

RIGHT or WRONG? Bio-ethics

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As medicine implements stem-cell research, genetic engineering and other scientific achievements, are we violating the created will of God? Do we infringe on things we have no business doing when we dabble with the human body?

At what point are we “playing God” with the knowledge and technology we acquire? The question recognizes a basic theological understanding of the fact we are limited, sinful humans who have shown from the very beginning of existence the propensity to make wrong choices when faced with the opportunity to exceed ourselves.

Such concern struggles with the tension of also understanding the theological concept that God has given us dominion over the earth, and he has worked with humanity to develop wonderful and miraculous answers to the complex problems that bring pain and suffering to the world. Such good cannot be ignored.

Medical experimentation has created attempts to “purify” the races and forced involuntary sterilization on the mentally ill. Medical experimentation also has provided cures and preventions for polio, smallpox, tuberculosis and numerous other diseases that have plagued society. Thus, we cannot always say we are right to take control of science and nature, nor can we say we always are wrong. Medical technology is no different than any other powerful technologies of history. Technology always produces a quandary.

We are forced by such development into the realm of making choices. The question is not whether or not we play God. The question is how we make choices.

The technologies themselves basically are neutral. The good or evil they

produce results from the purposes society pursues or for which it permits them to be used. Here is where Christianity has the opportunity to exert its influence over society in making these decisions.

Christians affect this process by gaining accurate and thorough knowledge of the facts and details of the issues involved. Too often, fears based on ignorance and false or distorted information cause unnecessary and impulsive reactions. Included in gathering this knowledge must be the realization the ethics of the situations and issues rarely will be concrete or clear. An innate sense of humility will help provide a reliable foundation for investigation.

Christians also must gain an accurate and thorough knowledge of the value system created by God in his people. While the Bible does not address every conceivable ethical issue, it does provide a solid understanding of God's purpose and plan for the world and his people. The task of Christians in this sphere of technology is to try to control such knowledge and power in a way that does not destroy humanity and creation, but fulfills God's plan for us to serve the world as we wait for his ultimate redemption.

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