

Two wrongs

Evils of cloning similar to those of abortion



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I knew it would come to this. I just didn't figure it would happen so soon. It's amazing how quickly some people can change their minds.

Last July, when the world was introduced to Dolly, the first cloned adult mammal, people responded with amazement and caution. The wonderful world of science had struck again. Once everyone overcame their initial amazement that science could now create exact replicas of animals, a certain uneasiness could be sensed within the public and scientific circles alike.

Shortly there appeared a public outcry to ensure that humans would not be the next scientific barrier for the cloning people to break. Numerous scientists ensured a skeptical public that the cloning of humans was and would remain an unthinkable evil. The mere thought of it was appalling. We were assured that the idea would never even be considered.

Now, just seven months after our introduction to Dolly, at least one scientist has broken away from his anti-human cloning colleagues. Dr. Richard Seed, a physicist from Chicago (that's right, the guy's not even a medical doctor), has announced to the world that he's going to clone a person and no one's going to stop him. He just needs a little help — namely \$2 million — and a country where cloning humans won't be outlawed.

The question I ask now is this: Is this guy simply a no-name hack basking in his 15 minutes of fame, or is it that the world of science is coming closer to seriously entertaining the idea of human cloning? President Clinton seemed to answer this question during his weekly radio address to the nation on Jan. 10. He proclaimed, "We know there is virtually unanimous consensus in the scientific and medical communities that attempting to use these cloning techniques to actually clone a human being is untested and unsafe and morally unacceptable." This is true. Most in the scientific and medical fields have denounced Dr. Seed and his ideas.

However, I believe it is important to remember that just fewer than 50 years ago "there was virtually unanimous consensus in the scientific and medical communities" that procedures used to kill unborn children were unsafe and morally unacceptable.

How things have changed.

Today, our great nation alone kills more than one million children a year using a medical procedure that just 25 years ago was banned by law.

This could lead one to believe that this whole thing is not strictly about science. It also involves political agendas and the group that can yell loudest, even though what they're screaming may be completely wrong. Dr. Seed says he does not want to clone humans just to be the first to do it, he wants to help people. "I have been enormously encouraged in just one day by calls I have received from infertile couples who are in tears. ... They tell me things like, 'Don't let them stop you.'"

Hmmm ... what a personal hell Dr. Seed must be suffering in. How long will it take for some radical, phony humanitarian group to start pushing the infertile couple's right to choose to clone themselves? I can hear their arguments right now: "There is no reason the government should interfere with the infertile couple's right to choose to clone themselves. These couples go through unnecessary emotional trauma because they are unable to create their own fetuses and are unable to adopt because of the low number of fetuses actually carried to term today. Who are we to take away their right to play with humanity and make a copy of themselves if they so choose?"

Sound ridiculous? So did the idea of a woman choosing to kill the baby in her womb to people living in the 1950s.

Fortunately, public support for banning human cloning has been strong enough to cause public officials around the world to pass legislation against it. Nineteen European countries have signed a treaty stating that cloning people violates human dignity and is a misuse of science. The treaty did not, however, mention sanctions of any kind for those who would attempt to break the cloning ban.

In the United States, President Clinton has lashed out

at Dr. Seed and any other human cloning advocates that may be out there, saying, "Personally, I believe that human cloning raises deep concerns given our cherished concepts of faith and humanity." Funny thing though — these same concepts of faith and humanity must have completely slipped the President's mind while he vetoed two partial-birth abortion bans.

Clinton has sent legislation to Congress that would outlaw human cloning for at least five years. I'm sorry, Mr. President, but the Richard Seeds of the world are not going to disappear in five years. The only hope for a clone-free future is an international, indefinite ban, and the faith that our society is intelligent enough not to buy into the ludicrous arguments supporting man's right to play God that are sure to come.

All that those of us who cherish life as God intended it to be can do now is hope and pray that some kind of worldwide ban can be put into place and that it is possible to enforce it. A ban would be very instrumental in helping to stop the dangerous idea of human cloning, but no legislation can bar moral values from changing.


We can only hope that our society does not once again fall into believing that manipulating and ultimately destroying innocent human life is acceptable because of the supposed "rights" of those who would sacrifice the defenseless in order to make things easier or better for themselves.



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