

The Human Fertilization and Embryology Bill

The standards and values we use to conduct our lives are based on our background, education and in many cases our faith. It is clear by the investment in advertising that we are influenced by experiences outside those parameters. Our lifestyles are a combination of everything we experience. Our parents knew this and how often as children are we asked: where have you been, who have you been with and what have you been doing?

When legislation tries to influence our values we become suspicious. The problem comes when legislation is made which conflicts with our values and is at odds with our gut feelings and in some instances our faith.

The Human Fertilization and Embryology Bill gives rise to concern as it makes proposals that conflict with rational thought and are based on speculative and often rejected research.

Plans are to remove the name of the father from the birth certificates of children born by donor sperm in infertility clinics will create problems in later life. As one donor can be used to father children by several women the chance in later life of irregular marriage is increased

The Singapore Government established the ES Cell International (ESI) a multimillion-pound commercial company aimed at leading the world in embryonic stem cell research. In 2007 the SCIENCE Journal reported that ESI had abandoned work on embryonic research. They admitted it was a complete failure being extremely costly and had produced no clinical treatment.

The use of umbilical-cord blood (which is ethically acceptable) has proved fruitful in producing stem cells and has resulted in some 17,000 transplants for treating children with Leukaemia. The use of adult stem cell has proved successful and over 70 treatments for disorders including diabetes and heart damage have been developed. The creator of Dolly the Sheep, Professor Ian Wilmut announced (Nov. 17th Daily Telegraph 2007) that he was abandoning cloning and is to follow adult stem cell research pioneered in Japan by Professor Yamanaka who created stem cells from fragments of skin. It was also stated he had now achieved the same with human skin. The cures arising from embryonic research has not materialised after 17 years of promises.

Perhaps the part of this Bill, which is most unacceptable, is the proposal to create embryos that are half human, half animal. For example, an embryo could be made from the egg of a woman and the sperm from an animal. This conflicts with the very fundamental issue of what it is to be human, our identity and in the longer term our freedom and rights. We all welcome and support ethical and effective scientific research but to truly harness the benefits of science we need to set developments within a social and moral framework. Science should serve humanity; humanity does not exist to provide the raw material for research. Experiences and experimentation in the WW2 camps highlighted this need.

Many Members of Parliament have indicated they seek to use this Bill as a means of making abortion more easily available. There is a move to set up a Parliamentary committee to look at abortion law reform. Indications are that these proposals include removing the requirement for two doctors to sign the form allowing abortion to take place and to investigate the feasibility of nurses carrying out abortions. This is against a background of five hundred abortions a day taking place in the UK. How many future doctors, scientists, teachers, trainers, and industrialists have we lost through abortions?

Social justice issues are relevant to everyone and should inform the decisions we make about how we live, how we spend our money and how we vote. The proposals in this Bill change the law and raise profound issues. It will be passed in the name of all citizens and if you do not speak about it, then your silence will be taken as consent.

Please write or email your MP and ask him to reject research that is unethical and inhumane.

For further information visit the following web sites:

www.catholicchurch.org.uk

www.christian.org.uk

www.righttolife.org.uk

www.Anglican-mainstream.net