

# Answering E-mail

Rick Wade

*Some examples of Probe's e-mail correspondence, covering questions about on which day Jesus died, the Nephilim, and is Jesus God's final messenger. It concludes with some flames from non-fans of our articles.*

## Three Days in the Tomb

One aspect of our ministry at Probe is answering questions sent via e-mail. In this article I'm going to address a few questions people have asked.

The first question I'll address has to do with the day of Jesus' death. Someone wrote and asked, "Was Jesus crucified on Thursday or Friday? How do we account for the three days [in the tomb]?"

It will be quite impossible to deal adequately with this question in such limited space. But let's see what we can do. [1](#)

The Friday view of the crucifixion has been held the longest in the church. John 19:31 says that Jesus' body was taken down from the cross on "the day of preparation" to avoid having it there on the Sabbath. If this refers to the weekly Sabbath, then the day of preparation—and hence, that of Jesus' death—was on Friday. Luke 23:54-56 says the women witnessed his burial on the day of preparation, and then went home and rested on the Sabbath. On the first day of the week, Sunday, they found the tomb empty (Luke 24:1ff).

Jesus' reference to Jonah poses the greatest problem for this understanding. In Matthew 12:40 we read, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Because of this verse, some have held a second view of the crucifixion, that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. He then arose on Saturday afternoon, and

first appeared to his disciples on Sunday.<sup>{2}</sup> This allows a full three days and nights in the tomb. But Sunday has from the beginning been regarded as the day Jesus rose from the dead, and this would be the fourth day from Wednesday rather than the third. In addition, it's been established that the Jews counted any part of a day as a whole day, so a full seventy-two hours in the tomb isn't required (cf. Gen. 42:17,18; I Kings 20:29, II Chron. 10:5,12; Esther 4:16, 5:1). "After three days" and "on the third day" are equivalent as Matthew 27:63-64 shows clearly.<sup>{3}</sup>

A third view is that Jesus died on Thursday and rose on Sunday, which allows for three nights and part of three days in the tomb. Thus, the Last Supper was on Wednesday evening, and Jesus - the Passover Lamb-was crucified on Thursday. Friday was the first day of Unleavened Bread, a day of no work, and so is thought to be "the Sabbath of the Passover."<sup>{4}</sup> So Jesus was buried on Thursday to avoid profaning this "Sabbath."

In response, New Testament scholar Harold Hoehner notes that there is no precedent for thinking of Friday as a special Sabbath. "The day of preparation for the Passover" in John 19:31 needn't refer to the day before Passover; it could refer to Passover itself.<sup>{5}</sup> John 19:31,42, which speaks of the day of preparation and the Sabbath, seems naturally to refer to Friday and Saturday.<sup>{6}</sup> In this writer's view, then, the Friday view still seems to be the correct one.

## **The Nephilim**

Who were the Nephilim in Genesis chapter 6? That is a question raised fairly often. The Nephilim are mentioned in Genesis 6 and again in Numbers 13. The passage in Genesis 6 is especially intriguing because of its account of the "sons of God" going in to the "daughters of men." Someone wrote to ask whether the Nephilim "were simply human or the off-spring of angels (demons) mating with human women."

Let's begin with the passage itself. Genesis 6: 1-4 reads:

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

In considering the identity of the Nephilim, one must also answer two other questions: the identity of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men," and the significance of the passage relative to that which precedes it and that which follows (its context). "In most cases," says John Sailhamer, "the interpretations [of this passage] have arisen out of the viewpoint that these verses introduce the story of the Flood." [\[7\]](#) Some commentators, however, think otherwise.

First, who are these "sons" and "daughters"? One view holds that the "sons" were kings and the "daughters" were lower class women who made up the harems of such kings. [\[8\]](#) The "sons" were guilty of polygamy in taking more than one wife from among the "daughters of men." This was at least part of the reason God brought judgment. This view has real possibilities, for it provides a bridge between the genealogies of Cain and Seth in chapters 4 and 5, and it serves as an explanation of the judgment to follow. A weakness of this view is that "while both within the OT and in other Near Eastern texts individual kings were called God's son, there is no evidence that groups of kings were so styled." [\[9\]](#)

Another view is that these "sons of God" were angels or demons who united with human women, and so corrupted the race that God had to bring judgment. It seems highly unlikely that this is the correct interpretation. First, Jesus said that angels don't marry, and in Genesis 6:2 the word for "married" means just that, and not fornication. If good angels don't marry, why would God grant sexual

powers to demons? Second, if demons were taking advantage of human women, why was mankind judged? The Interpreter's Bible Commentary offers this view, but relegates the story to myth. If we aren't prepared to think of Genesis as being mythological, we need to look for another option.

A third view is that the "sons of God" were descendents of godly Seth, while the "daughters of men" were descendents of ungodly Cain. Although "sons of God" is used in the Old Testament to refer to angels (see Job 1:6, 2:1 in the NASB), godly men are also called "sons" as in Psalm 73:15 and Hosea 1:10.

This view provides a bridge between chapters 4-5 and chapter 6. Chapter 4 lists some offspring of Cain, chapter 5 those of Seth, and chapter 6 brings them together. According to this view, says commentator Victor Hamilton, "The sin is a forbidden union, a yoking of what God intended to keep apart, the intermarriage of believer with unbeliever." [{10}](#)

Jesus said in Matt. 24:38, "For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark." Seth's godly descendents had shifted their focus from God to the things of the flesh and were simply carrying on with their lives, but not in accordance with God's will. That the primary focus of God's wrath is against the union, rather than the offspring of it, is the fact that God's displeasure is announced after mentioning the marriage unions but before mentioning the offspring.

So, then, who were the Nephilim? The Holman Bible Dictionary says the word "probably derived from the root 'to fall' and meaning either 'the fallen ones' or else 'ones who fall [violently] upon others.'" [{11}](#) Hamilton translates it "those who were made to fall, those who were cast down." If this is correct, then the Nephilim are certainly not to be identified with the "heroes of old, men of renown" in verse 4. [{12}](#) Old Testament commentators Keil and Delitzsch believe Martin Luther had it correct when he said these men were tyrants. "They were called Nephilim," they say, "because they fell upon the people and oppressed

them.”[\[13\]](#)

Were they the offspring of the “sons of God” and “daughters of men”? Apparently not, for the verse says they “were on the earth in those days—and also afterward”; in other words, they were contemporaries of the “sons” and “daughters.”

It’s hard to be dogmatic about the interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4. But my vote goes with this last view.

## **Is Jesus the Final Messenger from God?**

The next question has to do with Jesus as the final “messenger” from God. A letter e-mailed to us reads in part: I assume you believe the Old Testament to be part of the inspired word of God, and therefore believe Moses, and Abraham before him, were part of this “progress of revelation.” Were there others, perhaps Krishna, Zoroaster, or Buddha, who spread God’s instructions to others at different places and times?

The writer continues:

Is it possible that God has sent other messengers since Jesus, to accommodate His instructions, perhaps Muhammad (as Muslims believe) or Baha’ullah (as Baha’is believe)? If you do not believe these two men were messengers from God, do you believe we are due for another messenger, so God can accommodate his instructions to the moral and spiritual standards of the people of our time? In general, how can we determine which messengers are part of God’s progressive revelation and which are not?

According to Scripture, Jesus was the full revelation of God to us (Heb. 1:1-2). Not only did he teach us about God, but also His work of securing our redemption was the culmination of God’s plan. He was the focus of God’s message. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament point to Him. As two sorrowful disciples of

Jesus made their way home after His death, He appeared to them, and “beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, [Jesus] explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). The New Testament clearly is focused on Jesus as well. If Jesus was the focus of God’s message, anyone who legitimately spoke for God after Jesus was simply clarifying and expanding on His message.

In another e-mail, the same writer said: “I am struck by the great similarities of the world’s religions. It seems to me that certain central themes run through them all . . . for example, Love for God and your fellow man.” In response, I quoted Steve Turner’s tongue-in-cheek declaration of religious pluralists: “We believe that all religions are basically the same . . . They all believe in love and goodness. They only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.” [{14}](#)

Those are some major differences, aren’t they? So all religions believe in God. Which God? There are polytheists, Trinitarian theists, oneness theists, pantheists, panentheists, . . . Which view of God is true? What about salvation? Are we to become one with the cosmos, or find forgiveness through faith in Jesus alone? Are we to discover our own essential divinity, or recognize that we are finite, contingent beings who were made to serve the one true God who is “Wholly Other”? According to Jesus, there is only one God and only one way to Him.

It’s clear, then, that no other “messenger” such as Krishna or Buddha, who doesn’t preach Jesus and salvation through him alone, could be from God.

## **Flames**

Along with e-mails asking questions and occasionally giving us pats on the back, there are those that take issue with something we’ve said.

One general kind of criticism is that we don’t know what we’re talking about. Here’s an excerpt from an e-mail to Dr. Ray Bohlin:

I was highly disturbed by the content of this page. Your delusions and misinterpretation of facts is highly disconcerting. . . . This page is ripe with Christian propaganda and follows a thoroughly unscholarly approach in developing its argument. I only hope that millions of innocent people are not blinded by your lies, and that scientific research will continue to restore the truth that has been so corrupted by the archaic concept that is Christianity.

Wow! That's rather harsh. But notice that there are no specific issues mentioned. Here is Ray's response in part:

I . . . noticed that your message was loaded with accusations but no substance or specifics. If you really think we are so full of errors and lies, a few examples might allow us the opportunity to correct them.

The critic wrote back to say he would substantiate his accusations but never did.

Others of us have been accused of not knowing what we're talking about. One writer thought Pat Zukeran's assessment of Buddhism reflected a lack of direct experience with Buddhists. Pat replied,

I come from an island that is 80% Buddhist. My entire family clan has held to Buddhist teachings for hundreds of years. My parents and cousins remain in the Buddhist faith. I grew up under the teachings of the Buddhist temples near my house. I have been a member of the Young Buddhist Association. Therefore, I have many Buddhist friends including my own family members.

That should be enough experience, shouldn't it?

Occasionally we receive e-mails that almost fry our monitors—"flaming," I think it's called. Don Closson received this one:

I read your article about Bishop Spong, and while I don't always agree with him, I'm not an idiot like you who doesn't understand one word of the bishop's writings. You should try living in the 21st century sometime. What an idiot.



This isn't going to look good on Don's resume.

If things aren't looking good for Don, though, what about poor Ray? One writer said, "Hey I read your commentary on apes, 'hominids', and humans and thought it [stinks]." Well, he didn't say "stinks," but I think it would be improper to use his actual word. "Surely you can find something better to do than knock God's evolutionary plan back into the dark ages," he continues. "LOL. Crack me up. . . what a buffoon! You crack me up!"

But wait! It gets worse. Here's an e-mail that begins, "You are a sad man." Another says plainly, "You're sick." One says, "I think that you are a moron." Whoa! What kind of crew do we have here at Probe, anyway?

One final e-mail ought to be noted. Someone was upset about one of our articles on evolution and creation, and concluded his message with this:

All your pseudo-religion promotes is hate and intolerance, preaching your holier [sic] than thou attitude. So with great contempt I say, if your god is real, may you burn in hell, you evil Christian dinosaur.

Let's see. We preach "hate and intolerance," and the writer consigns us to a long stay in hell?

At Probe we take input seriously . . . when it's presented in a reasonable manner. Maybe a variation of the Golden Rule should be a guide: "Speak unto others as you would have them speak unto you." Do you have a complaint? State it clearly, give specific examples, and keep the tone as amiable as possible. And one of our sick, holier than thou, unscholarly, idiotic buffoons will answer . . . once we figure out what we're talking about.

## Notes

1. I have drawn extensively from chapter four of Harold Hoehner's *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), pp. 65-74, for this discussion.



2. W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels* (London, 1948), 569-577; cited in Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects*, 66-67.
3. Also, there are more occasions in the Gospels where Jesus is said to rise on the third day than after the third day (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Cor. 15:4).
4. Hoehner, 68.
5. New Testament scholar Leon Morris notes that there is no evidence that the phrase indicates the day before the Passover; all clear references to the “day of preparation” refer to Friday. See Hoehner, 70.
6. Hoehner, 71.
7. John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 75.
8. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 263.
9. Hamilton, 264.
10. Ibid.
11. *Holman Bible Dictionary*, “Nephilim.”
12. Hamilton, 270.
13. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsche, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1: The Pentateuch. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 137.
14. Steve Turner, *Nice and Nasty* (Marshall and Scott, 1980).

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# Protecting Your Family On the Internet

Sue Bohlin

## Protecting from Pornography

What's available for free and sometimes delivered without asking for it is not just airbrushed naked women anymore—it's very clear pictures of people actually engaging in various types of sex, bestiality, and adults molesting children.

Like the tobacco industry used to, the pornography industry aggressively targets young children as consumers. They position their Web sites to be found in seemingly innocent searches using words like toys, Disney, Nintendo, or dolls. According to NetValue, children spent 64.9 percent more time on pornography sites than they did on game sites in September 2000. Over one quarter (27.5%) of children age 17 and under visited an adult Web site, which represents 3 million unique underage visitors.[\[1\]](#)

But they are not the only ones struggling with easy and anonymous access to pornography—over 200,000 Americans, classified as “cybersex compulsives,” are hopelessly addicted to e-porn. The study, conducted by psychologists at Stanford and Duquesne universities, appears in the March 2001 issue of the journal *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*.

We personally know of people now in jail for stealing to support their porn addiction. Pastors are hearing from scores of people in their congregations who are secretly addicted to e-porn. Exposure to pornography, for some, escalates into

more perverse and dehumanizing images. Online pornography is so strongly graphic, sending a hormonal power surge through the brain, that it has been called “electronic crack cocaine.”

Protection from online pornography is essential. Parental involvement is the first line of defense. And Internet filters will add an additional layer of security in the home. Whether a filtered Internet service provider, a filtering software program, or even hardware filters just recently available, some level of filtering is better than none, but none are perfect. The technology is developing every day and filters are far more effective and less intrusive than a couple of years ago.

Many organizations have tested filtering technologies, and their evaluations and experience is available to parents. The Center for Decency ([www.centerfordecency.org](http://www.centerfordecency.org)), the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families ([www.filterreview.org](http://www.filterreview.org)) and a combination of several organizations at [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org) are excellent resources.

Those sites will also provide excellent advice to parents about monitoring their children or spouse’s online activities as well as provide resources to deal with situations that arise if pornography is a problem in the home.

Put your computer in a public place in your home where anyone can see what’s on the screen. Determine how much time children can spend online. Some families link screen time to reading time: a half-hour of reading earns you 30 minutes of Internet time. Talk to your children about the dangers of pornography. We warned our boys about “mind dirt,” the kind of mental images that can’t be washed out of memory like the mud that was ground into their soccer uniforms. Talk about why pornography is wrong: because it destroys the dignity that God gives people made in His image, and because it fuels our flesh instead of our spirits.<sup>{2}</sup>

Protecting our families from Internet pornography in our homes, businesses, schools, and libraries is one of the most loving and important things we can do for

them.

## Protecting from Predators

Several years ago when my son was about eight or nine, we had a memorable conversation when he decided he was going to run away from home. I used all the arguments from reason to try and dissuade him, but he was determined to leave. He was quite confident that if he met any bad guys, he'd just "beat 'em up," and that would be the end of that. I had to tell him about the *real* bad guys who are out there looking for vulnerable runaways, alone and defenseless, who either capture or lure them to places where they make horrible videos of grownups doing horrible things to kids—or worse. Thankfully, he decided to stay home.

As parents, of course we want to protect our kids from predators "out there" in the world; but it's just as important to protect them from predators online. Evil people and pedophiles know how to find children who don't know enough to be suspicious and self-protective, and they often rationalize their actions by saying that if parents don't protect their kids, then they deserve whatever happens.

One of the most unsafe places on the Internet is chat rooms. Conversations start out in a group, but one person can invite another into a private conversation. Anyone can initiate a private conversation, called an "instant message" or IM, with any other computer user once they know their nickname or screen name. I strongly suggest you teach your kids not to go into chat rooms or have private conversations unless you are supervising. Some "kids" they meet in chat rooms or IM's may not be kids at all, but adults with bad intentions.

It's essential to set down safety rules for our families. Teach your kids never to give out personal information like their age, phone number, school, or your town or city. Don't even let them use their real names. Kids must never call or meet an online friend in person unless a parent is there. And it would be wise also not to have a personal profile, which is a big part of the America Online community, but

also Web sites like Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)). Predators prowl the profiles looking for likely victims.

Donna Rice Hughes, [{3}](#) a children's Internet safety advocate, suggests some excellent questions to ask your kids who spend time online:

- Have you seen any pornographic pictures?
- Has anyone online talked dirty to you?
- Have you met anyone online whom you don't know?
- Has anyone asked you for personal information?
- Has anyone asked to meet you in person?

Ask the questions, and watch their body language for clues that anything has happened. We need to stay alert. We need to protect our kids from predators.

## **Protecting Ourselves Emotionally**

The Internet has opened an almost literal Pandora's box of emotional disasters for huge numbers of people.

An innocent looking computer screen or television set, for those with Web TV, turns out to be a portal to enormously addictive and powerful relationships with people we would never otherwise meet. People can be overwhelmed by the sense of truly connecting with people in an intense, compelling way. It can be a shock and a thrill to get a computer for doing mundane tasks like word processing or bookkeeping and discover that when it connects to the Internet, there are live people on the other side of the screen! The nature of online communication is different from the face-to-face or telephone communication we're used to in real life (or "RL" in net-speak). For one thing, people can project themselves as they wish to be. The painfully shy introvert can become a witty conversationalist, the charismatic center of attention in a chat room. Overweight, slovenly people can pretend to be buff and beautiful. Middle-aged men can-and do-present themselves as young girls.

This means that online communication so often isn't between *people* as much as between *personas*. Add to that the development of a dizzily rapid sense of intimacy, and you have the potential for people to get hurt by not guarding their hearts as Proverbs 4:23 tells us to do.

For instance, one young man met disaster when, lonely after his divorce, he thought he fell in love with a young lady he met in a chat room. They started talking by phone. He professed his love for her; she professed her love for him. She visited him for a romantic weekend tryst. But it turns out she was a fourteen-year-old runaway, not eighteen as she had said, and when her parents tracked her down they had him arrested as a sex offender.[\[4\]](#)

Many married people have discovered how intrusive the Internet can be when their spouses start spending hours online in chat rooms and private conversation. Many marriages have broken up over online affairs. It doesn't matter if the relationships become physical or not; when people give their affections to another person, it's adultery of the heart.

How do we protect ourselves emotionally?

First, pre-decide to guard your heart (Prov. 4:23). If you start to think and daydream about someone in a way that you would be embarrassed if others knew what you were thinking, pull back. You're probably spending too much time online and spending too much emotional energy on that person. Redirect your thoughts to ones that are more righteous.

Second, if you're married, shore up your relationship. Spend at least as much time building into your marriage as you do with online friends. Resolve not to take your spouse for granted or compare him or her to your image of your online friends. Remember that we tend to project onto online friends the qualities we want them to have, and it's not fair to compare the reality of the person you're married to with the fantasy of the *persona* on the other side of the screen. Consider that it is extremely rare, and frankly unwise, for married people to have

close friends of the opposite sex.

Third, watch how much of your heart you share with people online. They are, after all, strangers. Our emotions follow our hearts, and when we give chunks of our hearts away by sharing our hopes and dreams and feelings, our affections are tied to those pieces of our hearts. I've heard it called "emotional fornication," and for good reason.

It's important to realize how quickly and easily we can fall into the false and fast intimacy of online relationships. We need to remember that the intimacy is not real, but the pain that might come from forgetting that *is* very real.

## **Protecting Ourselves Financially**

Every year, more and more people are buying and selling on the Internet. That means more opportunity for fraud, mischief and flat-out evil intentions. How do we protect ourselves financially?[{5}](#)

First, protect your online identity. Identity theft is a growing problem, and the Internet has only made it easier. Don't store your personal information or credit card numbers with online retailers. Reputable merchants will ask if you want them to keep track of your personal information so you don't have to enter it every time. It's not that hard or time-consuming, and it's a good way to protect yourself. Don't give out more information than is necessary, especially your social security number. You're not being paranoid. You're being wise.

Now let's talk about making a purchase online. You don't have to be afraid to do this if you're dealing with a reputable company or organization. Be sure you're dealing with a real company or organization. Look for a physical address and at least one customer service number. (Call it to make sure it's active.) Check out the company online at the Better Business Bureau ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)).

Before entering personal information, make sure you're using a secure, or



encrypted, connection. Look at the site's Web address. If it changed to "https," the 's' shows that it's secure. Although, not all secure connections use the https designation. The one thing you absolutely must see is that the padlock icon on your Web browser is locked.

Once you make your purchase, print a copy of your online order and keep it for the length of the return or warranty period. Your printed copy may be the only proof of your purchase.

Use a credit card instead of a debit card. Credit cards give you bargaining leverage if you need to dispute a charge—for instance, if the item never arrived. With debit cards, it's like spending cash; once the money is out of your account, it's gone.

If you participate in online auctions like eBay or Amazon.com, be aware that auctions are the number one online scam today.[{6}](#) If you don't want to gamble, you can use a third-party escrow service where the seller doesn't get paid until the buyer receives and approves his purchase. The most money lost in Internet scamming is through the Nigerian money offers.[{7}](#) "These offers, which used to come by airmail but now are increasingly arriving by email, promise millions of dollars in exchange for allowing your bank account to be used to safeguard someone else's riches. But the real intent is to take money out of your account, not put money in it."[{8}](#)

We need to be just as good stewards of God's money online as we do every other place.

## **Protecting Ourselves from Unnecessary Losses**

The rise of the Internet has opened new doors to all kinds of unnecessary losses from which the wise person protects himself or herself. Probably the biggest loss is time. And probably the biggest time-waster is chat rooms. They are not productive, and many are not safe because predators prowl there. They

encourage a false sense of intimacy and community. Chat rooms are a way to spend time, but when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, one wonders how much of that activity will withstand the fiery test and endure into eternity? (1 Cor. 3:12-15)

Another consumer of time is e-mail. The problem with this is that, like handwritten letters, some e-mail is valuable for true communication. And like newspapers, some is valuable for disseminating information. But a lot of time is spent forwarding messages that are actually hoaxes and urban legends. Like fake virus warnings, for instance. I get several of these a week, and often per day, urging me to forward the letter to everyone in my address book. Please, before passing on a virus warning, check it out at one of the sites that expose virus warning hoaxes, like [www.Vmyths.com](http://www.Vmyths.com). And please don't waste your time or anybody else's by passing on e-mails that promise goodies in exchange for forwarding the message to a certain number of people. There is no such thing as e-mail tracking. Nobody will know if you forwarded the message, and you won't ever get the goodies.

But real viruses are a true threat, and they can wipe out data on your computer. That is a completely unnecessary loss because of the excellent virus-protection software available today, such as Norton Anti-Virus or McAfee VirusScan. Don't open e-mail attachments if you don't know what they are or if you don't know the person who sent them. (You generally [9](#) don't need to worry about opening the e-mail message itself, though. It's the attachments you need to be concerned about.) Many programs infect a person's computer and send out copies of themselves to people in their address books and the sender doesn't even know it's happening. I regularly receive messages containing viruses and worms from people I don't know because I'm the one who sends out our online newsletter, the [Probe-Alert](#), and some people's infected e-mail programs automatically reply back with nasty surprises for my computer.

In this article we've looked at ways to protect ourselves and our families from

online pornography and online predators. We suggested how to prevent emotional and financial disasters. And finally we've examined some unnecessary losses. Hopefully, you've found something that will help you pursue the worthy scriptural goal of "doing all to the glory of God," (1 Cor. 10:31) even in your online life.

## Notes

1. "The NetValue Report on Minors Online," *Business Wire*, December 19, 2000.
2. I enthusiastically recommend two Web sites for people addicted to porn and those who love them. The first is divided into two sections, targeted at both groups of people, with different articles on each. [www.pureintimacy.org](http://www.pureintimacy.org). The second is [www.settingcaptivesfree.com](http://www.settingcaptivesfree.com), which features an online Bible study program ("Pure Freedom") through which many have found freedom from sexual addiction for the first time in their lives.
3. <http://www.protectkids.com>
4. <http://www.ozarkcountry.com/jerry>.
5. The Kim Komando National Talkradio Show E-Zine, May 26, 2001.
6. <http://www.natlconsumersleague.org/susantestimony52301.html>
7. <http://www.fraud.org/scamsagainstbusinesses/tips/nigerian.htm>
8. <http://www.natlconsumersleague.org/susantestimony52301.html>
9. There are exceptions, such as the Wscript.Kakworm that someone sent me. According to the Symantec web site, "The worm utilizes a known Microsoft Outlook Express security hole so that a viral file is created on the system without having to run any attachment. Simply reading the received email message causes the virus to be placed on the system." This shows the importance of running an up-to-date virus protection program, because I was alerted to the presence of the

worm as soon as it arrived in my inbox and before I opened the e-mail message that contained it.

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# **“The Creation/Evolution Controversy is Keeping Me From Believing”**

Dr. Ray Bohlin

**Dear Ray Bohlin,**

**I read your article [Christian Views of Science and Earth History](#), and at the end it said about how you have been researching about this for twenty years, but still haven't come to a conclusion about it. If (macro)evolution isn't proved true, then why would people involved in science treat it as a fact? Two people who come to my mind are Michael Behe and Phillip Johnson. I guess Behe believes in macroevolution and Johnson doesn't, but they still both support Intelligent Design theory. Does Johnson just not know enough about science, or is Behe perhaps wrong? Maybe I've just become way too skeptical. I don't like being like this, but it's hard not to be! How can I not let this controversy about evolution keep me from believing? How do you do it? Maybe you just have more faith than I do. I don't know.**

Basically, my only question is concerning the age of the earth and universe. I do not consider this the critical issue so I am willing to live with a certain amount of

tension here. There are many good Christians, both theologians and scientists who disagree on the time frame of Genesis, so you are not alone.

Macroevolution is treated as fact primarily because it is necessary for a naturalistic world view. If there is no God then some form of evolution must be true. This is why so many evolutionists are not troubled by evolution's problems. They are firmly convinced that some form of evolution has occurred and the problems will be solved some day. Here their faith is in their world view and not necessarily science. Phil Johnson does a good job of talking about this in his first two books, *Darwin on Trial* and *Reason in the Balance*.

Being skeptical is OK. If Christianity is really true, then it can stand up to the scrutiny. I encourage you to continue to ask your questions and seek for answers. I have never been disappointed when I have felt the need to dig a little deeper. The Lord won't disappoint you either.

An excellent book you may want to pick up is by Lee Strobel called *The Case for Faith* (Harper Collins/Zondervan). It's a series of interviews with top Christian scholars looking for answers to the toughest challenges to faith. One of the interviews is with Dr. Walter Bradley from Texas A & M about evolution and the origin of life. Because each chapter is a retelling of an interview it's not overly technical but extremely helpful and honest.

I certainly don't feel I have all the answers about the evolution question either. I am convinced however, that evolution certainly doesn't have all the answers and some of the missing answers are to the most crucial questions such as a workable and observable mechanism of change.

In the past when I was feeling threatened as you are I would frequently need to return to the basics which I knew were true. The facts of Jesus historical existence, the reliability of the New Testament, the historical reliability of his resurrection, and God's clear direction and presence in my life. Then I would combine this with Jesus own confirmation of the historicity of Genesis (see Matt.

19:3-6, Matt. 23: 29-37, and Matt. 24:37-39 and [“Why We Believe in Creation”](#)) and Paul’s clear statement of the creation exhibiting his character in Romans 1:18-20 and it was obvious that something was very wrong with evolution and somehow God’s creative fingerprints are evident in the natural world. That would keep me going. Now the more I have studied and probed, the more bankrupt evolution has become and the reasonableness and scientific integrity of design becomes more and more self-evident.

Hope this helps.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin

Probe Ministries

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## **Privacy 2000**

Kerby Anderson

### **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 cyberspace. 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.

# Privacy Issues

Kerby Anderson

## 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 cyberspace. 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.

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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.



*Freeing Cultural Captives.  
Building Confident Ambassadors.*

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