

## EDITOR'S NOTES

**Leonard W. Pine**

Last year, while on a trip in the Southeast visiting churches and colleges on behalf of Western Reformed Seminary, I was asked by a college librarian if we ever featured studies of social concerns in the *WRS Journal*. Startled, I replied that we hadn't up to that point. She urged me to do so in future issues, and as I left her office, I determined in my heart to follow her advice. We Christians desire to be the salt of the earth, yet often we content ourselves with letting the salt stay in the shaker of our own circles! About that same time Dolly the sheep appeared on the scene, and abortion "rights" were big in the news. Here in Oregon, debate was hot concerning what supporters called the "Death with Dignity" bill. So the issues I should cover presented themselves to me on a platter, and now here we are, ready to take our theology and apply it to society. Lord willing, this will not be the last such issue that takes this approach (as you can tell by the title of the next issue listed on the front cover).

This summer the Lord has brought home the issues of life and death and who is in charge of it all in my own family. When my wife was diagnosed with cancer in late spring, my whole perspective changed. As her treatments progressed, it became obvious that we were not in control. God was. Now he has brought her out safely on the other side and the cancer is gone. But what if it had gone the other way? When would we say, "Life is no longer worth living for you?" Does any person even have the right to ask that question?

A young woman in a Baltimore, Maryland, Bible Presbyterian church was diagnosed with cervical cancer in the midst of pregnancy. The Doctor's advice? "Abortion." However, the young woman and her family said, "We'll trust in God and do what is right." Not only was the baby safely delivered, but the woman's aggressive and advanced cancer is gone. Once again, God is in control, not man.

The whole matter of cloning humans also refuses to go away. Man is determined to create man in his own image. Whether or not one believes it is possible, the point is that man is trying to do it at all. Even the secular world realizes from the light that God has given to every human being (Romans 1) that something is wrong with cloning people. On a recent *Star Trek: The Next Generation* television program, the issue of cloning was addressed as two shrinking colonies of culturally diverse humans were encouraged to unite for their common good. The more advanced colony had been cloning for generations to survive, and their gene pool was corrupted. When they attempted to clone officers of the Enterprise, Commander Ryker's big argument against cloning was, "Cloning diminishes me as person in ways I cannot even imagine." True, but what was the solution the crew came up with? Immorality corrected with more immorality, as they defied God's design of marriage and encouraged polygamy in the two colonies to strengthen the gene pool. So much for the world's conscience.

So this issue of the *Journal* seeks to address from a biblical and philosophical standpoint these issues in which man attempts to play God with human life. Though much of what you read will be familiar to you, we hope that new thoughts also present themselves to you, and give you further “saltiness” as you season the world with your presence and voice. We have several new contributors, including three medical doctors who each examine their respective issues from primarily a medical ethics perspective, pastors who approach the same subjects from the biblical perspective, and a reprint from *The New American* magazine on the impact of abortion on our society in general. This issue is different than all that have gone before. I hope it proves helpful to the cause of righteousness in this world.

I do feel an apology is in order for the lateness of the current issue’s arrival. Due to my wife’s battle with cancer this summer, I have been unable to keep up with many things, and the *Journal* happened to be one of them. To you, our readers, I’d like to sincerely express my regrets at any anxiety we may have caused you by not getting the issue out on time. Many of you have been praying for my family this summer—my heartfelt thanks to you. Rejoice with us! The Lord is good!

One other item needs to be mentioned at this point, one that comes with mixed feelings on my part. On the one hand, I am thrilled with the international attention the *WRS Journal* is receiving. Almost weekly new requests for subscriptions come in from Asia, Europe, Canada, and the Pacific. Along with international subscriptions, individual subscriptions here in the States have also multiplied greatly. The result is the largest circulation we have enjoyed to date, for which we are deeply thankful to the Lord, who has brought it all about.

On the other hand, postage and production costs have risen to the point where we can no longer offer the *Journal* free. Beginning with the February, 1999, issue we will have to implement modest rates (\$5 per annum, \$10US for overseas readers) for *individual* subscriptions. Subscribers will receive a letter outlining the rates soon. I trust that you find the *Journal* valuable enough to justify the price and stay with us. As always, I welcome your comments. God bless you in the fight!