

HACKING

I was chuckling to myself, as old guys are known to do. Thoughts pop up totally out of place, but interesting at least to me.

The Murdoch's got my ear as their hidden activities and cell phone hacking was revealed.

What's funny about that?

There must be some old enough to have lived in a house that was served by a party line. People had a private ring that rang in everyone's house, and unknown numbers of neighbors picked up their phones to listen. No need for tabloid press. Everyone knew everything. I never heard of anyone hauled into court for listening to such a call.

There is something in us that misses the old party line phone system. Now people spend hours living virtual lives in the homes and activities shown on TV and movies. It's like living with ears pressed to the old party line phone.

Then I thought about the old idea of a God that sees, hears and knows everything we do —

"Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou discernest my thoughts from afar." (Psalm 139:2)

God was way ahead of Murdoch. An awesome hacking system if there ever was one. The time is past when many seriously believe in an ear in the sky that listens to our every word. So we are shocked to find the Murdoch global enterprise listening to our phone conversations. Maybe we don't realize how much of our "private" conversation is available to other's ears. We say some things we hope that not even God hears. Sometimes we say those things to friends and families we really love. Children have ears too.

Then there is Facebook where the foolish can immortalize themselves for friends, bosses, future girlfriends or boyfriends, pastors, or anyone to see. Who cares who hears? Who needs Murdoch? Just get a Facebook account and see what your "friends" are saying.

I'm not defending the Murdoch enterprises. After all, a great amount of our news, including the *Wall Street Journal*, gets filtered through Murdoch's media systems. It's "fair and balanced."

And more can be stolen than tabloid gossip. Our whole identity is vulnerable.

Which brings to mind the endless cry to do away with regulatory agents of any sort who might be looking into the doings of the corporations, government agencies, banks, politicians, lobbyists and political organizations. People don't even like traffic cameras or any other substitute for the great "eye in the sky" that keeps track of what we are doing.

That leads to an ancient biblical and theological idea that there is something in the human species that really needs a bit of monitoring to stay within the speed limit or any other limits. Can the human species exist without watchdogs?

The awful thought concludes that maybe Murdoch was part of something society needs. And that we are in denial to think that our words don't matter. In fact, the knowledge that our words could matter to others might help us monitor ourselves. We're still on a party line whether we know it or not.

One of my mentors, John Paul Pack was pastor of University Christian Church. His favorite benediction was this:

***"May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts
and the deep and abiding desires of our lives
be acceptable in Thy sight..."***

— Art Morgan, July 21, 2011