

The Future of the Church and Society.

Interview with Dr Patrick Dixon by Jordon Cooper (2003) - "[The Ooze](#)" [online Christian magazine](#), which has 50,000 visitors a day.

What is Global Change and who are some of your clients?

Global Change is an international trends consulting company which I founded in 1996. Our clients include Microsoft, IBM, Ford, Credit Suisse, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Sara Lee, Saks Inc, Roche, ExxonMobil. I work with senior executive teams of multinationals, helping them get ready for the future. Either we take hold of the future or the future will take hold of us. But I also work with Christian agencies and not-for-profits.

What long term impact do you see 9/11 as happening on the western world? We see certain political moves being made in the name of security, will a loosening of freedoms be a part of our future? If so, how much freedom will we lose? What do you see as the impact on the Islamic world?

This is an acutely sensitive issue, and whatever words I write here are likely to provoke strong reactions... So try to hear the heart of what I am saying.....9/11 impact will be long term and significant in one way yet almost irrelevant in another. On the one hand it was a deeply traumatic shock, and a wake-up call to the growing powers of small numbers of extremists in a media-dominated, globalized world. On the other hand, despite what you might believe from watching too much CNN, the patterns of daily life actually go on unchanged for most of 6 billion people - including almost all across America. Most of the impact has been and will be psychological. A positive of that is that many are asking deep questions about the meaning of their lives and are finding faith, which in the West is usually of course faith in Christ.

Terrorism? Biological weapons? Iraq? The greatest weapon of the terrorist is fear, and the greatest weapon against the terrorist is quiet resilience and courage to go on exactly as before. That's why I did not change one single flying schedule. In the last 4 years my neighborhood has been bombed in London 3 times by the IRA. The local shopping district is still full of bombed out retail outlets from a blast two years ago. Yet life continues. The day after the blast we were all out there as usual. During the Second World War one in four of all homes in London were destroyed by terror bombing - much of it by missiles launched from other countries - yet life went on. It's a very important lesson. Terror must not win. However, fighting terror also means a loss of some personal convenience and freedoms.

The trouble is that history shows so-called Wars Against Terror cannot be won in a conventional way, nor by aggressive policing, nor by intrusive intelligence gathering. Terror groups can be weakened but not wiped out, because so long as the conditions remain that encourage small

numbers of activists to behave that way, new groups will form. And the more aggressive your anti-terror actions, the greater the recruitment to new terror groups can become, if the anti-terror actions are perceived by some as unjust.

So truly effective action will always attack terror groups in every conventional way possible, while also looking to deal as compassionately and fully as possible with any underlying social or political situations that may become hot-beds of conflict, resentment, bitterness and violent activism in the future. For example, suppose slavery were still legal and black slaves belonging to terror groups were blowing themselves up in Shopping Malls every day across America and Europe

in protest. Forces of law and order would react, and perhaps the cause of abolition of slavery would be put back a decade, with leaders denouncing the use of terror against innocent lives, and declaring that any moves to abolish slavery would simply reward terrorists.

As Christians we have a moral responsibility to bring clear balance: speaking not only of justice in terms of law and order and civilisation, but also justice in terms of fighting oppression and obscene contrasts in wealth and privilege which are growing larger by the day. One day God will judge us all for how we responded to issues that would provoke angry words from Jesus if he were on earth now.

Regardless of whether or not Clonaid is a hoax, you and others are calling 2003 the Year of the Clone. Are we too late to stop cloning or will we just drive it underground? Will this topic ever be dealt with. If yes, what will it look like when we have?

We are probably too late to prevent the birth of cloned babies - and indeed it may have happened already as many groups have been trying for a long time and their attempts are largely in secret, with the constant risk of tragic malformations and baby deaths. Cloning is already underground. The trouble is that despite public concerns most nations still have no laws against cloning babies and the laws in the US have huge holes in them, the same in countries like the UK.

One problem is who you prosecute and for what? The creator of an embryo? Legal in the UK. The person who puts it in the womb? But the doctor and patient can slip out of the country for a few hours to do it. The person who assists the birth? We need clear global agreement that those who are involved in the process of cloning babies will be put in prison in every nation, without refuge. Laws won't stop all cloning, just as laws don't stop being being slain with guns, but without laws we sink into an abyss where criminals say there is no crime being committed and no action can be taken.

A major problem is an informal collusion between two types of human cloners: those who want to earn money from medical research, and those who want to earn money making babies. The first group consistently rubbish the second group as fantasists, frauds or incompetent (whoever they are), as part of a deliberate attempt to reassure [governments](#) that cloning babies is not likely to happen and all is well, don't bother to legislate, don't over-react. They are scared that cloning headlines will provoke public demands for tighter laws and medical research will be more difficult.

But you can't have it both ways. A year ago UK human cloners campaigned to get Parliament to legalise the creation of cloned embryos for research: they claimed it was practical, realistic, and with huge medical potential. Now these very same people systematically attack the competence of all groups around the world who claim to have used the identical process to make human cloned embryos as part of a baby production programme. The UK human cloners now appear to be pretending that what they said to Parliament is untrue: making out that human cloning is science fiction and almost impossible. But they are playing a very dangerous game. Those making babies are using all the lessons learned from the medical research cloners.

In a further twist of irony it looks at present as though those making babies will make money and those making cloned embryos for research will continue to make catastrophic losses. The markets voted with their feet some time ago and have dumped shares big-time in PPL Therapeutics (which owns Dolly the sheep technology). In 1999 the shares were so low and PPL so near to folding, that PPL was snapped up by Geron. Now Geron's prices have tumbled from around \$75 to less than \$4 each and once again UK human cloners are running out of cash fast. They desperately need a success story and that is why the Roslyn Institute (who made Dolly) is about to apply to the HFEA in the UK for an official human cloning licence (to make embryos for research).

The trouble is that human cloning technology is looking rather last-century from the medical point of view (and I say this as a Physician). Adult stem cell technology means we can now do what human cloners promised, but with adult cells. We can take adult skin or bone, find special cells, treat them and inject them back into the person's blood stream, where they travel around and repair damaged bits of brain or heart. That is the story in animals at least, and I am certain it will be the case in humans soon. The cloning alternative is tacky: take a cell from an adult, fuse it with an egg, make a cloned embryo, grow it for a bit outside the womb, take cells from it and throw the rest of the clone away, and so on.

You mention in your book that tribalism will be the downfall of Europe. What does an increasing tribal Europe look like? What will be the impact on European culture and mindset of those that live there.

The European model is changing forever with rapid expansion to the East, doubling the number of countries and embracing nations that are extremely poor in comparison. Governance will be complex (we don't even have an elected President), and so will be the culture mix. Face the facts: ethnic cleansing is a daily reality in Europe - even in the UK. Every night somewhere in Belfast we see sectarian attacks and every morning the removal vans arrive to take another family away to another location. It is the same in Bosnia, and Kosovo, both part of old Yugoslavia, yet another part of the same old nation is entering the EU: Slovenia. So here we have nations rushing to become one, who cannot even stop people in the same street butchering each other because they want to be so different. So expect growth, extension, vast economic trading areas, and with it growing tensions, xenophobia and resentment.

How big will the conflict be as cultures clash between the millennialists and the pre-millennialists over things like corporate culture and their different values? Will organizations be forced to choose between the two?

We are seeing a huge shift in values: in how people feel about themselves and the world they live in. Look at the huge emphasis today on work-life balance for example. People in general don't want to put up with lifestyle pressures that were normal in the 80s and 90s. We are also seeing a huge questioning and unease about the power and goodness of science. Again, look at the explosive growth of alternative medicine. Post-millennialists are those whose entire adult life has been or will be lived in the third millennium. Watch them closely. They will shape a new world order. The current crisis of corporate culture post-Enron is just a tiny flicker of the whirlwind to come.

A great challenge for the church will be to show deep spirituality and total integrity. The attraction of Islamic fundamentalism has been the utter devotion of followers. We need a new generation to rise up with radical faith, and a total commitment in every area to lifestyles that are consistent with the teachings of Jesus. But when that happens it will be an uncomfortable time indeed for millions of church-goers who have been content enough to attend on a Sunday, but live in un-Christian ways for some of the rest of each week. Personal morality will be a key issue, and I am not just talking about paedophile priests. Faithfulness in relationships, monogamy, abstinence before marriage, moderation or abstention from alcohol and zero drug use, paying every cent due to the revenue, being totally open and transparent at work about things that matter (except when required by law), treating people with respect and care, acting honourably. The test is this: if people get to know me inside and out, will they be more likely or less likely to become committed disciples of Christ?

If fighting breaks out in Iraq again, do you see any significant changes coming about in the Middle East in the other Arab states?

Yes: a profound readjustment - or series of them - will need to take place that will affect a number of nations in the Middle East. Firstly the Palestinian question must be settled or we will find no peace in any part of the world in the longer term. Second, governance by non-elected Royal Families will come under increasing pressure in some nations over the next two decades from those who want theocracy (government by religious leaders) and those who seek democracy. War against Iraq may accelerate some of these adjustments, with some instabilities along the way. One of the greatest challenges in it all - as well as in many other areas - will be for America to find new and more comfortable relationship with the rest of the global village, which is in danger of becoming increasingly irritated by the actions of a lone superpower, whether on issues of security, respecting national sovereignty, caring for the environment, bringing hope to those in the poorest nations and so on. A problem is that positions justified by America today as morally right are seen by many in other nations to the East as morally wrong.

You ask the question, "should scientists be told to stop?" Throughout history the world has wrestled with that question and has never been able to come up with a response. We have allowed them to push the limits for so long. Can we say, "stop!" Even if we do, won't it continue in a different jurisdiction?

Scientists have always had boundaries. For example in most nations it is illegal to experiment on prisoners, illegal to take organs from a dead body without consent, illegal to cause unnecessary suffering to animals and so on. The problem is that science is creating new kinds

of work that are not covered by old laws. For example in the UK we realised that legislation covering human eggs and fertilisation, could not cover cloning because there is no act of conception!

Much has been made in the U.S. about the office of Total Information Awareness? Is it just the first step is us losing all of our privacy online and off? How long until the injectable PC becomes mainstream?

Forget it. You lost personal privacy a very long time ago. For example you are being tracked right now by your mobile phone. Actually you only had privacy for a short time. In the old days you lived and worked in the same small village or part of town and everyone knew your business. If you got out of bed late, the whole world knew about it. Then for a brief period in human history many were able to lose themselves in big cities, and travel to many other nations where they were unknown. Now we are returning to our roots when (we hope) crime will become once again more difficult, where people are known once again. In a democracy such knowledge should cause little fear, but it is true that tomorrow's dictators will have extraordinary powers. Even so, never underestimate the power of human resistance. Human beings are free spirits and tyrannical leaders don't tend to last long.

Injectable chips? Here already. 11 million made last year for cats and dogs. You will find them soon in clothing and shoes, and some will try them under their skin. As Christians we should not fear being known, of losing privacy. Our maker and protector knows all. I always start to worry of it becomes clear that someone has a lot they would rather hide. Why are you so worried if someone at Inland Revenue can see your bank balance on his or her screen? Of course there should be tight controls on access, and confidentiality is vital to maintain trust or - for example - people would stop going to see their physicians.

You talk of your workplace in your book and on your site. What are some of the tools you are using right now that you find indispensable and we will be hearing more about in the future?

Everything is going wireless and virtual so I live and work in a completely wireless environment, in a home with 10 megabits per second of wireless networking and 2 megabits per second of net access, as well as other data channels. That means I can lecture to audiences the other side of the world from my own TV studio, and at the click of a button I can broadcast from any radio station (life is too short to travel to a studio when you have virtual reality). I carry a small pocket device which is a mobile phone, fax, e-mail, web surfer, diary, video player, word processor etc. It works in most countries of the world and is my global office. Watch out for video - everywhere... Like short messaging and online chat for teenagers today, video will be part of the air we breath and will alter our social lives.