultists, thus they spread a rumor that was not true.

# Joshua's Long Day

One story that has been around for quite a long time is the myth of NASA discovering Joshua's long day. As the story goes, computers at the space agency discovered that as they went back in time the calculations did not work. Scientists doing orbital mechanics calculations to determine the positions of the planets in the future realized that they were off by a day. A biblical scholar in the group supposedly solved the question when he remembered the passage in Joshua 10:13 which says that "the sun stood still, and the moon stopped" for about a whole day.

Attempts to verify the story through the NASA Spaceflight Center in Maryland never materialized. But that didn't stop the spreading of the story that NASA found computer evidence of a missing day, which thereby verified the story of Joshua's long day.

As it turns out, the apparent origin of this story precedes NASA by many years. Harry Rimmer wrote about astronomical calculations recorded by Professor C.A. Totten of Yale University in his 1936 book *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*.{1} He quotes professor Totten, who said, "[A] fellow professor, an accomplished astronomer, made the strange discovery that the earth was twenty- four hours out of schedule!" He says that Professor Totten challenged this man to investigate the question of the inspiration of the Bible. Some time later, his colleague replied: "In the tenth chapter

of Joshua, I found the missing twenty-four hours accounted for. Then I went back and checked up on my figures, and found that at the time of Joshua there were only 23 hours and 20 minutes lost."

Researchers have gone back to Professor Totten's book *Joshua's Long Day and the Dial of Ahaz* (published in 1890) and have not been able to find the story of the astronomer. Instead they find his argument for the lost day based upon the chronology of Jesus Christ. He believed that Christ must have been born at the fall equinox and that the world was created four thousand years before Christ was born. He therefore calculates that the world was created on September 22, 4000 b.c. This day must be a Sunday, but using a calendar we find that this date was a Monday. Therefore, argues Professor Totten, Joshua's long day accounts for this "missing day."

As you can see, there is no story about NASA scientists, nor are there even skeptical astronomers. He makes a number of very questionable assumptions in order to supposedly "prove" Joshua's long day.

The story of NASA verifying Joshua's long day is a myth that has been passed down for decades and apparently has its origins from stories recorded even before NASA existed. The story is false.

## Darwin's Deathbed Conversion

One of the most persistent stories is the *supposed* conversion of Charles Darwin and his *supposed* rejection of evolution on his deathbed. Christian speakers and writers retell this story with great regularity even though there is good evidence that Darwin remained an agnostic and an evolutionist to the day of his death. And even if the story was true (and it is not), its retelling is irrelevant to whether the theory of evolution is true. Darwin did not recant, and scientists would continue to teach the theory even if he had changed his mind.

The origin of this story can be traced to one "Lady Hope" who started the story after the death of Charles Darwin. On one occasion, Lady Hope spoke to a group of young men and women at the school founded by the evangelist D. L. Moody at Northfield, Massachusetts. According to her, Darwin had been reading the book of Hebrews on his deathbed. She said he asked for the local Sunday school to sing in a summerhouse on the grounds, and had confessed: "How I wish I had not expressed my theory of evolution as I have done." She even said he would like her to gather a congregation since he "would like to speak to them of Christ Jesus and His salvation, being in a state where he was eagerly savouring the heavenly anticipation of bliss."{2}

D. L. Moody encouraged Lady Hope to publish her story, and it was printed in the Boston *Watchman Examiner*. The story spread, and the claims have been republished and restated ever since.

The claims were refuted at the time and were subsequently addressed by Darwin's son and daughter when they were revived years later. In 1918, Francis Darwin made this public statement:

> *Lady Hope's account of my father's views on religion is quite untrue. I have publicly accused her of falsehood, but have not seen any reply. My father's agnostic point of view is given in my Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, Vol. I., pp. 304-317. You are at liberty to publish the above statement. Indeed, I shall be glad if you will do so.*

Darwin's daughter, Henrietta, writing in the *Christian* for February 23, 1922, said she was present at her father's deathbed. "Lady Hope was not present during his last illness, or any illness. I believe he never even saw her, but in any case she had no influence over him in any department of thought or belief. He never recanted any of his scientific views, either then or earlier. We think the story of his

conversion was fabricated in the U.S.A." She concluded by saying, "The whole story has no foundation whatever."

So that is the history of the story of Charles Darwin's deathbed conversion. It simply is not true.

## Satanic Affiliations

Now I would like to conclude by looking at rumors linking various individuals and groups to Satan.

One individual linked to Satan is J. K. Rowling, the author of the best-selling *Harry Potter* series. Although we at Probe have expressed some concern over the books, we believe some of the criticism concerning her has been unfair. One purported quotation making the rounds comes from a satirical publication known as *The Onion*. Supposedly she says, "I think it's absolute rubbish to protest children's books on the grounds that they are luring children to Satan. People should be praising them for that! These books guide children to an understanding that the weak, idiotic Son of God is a living hoax who will be humiliated when the rain of fire comes." The quote goes on to use pornographic language.

Editors at *The Onion* made up the quote along with just about everything else in the article. The fictitious article includes mock quotes from blaspheming children planning satanic rituals. It claimed that fourteen million American children have joined the Church of Satan because of the *Harry Potter* series. Unfortunately, many Christians did not understand that the magazine is a blatantly satirical tabloid attempting to lampoon Christians concerned about the *Harry Potter* series.

A similar rumor surfaced in the 1980s when chain letters and petitions supposedly documented that the Procter & Gamble symbol was really a satanic symbol. According to the story, the company's historic "man in the moon" symbol was the devil.

And Procter & Gamble executives supposedly appeared on a TV talk show (Phil Donahue or Sally Jesse Raphael) to boast that their company gave some of their profits to the Church of Satan.

I think the lesson this week is that Christians should be more discerning. If you receive a letter or e-mail full of sensational information, you should ask yourself why this is the first you have heard about it. If Janet Reno or J.K. Rowling or an executive with Procter & Gamble said the things they allegedly said, wouldn't you have heard about it long before you received this letter or e- mail? If it sounds incredible, maybe that's because it isn't credible. If you have questions, feel free to write us or call us at Probe or check out the numerous Web sites dedicated to debunking myths, rumors, and urban legends. In the meantime, we should all learn to be more discerning.

**Notes**

1. Harry Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture* (1936), 281-282.
2. Ronald W. Clark, *The Survival of Charles Darwin: a Biography of a Man and an Idea* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1985), 199.

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# Terrorism in America

Many are calling it one of the bloodiest days in American history. And now we face the prospect that terrorism has become a part of modern life. Crashing planes into buildings, hijackings, bombings, and assassinations on different

continents of the world may seem like isolated attacks, but they reflect an easy reliance on violence as a way to promote social, political, and religious change. They are elements of a pervasive "end justifies the means" philosophy being followed to its most perverse conclusions.

Terrorism has become the scourge of democratic governments. According to Rand Corporation expert Brian Jenkins, nearly a third of all terrorists attacks involve Americans. Democratic governments, accustomed to dealing within a legal structure, often find it difficult to deal with criminals and terrorists who routinely operate outside of the law. Yet deterrence is just as much a part of justice as proper enforcement of the laws.

Democratic governments which do not deter criminals inevitably spawn vigilantism as normally law-abiding citizens, who have lost confidence in the criminal justice system, take the law into their own hands. A similar backlash is beginning to emerge as a result of the inability of Western democracies to defend themselves against terrorists.

But lack of governmental resolve is only part of the problem. Terrorists thrive on media exposure, and news organizations around the world have been all too willing to give terrorists what they crave: publicity. If the news media gave terrorists the minuscule coverage their numbers and influence demanded, terrorism would decline. But when hijackings and bombings are given prominent media attention, governments start feeling pressure from their citizens to resolve the crisis and eventually capitulate to terrorists' demands. Encouraged by their latest success, terrorists usually try again. Appeasement, Churchill wisely noted, always whets the appetite, and recent successes have made terrorists hungry for more attacks.

Some news commentators have been unwilling to call terrorism what it is: wanton, criminal violence. They blunt the

barbarism by arguing that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." But this simply is not true. Terrorists are not concerned about human rights and human dignity. In fact, they end up destroying human rights in their alleged fight for human rights.

Terrorism has been called the "new warfare." But terrorists turn the notion of war on its head. Innocent non-combatants become the target of terrorist attacks. Terrorist warfare holds innocent people hostage and makes soldier and civilian alike potential targets for their aggression.

Terrorist groups are not living in fear of their host governments. Instead, law-abiding citizens live in fear of terrorist groups. In one TV interview a Middle Eastern terrorist was quoted as saying, "We want the people of the United States to feel the terror."

The ability of these groups to carry out their agenda is not the issue. The fundamental issue is how U.S. government leaders should deal with this new type of military strategy. Terrorists have held American diplomats hostage for years, blown up military compounds, and hijacked airplanes and cruise ships. Although some hostages have been released, many others have been killed and the U.S. has been unsuccessful at punishing more than a small number of terrorists.

Although international diplomacy has been the primary means used by the United States against terrorism, we should consider what other means may also be appropriate. In the past, American leaders have responded to military aggression in a variety of ways short of declaring war.

Military strategy must be deployed which can hunt down small groups of well-armed and well-funded men who hide within the territory of a host country. We must also develop a political strategy that will allow us to work within a host country. We must make it clear how serious the United States takes a

terrorist threat. American citizens are tired of being military targets in an undeclared war.

Through diplomatic channels we must make two things very clear to the host country. First, they should catch and punish the terrorist groups themselves as civilian criminals. Or, second, they should extradite the enemy soldiers and give them up to an international court for trial.

If the host country fails to act on these two requests, we should make it clear that we see them in complicity with the terrorist groups. But failing to exercise their civil responsibility, they leave themselves open to the consequences of allowing hostile military forces within their borders.

In some cases, an American strike force of counterterrorists might be necessary when the threat is both real and imminent. This should be the option of last resort, but in certain instances it may be necessary. In 1989, for example, Israeli special forces captured Sheik Obeid and no doubt crippled the terrorist network by bringing one of their leaders to justice. Such acts should be done rarely and carefully, but they may be appropriate means to bring about justice.

In conclusion, I believe we must recognize terrorism as a new type of military aggression which requires governmental action. We are involved in an undeclared war and Congress and the President must take the same sorts of actions they would if threatened by a hostile country. We must work to deter further terrorist aggression.

# A War of Words in Bioethics

Political battles are often won or lost with definitions. Proponents of abortion learned this lesson well. They didn't want to be described as those who were willing to kill innocent life. So they changed the focus from the baby to the woman and emphasized her personal choice. Those who are pro-abortion called themselves "pro-choice" and supported "a woman's right to choose." Changing the words and modifying the definitions allowed them to be more successful and more socially acceptable.

Homosexuals learned the same lesson. If the focus was on their sexual activity, the public would not be on their side. So they began to talk about sexual orientation and alternate lifestyles. Then they began to focus on attacks on homosexuals and argue that teaching tolerance of homosexuality was important to the safety of homosexuals. Again, changing the words and the debate made the issue more socially acceptable.

Now this same war of words is being waged over cloning and stem cell research. The recent debate in Congress about cloning introduced a new term: therapeutic cloning. Those who want to use cloning argued that there are really two kinds of cloning. One is reproductive cloning which involves the creation of a child. The other is called therapeutic cloning which involves cloning human embryos which are eventually destroyed rather than implanted in a mother's womb.

Representative Jim Greenwood (R-PA) sponsored a bill that would permit this second form of human cloning for embryonic stem cell research while outlawing the first form of cloning to produce children. Although it was put forward as a compromise, pro-life advocates rightly called his legislation a "clone and kill bill." Fortunately, the Greenwood bill was defeated, and a bill banning all cloing sponsored by Representative Dave Weldon (R-FL) passed the House and was

sent to the Senate.

Another example of this war of words can be seen in the floor debate over these two bills. The opponents of the "clone and kill bill" were subjected to harsh criticism and stereotypes. Both the debate on cloning and the debate on stem cells has often been presented as a battle between compassion and conservatives or between science and religion. Here are just a few of the statements made during the House debate on cloning:

Anna Eshoo (D-CA): "As we stand on the brink of finding the cures to diseases that have plagued so many millions of Americans, unfortunately, the Congress today in my view is on the brink of prohibiting this critical research."

Zoe Lofgren (D-CA): "If your religious beliefs will not let you accept a cure for your child's cancer, so be it. But do not expect the rest of America to let their loved ones suffer without cure."

Jerold Nadler (D-NY): "We must not say to millions of sick or injured human beings, 'go ahead and die, stay paralyzed, because we believe the blastocyst, the clump of cells, is more important than you are.' . . . It is a sentence of death to millions of Americans."

Notice too how a human embryo is merely called a blastocyst. Though a correct biological term, it is used to diminish the humanity of the unborn. In the stem cell debate, it was disturbing to see how much attention was given to those who might potentially benefit from the research and how little attention was given to the reality that human beings would be destroyed to pursue the research.

Moreover, the claims of immediate success were mostly hype and hyperbole. Columnist Charles Krauthammer called it "The Great Stem Cell Hoax." He believes that any significant cures are decades away.

He also points out how it has become politically correct to "sugarcoat the news." The most notorious case was the article in the prestigious scientific journal *Science*. The authors' research showed that embryonic stem cells of mice were genetically unstable. Their article concluded by saying that this research might put into question the clinical applicability of stem cell research.

Well, such a critical statement just couldn't be allowed to be stated publicly. So in a highly unusual move, the authors withdrew the phrase that the genetic instability of stem cells "might limit their use in clinical applications" just days before publication.
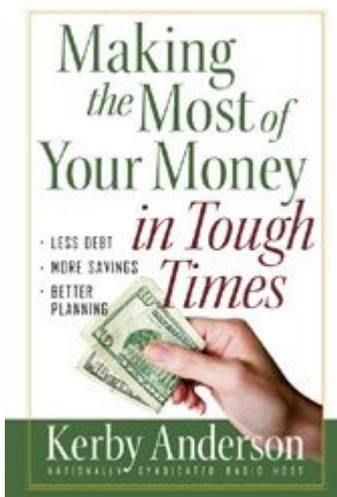
Charles Krauthammer says, "This change in text represents a corruption of science that mirrors the corruption of language in the congressional debate. It is corrupting because this study might have helped to undermine the extravagant claims made by stem cell advocates that a cure for Parkinson's or spinal cord injury or Alzheimer's is in the laboratory and just around the corner, if only those right-wing, antiabortion nuts would let it go forward."

So the current debate in bioethics not only brings in Huxley's *Brave New World*, but also George Orwell's newspeak. The debate about cloning and stem cells is not only a debate about the issues but a war of words where words and concepts are redefined.

# A Biblical View of Economics — A Christian Life Perspective

*Kerby Anderson shows that economics is an important part of one's Christian worldview.  Our view of economics is where many of Christ's teachings find their daily application.*

In this article we are going to be developing a Christian view of economics. Although most of us do not think of economics in moral terms, there has (until the last century) always been a strong connection between economics and Christian thought.

 If you look at the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas, you find whole sections of his theological work devoted to economic issues. He asked such questions as: "What is a just price?" or "How should we deal with poverty?"

Today, these questions, if they are even discussed at all, would be discussed in a class on economic theory. But in his time, these were theological questions that were a critical and integral part of the educational curricula.

In the Protestant Reformation, we find the same thing. In John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, whole sections are devoted to government and economics. So Christians should

not feel that economics is outside the domain of Christian thinking. If anything, we need to recapture this arena and bring a strong biblical message to it.

In reality, the Bible speaks to economic issues more than any other issue. Whole sections of the book of Proverbs and many of the parables of Jesus deal with economic matters. They tell us what our attitude should be toward wealth and how a Christian should handle his or her finances. The Bible also provides a description of human nature, which helps us evaluate the possible success of an economic system in society.

The Bible teaches that there are two aspects to human nature. First, we are created in the image of God and thus able to control the economic system. But second, human beings are sinful and thus tend towards greed and exploitation. This points to the need to protect individuals from human sinfulness in the economic system. So Christians have a much more balanced view of economics and can therefore construct economic theories and analyze existing economic systems.

Christians should see the fallacy of such utopian economic theories because they fail to take seriously human sinfulness. Instead of changing people from the inside out as the gospel does, Marxists believe that people will be changed from the outside in. Change the economic base, they say, and you will change human beings. This is one of the reasons that Marxism was doomed to failure, because it did not take into account human sinfulness and our need for spiritual redemption.

It is important for Christians to think about the economic arena. It is a place where much of everyday life takes place, and we can evaluate economics from a biblical perspective. When we use the Bible as our framework, we can begin to construct a government and an economy that liberates human potentiality and limits human sinfulness.

Many Christians are surprised to find out how much the Bible says about economic issues. And one of the most important aspects of the biblical teaching is not the specific economic matters it explores, but the more general description of human nature.

## Economics and Human Nature

When we are looking at either theories of government or theories of economics, an important starting point is our view of human nature. This helps us analyze these theories and predict their possible success in society. Therefore, we must go to the Scriptures to evaluate the very foundation of each economic theory.

First, the Bible says that human beings are created in the image of God. This implies that we have rationality and responsibility. Because we have rationality and volition, we can choose between various competing products and services. Furthermore, we can function within a market system in which people can exercise their power of choice. We are not like the animals that are governed by instinct. We are governed by rationality and can make meaningful choices within a market system.

We can also assume that private property can exist within this system because of the biblical idea of dominion. In Genesis 1:28, God says we are to subdue the earth and have dominion over the creation. Certainly one aspect of this is that humans can own property in which they can exercise their dominion.

Since we have both volition and private property rights, we can then assume that we should have the freedom to exchange these private property rights in a free market where goods and services can be exchanged.

The second part of human nature is also important. The Bible describes the fall of the world and the fall of mankind. We

are fallen creatures with a sin nature. This sinfulness manifests itself in selfishness, greed, and exploitation. Thus, we need some protection in an economic system from the sinful effects of human interaction.

Since the Bible teaches about the effects of sinful behavior on the world, we should be concerned about any system that would concentrate economic power and thereby unleash the ravages of sinful behavior on the society. Christians, therefore, should reject state-controlled or centrally controlled economies, which would concentrate power in the hands of a few sinful individuals. Instead, we should support an economic system that would disperse that power and protect us from greed and exploitation.

Finally, we should also recognize that not only is human nature fallen, but the world is fallen. The world has become a place of decay and scarcity. In a fallen world, we have to be good managers of the limited resources that can be made available in a market economy. God has given us dominion over His creation, and we must be good stewards of the resources at our disposal.

The free enterprise system has provided the greatest amount of freedom and the most effective economic gains of any economic system ever devised. Nevertheless, Christians often wonder if they can support capitalism. So the rest of this article, we are going to take a closer look at the free enterprise system.

## Capitalism: Foundations

Capitalism had its beginning with the publication of *The Wealth of Nations,* written by Adam Smith in 1776. He argued that the mercantile economic system working at that time in Great Britain was not the best economic foundation. Instead, he argued that the wealth of nations could be increased by allowing the individual to seek his own self-interest and by removing governmental control over the economy.

His theory rested on three major premises. First, his system was based upon the observation that people are motivated by self-interest. He said, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." Smith went on to say that "neither intends to promote the public interest," yet each is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end that was not part of [his] intention."

A second premise of Adam Smith was the acceptance of private property. Property was not to be held in common but owned and freely traded in a market system. Profits generated from the use and exchange of private property rights provided incentive and became the mechanism that drives the capitalist system.

From a Christian perspective we can see that the basis of private property rests in our being created in God's image. We can make choices over property that we can exchange in a market system. The need for private property grows out of our sinfulness. Our sinful nature produces laziness, neglect, and slothfulness. Economic justice can best be achieved if each person is accountable for his own productivity.

A third premise of Adam Smith's theory was the minimization of the role of government. Borrowing a phrase from the French physiocrats, he called this laissez-faire. Smith argued that we should decrease the role of government and increase the role of a free market.

Historically, capitalism has had a number of advantages. It has liberated economic potential. It has also provided the foundation for a great deal of political and economic freedom. When government is not controlling markets, then there is economic freedom to be involved in a whole array of entrepreneurial activities.

Capitalism has also led to a great deal of political freedom, because once you limit the role of government in economics,

you limit the scope of government in other areas. It is no accident that most of the countries with the greatest political freedom usually have a great deal of economic freedom.

At the outset, let me say that Christians cannot and should not endorse every aspect of capitalism. For example, many proponents of capitalism hold a view known as utilitarianism, which is opposed to the notion of biblical absolutes. Certainly we must reject this philosophy. But here I would like to provide an economic critique.

## Capitalism: Economic Criticisms

The first economic criticism is that capitalism leads to monopolies. These develop for two reasons: too little government and too much government. Monopolies have occurred in the past because government has not been willing to exercise its God-given authority. Government finally stepped in and broke up the big trusts that were not allowing the free enterprise system to function correctly.

But in recent decades, the reason for monopolies has often been too much government. Many of the largest monopolies today are government sanctioned or sponsored monopolies that prevent true competition from taking place. The solution is for government to allow a freer market where competition can take place.

Let me add that many people often call markets with limited competition monopolies when the term is not appropriate. For example, the three major U.S. car companies may seem like a monopoly or oligopoly until you realize that in the market of consumer durables the true market is the entire western world.

The second criticism of capitalism is that it leads to pollution. In a capitalistic system, pollutants are considered externalities. The producer will incur costs that are external

to the firm so often there is no incentive to clean up the pollution. Instead, it is dumped into areas held in common such as the air or water.

The solution in this case is governmental intervention. But I don't believe that this should be a justification for building a massive bureaucracy. We need to find creative ways to direct self-interest so that people work towards the common good.

For example, most communities use the water supply from a river and dump treated waste back into the water to flow downstream. Often there is a tendency to cut corners and leave the waste treatment problem for those downstream. But if you required that the water intake pipe be downstream and the waste pipe be upstream you could insure less pollution problems. It is now in the self-interest of the community to clean the wastewater being pumped back into the river. So while there is a need for governmental action, much less might be needed if we think of creative ways to constrain self-interest and make it work for the common good.

We can acknowledge that although there are some valid economic criticisms of capitalism, these can be controlled by limited governmental control. And when capitalism is wisely controlled, it generates significant economic prosperity and economic freedom for its citizens. Next, let us discuss some of the moral problems of capitalism.

## Capitalism: Moral Critiques

One of the first moral arguments against capitalism involves the issue of greed. And this is why many Christians feel ambivalent towards the free enterprise system. After all, some critics of capitalism contend that this economic system makes people greedy.

To answer this question we need to resolve the following question. Does capitalism make people greedy or do we already

have greedy people who use the economic freedom of the capitalistic system to achieve their ends? In light of the biblical description of human nature, the latter seems more likely.

Because people are sinful and selfish, some are going to use the capitalist system to feed their greed. But that is not so much a criticism of capitalism as it is a realization of the human condition. The goal of capitalism is not to change people but to protect us from human sinfulness.

Capitalism is a system in which bad people can do the least harm, and good people have the freedom to do good works. Capitalism works well if you have completely moral individuals. But it also functions adequately when you have selfish and greedy people.

Important to this discussion is the realization that there is a difference between self-interest and selfishness. All people have self-interest and that can operate in ways that are not selfish. For example, it is in my self-interest to get a job and earn an income so that I can support my family. I can do that in ways that are not selfish.

Adam Smith recognized that every one of us have self-interest and rather than trying to change that, he made self-interest the motor of the capitalist system. And before you react to that, consider the fact that even the gospel appeals to our self-interest. It is in our self-interest to accept Jesus Christ as our savior so that our eternal destiny will be assured.

By contrast, other economic systems like socialism ignore the biblical definitions of human nature. Thus, they allow economic power to be centralized and concentrate power in the hands of a few greedy people. Those who complain of the influence major corporations have on our lives should consider the socialist alternative of how a few governmental

bureaucrats control every aspect of their lives.

Greed certainly occurs in the capitalist system. But it does not surface just in this economic system. It is part of our sinfulness. The solution is not to change the economic system, but to change human nature with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, we may readily acknowledge that capitalism has its flaws as an economic system, but it can be controlled to give us a great deal of economic prosperity and economic freedom.

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# Technological Challenges of the 21st Century

We live in historic times. And we will face new challenges as we enter the 21st century, especially in the area of technology. The fields of biotechnology and information technology have the capacity to change the social landscape and even alter the way we make ethical decisions. These are not challenges for the faint-hearted. We must bring a tough-minded Christianity into the 21st century.

We are reminded in 1 Chronicles 12:32 (NIV) that the men of Issachar "understood the times and knew what Israel should do." Likewise, we must understand our times and know what we should do. New ethical challenges await us as we consider the moral issues of our day and begin to analyze them from a biblical perspective.

We should also enter into the task with humility. Over a hundred years ago, Charles Duell, Director of the U.S. Patent

Office, was ready to close his office down because he believed that "Everything that can be invented has been invented."{1} We should not make the mistake of thinking that we can accurately see into the future. However, we can analyze trends and look at new inventions and begin to see the implications of these remarkable changes. Our challenge will always be to apply the timeless truths of Scripture to the quickly changing world around us.

How should Christians analyze the technological changes taking place? First we must begin by developing a theology of technology.

## Theology of Technology

Technology is really nothing more than the systematic modification of the environment for human ends. This might be a process or activity that extends or enhances a human function. A telescope extends man's visual perception. A tractor extends one's physical ability. A computer extends a person's ability to calculate.

The biblical mandate for developing and using technology is stated in Genesis 1:28. God gave mankind dominion over the land, and we are obliged to use and manage these resources wisely in serving the Lord. God's ideal was not to have a world composed exclusively of primitive areas. Before the Fall (Gen. 2:15) Adam was to cultivate and keep the Garden of Eden. After the Fall the same command pertains to the application of technology to this fallen world, a world that "groans" in travail (Rom. 8:22). Technology can benefit mankind in exercising proper dominion, and thus remove some of the effects of the Fall (such as curing disease, breeding livestock, or growing better crops).

Technology is neither good or evil. The worldview behind the particular technology determines its value. In the Old Testament, technology was used both for good (e.g., the

building of the ark, Gen. 6) and for evil (e.g., the building of the Tower of Babel, Gen. 11). Therefore, the focus should not be so much on the technology itself as on the philosophical motivation behind its use. Here are three important principles that should be considered.

First, technology should be seen as a tool, not as an end in itself. There is nothing sacred about technology. Unfortunately, Western culture tends to rely on it more than is appropriate. If a computer, for example, proves a particular point, people have a greater tendency to believe it than if the answer was a well-reasoned conclusion given by a person. If a machine can do the job, employers are prone to mechanize, even if human labor does a better or more creative job. Often our society unconsciously places machines over man. Humans become servants to machines rather than the other way around.

There is a tendency to look to science and engineering to solve problems that really may be due to human sinfulness (wars, prejudice, greed), the fallenness of the world (death, disease), or God's curse on Adam (finite resources). In Western culture especially, we tend to believe that technology will save us from our problems and thus we use technology as a substitute for God. Christians must not fall into this trap, but instead must exhibit their ultimate dependence on God. Christians must also differentiate between problems that demand a technological solution and ones that can be remedied by a social or spiritual one.

Second, technology should be applied in different ways, according to specific instructions. For example, there are distinctions between man and animal that, because we are created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27), call for different applications of medical science. Using artificial insemination to improve the genetic fitness of livestock does not justify using it on human beings. Christians should resist the idea that just because we *can* do something, we *should* do it.

Technological ability does not grant moral permission.

Third, ethics, rather than technology, must determine the direction of our society. Jacques Ellul has expressed the concern that technology moves society instead of vice versa.{2} Our society today seems all too motivated by a technological imperative in our culture. The technological ability to do something is not the same as a moral imperative to do it. Technology should not determine ethics.

Though scientists may possess the technological ability to be gods, they nevertheless lack the capacity to act like gods. Too often, man has tried to use technology to become God. He uses it to work out his own physical salvation, to enhance his own development, or even to attempt to create life. Christians who take seriously human fallenness will humbly admit that we often do not know enough about God's creation to use technology wisely. The reality of human sinfulness means that society should be careful to prevent the use of technology for greed and exploitation.

Technology's fruits can be both sweet and bitter. C. S. Lewis writes in the *Abolition of Man*, "From this point of view, what we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be power exercised by some men over men with Nature as its instrument. . . . There neither is nor can be any simple increase of power on Man's side. Each new power won *by* man is a power *over* man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger. In every victory, besides being the general who triumphs, he is also the prisoner who follows the triumphal car."{3}

Christians must bring strong biblical critique to each technological advance and analyze its impact. The goal should be to liberate the positive effects of technology while restraining negative effects by setting up appropriate constraints against abuse.

# The Challenge of Biotechnology

The age of biotechnology has arrived. For the first time in human history it is possible to completely redesign existing organisms, including man, and to direct the genetic and reproductive constitution of every living thing. Scientists are no longer limited to breeding and cross-pollination. Powerful genetic tools allow us to change genetic structure at the microscopic level and bypass the normal processes of reproduction.

For the first time in human history it is also possible to make multiple copies of any existing organism or of certain sections of its genetic structure. This ability to clone existing organisms or their genes gives scientists a powerful tool to reproduce helpful and useful genetic material within a population.

Scientists are also developing techniques to treat and cure genetic diseases through genetic surgery and genetic therapy. They can already identify genetic sequences that are defective, and soon scientists will be able to replace these defects with properly functioning genes.

Gene splicing (known as recombinant DNA technology) is fundamentally different from other forms of genetic breeding used in the past. Breeding programs work on existing arrays of genetic variability in a species, isolating specific genetic traits through selective breeding. Scientists using gene splicing can essentially "stack" the deck or even produce an entirely new deck of genetic "cards."

But this powerful ability to change the genetic deck of cards also raises substantial scientific concerns that some "sleight-of-hand" would produce dangerous consequences. Ethan Singer said, "Those who are powerful in society will do the shuffling; their genes will be shuffled in one direction, while the genes of the rest of us will get shuffled in

another."{4} Also there is the concern that a reshuffled deck of genes might create an Andromeda strain similar to the one envisioned by Michael Crichton is his book by the same title.{5} A microorganism might inadvertently be given the genetic structure for some pathogen for which there is no antidote or vaccine.

The potential benefits of gene splicing are significant. First, the technology can be used to produce medically important substances. The list of these substances is quite large and would include insulin, interferon, and human growth hormone. The technology also has great application in the field of immunology. In order to protect organisms from viral disease, doctors must inject a killed or attenuated virus. Scientists can use the technology to disable a toxin gene, thus producing a viral substance that triggers production of antibodies without the possibility of producing the disease.

A second benefit is in the field of agriculture. This technology can improve the genetic fitness of various plant species. Basic research using this technology could increase the efficiency of photosynthesis, increase plant resistance (to salinity, to drought, to viruses), and reduce a plant's demand for nitrogen fertilizer.

Third, gene splicing can aid industrial and environmental processes. Industries that manufacture drugs, plastics, industrial chemicals, vitamins, and cheese will benefit from this technology. Also scientists have begun to develop organisms that can clean up oil spills or toxic wastes.

This last benefit, however, also raises one of the greatest scientific concerns over the use of biotechnology. The escape (or even intentional release) of a genetically engineered organism might wreak havoc on the environment. Scientists have created microorganisms that dissolve oil spills or reduce frost on plants. Critics of gene splicing fear that radically altered organisms could occupy new ecological niches, destroy

existing ecosystems, or drive certain species to extinction.

A significant question is whether life should be patented at all. Most religious leaders say no. A 1995 gathering of religious leaders representing virtually every major religious tradition spoke out against the patenting of genetically engineered substances. They argued that life is the creation of God, not humans, and should not be patented as human inventions.{6}

The broader theological question is *whether* genetic engineering should be used and, if permitted, *how* it should be used. The natural reaction for many in society is to reject new forms of technology because they are dangerous. Christians, however, should take into account God's command to humankind in the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28). Christians should avoid the reflex reaction that scientists should not tinker with life; instead Christians should consider how this technology should be used responsibly.

One key issue is the worldview behind most scientific research. Modern science rests on an evolutionary assumption. Many scientists assume that life on this planet is the result of millions of years of a chance evolutionary process. Therefore they conclude that intelligent scientists can do a better job of directing the evolutionary process than nature can do by chance. Even evolutionary scientists warn of this potential danger. Ethan Singer believes that scientists will "verify a few predictions, and then gradually forget that knowing something isn't the same as knowing everything. . . . At each stage we will get a little cockier, a little surer we know all the possibilities."{7}

In essence biotechnology gives scientists the tools they have always wanted to drive the evolutionary spiral higher and higher. Julian Huxley looked forward to the day in which scientists could fill the "position of business manager for the cosmic process of evolution."{8} Certainly this technology

enables scientists to create new forms of life and alter existing forms in ways that have been impossible until now.

How should Christians respond? They should humbly acknowledge that God is the sovereign Creator and that man has finite knowledge. Genetic engineering gives scientists the technological ability to be gods, but they lack the wisdom, knowledge, and moral capacity to act like God.

Even evolutionary scientists who deny the existence of God and believe that all life is the result of an impersonal evolutionary process express concern about the potential dangers of this technology. Erwin Chargaff asked, "Have we the right to counteract, irreversibly, the evolutionary wisdom of millions of years, in order to satisfy the ambition and curiosity of a few scientists?"{9} His answer is no. The Christian's answer should also be the same when we realize that God is the Creator of life. We do not have the right to "rewrite the fifth day of creation."{10}

What is the place for genetic engineering within a biblical framework? The answer to that question can be found by distinguishing between two types of research. The first could be called genetic repair. This research attempts to remove genetic defects and develop techniques that will provide treatments for existing diseases. Applications would include various forms of genetic therapy and genetic surgery as well as modifications of existing microorganisms to produce beneficial results.

The Human Genome Project has been able to pinpoint the location and sequence of the approximately 100,000 human genes.{11} Further advances in biotechnology will allow scientists to repair these defective sequences and eventually remove these genetic diseases from our population.

Genetic disease is not part of God's plan for the world. It is the result of the Fall (Gen. 3). Christians can apply

technology to fight these evils without being accused of fighting against God's will.{12} Genetic engineering can and should be used to treat and cure genetic diseases.

A second type of research is the creation of new forms of life. While minor modifications of existing organisms may be permissible, Christians should be concerned about the large-scale production of novel life forms. That potential impact on the environment and on mankind could be considerable. Science is replete with examples of what can happen when an existing organism is introduced into a new environment (e.g., the rabbit into Australia, the rat to Hawaii, or the gypsy moth in the United States). One can only imagine the potential devastation that could occur when a newly created organism is introduced into a new environment.

God created plants and animals as "kinds" (Gen. 1:24). While there is minor variability within these created kinds, there are built-in barriers between these created kinds. Redesigning creatures of any kind cannot be predicted the same way new elements on the periodic chart can be predicted for properties even before they are discovered. Recombinant DNA technology offers great promise in treating genetic disease, but Christians should also be vigilant. While this technology should be used to repair genetic defects, it should not be used to confer the role of creator on scientists.

A related issue in the field of biotechnology is human cloning. It appears that the cloning of a human being will no doubt take place some time in the future since many other mammals have been cloned. Proponents of human cloning argue that it would be a worthwhile scientific endeavor for at least three reasons. First, cloning could be used to produce spare parts. The clone would be genetically identical to the original person, so that a donated organ would not be rejected by the immune system. Second, they argue that cloning might be a way to replace a lost child. A dying infant or child could be cloned so that a couple would replace the child with a

genetically identical child. Third, cloning could produce biological immortality. One woman approached scientists in order to clone her deceased father and offered to carry the cloned baby to term herself.{13}

While cloning of various organisms may be permissible, cloning a human being raises significant questions beginning with the issue of the sanctity of life. Human beings are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:2728) and therefore differ from animals. Human cloning would certainly threaten the sanctity of human life at a number of levels. First, cloning is an inefficient process of procreation as shown in cloning of a sheep. Second, cloning would no doubt produce genetic accidents. Previous experiments with frogs produced numerous embryos that did not survive, and many of those that did survive developed into grotesque monsters. Third, researchers often clone human embryos for various experiments. Although the National Bioethics Advisory Commission did ban cloning of human beings, it permitted the cloning of human embryos for research. Since these embryos are ultimately destroyed, this research raises the same pro-life concerns discussed in the chapter on abortion.

Cloning represents a tampering with the reproductive process at the most basic level. Cloning a human being certainly strays substantially from God's intended procedure of a man and woman producing children within the bounds of matrimony (Gen. 2:24). All sorts of bizarre scenarios can be envisioned. Some homosexual advocates argue that cloning would be an ideal way for homosexual men to reproduce themselves.

Although this would be an alternative form of reproduction, it is reasonable to believe that human clones would still be fully human. For example, some people wonder if a clone would have a soul since this would be such a diversion from God's intended process of procreation. A traducian view of the origin of the soul, where a person receives both body and soul from his parents rather than an act of special creation by

God, would imply that a cloned human being would have a soul. In a sense a clone would be no different from an identical twin.

Human cloning, like other forms of genetic engineering, could be used to usher in a "brave new world." James Bonner says "there is nothing to prevent us from taking a thousand [cells]. We could grow any desired number of genetically identical people from individuals who have desirable characteristics."{14} Such a vision conjures up images of Alphas, Betas, Gammas, and Deltas from Aldous Huxley's book *Brave New World* and provides a dismal contrast to God's creation of each individual as unique.

Each person contributes to both the unity and diversity of humanity. This is perhaps best expressed by the Jewish Midrash: "For a man stamps many coins in one mold and they are all alike; but the King who is king over all kings, the Holy One blessed be he, stamped every man in the mold of the first man, yet not one of them resembles his fellow."{15} Christians should reject future research plans to clone a human being and should reject using cloning as an alternative means of reproduction.

## The Challenge of Information Technology

The information revolution is the latest technological advance Christians must consider. The shift to computers and an information-based society has been swift as well as spectacular. The first electronic digital computer, ENIAC, weighed thirty tons, had 18,000 vacuum tubes, and occupied a space as large as a boxcar.{16} Less than forty years later, many hand-held calculators had comparable computing power for a few dollars. Today most people have a computer on their desk with more computing power than engineers could imagine just a few years ago.

The impact of computers on our society was probably best seen

when in 1982 *Time* magazine picked the computer as its "Man of the Year"—actually listing it as "Machine of the Year."{17} It is hard to imagine a picture of the Spirit of St. Louis or an Apollo lander on the magazine cover under a banner "Machine of the Year." This perhaps shows how influential the computer has become in our society.

The computer has become helpful in managing knowledge at a time when the amount of information is expanding exponentially. The information stored in the world's libraries and computers doubles every eight years.{18} In a sense the computer age and the information age seem to go hand in hand.

The rapid development and deployment of computing power however has also raised some significant social and moral questions. People in this society need to think clearly about these issues, but often ignore them or become confused.

One key issue is computer crime. In a sense computer fraud is merely a new field with old problems. Computer crimes are often nothing more than fraud, larceny, and embezzlement carried out by more sophisticated means. The crimes usually involve changing address, records, or files. In short, they are old-fashioned crimes using high technology.

Another concern arises from the centralization of information. Governmental agencies, banks, and businesses use computers to collect information on its citizens and customers. For example, it is estimated that the federal government has on average about fifteen files on each American.{19} Nothing is inherently wrong with collecting information if the information can be kept confidential and is not used for immoral actions. Unfortunately this is often difficult to guarantee.

In an information-based society, the centralization of information can be as dangerous as the centralization of power. Given sinful man in a fallen world, we should be

concerned about the collection and manipulation of vast amounts of personal information.

In the past, centralized information processing was used for persecution. When Adolf Hitler's Gestapo began rounding up millions of Jews, information about their religious affiliation was stored in shoe boxes. U.S. Census Bureau punch cards were used to round up Japanese Americans living on the West Coast at the beginning of World War II.{20} Modern technology makes this task much easier. Governmental agencies routinely collect information about citizens' ethnic origin, race, religion, gross income, and even political preference.

Moreover, the problem it not limited to governmental agencies. Many banking systems, for example, utilize electronic funds-transfer systems. Plans to link these systems together into a national system could also provide a means of tracking the actions of citizens. A centralized banking network could fulfill nearly every information need a malevolent dictator might have. This is not to say that such a thing will happen. It does mean, however, that societies that want to monitor their citizens will be able to do so more efficiently with computer technology.

A related problem arises from the confidentiality of computer records. Computer records can be abused like any other system. Reputations built up over a lifetime can be ruined by computer errors and often there is little recourse for the victim. Congress passed the 1974 Privacy Act which allows citizens to find out what records federal bureaucracies have on them and to correct any errors.{21} But more legislation is needed than this particular act.

The proliferation of computers has presented another set of social and moral concerns. In the recent past most of that information was centralized and required the expertise of the "high priests of FORTRAN" to utilize it. Now most people have access to information because of increasing numbers of

personal computers and increased access to information through the Internet. This access to information will have many interesting sociological ramifications, and it is also creating a set of troubling ethical questions. The proliferation of computers that can tie into other computers provides more opportunities for computerized crime.

The news media frequently carry reports about computer "hackers" who have been able to gain access to confidential computer systems and obtain or interfere with the data banks. Although these were supposed to be secure systems, enterprising computer hackers broke in anyway. In many cases this merely involved curious teenagers. Nevertheless computer hacking has become a developing area of crime. Criminals might use computer access to forge documents, change records, and draft checks. They can even use computers for blackmail by holding files for ransom and threatening to destroy them if their demands are not met. Unless better methods of security are found, professional criminals will begin to crack computer security codes and gain quick access into sensitive files.

As with most technological breakthroughs, engineers have outrun lawmakers. Computer deployment has created a number of legal questions. First, there is the problem of establishing penalties of computer crime. Typically, intellectual property has a different status in our criminal justice system. Legal scholars should evaluate the notion that ideas and information need not be protected in the same way as property. Legislators need to enact computer information protection laws that will deter criminals, or even curious computer hackers, from breaking into confidential records.

A second legal problem arises from the question of jurisdiction. Telecommunications allows information to be shared across state and even national borders. Few federal statutes govern this area and less than half the states have laws dealing with information abuse.

Enforcement will also be a problem for several reasons. One reason is the previously stated problem of jurisdiction. Another is that police departments rarely train their personnel in computer abuse and fraud. A third reason is lack of personnel. Computers are nearly as ubiquitous as telephones or photocopiers.

Computer fraud also raises questions about the role of insurance companies. How do companies insure an electronic asset? What value does computer information have? These questions also need to be addressed in the future.

## Technology and Human Nature

These new technologies will also challenge our views of human nature. Already medical technology is challenging our views of what it means to be human. A key question in the abortion debate is, When does human life begin? Is an embryo human? What about a developing fetus? Although the Bible provides answers to these questions, society often takes its cue from pronouncements that do not square with biblical truth.

Biotechnology raises yet another set of questions. Is a frozen embryo human and deserving of a right to life? Is a clone human? Would a clone have a soul? These and many more questions will have to be answered. Although the Bible doesn't directly address such issues as genetically engineered humans or clones, key biblical passages (Ps. 139, Ps. 51:5) certainly seem to teach that an embryo is a human created in the image of God.

Information technology also raises questions about human nature in an unexpected way. Researchers believe that as computer technology advances, we will begin to analyze the human mind in physical terms. 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."{22} 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.

Will we some day elevate computers to the level of humanity? One article asked the question, Would an Intelligent Computer Have a "Right to Life?"{23} 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 17th 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. Already scientists predict that computer intelligence will create "an intelligence beyond man's" and provide wonderful new capabilities.{25} One of the great challenges in the future will be how to manage new computing power that will outstrip human intelligence.

Once again this is a challenge for Christians in the 21 st century. Human beings are more than just proteins and nucleic acids. Human being are more than bits and bytes. We are created in the image of God and therefore have a spiritual dimension. Perhaps this must be our central message to a world enamored with technology: human beings are created in the image of God and must be treated with dignity and respect.

**Notes**

1. Memo from Charles H. Duell, Director of the U.S. Patent Office, 1899.

2. Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage, 1964).

3. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 6869, 71 (italics his).

4. Ethan Singer, cited in Nicholas Wade, "Gene Splicing: Congress Starts Framing Law for Research," *Science*, 1 April 1977, 39.

5. Michael Crichton, *The Andromeda Strain* (New York: Dell, 1969).

6. Kenneth Woodward, "Thou Shalt Not Patent!" *Newsweek*, 29 May 1995, 68.

7. Testimony by Ethan Singer before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *Hearings*, 15 March 1977, 79.

8. Julian Huxley, cited in Joseph Fletcher, *The Ethics of Genetic Control* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1974), 8.

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10. Nancy McCann, "The DNA Maelstrom: Science and Industry Rewrite the Fifth Day of Creation," *Sojourners*, May 1977, 2326.

11. Philip Elmer-Dewitt, "The Genetic Revolution," *Time*, 17 January 1994, 49.

12. Skeptics sometimes argue that fighting disease is the same as fighting against God's will. Albert Camus poses this dilemma for Dr. Reux in *The Plague*. Christians should follow the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28) and use genetic technology to treat and cure genetic disease.

13. Sharon Begley, "Little Lamb, Who Made Thee?" *Newsweek*, 10

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16. Philip Elmer-De-Witt, "A Birthday Party for ENIAC," *Time*, 24 February 1986, 63.

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22. Richard Lipkin, "Making Machines in Mind's Image," *Insight*, 15 February 1988, 812.

23. Robert Mueller and Erik Mueller, "Would an Intelligent Computer Have a 'Right to Life?'" *Creative Computing*, August 1983, 14961.

24. Danny Hillis, "Can They Feel Your Pain?" *Newsweek*, 5 May 1997, 57.

25. Robert Jastrow, "Toward an Intelligence beyond Man's," *Time*, 20 February 1978, 59.

# Privacy 2000

## Introduction

Privacy is something I believe we all take for granted until we lose it. Then we begin to think about how someone invaded our privacy, often by incremental steps. In this article we are going to discuss ways in which we have lost our privacy. Most of the intrusions into our lives come from government, but not all. Businesses also buy and sell information about us every day. Most of us would be shocked to find out how much personal information is in databases around the country.

As we cover this important issue of privacy and focus on a specific threats to our privacy I want to begin by highlighting how quickly our privacy is being lost and how often it takes place without any debate.

Let's look at the last few years of congressional debate. It's amazing to me that there never was an extended debate on the issue of privacy. Granted there wasn't a lot of debate on a number of issues, but the lack of debate on this fundamental issue shows how far down the road we have gone. Let's look at a few of these issues.

For example, we saw absolutely no debate on issues such as the national ID card, the medical ID number, the administration's encryption policy, and the expansion of the FBI's wiretap capability.

Some of the proposals were defeated, at least for now. The national ID card was defeated, for example, not because Congress debated the issue, but because thousands of Americans wrote letters and made phone calls. Most other issues, however, are moving ahead. Congress gave the FBI permission to use "roving wiretap surveillance." That means that the next time you use a pay phone at your local grocery store, it may

be tapped merely because there's a criminal suspect within the area. One wiretap order in California authorized surveillance on 350 phones for over two years. In another case, five pay phones were tapped, intercepting 131,000 conversations.

Those are just a few of the examples we will discuss on the subject of privacy. Unfortunately whenever someone cries for privacy, another is sure to ask, "What do you have to hide?" The question confuses privacy and secrecy. I don't really have anything I want to keep secret, but I'm not too excited about the government listening to every one of my phone conversations. You may not want your future boss to know that you have a genetic predisposition to breast cancer. You may not want a telemarketer to know what you just recently purchased so that he can call your home number and try to sell you more. The point is that each day we are losing a bit of our privacy. And we will continue to do so unless we work to establish some limits to this invasion of our privacy.

## National ID Card

Issuing internal passports has been one of the methods used by communist leaders to control their people. Citizens had to carry these passports at all times and had to present them to authorities if they wanted to travel within the country, live in another part of the country, or apply for a job.

A few years ago, the Department of Transportation called for the establishment of a national ID system by October, 2000. Although presented as merely a move toward standardization, this seemed to many as a move toward a national passport to allow the government to "check up" on its citizens.

A little history is in order. Back in 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. This charged the federal Department of Transportation with establishing national requirements for birth certificates and driver's licenses. Add to this the 1996 Kennedy-Kassebaum

health-care law that implies that Americans may be required in the future to produce a state- issued ID that conforms to federal specifications.

If all of this sounds to you like Big Brother or even the mark of the beast, then you have company. Congressman Ron Paul believes that the Department of Transportation regulations would adversely affect Americans and fought to end these regulations.

The law ordered the Attorney General to conduct pilot programs where the state driver's license includes a "machine-readable" social security number. It also ordered the development of a social security card that uses magnetic strips, holograms, and integrated circuits.

The good news is that the work by Congressmen Ron Paul and Bob Barr paid off and the attempt to create a national ID card was stopped, for now. But it is likely to surface again. After all there has been a push to establish a federal database for Americans and having each person carry an ID card would allow that information to be linked to a federal database. And while it would help the government catch illegal aliens, it could also be used to track law-abiding American citizens.

Tracking down illegal aliens and standardizing licenses are worthy goals. But the ends do not justify the means. That is why so many people wrote Congress to stop this push for a national ID card. Sometimes in the midst of this political debate, citizens must ask themselves how much they value their freedom and privacy.

Congressman Bob Barr says, "Novelists Aldous Huxley and George Orwell have given us countless reasons why we shouldn't trade our privacy for any benefit, no matter how worthwhile it sounds." In the end, we must ask, At what cost? Is it worth trading our privacy for the benefits government promises? The answer is no, and that's why we need to pay attention to

governmental attempts to invade our privacy.

# Carnivore

We've talked about attempts to establish a national ID card and attempts to expand wiretaps. Another threat to privacy is Carnivore, the FBI's newest electronic snooping device that can read your e-mail right off your mail server.

Packed in a slim laptop computer, this program looks downright docile, but privacy advocates believe that it is quite dangerous. This automated system to wiretap the Internet is called Carnivore because it rapidly finds the "meat" in vast amounts of data. The programmers devised a "packet sniffer" system that can analyze packets of data flowing through computer networks to determine whether it is part of an e-mail message or some other piece of Web traffic.

The FBI has been quietly monitoring e-mail for about a year. Finally the bureau went public with their operation to what the *Wall Street Journal* called "a roomful of astonished industry specialists." Although the device has been used in less than 100 cases, there is every reason to believe that it will be expanded. A judge can issue a court order to tap your e-mail just as they tap your phones.

In this electronic age, new devices threaten our privacy. And in this current political climate, administration officials seem to have little concern about threats to our Fourth Amendment rights. Critics argue that Carnivore, like some ravenous beast, will be too hungry to be trusted. But the FBI says that this new device can be tailored to distinguish between packets of information and only grab e-mails from the suspect. Carnivore appears to be more discriminating than a standard telephone wire tap. The FBI says that messages belonging to those not being probed (even if criminal) would not be admissible in court. Perhaps that is true, but privacy advocates wonder how this new device will be used in the

future.

Carnivore is nothing more than a standard computer with special software. The computer is kept in a locked cage for about a month and a half. Every day an agent comes by and retrieves the previous day's e-mail sent to or by someone suspected of a crime. But it can also capture file downloads and chat room conversations. And once it is installed, the FBI can dial into Carnivore to make changes and monitor data that have been collected.

Critics are concerned that Carnivore will soon become a hungry beast, ready to devour personal and confidential information in people's e-mail messages. The FBI says that won't happen, but such assurances do nothing to mollify the critics. Maybe Carnivore will never tap into your e-mails, but its existence is just one more good reason why we should be careful about what we put in our e- mails.

## Encryption

The privacy threats surrounding today's technology are numerous, and I want to turn to computers and talk about another important issue: encryption. Now I know that's probably an unfamiliar word. But stay with me. Encryption is big word for a big issue that I think you need to know about.

Encryption is a relatively new technology that enables you to have private phone conversations and send e-mail messages that are secure. Encryption codes your words so that they cannot be deciphered by people listening in on your conversation or reading your mail.

As you may know, nosy people already can listen in on your wireless phone calls (cellular or cordless phones). And they can intercept and read your e-mail. Sending e-mail without encryption is like mailing a postcard—everyone can read it along the way. And we all know that people will do exactly

that. If you have ever had a phone on a party line, you know that people listen in.

What you may not know is that various branches of the government are demanding the authority to read encrypted messages. Now remember that the Fourth Amendment guarantees citizens be free of unreasonable searches and seizures. Nevertheless, these and other law enforcement officers believe they have the right to open your mail.

What they are asking for is the key to the code. When you send a message in code, you need a key to enable you to send the code and the recipients need the same key to read the code. The Clinton administration is demanding access to all encryption keys. This is like giving the government the power to steam open all the letters we send in the mail. Frankly you only see this level of surveillance in totalitarian countries. If government has the key, then it could call up information on you, your family, your medical records, your bank records, your credit card purchases, and your e- mail messages to all of your friends and relatives.

What is even more disturbing is the current attempt by government to limit American citizen's access to strong and power encryption software. A new study from the Cato Institute says that "People living outside the United States find it amusing and perplexing that U.S. law regulates the distribution of strong encryption."

Everyone wants encryption in the computer age. Citizens want private communication. Businesses want to prevent billing records and personnel records from falling in the wrong hands. Consumers don't want their credit card numbers widely distributed. That is why we need strong encryption software, and that is why government should not be given a key to the messages we send. Most Americans would not like to turn over so much of their privacy to the government, but unfortunately most Americans don't realize that they already have.

# Privacy and Your Life

We have been talking about the threats to our privacy through wiretaps of our phones and e-mail correspondence, as well as through the issuing of a national ID number. Common citizens are having their privacy violated in new and unexpected ways.

Such is life in the cyberage. As more and more people are seeing their privacy violated, they wonder what to do in a time of financial and personal indecent exposure. What used to be called public records weren't all that public. Now they are all too public. And what used to be considered private records are being made public at an alarming rate. What should we do?

First, don't give out personal information. You should assume that any information that you do give out will end up on a database somewhere. Phone solicitors, application forms, warranty cards all ask for information you may not want to give out. Be careful how much information you disclose.

Second, live your life above reproach. Philippians 2:14-15 says "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." 1 Timothy 3:2 says that an elder must be "above reproach" which is an attribute that should describe all of us. If you live a life of integrity, you don't have to be so concerned about what may be made public.

Third, exercise discretion, especially when you use e-mail. Too many people assume they have a one-on-one relationship with someone through the Internet. The message you send might be forwarded on to other people, and the message may even be read by other nosy people. One Web site provider says, "A good rule of thumb: Don't send any e-mail that you wouldn't want your mother to read."

Finally, get involved. When you feel your privacy has been violated, take the time to complain. Let the person or organization know your concerns. Many people fail to apply the same rules of privacy and confidentiality on a computer that they do in real life. Your complaint might change a behavior and have a positive effect.

Track congressional legislation and write letters. Many of the threats to privacy I've covered started in Congress. Citizens need to understand that many governmental policies pose a threat to our privacy. Bureaucrats and legislators are in the business of collecting information and will continue to do so unless we set appropriate limits.

Sadly most Americans are unaware of the growing threats to their privacy posed by government and private industry. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. We must continue to monitor the threats to our privacy both in the public and private sector.

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# Integrity – A Christian Virtue

*Kerby Anderson helps us understand the true meaning and importance of the Christian virtue of integrity.  From a biblical worldview perspective, integrity is a critical element of a Christ centered life.  Understanding integrity will help us incorporate it in our daily walk with Jesus Christ.*

*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

# Integrity and the Bible

The subject of this article is the concept of integrity—a character quality that we often talk about but don't see quite as regularly in the lives of public officials or even in the lives of the people we live and work with.

The word *integrity* comes from the same Latin root as *integer* and implies a wholeness of person. Just as we would talk about a whole number, so also we can talk about a whole person who is undivided. A person of integrity is living rightly, not divided, nor being a different person in different circumstances. A person of integrity is the same person in private that he or she is in public.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talked about those who were "pure in heart" (Matt. 5:8), implying an undividedness in following God's commands. Integrity, therefore, not only implies an undividedness, but a moral purity as well.

The Bible is full of references to integrity, character, and moral purity. Consider just a few Old Testament references to integrity. In 1 Kings 9:4, God instructs Solomon to walk with "integrity of heart and uprightness" as his father did. David says in 1 Chronicles 29:17, "I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity." And in Psalm 78:70-72 we read that "David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands."

The book of Proverbs provides an abundance of verses on integrity. Proverbs 10:9 says that, "He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out." A person of integrity will have a good reputation and not have to fear that he or she will be exposed or found out. Integrity provides a safe path through life.

Proverbs 11:3 says, "The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them."

Proverbs is a book of wisdom. The wise man or woman will live a life of integrity, which is a part of wisdom. Those who follow corruption or falsehood will be destroyed by the decisions and actions of their lives.

Proverbs 20:7 says, "A righteous man who walks in his integrity; How blessed are his sons after him." Integrity leaves a legacy. A righteous man or woman walks in integrity and provides a path for his or her children to follow.

All of these verses imply a sense of duty and a recognition that we must have a level of discernment of God's will in our lives. That would certainly require that people of integrity be students of the Word, and then diligently seek to apply God's Word to their lives. The book of James admonishes us to be "doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22). That is my goal in this article as we talk about integrity.

## Corruption

As we examine integrity, I would like to talk about its opposite: corruption. We claim to be a nation that demands integrity, but do we really? We say we want politicians to be honest, but really don't expect them to be; perhaps because often we aren't as honest as we should be. We say that we are a nation of laws, but often we break some of those same laws—like speed limits and jaywalking— and try to justify our actions.

A powerful illustration can be found in the book, *The Day America Told the Truth,* by James Patterson and Peter Kim.{1} Using a survey technique that guaranteed the privacy and anonymity of the respondents, they were able to document what Americans really believe and do. The results were startling.

First, they found there was no moral authority in America. "Americans are making up their own moral codes. Only 13

percent of us believe in all the Ten Commandments. Forty percent of us believe in five of the Ten Commandments. 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."

Second, they found Americans are not honest. "Lying has become an integral part of American culture, a trait of the American character. We lie and don't even think about it. We lie for no reason." The authors estimate that 91 percent of us lie regularly.

Third, marriage and family are no longer sacred institutions. "While we still marry, we have lost faith in the institution of marriage. A third of married men and women confessed to us that they've had at least one affair. Thirty percent aren't really sure that they still love their spouse."

Fourth, they found that the "Protestant [work] ethic is long gone from today's American workplace. Workers around America frankly admit that they spend more than 20 percent (7 hours a week) of their time at work totally goofing off. That amounts to a four-day work week across the nation."

The authors conclude by suggesting that we have a new set of commandments for America:

- I don't see the point in observing the Sabbath (77 percent).
- I will steal from those who won't really miss it (74 percent).
- I will lie when it suits me, so long as it doesn't cause any real damage (64 percent).
- I will cheat on my spouse; after all, given the chance, he or she will do the same (53 percent).
- I will procrastinate at work and do absolutely nothing about one full day in every five (50 percent).

We may say that we are a nation that wants integrity, but

apparently a majority of us lack it in our own personal lives.

# The Traits of Integrity

*Honesty*

I would now like to turn our focus toward four key traits found in a person of integrity. One of those traits is honesty.

We talked about some of the findings from the book *The Day America Told the Truth*. The authors found that nearly everyone in America lies and does so on a fairly regular basis. Truth telling apparently is no longer a virtue people try to adopt for their lives. We may say we want people to tell the truth, but we don't do it ourselves.

That is the problem with corruption; it is corrosive. We believe we can be dishonest just a little bit. We say we want people to be honest, but then we cheat on our taxes. We say we want people to obey the laws, but then we go "just a little" over the speed limit. We want to be honest just enough to ease our conscience.

It's a little like the story of the man who sent a letter to the Internal Revenue Service. He said, "I cheated on my income taxes, and felt so bad that I couldn't sleep. Enclosed find a check for $150. And if I still can't sleep I'll send the rest of what I owe."

Many of us can relate to that man. We want to be honest, but sometimes we find it easier to be dishonest. So we try to find a way to compromise our values so that a little bit of lying doesn't bother our conscience.

*Trustworthiness*

Another characteristic of a person of integrity is trustworthiness. A person of integrity is unimpeachable. He or

she stands by principles no matter what the consequences. A person of integrity realizes there are moral absolutes even in a world of relative values.

In Tom Clancy's novel, *Clear and Present Danger,* Jack Ryan is about the only noble character in the book. As he begins to uncover this clandestine government plot, he is confronted by the antagonist who makes fun of Jack Ryan's principles. He says, "You're a boy scout, Jack. Don't you get it? It's all grey. It's all grey."

I wonder how often people of integrity hear a similar statement in corporate board rooms or the halls of government. It's all grey. There are no absolute right and wrong values. It's all relative.

A person of integrity knows that it isn't all grey. There are principles worth standing by and promoting. There are values that should govern our lives. We have a responsibility to follow God's law rather than the crowd.

When the book of Proverbs talks of the "integrity of the upright" it implies that we adhere to God's will and God's laws. We have a duty to obey God's absolute commands in our lives and become men and women of integrity.

*"Private" Life*

There is a popular book on the market entitled, *Who You Are When Nobody's Looking*. Who are you when nobody's looking? Will I see the same person that I see when you are in a group of people? Do you do the right thing no matter what the circumstances?

There was a newspaper story years ago about a man in Long Beach who went into a KFC to get some chicken for himself and the young lady with him. She waited in the car while he went in to pick up the chicken. Inadvertently the manager of the store handed the guy the box in which he had placed the

financial proceeds of the day instead of the box of chicken. You see, he was going to make a deposit and had camouflaged it by putting the money in a fried chicken box.

The fellow took his box, went back to the car, and the two of them drove away. When they got to the park and opened the box, they discovered they had a box full of money. Now that was a very vulnerable moment for the average individual. However, realizing the mistake, he got back into the car and returned to the place and gave the money back to the manager. Well, the manager was elated! He was so pleased that he told the young man, "Stick around, I want to call the newspaper and have them take your picture. You're the most honest guy in town.

"Oh, no, don't do that!" said the fellow.

"Why not?" asked the manager.

"Well," he said, "you see, I'm married, and the woman I'm with is not my wife."{2}

Apparently he had not considered the consequences of his actions. Even when he was doing something right, it turned out he was also doing something wrong. A person of integrity is integrated and authentic. There is no duplicity of attitudes and actions.

When the apostle Paul lists the qualifications for an elder in the church, he says "he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:7). This is not only a desirable quality for church elders, it is a quality we should all aspire to. Christians should be "above reproach" in their public testimony before the watching world.

In the next section we will talk more about the importance of a public testimony of integrity and conclude our study.

# Public Testimony

I would like to conclude our discussion by addressing the importance of integrity in our daily lives.

It's been said that *we* may be the only Bible some people ever read. In other words, people around us often judge the truthfulness of Christianity by its affect in our lives. If they see us as hypocrites, they may not go any further in their investigation of the gospel.

Every day we rub shoulders with people who are watching us. Your life will demonstrate to them whether Christianity is true or false. They make value judgements about you by your attitudes and actions. Have we made the right choice?

After his Sunday messages, the pastor of a church in London got on the trolley Monday morning to return to his study downtown. He paid his fare, and the trolley driver gave him too much change. The pastor sat down and fumbled the change and looked it over, counted it eight or ten times. And, you know the rationalization, "It's wonderful how God provides." He realized he was tight that week and this was just about what he would need to break even, at least enough for his lunch. He wrestled with himself all the way down that old trolley trail that led to his office. Finally, he came to the stop and got up, and he couldn't live with himself. He walked up to the trolley driver, and said, "Here. You gave me too much change. You made a mistake." The driver said, "No, it was no mistake. You see, I was in your church last night when you spoke on honesty, and I thought I would put you to the test."[{3}](#)

Fortunately the pastor passed the test. Do you pass the test when unbelievers look at you and your life and wonder if the gospel is true? It's a convicting question. When we live lives of integrity, opportunities for evangelism and ministry surface. When we don't, those opportunities dry up.

I have been encouraging you to develop a life of integrity. In some respects, it's a life-long process. But we have to begin somewhere. Our lives are the collection of choices we have made in the past¾ both good choices and bad choices. Perhaps you have seen the poem:

> Sow a thought, reap an act.
> Sow an act, reap a habit.
> Sow a habit, reap a character.
> Sow a character, reap a destiny.

I would encourage you to begin to focus on the verses and biblical principles delineated here. If you want to be a person of integrity, it won't happen overnight. But if you don't make a deliberate plan to be a person of integrity, it will never happen at all.

**Notes**

James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991).
*Dallas Times Herald*, 23 Sept. 1966.
Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* (Assurance Publishers, 1990).

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# Partial Birth Abortion — From a Biblical Perspective

## A Commitment to Gruesomeness

This year is the twenty-seventh year of legal abortion, and

the only thing that appears to have changed in the debate is the addition of newer and more gruesome abortion procedures. At the top of the list is partial birth abortion.

The first legislative debate on partial birth abortion took place back in 1995 when Representative Charles Canady introduced a bill to ban this unknown procedure. Congressional testimony revealed that a fetus was delivered feet first, up to the head, so that the skull could be pierced and the brain suctioned out.

Canady's bill was a response to a paper delivered by Martin Haskell, a doctor from Dayton, Ohio, at the National Abortion Federation. At the time, reaction to Haskell's practice ran high in Ohio and eventually nationwide. The state of Ohio became the first state to prohibit the procedure and Canady's bill began to focus the issue on a national level.

Who would have predicted that such a long and protracted battle would take place over the last five years? And perhaps that shows how extreme the abortion lobby has become by its willingness to defend any abortion procedure no matter how far advanced the pregnancy might be. It also demonstrates the judiciary's willingness to defend abortion at every turn.

Although Charles Canady's bill was passed by both the House (288 to 139) and Senate (54 to 44), it was vetoed by President Clinton in April of 1996. Meanwhile, pro-life advocates were turning their energies to state legislatures. Partial birth abortion bans spread like wildfire through the legislatures. Today nearly three out of every five state legislatures have passed a ban, and some of these bans have been passed over gubernatorial vetoes. Unfortunately, liberal judges in various judicial jurisdictions have overturned many of these bans, alleging that they are vague or could threaten the life of the mother.

Congress has also reconsidered the issue again. Senator Rick

Santorum reintroduced the ban in January 1997. A month later the newspaper *American Medical News* published an interview with Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers. He admitted that he lied on national television regarding the number of partial birth abortions performed and the reasons for them. This was a stunning revelation that thousands of such abortions had been performed and usually for no medical indications. The momentum for a ban on partial birth abortions seemed to be growing. And the bill again passed both houses of Congress with a larger margin. But the Senate vote (64 to 36) was still not quite large enough to ensure an override of the expected veto by President Clinton.

Currently Congress is considering the issue again. And there are many political commentators who wonder if the margin may grow again since this is an election year. Also, as we will discuss in more detail, the Supreme Court seemed poised to act on the issue as well. While that does not insure that a federal ban on partial birth abortion will pass this year, it does raise the stakes over this controversial and gruesome procedure. Will Congress or the courts eventually ban this procedure? That seems more likely now than at any time in the past. Certainly the next few months will tell. But how will that take place?

## The Current Climate

Publicity over the partial birth abortion procedure has helped build momentum. During the debate in October of 1999, Senator Rick Santorum and Senator Barbara Boxer engaged in the following exchange.

> *Santorum:* But, again, what you are suggesting is if the baby's toe is inside the mother, you can, in fact, kill that baby.
>
> *Boxer:* Absolutely not.

*Santorum:* Okay. So if the baby's toe is in, you can't kill the baby. How about if the baby's foot is in?

*Boxer:* You are the one who is making these statements.

*Santorum:* We are trying to draw a line here.

*Boxer:* I am not answering these questions.

*Santorum:* If the head is inside the mother, you can kill the baby.

Discussion and dialogue like this has helped solidify and bolster public opposition to partial birth abortion. Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has called this procedure "near-infanticide." Opinion polls show that he is not alone in his assessment. Even citizens and politicians who are sympathetic to abortion rights are repulsed by partial birth abortion.

Throughout this year the battle against partial birth abortion will be fought on two fronts: Congress and the courts. Pro-life advocates point out that vote counts in the Senate show they are getting very close to a veto-proof margin. Key senators forced to vote on this measure during an election year might make the difference.

Meanwhile, federal courts have forced the Supreme Court to deliberate on the issue. This fall federal judges in Wisconsin and Illinois found the partial birth abortion bans in their states to be constitutional. Before the laws could be implemented, Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens issued a stay that holds the two state laws in limbo until the high court disposes of the appeals.

Legal experts say that the order is written in such a way as to force the court to directly consider the constitutionality of partial birth abortions, or else the court must leave these state laws in place. In either case, this appears to be a pro-

life victory.

Last summer in Arizona, an abortionist was performing a partial birth abortion on what he thought was a twenty-three week old. Suddenly he realized the baby was actually thirty-seven weeks old. He stopped the abortion and delivered the baby. The police said that, "At this point it doesn't appear that anybody will be charged with anything." The reason? Nothing illegal was done.

President Clinton continues to veto congressional bans on this procedure, and judges continue to overturn state bans on this procedure. But it appears that in the year 2000 that is about to change.

## The Biblical Perspective

Before we continue this discussion I wanted to focus on the biblical perspective of abortion. A key passage in this discussion is Psalm 139, where David reflected on God's sovereignty in his life.

The psalm opens with the acknowledgment that God is omniscient; He knows what the psalmist, David, is doing. God is aware of David's thoughts before he expresses them. Wherever David might go, he could not escape from God, whether he traveled to heaven or ventured into Sheol. God is in the remotest part of the sea and even in the darkness. David then contemplated the origin of his life and confessed that God was there forming him in the womb.

> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them

came to be.

Here David wrote of God's relationship with him while he was growing and developing before birth. The Bible does not speak of fetal life as mere biochemistry. This is not a piece of protoplasm that became David. This was David already being cared for by God while in the womb.

Verse 13 speaks of God as the Master Craftsman, weaving and fashioning David into a living person. In verses 14-15 David reflected on the fact that he was a product of God's creative work within his mother's womb, and he praised God for how wonderfully God had woven him together.

David drew a parallel between his development in the womb and Adam's creation from the earth. Using figurative language in verse 15, he referred to his life before birth when "I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth." This poetic allusion hearkens back to Genesis 2:7, which says that Adam was made from the dust of the earth.

David also noted that "thine eyes have seen my unformed substance." This shows that God knew David even before he was known to others. The term translated "unformed substance" derives from the verb "to roll up." When David was forming as a fetus, God's care and compassion were already extended to him. The reference to "God's eyes" is an Old Testament term connoting divine oversight of God in the life of an individual or a group of people.

While there are certainly other passages in the Old and New Testament that speak to the sanctity of human life, I believe that Psalm 139 is sufficient to show why Christians must oppose abortion, especially partial birth abortion. The unborn baby is a human being that God cares for. It should not be sacrificed in the womb for convenience or even for fetal parts that might improve the medical condition of another person. The unborn must be protected at every stage of development.

Partial birth abortion is a controversial and gruesome procedure. It is also against the will of God. Christians must speak out against the horror of this procedure and do whatever they can to make the procedure illegal.

## Fetal Tissue Trafficking

I would like to turn our focus to a related issue: the traffic of fetal tissue parts. In the fall of 1999, a pro-life group by the name of Life Dynamics published their two-year investigation of the traffic of fetal body parts. They produced copies of brochures, protocols, and price lists that document the interstate commerce of fetal body parts. One brochure touts "the freshest tissue available." A price list provides a grim picture of the trafficking in cannibalized body parts: eyes are $50 to $75 depending on the age of the fetus, skin is $100, a spinal cord is $325.

The investigation provided new insight into why the fight against partial birth abortion has been so tough. Partial birth abortion, after all, is a difficult procedure that involves turning the fetus in the womb and removing it feet first. This complicates the abortion and therefore poses more risk to the mother. So why do abortionists do it? Fetal tissue parts. Quite simply, if you want an intact brain, spinal cord, or limbs, partial birth abortion will provide that in ways that other abortion techniques will not.

Essentially scientists who need human body parts for research have found a loophole in the federal law that prohibits the sale of body parts. Abortion clinics provide these companies with whole or dismembered aborted fetuses for a service fee. This is listed as a "site fee" which is "rental on the space" that a body parts company employee occupies within the clinic. The company can, therefore, argue that they are donating the parts, but charging reasonable costs for retrieval which the federal law does allow. As long as the retrieval fees are higher than the site fee, they can make a profit.

Just one look at the "Fees for Services Schedule" can be chilling. Prices for every conceivable body part are listed. But it's important to notice that an intact embryonic cadaver costs $600. Why should there be a retrieval fee for that? Why not just list the cost of shipping? This discrepancy illustrates how the body parts companies are trying to circumvent the law.

Gene Rudd, an obstetrician and member of the Christian Medical and Dental Society's Bioethics Commission, said: "It's the inevitable logical progression of a society that, like Darwin, believes we came from nothing. . . . This is the inevitable slide down the slippery slope." He is appalled by this "death for profit" scheme that takes the weakest of the species to satisfy our desires.

Apparently women who come into an abortion clinic are asked to sign a document allowing the clinic to donate their aborted baby to research. No fetus may be used without permission. Then the clinic receives orders (usually from their fax machine) for parts that will be retrieved and shipped. Many of the protocols require that the specimens be obtained within minutes after the abortion and frozen or preserved.

Life Dynamics' two year investigation clearly documents what many of us suspected all along. The fight against partial birth abortion was so tough because a lot of money and fetal tissue was a stake. This procedure has little to do with providing women with choice and everything to do with the interstate trafficking of fetal body parts.

A technician identified as "Kelly" came to Life Dynamics with this story of the traffic of fetal body parts.

The doctor walked into the lab and set a steel pan on the table. "Got you some good specimens," he said. "Twins." The technician looked down at a pair of perfectly formed 24-week-old fetuses moving and gasping for air. Except for a few nicks

from the surgical tongs that had pulled them out, they seemed uninjured. "There's something wrong here," the technician stammered. "They are moving. I don't do this."

She watched the doctor take a bottle of sterile water and fill the pan until the water ran over the babies' mouths and noses. Then she left the room. "I would not watch those fetuses moving," she recalls. "That's when I decided it was wrong."

Back in the fall of 1999, Life Dynamics published its two-year investigation of the traffic of fetal body parts. They produced copies of brochures, protocols, and price lists that document the interstate commerce of fetal body parts.

I believe their investigation provided new insight into why the fight against partial birth abortion has been so tough. This procedure provides fetal tissue parts that are intact and thus available to research labs for a profit. And these are respected, tax-funded laboratories pursuing laudable goals like treating diabetes and Parkinson's disease.

"Kelly" says that it was her job to go to abortion clinics to procure tissue "donations." She would get a generated list each day of what tissue researchers needed and then look at the particular patient charts to determine where the specimens would be obtained. She would look for the most perfect specimens to give the researchers "the best value that we could sell for."

Fetuses ranged in age from seven weeks to 30 weeks and beyond. Typically, "Kelly" harvested tissue from 30 to 40 "late" fetuses each week. These are delivered using the partial birth abortion procedure.

"Kelly" and others like her would harvest eyes, livers, brains, thymuses, and especially cardiac blood. Then they would pack and freeze the tissue and send them out by standard couriers (UPS, FedEx) to the research laboratories requesting the material. Life Dynamics has produced copies of forms for

fetal parts from researchers. They contain the names of researchers, universities, pharmaceutical companies, and more.

Proponents of the research argue that the goal justifies the means. After all, these babies would have been aborted anyway. Why not use the discarded parts to further science and improve the quality of living of others? Christopher Hook, a fellow with the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity calls this exploitation of the unborn "too high a price regardless of the supposed benefit. We can never feel comfortable with identifying a group of our brothers and sisters who can be exploited for the good of the whole." He believes that, "Once we have crossed that line, we have betrayed our covenant with one another as a society and certainly the covenant of medicine."

This is the sad legacy of partial birth abortion and the international traffic of fetal body parts. Christians must stand up against this gruesome practice and reassert the sanctity of human life and work for the banning of these procedures.

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# Online Affairs – A Christian Look at a Major Problem

*Kerby Anderson highlights online affairs, the sin of adultery with an "electronic" relationship on the Internet.*

*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

# The Allure of Cyber-Relationships

The Internet is becoming a breeding ground for adultery, so say many experts who track the pattern of extramarital affairs. So we will discuss the phenomenon of online affairs.

Peggy Vaughn is the author of *The Monogamy Myth* and also serves as an expert for America Online on problems caused by infidelity. She predicts that one "role of the Internet in the future will be as a source of affairs." She is writing a second book on the subject of adultery and says she could base half of it just on the letters she receives from people who started an affair online.[1]

An online affair (or cyberaffair) is an intimate or sexually explicit communication between a married person and someone other than their spouse that takes place on the Internet. Usually this communication takes place through an online service such as America Online or CompuServe. Participants usually visit a chat room to begin a group conversation and then often move into a one-to-one mode of communication. Chat room categories range from "single and liking it" to "married and flirting" to "naked on the keyboard."

Women in a chat room are often surprised at what develops in a fairly short period of time. At first the conversation is stimulating, though flirtatious. Quickly, however, women are often confronted with increasingly sexual questions and comments. Even if the comments don't turn personal, women find themselves quickly sharing intimate information about themselves and their relationships that they would never share with someone in person. Peggy Vaughn says, "Stay-at-home moms in chat rooms are sharing all this personal stuff they are hiding from their partners." She finds that the intensity of women's online relationships can "quickly escalate into thinking they have found a soulmate."

Online affairs differ from physical world affairs in some

ways, but are similar in others. Cyberaffairs are based upon written communication where a person may feel more free to express herself anonymously than in person. Frequently the communication becomes sexually graphic and kinky in ways that probably would not occur if a real person were hearing these comments and could act on them. Participants in an online affair will often tell their life stories and their innermost secrets. They will also create a new persona, become sexually adventurous, and pretend to be different than they really are.

Pretending is a major theme in cyberaffairs. Men claim to be professionals (doctors, lawyers) who work out every day in the gym. And they universally claim that if their wives met their needs, they wouldn't be sex shopping on the Internet. Women claim to be slim, sexy, and adventurous. The anonymity of the Internet allows them to divulge (or even create) their wildest fantasies. In fact, their frank talk and flirtation pays great dividends in the number of men in a chat room who want to talk to them and get together with them.

Just as the Internet has become a new source of pornography for many, so it seems that it has also become a new source for affairs. Relationships online frequently go over the line leaving pain, heartbreak, and even divorce in their wake. Even though these online affairs don't involve sex, they can be very intense and threaten a marriage just the same.

## Current Statistics on Adultery

In a [previous article](), I talked about some of the statistics concerning adultery. Before we continue, let me update some of those numbers with a multitude of studies all coming to similar conclusions.

One conclusion is that adultery is becoming more common, and researchers are finding that women are as likely as men to have an affair. A 1983 study found that 29 percent of married people under 25 had had an affair with no statistical

difference between the number of men and women who chose to be unfaithful to their spouses early in life.{2} By comparison, only 9 percent of spouses in the 1950s under the age of 25 had been involved in extramarital sex. Another study concluded that by age 40 about 50 to 65 percent of husbands and 45 to 55 percent of wives become involved in an extramarital affair.{3}

Affairs are usually more than a one-time event. A 1987 study surveyed 200 men and women and found that their affairs lasted an average of two years.{4} In fact, affairs go through transitions over time. They may begin as romantic, sexual, or emotional relationships and may become intimate friendships. Affairs that become friendships can last decades or a lifetime.

Online affairs differ from other affairs in that they may not involve a physical component, but the emotional attachment is still there. Online affairs develop because of the dual attraction of attention and anonymity. Someone who has been ignored by a spouse (or at least perceives that he or she is ignored) suddenly becomes the center of attention in a chat room or a one-on-one e-mail exchange. A woman finds it exciting, even intoxicating, that all these men want to talk to her. And they are eager to hear what she says and needs.

Anonymity feeds this intoxication because the person on the other end of this cyberaffair is unknown. He or she can be as beautiful and intelligent as your dreams can imagine. The fantasy is fueled by the lack of information and the anonymity. No one in cyberland has bad breath, a bald head, love handles, or a bad temper. The sex is the best you can imagine. Men are warm, sensitive, caring, and communicative. Women are daring, sensual, and erotic.

Is it all too good to be true? Of course it is. Cyberaffairs are only make-believe. Usually when cyberlovers meet, there is a major letdown. No real person can compete with a dream lover. No marriage can compete with a cyberaffair. But then an

online affair can't really compete with a real relationship that provides true friendship and marital intimacy.

Nevertheless, online affairs are seductive. An Internet addict calls out to a spouse "one more minute" just as an alcoholic justifies "one more drink." Cyberaffairs provide an opportunity to become another person and chat with distant and invisible neighbors in the high-tech limbo of cyberspace. Social and emotional needs are met, flirting is allowed and even encouraged, and an illusion of intimacy feeds the addiction that has caught so many unsuspecting Internet surfers.

## Motivations for Affairs

Affairs usually develop because the relationship meets various social and psychological needs. Self-esteem needs are often at the top of the list. Self-esteem needs are met through knowing, understanding, and acceptance. Psychologists say that those needs are enhanced through talking intimately about feelings, thoughts, and needs. This can take place in person or take place through the Internet.

Even though online affairs may not involve a physical component, the emotional attachment can be just as strong and even overwhelming. And when they end, this strong attachment usually leaves participants in emotional pain.

Women report feeling thrilled by their lover's interest in them physically, emotionally, and intellectually. They are also excited about the chance to know a different man (how he thinks and feels). They also feel intimate with their lovers because they can talk about their feelings openly. However, when the affair ends, they feel a great deal of guilt with regard to their husband and children. They also regret the deceit that accompanied the affair.

Men report feeling excited about the sexual experience of the

affair. They try to control their feelings in the affair and do not compete with their feelings for their wife. Often they limit the emotional involvement with their lover. Men also feel guilt and regret over deceit when an affair ends, but less so than most women.

Men and women have affairs for different reasons. Research has shown that women seek affairs in order to be loved, have a friend, and feel needed. Men seek affairs for sexual fulfillment, friendship, and fun.{5}

It appears that the percentage of women who have extramarital sex has increased the last few decades. In 1953 Alfred Kinsey found that 29 percent of married women admitted to at least one affair.{6} A *Psychology Today* survey in 1970 reported that 36 percent of their female readers had extramarital sex.{7} One study in 1987 found that 70 percent of women surveyed had been involved in an affair.{8}

It also appears that women who are employed full-time outside of the home are more likely to have an affair than full-time homemakers. Several studies come to this same conclusion. One study found that 47 percent of wives who were employed full-time and 27 percent of full-time homemakers had been involved in an affair before they were 40 years old.{9} And *New Woman* magazine found that 57 percent of employed wives who had an affair met their lover at work.{10}

Contrary to conventional wisdom, an affair will not help your marriage. In 1975, Linda Wolfe published *Playing Around* after she studied twenty-one women who were having affairs to keep their marriages intact.{11} The reasoning for many of these women was that if they could meet their own needs, their marriages would be more successful. Many said they were desperately lonely. Others were afraid, believing their husbands did not love them or were not committed to their marriage. Five years after the initial study, only three of the twenty-one women were still married.

Adultery can destroy a marriage, whether a physical affair or an online affair.

## Preventing an Affair

The general outline for some of these ideas comes from family therapist Frank Pittman, author of *Private Lies: Infidelity and the Betrayal of Intimacy*, although I have added additional material. He has counseled 10,000 couples over the last forty years, and about 7,000 have experienced infidelity. He has nineteen specific suggestions for couples on how to avoid affairs.{12} Let's look at a few of them.

First, accept the possibility of being sexually attracted to another and of having sexual fantasies. Frank Pittman believes we should acknowledge that such thoughts can develop so that you don't scare them into hiding. But he also says you shouldn't act on them.

Second, we should hang out with monogamous people. He says, "They make a good support system." To state it negatively, "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33).

Third, work on your marriage. He says to keep your marriage sexy and work to be intimate with your spouse. He also says to make marriage an important part of your identity. "Carry your marriage with you wherever you go."

Fourth, be realistic about your marriage. Pittman says, "Don't expect your marriage to make you happy. See your partner as a source of comfort rather than a cause of unhappiness." Accept the reality of marriage; it isn't always beautiful. Also accept that you are both imperfect.

Fifth, keep the marriage equal. Share parenting duties. "If not, one partner will become the full-time parent, and the other will become a full-time child" without responsibilities, who seeks to be taken care of. And keep the relationships

equal. Pittman says, "The more equal it is, the more both partners will respect and value it."

Sixth, if you aren't already married, be careful in your choice of a marriage partner. For example, marry someone who believes in, and has a family history of, monogamy. Frank Pittman says, "It is a bad idea to become the fifth husband of a woman who has been unfaithful to her previous four." Also, marry someone who respects and likes your gender. "They will get over the specialness of you yourself and eventually consider you as part of a gender they dislike."

Seventh, call home every day you travel. "Otherwise, you begin to have a separate life." And stay faithful. "If you want your partner to (stay faithful), it is a good idea to stay faithful yourself." And make sure you are open, honest, and authentic. Lies and deception create a secret life that can allow an affair to occur.

Finally, don't overreact or exaggerate the consequences of an affair if it occurs. Pittman says, "It doesn't mean there will be a divorce, murder or suicide. Catch yourself and work your way back into the marriage."

Affairs can destroy a marriage. Take the time to affair-proof your marriage so you avoid the pain, guilt and regret that inevitably results. And if you have fallen into an affair, work your way back and rebuild your marriage.

## Consequences of Affairs

When God commands, "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14), He did so for our own good. There are significant social, psychological, and spiritual consequences to adultery.

A major social cost is divorce. An affair that is discovered does not have to lead to divorce, but often it does. About one- third of couples remain together after the discovery of an adulterous affair, while the other two-thirds usually

divorce.

Not surprisingly, the divorce rate is higher among people who have affairs. Annette Lawson (author of *Adultery: An Analysis of Love and Betrayal*) found that spouses who did not have affairs had the lowest rate of divorce. Women who had multiple affairs (especially if they started early in the marriage) had the highest rate of divorce.

A lesser known fact is that those who divorce rarely marry the person with whom they are having the affair. For example, Dr. Jan Halper's study of successful men (executives, entrepreneurs, professionals) found that very few men who have affairs divorce their wife and marry their lovers. Only 3 percent of the 4,100 successful men surveyed eventually married their lovers.{13}

Frank Pittman has found that the divorce rate among those who married their lovers was 75 percent.{14} The reasons for the high divorce rate include: intervention of reality, guilt, expectations, a general distrust of marriage, and a distrust of the affairee.

The psychological consequences are also significant, even if they are sometimes more difficult to discern. People who pursue an affair often do so for self-esteem needs, but often further erode those feelings by violating trust, intimacy, and stability in a marriage relationship. Affairs do not stabilize a marriage, they upset it.

Affairs destroy trust. It's not surprising that marriages formed after an affair and a divorce have such a high divorce rate. If your new spouse cheated before, what guarantee do you have that this person won't begin to cheat on you? Distrust of marriage and distrust of the affairee are significant issues.

Finally, there are spiritual consequences to affairs. We grieve the Lord by our actions. We disgrace the Lord as we become one more statistic of moral failure within the body of

Christ. We threaten the sacred marriage bond between us and our spouse. We bring guilt into our lives and shame into our marriage and family. Affairs extract a tremendous price in our lives and the lives of those we love and hold dear.

And let's not forget the long-term consequences. Affairs, for example, can lead to unwanted pregnancies. According to one report, "Studies of blood typing show that as many as 1 out of every 10 babies born in North America is not the offspring of the mother's husband."{15} Affairs can also result in sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, or even AIDS. Many of these diseases are not curable and will last for a lifetime.

Adultery is dangerous, and so are online affairs. The popularity of the recent movie *You've Got Mail* has helped feed the fantasy that you are writing to Tom Hanks or Meg Ryan. In nearly every case, nothing could be further from the truth. An online affair could happen to you, and the plot might be more like *Fatal Attraction*.

**Notes**

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# Privacy Issues

## The Need to Discuss Privacy Issues

Privacy is something I believe we all take for granted until we lose it. Then we begin to think about how someone invaded our privacy, often by incremental steps. In this article we are going to talk about ways in which we have lost our privacy. Most of the intrusion into our lives comes from government, but not all. Businesses also buy and sell information about us every day. Most of us would be shocked to find out how much personal information is in databases around the country.

As I address this important issue, I will focus on several specific threats to our privacy. I want to begin, though, by discussing how quickly our privacy is being lost and how often

it takes place without any debate.

Let's look at the last session in Congress. It's amazing to me that there never was an extended debate on the issue of privacy. Granted there wasn't much debate on a number of issues, but the lack of debate on this fundamental issue shows how far down the road we have gone.

For example, we saw absolutely no debate on issues such as the national ID card, the medical ID number, the Clinton administration encryption policy, the expansion of the FBI's wiretap capability, along with the Clinton administration's Executive Order authority and federal databases.

Some of the proposals were defeated, at least for now. The national ID card was defeated, for example, not because Congress debated the issue, but because thousands of Americans wrote letters and made phone calls. Meanwhile, plans by the Clinton administration to develop a medical ID number are on hold, but could surface at any time.

Most other issues, however, are moving ahead. Congress gave the FBI permission to use "roving wiretap surveillance." That means that the next time you use a pay phone at your local grocery store, it may be tapped merely because there's a criminal suspect within the area. And if you think I am overreacting, look at what has already happened in California. One wiretap order there authorized surveillance on 350 phones for over two years. In another case, five pay phones were tapped, intercepting 131,000 conversations.

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission mandated that cell phones and other wireless telephone companies track the location of the customers from the time the call was initiated until the time it was terminated. By locating the cell site the person was using, the government can pinpoint the location of every citizen who uses a cell phone since the telephone companies must track and log the locations.

Those are just a few of the examples we will discuss on the subject of privacy. Unfortunately, whenever someone cries for privacy, another is sure to ask, "What do you have to hide?" The question confuses privacy and secrecy. I don't really have anything I want to keep secret, but I'm not terribly excited about the government listening to every one of my phone conversations. You may not want your future boss to know that you have a genetic predisposition to breast cancer. You may not want a telemarketer to know what you just recently purchased so that he can call your home number and try to sell you more.

The point is that each day we are losing a bit of our privacy. And we will continue to do so unless we work to establish some limits to these invasions of our privacy.

## National ID Card

Issuing internal passports has been one of the methods used by communist leaders to control their people. Citizens had to carry these passports at all times and had to present them to authorities if they wanted to travel within the country, live in another part of the country, or apply for a job.

The Department of Transportation has recently called for the establishment of a national ID system by the first of October, in the year 2000. Although presented as merely a move toward standardization, this seemed to many as a move toward a national passport to allow the government to "check up" on its citizens.

A little history is in order. Back in 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. This charged the federal Department of Transportation with establishing national requirements for birth certificates and drivers' licenses. Add to this the 1996 Kennedy-Kassebaum health care law that implies that Americans may be required in the future to produce a state-issued ID that conforms to

federal specifications.

If all of this sounds to you like Big Brother or even the mark of the beast, then you have company. Congressman Ron Paul believes that the Department of Transportation regulations would adversely affect Americans. He says, "Under the current state of the law, the citizens of states which have drivers' licenses that do not conform to the federal standards by October 1, 2000, will find themselves essentially stripped of their ability to participate in life as we know it."

Congressman Paul adds that, "On that date, Americans will not be able to get a job, open a bank account, apply for Social Security or Medicare, exercise their Second Amendment rights, or even take an airplane flight, unless they can produce a state-issued ID that conforms to the federal specifications."

The law orders the Attorney General to conduct pilot programs where the state driver's license includes a "machine-readable" Social Security number. It also orders the development of a Social Security card that uses magnetic strips, holograms, and integrated circuits. The law also requires that states collect Social Security numbers from all applicants for various licenses. It requires states to transmit the name, address, and Social Security number of every new worker to a Directory of New Hires.

The good news is that the work by Congressmen Ron Paul and Bob Barr paid off and the attempt to create a national ID card was stopped, for now. But it is likely to surface again.

After all, there has been a push to establish a federal database for Americans and having each person carry an ID card would allow that information to be linked to a federal database. And while it would help the government catch illegal aliens, it could also be used to track law-abiding American citizens.

Tracking down illegal aliens and standardizing licenses are

worthy goals. But the ends do not justify the means. That is why so many people wrote Congress to stop this push for a national ID card. Sometimes in the midst of this political debate, citizens must determine how much they value their freedom and privacy.

Congressman Bob Barr says, "Novelists Aldous Huxley and George Orwell have given us countless reasons why we shouldn't trade our privacy for any benefit, no matter how worthwhile it sounds." In the end, we must ask, At what cost? Is it worth trading our privacy for the benefits government promises?

## Medical ID Number

While the Department of Transportation is moving ahead with plans for a national ID card, the Department of Health and Human Services is working to assign everyone a lifetime medical ID number.

The purpose of the ID number is to make it easier to keep accurate records of patients as they change doctors and health plans. The identification was required in a 1996 law that guarantees workers continued access to health coverage even if they change jobs.

One solution proposed is to merely use Social Security numbers. But doing that could give credit card companies and other organizations access to medical records. This would raise a greater concern over privacy of medical records. And that's the point. Even a secure number still could pose a privacy nightmare by potentially giving everyone from insurance companies to computer hackers access to medical histories.

One doctor expressed his concern that a "unique patient identifier could lead to a central database." He fears that "someone without permission could break into those records." But even if the record is secure, doctors fear that patients

will withhold embarrassing information if there is a chance someone else might get access to the records.

Robert Gellman, an information policy consultant said at a recent hearing, "Once everyone's required to use a government-issued health identification card, it may become impossible for any American citizen to walk down the street without being forced to produce that card on demand by a policeman."

Why are so many people concerned? Perhaps past history is an indication. One of the features of Hillary Clinton's national health care plan was a federal database of every American's medical records. During one of his State of the Union addresses, President Clinton waved a card with a "unique identifier number" that would give government bureaucrats and health care providers easy computer access to everyone's medical history.

Although the American people rejected that plan back in 1993 and 1994, the government is still moving ahead with a plan to give every American an "unique identifier number" and to compile medical records into a federal database. Five years ago the argument for a medical card and number linked to a federal database was to aid in health care planning and to eliminate fraud by health care providers. The American people, however, feared it would end medical privacy and increase federal control over health care.

The fear is justified. Just listen to what has already happened in a system without a medical ID number. For example, there is the banker on a county health care board who called due the mortgages of people suffering with cancer. There was a congresswoman whose medical records, revealing a bout of depression, were leaked before primary day. And there are a number of drug store chains that sell the name, address, and ailments of their customers to marketing firms.

The Hippocratic Oath says, "That whatsoever I shall see or

hear of the lives of men, which is not fitting to be spoken . . . I shall keep inviolably secret." Current attempts by the federal bureaucracy to standardize and centralize medical information are presented as a way to make health care delivery more effective and efficient, but they also have the potential to invade our privacy and threaten doctor-patient confidentiality. Frankly, I think the administration needs to rethink their current proposal. Or, to put it in medical terms, I think they need a second opinion.

## Encryption

As we have been looking at the issue of privacy, we've considered attempts to establish a national ID card and a medical ID number. I want to turn to computers and talk about another important issue: encryption. Now I know that's probably an unfamiliar word. But stay with me. Encryption is big word for a big issue that I think you need to know about.

Encryption is a relatively new technology that enables you to have private phone conversations and send e-mail messages that are secure. Encryption codes your words so that they cannot be deciphered by people listening in on your conversation or reading your mail.

As you may know, nosy people already can listen in on your wireless phone calls (cellular or cordless phones). And they can intercept and read your e-mail. Sending e-mail without encryption is like mailing a postcard — everyone can read it along the way. And we all know that people will do exactly that. If you have ever had a phone on a party line, you know that people listen in.

What you may not know is that various members of the Clinton administration (like Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Director Louis Freeh) are demanding the authority to read encrypted messages. Now remember that the Fourth Amendment guarantees citizens be free of unreasonable searches and

seizures. Nevertheless, these and other law enforcement officers believe they have the right to open your mail.

What they are asking for is the key to the code. When you send a message in code, you need a key to enable you to send the code and the recipients need the same key to read the code. The Clinton administration is demanding access to all encryption keys. This is like giving the government the power to steam open all the letters we send in the mail. Frankly, you only see this level of surveillance in totalitarian countries. If the government has the key, then it could call up information on you, your family, your medical records, your bank records, your credit card purchases, and your e-mail messages to all of your friends and relatives.

What is even more disturbing is the current attempt by the government to limit an American citizen's access to strong and powerful encryption software. A new study from the Cato Institute says that "People living outside the United States find it amusing and perplexing that U.S. law regulates the distribution of strong encryption." Critics of the administration's policy point out that true criminals (terrorists, drug dealers, the mafia) are unlikely to use anything less than the strongest encryption for their communication and data storage. The government will unlikely have a key to that level of encryption. Meanwhile, the average citizen must use weak encryption to protect private data and run the risk that the government will have a key to access it.

Everyone wants encryption in the computer age. Citizens want private communication. Businesses want to prevent billing records and personnel records from falling into the wrong hands. Consumers don't want their credit card numbers widely distributed. That is why we need strong encryption software, and that is why government should not be given a key to the messages we send. Most Americans would not like to turn over so much of their privacy to the government, but unfortunately most Americans don't realize that they already have.

# Privacy and Your Life

Dave Ballert thought he was being a savvy consumer when he attempted to download a copy of his credit report from a web site. He hadn't checked it recently and thought it was worth paying the eight bucks. But when the report arrived a few minutes later, it wasn't his. It was a report for someone in California. The next thing he knew he received a call from the *Washington Post*, who said they received his report. The web site halted access later, but the damage was already done. How would you like a major newspaper to have a copy of your credit report?

Consider the case of the Social Security Administration. They provided earnings information to individuals via the Internet. After more than a month of virtually unfettered access for disgruntled employees, ex-spouses, and their attorneys, the Social Security Administration pulled the plug.

Such is life in the cyberage. More and more people are seeing their privacy violated and wonder what to do in a time of financial and personal indecent exposure. What used to be called public records weren't all that public. Now they are all too public. And what used to be considered private records are being made public at an alarming rate. What should we do?

First, don't give out personal information. You should assume that any information that you do give out will end up on a database somewhere. Phone solicitors, application forms, warranty cards all ask for information you may not want to give out. Be careful how much information you disclose.

Second, live your life above reproach. As it is written in Philippians 2:14-15, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." 1 Timothy 3:2 says that an elder must be

"above reproach," which is an attribute that should describe all believers. If you live a life of integrity, you don't have to be so concerned about what may be made public.

Third, exercise discretion, especially when you use e-mail. Too many people assume they have a one-on-one relationship with someone through the Internet. The message you send might be forwarded on to other people, and the message may even be read by other nosy people. One web site provider advises, "A good rule of thumb: Don't send any e-mail that you wouldn't want your mother to read."

Finally, get involved. When you feel your privacy has been violated, take the time to complain. Let the person or organization know your concerns. Many people fail to apply the same rules of privacy and confidentiality on a computer that they do in real life. Your complaint might have a positive effect.

Track congressional legislation and write letters. Many of the threats to privacy I've talked about started in Congress. Citizens need to understand that many governmental policies pose a threat to our privacy. Bureaucrats and legislators are in the business of collecting information and will continue to do so unless we set appropriate limits.

Sadly, most Americans are unaware of the growing threats to their privacy posed by government and private industry. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. We must continue to monitor the threats to our privacy both in the public and private sector.