



STATEMENT DC449

PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS

Seed's Preposterous Plan

by Hank Hanegraaff

As has been well said, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." The stark reality of this sentiment was borne out in 1973 when Christians quietly passed by a major battle in the war against abortion. Two and a half decades later the far-reaching impact of that loss is being felt in a raging debate over human cloning. While Pandora's box is already open, Christians must do all that is permissible to speak out and prevent a human clone from emerging.

Richard Seed, who holds farcical metaphysical views along with a Ph.D. in physics, has refueled the debate on human cloning. His preposterous plan to produce 200,000 human clones per year has caught the attention of politicians and pastors, as well as the president of the United States. According to Seed, "Cloning and the reprogramming of DNA is the first serious step in becoming one with God."¹ Following Seed's outrageous remarks, President Clinton immediately pushed Congress for a five-year moratorium on human cloning.²

Clinton's actions, however, may have come too late. Laws granting constitutional protection regarding reproductive choices,³ as well as laws giving women carte blanche over abortion decisions,⁴ may well limit the right of the government to interfere with human cloning experimentation. "It is hard to imagine a judicial decision consistent with current Supreme Court interpretations of abortion law," syndicated columnist Linda Chavez points out, "that would uphold the right of the government to outlaw cloning."⁵ In other words, the prevailing logic that permits a woman to terminate the life of a child in the womb may well apply equally to cloning.

The cloning issue took on greater urgency in 1997 when a team of Scottish embryologists produced the first *successful* clone of an adult mammal — a sheep named Dolly. In the process of experimentation, 276 out of 277 cloning attempts failed.⁶ This is an important consideration in light of Seed's proposals for cloning human beings. In theory, human cloning is similar to animal cloning.⁷ Thus for Richard Seed to succeed in his biological schemes, he would first have to harvest female eggs, fuse them with the nuclei of human cells, and then implant the reworked eggs into the wombs of surrogate mothers, dooming almost all of the embryos to failure and death. While Seed sees this as an intoxicating proposition, the leaders of 19 European nations signed a treaty declaring that cloning is "contrary to human dignity and constitutes a misuse of biology and medicine."⁸ Christian leaders must speak out clearly and concisely against human cloning as well.

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First, it is important to point out that producing a human clone would of necessity require experimentation on hundreds if not thousands of live human embryos. In reality (since embryos are fully human), the entire bloody process would be the moral equivalent of the human experiments carried out by Nazi scientists under Adolph Hitler.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the issues concerning cloning and abortion are inextricably woven together. For example, if defects were detected in developing clones, abortion would no doubt be the solution of choice. And make no mistake — the notion that an embryo has full personhood from the moment of conception is no longer a theological proposition, it is plain scientific fact. French geneticist Jerome LeJeune explains, "To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence."⁹

Finally, it should be emphasized that cloning has serious implications regarding what constitutes a family. While children are the result of spousal reproduction, clones are essentially the result of scientific replication.¹⁰ To wit the question, who owns the clone? It is terrifying to consider that the first human clone might well be "owned and operated" by none other than Richard Seed.

NOTES

¹The Associated Press, *USA Today*, 7 January 1998, Nation (www.USA.com).

²Linda Chavez, "Cloning and Abortion: Two Sides of a Coin," *The Orange County Register*, 15 January 1998, Metro section.

³*Ibid.*, which references Supreme Court decision, *Griswold vs. Connecticut*, 1964.

⁴*Ibid.*, which references Supreme Court decision, *Roe vs. Wade*, 1973.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Ray Bohlin, "Can Humans Be Cloned Like Sheep?" (Richardson, TX: Probe Ministries, 1997), 2 (www.probe.org). Bohlin notes that out of 277 initial cell fusions, 29 began growing as embryos *in vitro*; all 29 embryos were implanted into 13 receptive ewes; yet only one lamb was born.

⁷It is important to note that while it is theoretically possible to clone a human body, the human spirit can never be cloned. As with twins, the clone may share a genetic blueprint with the body from which it is derived but its soul or spirit would nevertheless remain distinct.

⁸Joseph Schuman, "European Nations Sign Ban on Human Cloning," *The Orange County Register*, 13 January 1998, front page.

⁹Quoted in Francis J. Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death: Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 42. Many other leading medical experts echo LeJeune's words. These experts include Dr. Micheline Matthews-Roth, a principal research associate in the department of Medicine at Harvard (Beckwith, 43) and Dr. Hymie Gordon, professor of medical genetics and a physician at the Mayo clinic (*ibid.*, 42). While pro-abortionists try to separate "human life" from "personhood," this distinction is merely a semantic deception. Personhood is an essential attribute of human nature; if one is a human life, he or she is naturally also a human person.

¹⁰In essence, cloning is a form of asexual reproduction.