**MEET CENTER FELLOWS**

**Paige Cunningham, M.D.**
Paige Comstock Cunningham, Esq., is the chairman of the board of the oldest national pro-life organization in the country, Americans United for Life. Over the past 15 years, Cunningham has served at AUL in various capacities, including president, associate general counsel for legislation, executive director/general counsel and as a member of its board of directors. While serving at AUL, as associate general counsel, Cunningham was instrumental in developing post-Webster protective state legislation. Prior to joining AUL, she practiced law with two private law firms in Chicago.

She is co-author of Abortion and the Constitution, co-author of "Is Abortion the 'First Right' for Women?" in Abortion, Medicine and Law and other articles on abortion and the law. Cunningham co-authored the amicus brief that Justice O'Connor cited in her discussion of viability in Webster v. Reproductive Health Services.

Among the awards she has received is Taylor University's Alumna of the Year Award and the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division Award for the top 20 lawyer making a difference in the world.

Cunningham was born in Brazil and raised in Latin America. She is a graduate of Northwestern University School of Law and received her Bachelor of Arts degree summa cum laude from Taylor University. She lives in Wheaton, Illinois, with her husband and three children.

**Scott B. Rae, Ph.D.**
Dr. Rae's degrees include: Associate Professor of Biblical Studies/Christian Ethics, 1989, B.A., Southern Methodist University; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Southern California. His primary interests include the application of the biblical text to current social issues. He brings a solid academic background, pastoral experience, and university training in social ethics to bear on the exposition of God's Word. He specializes in the application of Scripture to the complexities of medical ethics. Dr. Rae is the author of The Ethics of Commercial Surrogacy: Motherhood, Moral Choices. An Introduction to Ethics, Brave New Families: Biblical Ethics and Reproductive Technologies and Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics. His work has appeared in The Life Recovery Bible and many journals including the Linacre Quarterly, Christian Research Institute Journal and The Journal of Women's Health.

He is also a consultant for ethics for four Southern California area hospitals.

**Federally Funding Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Bush and Beyond**

On Thursday, August 9, 2001, President George W. Bush announced to the nation his long-awaited decision on whether federal funds would be used to support research on human embryonic stem cells. Billed as the "defining issue" of his presidency, stem cell research had elicited an intense battle between some patients' rights advocates and medical researchers — who contend that such research will lead to a panacea for some of the most devastating human diseases — and those who object to the research because it requires the destruction of human embryos. While campaigning for the presidency, Bush had declared that "taxpayer funds should not underwrite research that involves the destruction of live human embryos." His final decision on the matter? To not allow federally funded destruction of embryos to produce stem cells, but instead to allot federal funds for research carried out on the 60 or so already existing stem cell lines obtained from embryos who had previously been destroyed by the private sector researcher.

As the war over stem cell research intensified during the last 26 years, the stances taken by various groups on this issue were for the most part predictable. Reactions to the President's decision, however, were far less so, with prominent pro-life groups both lauding and lashing out at the ruling. Politically speaking, Bush may have done the very best he could do, as Congress would have almost certainly overridden any decision to prohibit governmental-sponsored stem cell research altogether. From this vantage point, Bush may indeed deserve to be commended; however, the question remains as to whether his decision is morally praiseworthy.

Acknowledging that human life is a "sacred gift from our Creator" which should not be devalued, Bush arrived at a policy which would fund research on stem cells obtained from embryos for whom "the life-and-death decision had already been made." The implication here is that by supporting the research only on embryos who have already been destroyed, the government can simultaneously distance itself from any endorsement of the requisite embryo destruction. However, can such a maneuver be defended, or will the government — simply by funding this research — also be complicit in the destruction of human life? It is at this point that even conservatives have, surprisingly, differed fundamentally in their response.

Those concerned to unpack this issue must address two sets of questions. They must first determine whether they are, at the most basic level, opposed to the killing of embryos. If they are, but an embryo has already been destroyed despite their opposition, may they support the research on the resulting stem cells and still be regarded as morally upright? Or, are those in favor of the experimentation necessarily also aligned with the tragic loss of embryonic life? Should they condemn such experimentation because of their prima facie objection to the sacrifice of human embryos for use to medical research — since that is what is occurring, regardless of who was directly responsible for carrying out such sacrifice?

However one resolves these challenging questions (see www.stemcellresearch.org for helpful background information), we should all call on President Bush, Congress, and future administrations to never cross what Bush has called the "fundamental moral line [of] providing taxpayer funding that would sanction or encourage further destruction of human embryos." Given the political climate, and depending on how the science and cell research advances over the next several months and years, this line may prove to be an extremely difficult one to hold.