



Family Concerns

"Bridging the Information Gap"

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BRAVE NEW WORLD MAY BE A REALITY SOON *Science is building the newest Tower of Babel*

Kansas is embarking into the world of biotechnology with a Legislature-sponsored bill that promotes biotechnological research. The bill (**HB2647**) is intended to coordinate educational and business interests in Kansas to develop new opportunities for biotechnological research. Several legislators have worked hard to make sure that pro-life language remains in the bill, but biotechnology groups and educational institutions are lobbying hard to remove the restrictions on embryonic stem-cell research and somatic cell nuclear transfer (cloning).

A primer on stem cells:

Stem cells are unspecialized cells found in embryos and in adults that have the ability to turn into specialized cells that can eventually function as organ tissue. The beauty of adult stem cells is that they can differentiate into tissue that repairs injuries and diseased tissue. They are found everywhere in the body, including the hair, the fat tissue, the blood, bone marrow, and are often harvested from those sites to repair the organ of origin. However, they appear to also have the miraculous ability to migrate to the site of injury anywhere in the body and proceed to differentiate into the cells needed for the body to repair itself.

What is different about embryonic stem cells?

Embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) requires an embryo that is either "left over" from *in vitro* fertilization or a "cloned" embryo. Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) is the newest euphemism for "therapeutic cloning" or cloning for bio-medical research, consisting of the transfer of nuclear material to an egg with the nucleus removed, and shocking the egg with electricity to stimulate cell division . . . new life. One of the "benefits" of this type of cloning is that genetically engineered material can be inserted into the egg, providing genetic characteristics that are desired by the "creator" of the new life. Scientists want to "create" stem-cell lines that will have certain genetic characteristics so they can research diseases, cures, etc. The egg is allowed to divide several times until it reaches the "blastocyst" stage, which occurs five to seven days after development. The stem cells are then extracted. In other words, the embryo is killed and the cells are "harvested" and used for research. The Kansas bill now has language that would prohibit that type of research. It is essential that language stay in the bill.

Why not allow all kinds of research?

In the first "Jurassic Park" movie, the scientist who cloned the dinosaurs from DNA was asked if he thought if it were ethical to do *anything* in science just because you can. That question was left unanswered in the movie but we have a chance to answer now in ensuring that human life is

kept sacred and protected. A peek into the "other side's" mentality is to take a walk through the eugenics hall of horrors.

An article by Wesley J Smith in *Human Life Review* surveys some of those who support an "anything goes" mentality in biomedical research. One book he assesses is *Children of Choice* by John A. Robertson. In this book, Robertson asserts that women not only have an absolute right to terminate their pregnancies, but an absolute right to access whatever "non coital technology" they require to produce the child of their choice. This should also include the right to genetically engineer their children . . . something he calls "quality control of offspring."

In another review, Smith writes of Lee M. Silver, a professor of biology at Princeton University. He wrote *Remaking Eden: Cloning and beyond in a Brave New World* in which he states: "Without cloning, genetic engineering is simply science fiction. But with cloning, genetic engineering moves into the realm of reality. He also states that once the technology of genetically engineered cloning progeny becomes widely accessible, "the global marketplace will reign supreme." He sees animal genes being introduced into human embryos to increase the child's sense of smell and other modifications that might be needed to "improve" human beings. He foresees two species: the "Naturals" who are born the old-fashioned way and the GenRich, the "super-humans", not unlike the *Brave New World* scenario of Aldous Huxley.

In *Who's Afraid of Human Cloning?*, Gregory Pence, a philosophy professor in the Schools of Medicine and Arts/Humanities at the University of Alabama, writes that by "weakening the ethical boundary between non-human and human animals," we could "allow doing to humans some of the things we think quite sane to do to animals."

Surely that could not happen in Kansas!

Right now the biotechnology industry is lobbying hard to remove restrictions on their ability to do anything they want in the name of science and research. They want to be able to do *anything they can do* and more. It is essential that the pro-life language stay in this bill.

Call your representative/senator and tell him/her of your concerns about an "anything goes" philosophy in scientific research. Urge him/her to keep the pro-life language in HB 2647.

Capitol Switchboard: 785-296-0111, and ask for your legislator.

Next *Family Concerns*: The success of Adult Stem-Cell treatments