

More on the Subject of Cloning

Many things are possible that are inadvisable, fraught with dangers, and simply morally wrong. What is known as “the transfer of the nucleus of one cell to another cell” makes the manipulation of human embryos possible, by injecting the nucleus from a living cell of one person into the egg of another person, so that the genetic characteristics of the first person are duplicated. Though the technology seems to have been developed, the moral and social implications of it have to be examined very carefully.

If this technology is pursued with human beings, there are implications for development of a “master race” (one of the aims of the Nazis in Germany). Many of the Nazis’ experiments on human beings had this eventual aim.

Aims such as the treatment of diseases in human beings by the transfer of a nucleus in animals, to provide food with anti-viral agents to combat diseases in human beings such as haemophilia, aids, Parkinson’s disease, and leukaemia seem noble enough, for they do not involve genetic manipulation of human beings themselves.

However, the argument that there is no demand in society at present to have a child of a parent’s choice (sex or the genetic inheritance of only one “parent” does not dispel concerns. When surrogacy was first spoken about, there were similar assurances that it would not occur, but there is so much diversity in laws in various countries, that such assurances could not be kept.

Consider this scenario: A Lesbian “couple” want a child, without the involvement of a husband with the mother. So the precise gene pattern of the one is implanted into an ovum of the other, and the “couple” have a child of their choosing, without a father. The experiment with the sheep “Dolly” shows that this kind of thing is possible. Surely, since homosexuality is condemned by God’s Word, the idea of such people raising children outside God’s design of marriage, to grow up with a father and a mother, in a family environment (the normal thing, without casting aspersions on bereaved parents and divorcees) is now possible. We can be sure that, if the technology is possible, there will be people who demand it for themselves.

Again, the killing of human beings to provide healthy organs for transplant into diseased human beings is wrong because of the murder involved. Surely, the production of cloned human beings for the sole purpose of providing organs for harvesting is wrong, because of the harm done to the cloned human being. Again, the idea of banks of cloned human beings to provide backup for organs that fail or may fail, simply to provide spare parts for the person from whom the clone has come, is repulsive, because of the harm done to that cloned human being. The child is then viewed as a “product”, which exists solely for the sake of others.

God’s design for human beings is that each individual should carry the genetic balance of both parents. Since God has forbidden incest, which may involve a child with close genetic inheritance, cloning, which duplicates the inherited characteristics of one person, is at least similar to incest. God did not provide for such mirror images in His design for the birth of children. In His design, every human being, except for an identical twin, has his or her unique genetic inheritance. The question raised on the program, “Why produce a child that is not a unique individual?” is a very valid one.

Already the procedure of giving a child to a couple where one of them is infertile through IVF, through the introduction of donor sperm, has to be rejected, because of the intrusion of a third party into the marriage relationship, parallel to adultery. Perhaps the use of human embryos that have already been produced in a laboratory, and would otherwise be destroyed, to implant into a childless woman is defensible, because in that case it saves a life. However, there are grave reservations about the deliberate production of such embryos with donor sperm, for the reason above.

Embryos have been frozen and then used for artificial insemination in animals for some time now. The development of technology for cloning human beings, linked with such freezing, could result in parents’ storing the genetic characteristics of one child in case another is killed in an accident or disease, to produce a “twin”, to replace him or her at a later date, or even after one of the parents has died. The abuses that cloning makes possible are far enough away from God’s original design for human beings to call for the whole procedure to be prohibited absolutely.