

# The Human Genome Project: investigating identity and history

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A new book, *God, ethics and the human genome: theological, legal and scientific perspectives*, helps the Church and individual Christians explore the questions raised by advances in genetic science and medicine over the last few decades. How far should we intervene in 'natural' processes? How far should we go to alleviate suffering? What constitutes a worthwhile life? Can the human genome be 'owned'? What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

This ground-breaking contribution to the issues surrounding the human genome brings together individual essays by leading experts and thinkers from a range of disciplines - from law to theology, and genetics to patent agency - to help the non-expert engage with this vital area.

The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs, says in the preface to *God, ethics and the human genome*: "Christians should arrive at their ethical positions by an authentic process of deriving principles from Scripture and doctrine. This leaves open the possibility that others, of different faith traditions and none, may share the same ethical stance as Christians on some specific matter.

"It also leaves open, importantly, the possibility that Christians may disagree among themselves, since there may be more than one tenable conclusion to be drawn from the inheritance of Scripture and the Church's teaching."

"The book's aim is 'to shine the light of the gospel' upon an area of debate too significant for humankind to be left to experts," said Dr Philip Giddings, Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council.

"It was commissioned by the Church of England's General Synod, but we intend it as a resource for continuing debate, not a 'policy statement' from the Church. The report does not conclude with a single judgement on the ethics of the genome project, nor have the contributors come to a single mind. The purpose of the report is to open up a complex question of great moral significance, not to present the Church, the government or anyone else with a series of cut and dried recommendations."

## Notes for Editors

*God, ethics and the human genome* is published by Church House Publishing (ISBN 978-0-7151-4139-7) and costs £16.99. It is available from Christian bookshops, or by mail order via the web.

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