

*Secular Morality in Matters of Life and Death*  
*David Cook*

I do quite a lot of travel, and when you travel sometimes you want to be left alone. I want to give you a little clue how to achieve that. When people ask you, “What do you do for a living?” You say, “I teach philosophy.” That is the end of every conversation. I never had anybody say, “Wow! A real, live philosopher! Have I ever got some philosophical questions for you!” But every now and then I feel almost human and want some human contact. So when they say, “What do you do for a living?” then I say, “I teach ethics.” They think that is the county next to Thuthex (Sussex). “No, I teach medical ethics,” and they think that is a disease that doctors catch from senior doctors. Then they all tell me about their “friend,” and they know remarkable details of their “friend’s” medical problems. They describe it and want me to comment on their “friend’s” medical problem, because everyone is interested in medical issues today.

I used to work in an Episcopalian seminary. For a Baptist like me, that was hard going. It was interesting that in the seminary we had a particular model. Our model was to draw what we called vicars (pastors) who had in one hand a newspaper and in the other hand a Bible because we wanted to bring God’s Word and God’s world together. Sometimes, you know, we need to keep God’s Word fresh. So I like to read different translations, and I like particularly J.B. Phillip’s translation of Romans 12:2. He does not say, “Do not be conformed to this world.” He says, “Do not let this world squeeze you into its mold.” Whether we like it or not, we live in a society, a culture, a world, a global world which is trying to squeeze us into its own mold. I want to think this morning about

how people outside the church, how non-Christians, how secular people, how people in government make decisions, particularly about questions of life and death.

I want you to imagine a nice, friendly discussion between a Roman Catholic doctor and a rabid feminist, and they are discussing that innocuous issue – abortion. The feminist says, “A woman has a fundamental right to do whatever she wants with her own body.” The Roman Catholic doctor says, “Why?” The woman says, “Well... Well, a woman has a fundamental right to do whatever she wants with her own body. For her, it is a principle.” The Roman Catholic doctor says, “Abortion is wrong.” The feminist says, “Why?” The Roman Catholic says, “It is wrong because it is wrong.” You see there are people in our secular world who still believe in principles. One of the key principles they still believe in is autonomy, choice, the individual doing his or her own thing. We live in a society where people believe in principles--some principles-- not as much as they did.

I have a friend (and if you knew me better, you would know how remarkable that is) who is a Scotsman because as members of a persecuted minority group, we have to stick together. One day my friend said to me, “David” (because that is the kind of friends that we are. We call each other by our first names.) “David” (he repeats it because I suffer from this identity crisis). “David,” he says, “I had like to cut off one of your hands.” These are the kind of friends that I have. But when you study philosophy and ethics, you get used to what people say. I said, “That is very interesting, Arthur. Why would you like to cut off one of my hands?” He said, “It would stop this annoying habit you have of saying, ‘On the one hand...but on the other hand’.”

Now, on the one hand, many people in our secular world make their decisions about life and death based on principles, things which are right because they are right and

which are wrong because they are wrong. But on the other hand, there are two problems with principle-based morality.

Number one is from where do you get your principles? In the mornings, I am not good for very much except Corn Flakes packet reading and I can just about do that. When I read Corn Flakes packets, or any other cereal, I find that these cereals are full of natural ingredients, because what is “natural” is good, but what is “unnatural” is bad. So some people look to nature to provide them with certain kinds of principles. That is why the ecological, the environmental movement today is looking to nature, to Gaia to find some basic principles for life. Now there is a problem with that.

You may not believe it to listen to me, but I do quite a lot of speaking. When you do a lot of speaking, what you do is compare audiences. I have to tell you the most difficult audience--and it is certainly not seminary students or even the military or the police, not even politicians--the most difficult are pastors. It is terrible if you get a whole gathering of pastors together. So I have learned a very simple technique. When I am back in the U.K. and there are all these Anglican clergy there and I am speaking to them, I say, “One in ten people are homosexual.” Then I begin to count them. “ One, two, three, four....” What happens is that they all move away from each other very quickly and say, “I’ve never seen this man before.”

The question is, is homosexuality *natural*? Now, most people would think that it is *unnatural*. But there are one to two percent of the people who seem almost exclusively attracted to the same sex. If I say to that person, “Is homosexuality natural?”--they will say, “Yes, homosexuality is natural to *me*.” How do we define what is natural? From where do we get our principles? Well, from nature.

For some people, principles are obvious; they are self-evident. You know it by intuition. You just look at a situation, and you know. You can not explain it; you do not need to offer a reason, a rationale. It is simply there, and it is obvious. The difficulty is that for some people, going to war in Iraq was obviously the thing to do. For other people, going to war in Iraq was obviously *not* the thing to do. Different people have different intuitions. How do I cope with that kind of difference? Do I say, “The trouble with you is you are morally blind?” How can we work and get principles when people have different intuitions, different “self-evident” truths?

Others point to religions. Christianity has fundamental principles. Buddhism has fundamental principles. Hinduism has fundamental principles. Islam has fundamental principles. But are all the principles the same? Are all religions just the same with exactly the same principles? That is the first problem about what is called deontological principle-based morality. From where do you get your principles? Of course, if we were at Oxford where I teach some, it would be, “Whence do we derive our principles?” That is for any Brit who is present today.

The other problem with this deontological principle-based morality is *how do I decide between principles?* How do I deal with conflict? You see, the Roman Catholic doctor has a principle – all abortion is wrong. The feminist has a principle – a woman can do whatever she wants with her own body. So how in principle do I decide between principles? The answer is the same way hedgehogs make love-- very carefully.

How do people in our secular society make moral decisions, particularly about issues of life and death? For some people, it is about principles, but there are problems there. For other people, it is not about principles; it is about consequences. If the

consequences are good, then it is a good thing. I will do it. If the consequences are bad, then it is bad; it is wrong. I will not do it. For some people, the consequences are the end that justifies the means. If the end is a good thing, then it does not matter what the means are, as long as I arrive at the good consequences, the good end.

Much of my teaching is done at Oxford to medical students. I give them this little dilemma. Now this is your thrill for the day. You can all pretend to be an Oxford medical student. I say to them, “We have just had news that a bomb has been planted in the hospital. We do not know where it is. But the good news is, we have caught the man who planted the bomb.” Then I ask the students, and I ask you, too, “How many of you would be willing to torture this man to save the lives of the people in the hospital?” How many torturers do we have here this morning? Well, there are one or two in the back. How many would not torture? Well, there must be a lot of people with a very red mark across their buttocks, because you are all sitting on the fence here. Either you would torture or you would not torture. It is interesting, when I ask the medical students, I have to tell you, medical students at Oxford, 95 percent of them would torture. This is the kind of medical training that we give them there. But there is always 3, 4, 5 percent, usually in Christian settings it is higher, who say, “No, torture is always wrong, even if we *might* save the hospital.” And of course, it is only a *might* save because you do not know whether the person would rather die than tell you what is happening. You do not know whether you will be able to torture him successfully and find out in time and still defuse the bomb. Even for a very good end, you can not do something which is wrong in itself. The end does not always justify the means.

That is not the only problem with consequentialist morality. You see, if you have the consequence on the one hand, then on the other hand you have, *how do you predict and control consequences?* At Oxford I am a Fellow of one of the colleges there, and we had a problem recently. Our head of the college, not the president, we call him the warden, because it is a bit like being in prison, really. Our warden got demoted; he went to the House of Lords. We had to find a new warden, so we went down at the center of Oxford, the previous warden, Sir John Walton, and I, and suddenly this desire to become the new warden got hold of me. So I gave Sir John a loving and very friendly push in front of one of the buses coming up the center. Now John is a Methodist, but in spite of that, he is still a good man. And just at that moment, Providence intervened. The bus driver had a mild heart attack (now, it is mild because Providence is a good thing – that is a theological joke, in case you missed it) and loses control of the bus. The bus swerves, misses John Walton lying in the street, and mounts the sidewalk and knocks me down instead. I like to use these everyday kinds of examples. Now, if you are on the other side of the street, what do you see? You see that brave little Scotsman, David Cook, saving the life of the Warden of Green College, pushing him out of the way of this mad careening bus and sadly giving his life as a sacrifice for others. The funeral oration would be absolutely tremendous. Unfortunately, this is not quite what I had in mind! The problem is, I could not predict and control the consequences of my own action, never mind predict and control the consequences of other people's actions.

I go to work early one morning. I work in the World Trade Center. I am there at 7:00 am. It is good to be there on the top floor. Then someone steals an airliner and flies it into the building. I can not predict and control the consequences. In our secular world,

if people build their morality on consequences alone, they will run into fundamental difficulties.

How do people in our society want to squeeze us into their morality, their moral mold, their way of thinking about issues of life and death? How do they do that? They do it either by principles, or they do it by consequences, or they do it by happiness. “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we diet.” You see, we live in a society where people want to be happy. They want to be satisfied; they want to be fulfilled. I have been selecting men for ministry since 1970. It is interesting, when you interview people for ministry in the UK, I would say to them, “Why do you want to go into ministry?” They would say in the 70s, “I want to go into the ministry to serve Christ. I want to serve humanity. I want to make a difference in the world.” But now if I go to a selection school, and I say to them, “Why do you want to go into the ministry?” They say, “It will fulfill me. It will give me an opportunity to be myself, to use all my gifts.” You see, we have moved away from service to satisfaction. Happiness has become the basis for much of our moral thinking, inside the church, never mind outside the church.

But of course, on the other hand, there is a problem with that. I am sure you have all heard about the sadist and the masochist. The masochist says to the sadist, “Beat me! Beat me!” The sadist says, “No.” Now, you need to think about that clearly, but if you do think about it, you will realize that people are made happy by different things. How do we live in a society where different people want different things? That is where John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham came along and said it is easy because we do not just look for the individual’s happiness, we look for the greatest happiness of the greatest

number. The basis on which most of the decision making in politics, in medicine, in business, and in society today is about the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Just before the service, we were talking about the decision in Great Britain, a call on the part of pediatric doctors to say, “Let us kill severely handicapped children. Their life is not worth living. They are a burden to their parents. They are a burden to society. They are a drain on hospital resources.” So for the sake of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, Let us take human life. It is not valuable in itself. All that matters is adding toward the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Bentham even produced with a bit of calculus. You add up all the pleasure; you add up all the pain. You take away the pain from the pleasure. More pleasure than pain? You do it; it is good. More pain? You avoid it; it is bad. This is utilitarian. This is not just a nineteenth-century philosophy. This is alive and well and really at work in our secular society---utilitarianism.

But on the other hand, there are some problems. How can you measure pleasure? To measure anything, you need a unit of measurement. What is the unit of measure? Some people think it should be called a “util” after utilitarian. How many utils make a really good party? I am not really sure how you do the measurement.

Some people say pain and pleasure are not the same. Alleviating someone’s pain and distress is much more morally significant than just pleasing people, giving them a thrill. They are not the same kinds of things. Our moral call is to alleviate pain rather than just give people pleasure.

But the real problem was highlighted by Mill. I was flying down last evening from Chicago, and I was thinking how the trouble with going to seminaries is you have

got to please the faculty and you have got to please the students. I am really interested in pleasing myself. Then I thought, in a way that philosophers do, “What makes you happy, David?” The answer is, “The sound of my own voice with a captive audience.” Then, of course, I looked at the program and it said 40–45 minutes. A mere 40–45 minutes! Now, I am a deeply sensitive soul. I have to tell people that because it is not immediately obvious. But because I am deeply sensitive, my capacity for pleasure is enormous! So I began thinking, how much pleasure would I, deeply sensitive David, have if instead of 45 minutes we had four glorious, uninterrupted hours! You, as a captive audience, listening to me! And the amount of pleasure was absolutely enormous! And that was only my pleasure. If I had added yours as well, wow! I am also a reasonable person, and I recognize that after about 3½ hours, not before, a few, two or three at the most, would be feeling a level of discomfort, probably in the bladder or posterior regions. I thought, “I am at Southeastern Seminary. How much pain are they going to have?” And it was this amount of pain. So we are going to be good utilitarians this morning. We are going to add up the pleasure; we are going to take away the pain. Good news! Four glorious hours of you as a captive audience listening to me! Now, the one little detail is it is not fair.

It is not fair because there are more of you than there are of me. Mill said that we need another principle, not just utility, but the principle of justice. Everybody counts for one, and nobody counts for more than one. And that does solve the problem of having to please the deeply sensitive all the time. Instead, you have to please the Chinese all the time because there are more of them than anybody else.

How do we make decisions in our secular world about issues of life and death? For some people, it is about principles. It is right because it is right, and it is wrong

because it is wrong. For some people, it is about consequences. The end justifies the means. For others, it is about individual happiness. For others, it is about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But for still others, there is another view. If you remember nothing else from today, not even the jokes, if you do not remember that, I want you to pay particular attention to this philosophy because this is so widespread in every congregation, in every setting in my Western world and in the United States. Wherever you go, this is very strong. It is called relativism. It is the idea that there are no absolute principles. What is right, wrong, good, and bad varies from time to time, place to place, person to person. It is a denial of any, even God's, absolute standards. Instead, everything is relative.

When I began teaching in this Episcopalian seminary, the president was a man called Michael Green, a well-known evangelist. Michael gave me advice. Michael said, "David, if you want to be a successful teacher (as I know all the faculty here at Southeastern are), you have got to be nice to students." I have to tell you that being nice to students all the time is a pain in the tonsils. So it is always a great delight not to have to be nice. I remember my first student, a young man, Garth Barbour, and here I was, confronted by this moral dilemma. I thought, "How can I be nice to Garth Barbour? Well, my wife's a good cook, Let us invite Garth for a meal." Then he gave me the bad news – he was married. That meant, for a Scotsman, two meals instead of one. Well, alright, I bit the bullet and said, "Yes, bring your wife as well." Ding-dong, the doorbell rang, I opened the door, and there they were, Garth and Jan Barbour. I said, "Garth, Jan, this is my wife, Kathleen." And Garth Barbour *kissed* my wife! Now I come from a little town in Scotland called Hawick, and in Hawick when somebody kisses your wife, you smash

them in the face. But I did know that that was not the way to begin an ongoing, deeply meaningful relationship. So I restrained myself, and I began to observe the English. Now you would be really surprised if you met lots of English people, at Oxford even in the churches in Oxford. They even have a moment which they call “the peace.” They all gather with the pulchritudinally exceptional, long queues (lines) of young men, all of them waiting to give them what they call “the holy kiss.” I think it is a less than holy, or a more than holy kiss. Then the pulchritudinally challenged are all shaking their watches and going: Let us get on with the service. People in England greet each other with a kiss. So, of course now, having lived in England for thirty years, I am able to adjust. If a lady is good-looking, then I am able... No, no, no.

If you live in Timbuktu, and granny’s getting frail and decrepit, what you do is you kill her and eat her to send her on to the next world. If you live in Tallahassee and granny’s getting frail and decrepit, you put her in an old folks’ home and visit her once a year, whether she likes it or not. Morality varies from time to time, place to place, person to person. A denial of absolutes, everything is relative.

On the other hand, there is a problem. If I say to you everything is relative, is that an absolute or a relative statement? Because, of course, if it is an absolute statement that absolutely everything is relative, it is not true that everything is relative because we have an absolute that absolutely everything is relative. If on the other hand, it is only relatively true that everything is relative, it is only true for some people, some times, some places and not for me now. Of course, that is playing with words, but behind the playing with words there is a very, very serious point. The point is that relativism can not be stated as true. It is literally nonsense. It is literally incomprehensible. Now, you have to be careful.

It does not mean that it is not true. It means that it can not be stated as true without a contradiction. But in fact it is not true because if you examine morality across the cultures, across the religions, down through ages, you will find a core of morality. It is interesting, that core. Always there are rules about parent-children relationships. Always there are rules about sexual behavior. Always there are rules about the taking or not taking of innocent human life. Always there are rules about what belongs or what does not belong. Always there are rules about truth-telling. Five universal, absolute standards. Interestingly, five of God's Ten Commandments. The five of human relationship because you can not have a society, you can not have a community without these fundamental, universal, absolute moral laws. Now, of course, the expression can vary. Caring for the elderly in Timbuktu might mean a different practice from caring for the elderly in Tallahassee, but the principle is the same.

We live in a world, a society, where some people make their morality, their choices about life and death, on the basis of principle. For many, it is about consequences, the end justifies the means. For others it is about individual or about community happiness. And for still others, it is a denial of absolute standards.

Let me just give you one more example. We have a radio program on the BBC. The BBC is made up of different channels, and one of the channels is popular music, it is a radio channel. They have about twelve to fifteen million listeners. One day, I got a call from the BBC. They said, "David, this is the BBC." So I sat up straight in my chair, and I said, "Hello." They said, "We would like you to come on *Radio One*." I laughed and said, "I do *serious* talk radio. I do not do *popular Radio One* music radio." They said, "Well, this is a very interesting program. It is one hour long and it is live." But I said, "There is

no way I am going on *Radio One* live for one hour.” They said, “It is with a female disc jockey, Annie Nightingale.” “YES!!” You do not give people a chance to withdraw an offer like that. I went down to London, and I met Annie Nightingale. She said, “Hello, David.” And I said, “He..he...hellllooo, Annie.” She said, “Come into the studio and relax.” There I was relaxing in the *Radio One* studio with Annie Nightingale. She said, “David, the program’s very simple. We have got an hour. I am going to introduce you; I am going to play a few records; and then we have made a tape compilation. On the tape, there are seven moments. What I am going to do is throughout the session, I will play a moment and then we’ll have a little question and discussion. Then I will play some more music, then another piece of the tape, and we’ll do that for the hour. Is that alright, David?” I said, “Annie,” because, of course, we had become close, personal friends by then, “Annie, that is fine, the only thing is – what is on the tape?” “Oh, David,” she says, “it would spoil the spontaneity of the program if we told you in advance.” So, she introduced me. She played a few records. Twelve million people were listening, and she says, “Now, David, listen to this tape.” It was the Hindenburg disaster. The balloon and its original passengers are taking off. The commentator is describing the scene. It explodes; it bursts into flames. The commentator is weeping hysterically. She switches the tape off and says, “Now, David, would you like to tell the audience why God let that happen.” This was a bad moment, because she was looking for a very simplistic solution to a very difficult problem – the problem of evil.

I often forget to tell people what I said. I said, “It reminds me of the Irishman who jumped off the top of the Empire State Building. As he was going past each floor, he said, ‘Well, so far, so good.’ Then, just before he hit the sidewalk, it turned into a trampoline,

and he bounced to a halt. What kind of world would it be if every time something bad was going to happen, God popped in, made it all right, and then popped out again? You are in the kitchen cutting a tomato. You are just about to cut your finger. God pops in, turns the knife into butter; you take your hand away, the knife turns back into metal, and you carry on cutting. We would have no understanding of the world. We would have no understanding of science. We would have no understanding of cause and effect. We would have no human freedom because the price that we pay for freedom is that bad things can happen to good people as well as to bad people.”

Annie Nightingale wanted to reduce morality to something very simple, and that is what you will find in your churches. You will find in our society that people are not looking for complexity. They are looking for a simplistic, reductionistic account. The Marxist: you want to understand morality?--it is about economic function. The Freudian: you want to understand morality?--it is all about sex and aggression. The Behaviorist: you want to understand morality?--it is all about how you feel. You heard about the two behaviorists walking down the street? One said to the other, “You’re fine; how am I?” (That is an intellectual joke that you need to work on.) How do we understand morality? Some people say “It is only this; it is only this; it is only this.”

What is interesting is the thing (economics, sexual function, behavior), these are true elements of morality. But the part is not the whole. We can not take just one aspect and make that everything. We need to be holistic. That is the beauty of the gospel. It is a holistic gospel. It deals with the whole person and the whole of life. God is interested and concerned with every aspect of our being--not reductionism. The problem really is Procrustes. I am sure you all remember Procrustes, that lovely ancient Greek gentleman.

When people went to visit him, he said to please stay. A bit like the Guest House, it was a lovely guest house, and he said to please stay. The only thing was, he was very hospitable, but he was a perfectionist. He liked you to occupy all six feet of the guest bed. Now I was a little disappointing to Procrustes because there is only 5 feet 7 inches of me. But racks are wonderful things, and if you stretch somebody on a rack long enough, eventually you fit the bed perfectly. I had a student from Nigeria, Adeyemo Soleyi. Adeyemo was 6 feet 7 inches. He was a big disappointment to Procrustes because there was more of Adeyemo than there was of the bed. But axes are wonderful things. Chop off the head; chop off the feet; Adeyemo fits the bed perfectly. That is what the reductionist does, the Marxist, the Freudian, the behaviorist. They come along with their framework, and they stretch the facts to fit in with the theory. If there are some things that do not fit in, they chop them off and ignore them. Beware the reductionist who gives simplistic solutions to very complicated moral problems.

We live in a society where we as pastors, we as Christians, we as thinkers, we as teachers, we as Christians, need to understand the world around us. We need to understand it without allowing it to squeeze us into its mold, particularly when it comes to questions of life and death. The way that people make decisions--principles, consequences, happiness for the individual, happiness for the community, a denial of absolute values, anything goes, everybody does what is right in their own eyes, or they reduce morality to just one aspect rather than the full aspect, the totality of what it means to be a human in God's world.

We understand. We criticize. But so what? Paul says, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold. Instead, be transformed." It is the same word as was used for

the Mount of Transfiguration. Transformation. We can be changed. That is the good news of the gospel. That is the good news of Christian morality. That is the good news of Christian thinking. We can be transformed. How? How does transformation happen? Paul tells us, “By the renewing of your mind.” Not your thought, not your soul, not your feelings, but your *mind*. “Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus.” As your president said, we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, our soul, our *mind* and strength. It is by the daily renewal of our mind. Paul knows that we Christians are interested in consequences, and I will talk more about that tomorrow. But our concern for consequences drives us to say, “So what? So I resist being squeezed into the world’s mold, so here I am trying to be transformed, here I am trying to renew my mind?” Then you will know, that is a promise. You will know God’s will. What is that like, to know God’s will, God’s will about my future, about my ministry, about my life’s partner, about what is best for my children? I will *know* God’s will. Paul tells us something about God’s will. God’s will is *good*. God sets the standard of morality. Human beings try to set up their own standards. That is why it is so difficult.

One of my roles in life back in the UK is that I am a member of the United Kingdom Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority. Now if you can say that in Oxford, they will give you a degree. I will be amazed if any of you know what xenotransplantation is. Xenotransplantation is taking organs from animals and putting them into human beings. When the British government set up the committee, they said, “Who will we have on this committee?” They looked for a vet, and they looked for a scientist, and they looked for a business person from the drug companies, and they looked for an academic. And they looked for a *Christian* voice, because they wanted to have

some basic, fundamental morality. Because there were too many voices in the secular world, it was too confusing. How could they ever arrive at any basic, fundamental morality that would mean something to people of faith and mean something to people who have no faith? Because, you see, when God made the world, He wrote His law, His moral law, into the nature of people. That is why Paul says, “You are a Gentile? You haven’t got God’s law, but you have got it written in your heart.” It is there, the sense of right and wrong. We are able to provide a standard for goodness. God’s will is what is good, and it is perfect. It makes people whole. It makes people saved. That is the same root word for salvation. Wholeness, perfection, everything fits together. Everything operates as it is meant to operate. We are the people God created us to be. We are the people Christ died for us to be. We are the people His Spirit lives within us, daily conforming us more and more into the image of Christ. God’s will is good. His standard is good--good in itself and good for us. God’s will is perfect. It makes us as individuals whole. It makes us as a community whole. It is also pleasing.

It is interesting, Paul knows that we like to be satisfied. We like to be pleased. We like to have that satisfaction. We know that none but Christ can satisfy. We will know that satisfying presence of Christ, that satisfying will of Christ, the will of God in our lives, *if* we resist being squeezed into the world’s mode, resist being conformed to the world’s mold.

Consider stem cell research. The world says, “Are you in favor of stem cell research?” They do not explain that there are different kinds of stem cell research--the stem cells we take from adults, the stem cells we take from umbilical cords. Just two weeks ago, they developed a liver from stem cells taken from an umbilical cord. Here is

the way for stem cell research. I am in favor of stem cell research – adult stem cell research, umbilical cord stem cell research. But creating embryos simply to take their cells and then destroy them, is that what we want?

Euthanasia means dying well. People think it is talking about the youth in Asia rather than the youth in Europe. But here we are in a world, a society, where we speak of the right to die. What an odd notion that is, the right to die. What we really mean is a freedom to die, a right implies that we have a responsibility. Can we say to a doctor or a nurse, “You have a responsibility to end somebody’s life”? That is what the pediatricians are saying in Great Britain. “You are a handicapped person. Your life is not worth living.” Who decides that? It is very interesting if you look at the statistics. You ask a person with handicaps, “Is your life worth living? Rate your life out of ten.” Eight out of ten is what they give! You ask a doctor to rate the very same life out of ten; the rating they give is two out of ten! Whose opinion is more important? A person suffering from a handicap, or those who make the policy based on *medical* advice?

You see, we live in a society which challenges the very beginning of life, and the very end of life, and indeed throughout all life. You as pastors, as teachers, as facilitators, enablers, are going to be confronted by people who have moral dilemmas. I was sitting in a class yesterday afternoon at Wheaton. The editor of the student newspaper came into the class and said, “Can I ask you a question?” I said, “Certainly.” She said, “I’ve heard of an advertisement from a couple living in Wheaton who want to advertise for an egg donor. They are willing to pay a young woman to donate eggs so they will be able to have a child. Should we run it?” Well, here is a Christian ghetto, Wheaton, and even

there, the world is intruding, is raising moral questions. If that happens in the ghetto, how much more will it happen in situations where people are out in the world facing reality?

I love you, president. I love Bruce. I love what Southeastern is doing. And I hear nothing but good wherever I go about what is being achieved here. And I love you.

Because I love you, I want to say to you *do not let the world squeeze you into its mold but be transformed by the renewing of your mind and then you will know God's will, His will which is good and pleasing and perfect. Amen.*

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