

# CHRISTIAN FAITH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## The Human Body and the Synthetic Body

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-17

In western Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, medicine transformed the understanding of the human body. Sources of human illness and disease—and treatment methods—followed scientific methods.

- ❖ **Sanitation and human contact**
- ❖ **Wound treatment in warfare**
- ❖ **Inherited conditions**
- ❖ **Hospitals for concentration of treatment**

Devoted Christians provided leadership in health care improvement.

Scientific discoveries in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have challenged Christian faith and the uniqueness and mysteries of the human body.:

### **Genetics**

Origins: Gregory Mendel, Austrian monk, curious about cultivation of peas: **inherited traits.**

Two major developments:

- ❖ **Genetic paths: DNA and RNA** (Watson & Crick, 1953)
- ❖ **Genome Project** Collins and IH team, 1992)

Three primary conclusions:

- ❖ **Every human being has a common ancestry—and each is unique.**
- ❖ **Basic human traits are found in DNA.**
- ❖ **Many chronic conditions result from genetic error (genetic modification)**

Dangers in a genetic code:

- ❖ **Identity compromise**
- ❖ **Cloning**
- ❖ **Insurability**

## **Stem cell research**

The *stem cell* originates in the brain stem—the brain section in the back of the brain that connects to the spinal system. Big step: **first implant of human stem cells in 1998 by Dr. James Thomson, UW-Madison.**

- ❖ **Implanted stem cells re-set genetic error**
- ❖ **Stem cells re-generate nerve damage.**
- ❖ **Stem cells assist the acceptance of organ/tissue transplant**
- ❖

Ethical problem: **use of unborn fetal tissue.** With parental consent, Source: miscarriage, pre-mature neo-natal fatality, adult fatality. Politics and conspiracy theories tie the therapy to abortion—or worse.

## **Nature and value of vaccinations/pharmaceuticals**

Vaccination is the injection of dead cellular material of the illness-which prompts cellular defense in the body.. First significant vaccination: polio (1950s).

- ❖ **Anti-viral treatments are thoroughly tested.**
- ❖ **Vaccination supports the human immune system.**
- ❖ **Vaccination promotes community health.**