

Human Cloning

GATHER AND PRAY

Lord, we ask your blessing on this meeting. We thank you for the wisdom and experience that each person brings to it. Thank you for being with us as we gather in your name. Help us to gain insight into your plan for this world and give us the courage to reflect your values.

Report on Actions

The group discusses the actions planned from the prior meeting.

Reflection

It was I who made the earth and created mankind upon it;
It was my hands that stretched out the heavens;
I gave the order to all their host

Isaiah 45:12

Truly you have formed my inmost being;
You knit me in my mother's womb.
I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made;
Wonderful are your works.

Psalms 139

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
Before you were born I dedicated you,
A prophet to the nations I appointed you.

Jeremiah 1:5

SOCIAL INQUIRY

A well-known infertility specialist, Panayiotis Zavos, formerly of the University of Kentucky, announced that he and Italian researcher Severino Antinori, the man who almost seven years ago helped a 62-year-old woman give birth using donor eggs, were forming a consortium to produce the first human clone. Researchers in South Korea claim they have already created a cloned human embryo, though they destroyed it rather than implanting it in a surrogate mother to develop. In Canada, the Raelian cult has hired scientists to clone the cells of a dead 10 month old boy whose parents have contributed a million dollars to carry a cloned baby to term.

A donor egg has the nucleus sucked out and the nucleus of a skin (or other type) cell from the human that is being copied is inserted. With the help of an electrical current, the reconstituted cell should begin growing into a genetic duplicate. The consensus among biotechnology specialists is that within a few years-some scientists believe in a few months-the news will break of the birth of the first human clone.

On January 24, 2001 British lawmakers approved human cloning for "medical purposes". For medical research, the law will permit limited cloning of human embryos, which must be destroyed within 14 days-at the earliest stage of development.

It took 277 attempts to clone Dolly; only 29 embryos could be transferred to a surrogate mother. A single one grew to term and was born as Dolly (the sheep).

Last Friday, President George W. Bush spoke about his objection to federal funding for research that uses tissue from aborted fetuses. Scientists are concerned that he may try to block plans to fund fetal and embryo cell research, which potentially could lead to cures for diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and other illnesses. Promising experiments on diseases

including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and cancer are already underway using tissue from embryos created at infertility clinics that were not used to create a pregnancy.

"We can manage the science for human benefit but if we bottle it up out of a fear of the unknown or some sectarian debate over abortion we will do ourselves a great harm," says Dan Curry of the US Alliance for Aging Research.

Judge

1. How do we reconcile our religious beliefs about God and the sanctity of human life with the capabilities of modern scientists?
2. Do humans have a right to reproduce? Dr. Zavos says they do.
3. Will we as a society tolerate the destruction of abnormal or unwanted embryos as we do abortions?
4. Will we legislate against this technology and prevent the techniques to clone human organs for transplantation from being developed?
5. Do we approve of tissue or organs being grown from fetal stem cells that are obtained by destroying an embryo? Does the end justify the means?

Act

1. Dr. Zavos has requested a meeting with the Vatican in March 2001. Report back to the group about the outcome.
2. Inform your legislator about your opinions regarding human cloning and research on human embryos.

3. Support prolife organizations such as Birthright, National Right to Life, California Association of Natural Family Planning, etc.

Preparation for next meeting

1. Date _____
Time _____
Place _____

2. Turn to the next meeting. Read aloud the Observes to prepare for the next meeting.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, forgive us our sins. Help us not to be satisfied with going along with the crowd against your wishes. Strengthen us in our resolve to make a difference, to let your voice be heard. Jesus we trust in your mercy and grace. Amen. human dignity, preserve God's creation, and build peace.