

Cloning has potential to save lives

On Sunday, the 26th of November, scientists in Massachusetts announced, much to the dissatisfaction of President Bush, that they had begun the manufacturing of cloned human embryos.

Just a thought.



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For many, the idea of cloning human beings is a forbidden, unethical act that can only result in the mass production of a race of perfectly engineered ultra-humans—I prefer to call them “mega-persons.” For others, it a bold new step in the stairwell of scientific knowledge that is well worth ascending.

To all of those who live in fear of the “mega-persons,” you can rest soundly knowing that all that is being done here is “therapeutic cloning,” the making of a cloned human embryo to be used exclusively for

medical treatments.

For example, let’s say you have a crazy drunken uncle who, after 45 long years of inebriated alcoholic benders, needs a new liver—go figure. Scientists would be able to clone

a new liver for the senseless bastard by taking genetic material from him, and injecting it into an egg cell. Ideally, the egg cell will then grow long enough to produce stem cells that can be coaxed into—ta-da—a new liver for uncle! Since it was made from his genetic material, his immune system will be less likely to reject the new organ. Life goes on and everyone is a winner.

Well, maybe not everyone. I nearly forgot about that zany group of kids known as anti-abortion activists. Yup, they’re at it again. You see this whole process can be viewed as the “murder” of a human “life.” “Making babies solely to kill them

and harvest their organs?! What the hell is wrong with a country that would allow anyone to do this?”

No need to worry your screwy little heads. You may relax in knowing that these undertakings are not federally funded. The government does not condone these actions, and the president himself has stated that “we should not as a society grow life to destroy it.”

Call me a little harsh, but I neglect to see anything wrong with the brutal massacre of...well...cells. Granted, these cells are the beginnings of a human life, but they were manufactured by science, and only grow long enough to develop stem cells. It’s not as if these scientists are attacking pregnant women, ripping the babies from their wombs and trading babies’ organs for drug money.

Therapeutic cloning is a fantastic idea that I believe has the potential to save many lives in the future. Hopefully though, we won’t allow this branch of science to get out of hand; I’m pretty scared of the idea of “mega-persons.”

Bending the rules

What would you be willing to do in order to protect the United States from further attack? Aside from all the basics, airline security, sacrificing a little privacy etc., what would you think about torturing suspected terrorists in order to prevent further attacks?

When I say “suspects”, I am specifically speaking of individuals who are known, for a fact, to be associated with terrorist factions. Although their known association thereby makes them more into “heartless bastards” than “suspects”, I will continue to refer to them as “suspects” throughout the rest of this piece, due to the fact that “heartless bastards” just doesn’t flow, and makes me look like a “prejudiced bastard.”

Although the United States government is not seriously considering the torture of terrorist suspects, The Washington Post reports that the government is weighing the possibility of putting suspects in the custody of other governments “who are known for their bare knuckle tactics.” Nations such as Israel, although formerly condemning the practice of terror, have been reported to use force when necessary in order to extract information.

I, for one, hold the opinion that it is morally justified to inflict pain in order to possibly obtain information which would save

lives. And I am not alone either. A Christian Science Monitor / TIPP poll said that one of three people would accept government sanctioned torture of suspects. (This reinforces my personal theory that nearly two out of three people usually disagree with me.) If, in order to ensure

the safety of the American public, it is necessary to bend a few rules of the Geneva Convention, which forbids “Violence to life and person, in particular...cruel treatment and torture,” I am all for it.

Critics may say it’s inhumane, “not right” (show me a definition of “right” please) or cruel. I say living in fear for your life is inhumane, killing over 3,500 innocent civilians isn’t right in the eyes of nearly the entire world (we have to live by its rules, sorry), and cruelty is leaving thousands of children without a mom or dad this holiday season. I will bow to the notion that two wrongs don’t make a right. However, when it comes down

to whether or not to inflict some pain on one individual or wait to see how many die in the next terrorist attack, I suggest that the FBI host a neighborhood piñata party, the suspects being the piñatas.

The benefits of preserving the sense of freedom and saving countless lives far outweighs the importance of a terrorists personal comfort. This nation has been a safe home to millions of

people for over two centuries. As United State citizens, we are among the most privileged in the world, economically, and socially. The United States helps the entire world in times of crisis, from Honduras to Israel, and provides freedom to all who live in its boundaries. In order to protect the nation and the people of the nation, it may not be such a bad idea to “bend a few rules.” I, for one am not about to protect the rights of someone who participates in the massive slaughter of human beings. If you have any questions or would like to offer a view, please feel free to contact me. I’ll be at the FBI’s pinata party.

One Crazy World.



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The flame of peace

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“...and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: *Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men.*”

With these words in the Gospel of Luke is heralded the birth of Christ, and peace is thus forever ingrained in our awareness of that birth. It flows throughout the celebration and runs through all the music, interposing the exultant shout of “Gloria!” with the tranquil nocturne of “Silent Night.” And so is peace wedded to any conception of Jesus of Nazareth, whatever the interpretation of that peace may be. Indeed, Jesus’ mission is especially concerned with comfort. “Come unto me, all who are weary, and I will give you rest,” He offers. “Prince of Peace” is one prophesied title of the Messiah. “Peace I leave with you,” is Jesus’ promise to his closest friends just prior to His death.

But then we are treated in the Gospel accounts to words of startling and fiery contention—the rebuke of hypocrites, challenge of a high morality, the critique of a corrupt society—that remind us that whatever things are good must necessarily oppose those which are bad, and that there is more to peace than mere comfort. Even peace, perhaps especially peace, is worth fighting for.

The Jesus revealed in these ancient accounts is much more than the sleeping Babe in the manger. The serenity of the Nativity is the calm before a storm, the breaking out into human history of something more wild and terrible and wonderful than anything known before.

The Christ of the Gospels is a Man of fierce passion. His anger is raging, His pity bottomless, His love fervent—and His peace all-encompassing. He has come to

save mankind, not merely give them a good feeling. And so, unlike good feeling, He is dangerous. The first century Pharisee and the 20th century respectable American must both approach Christ with caution; He just might unseat them—or He just might save them.

“Do not think I came to bring peace on the earth,” spoke Jesus, in one of the passages that is proof of the tumult of personality that mingled freely with His deep love; “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Far from a statement of hatred or even, directly, of war, this is a frank acknowledgment that belief, or ideal or anything of worth, will always be cause for the greatest contention, will ever “set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother.” It is, in fact, just the things that are most universally compassing that are most universally divisive, for they are universally important.

So let us have peace, the Peace of Christ, “not as the world giveth,” by which we can have rest from the cares of the world. But let us not forget that this peace comes with a struggle; we must do something to attain it, perhaps even lose something, even losing life to find life. Is it any wonder that the passage quoted above from Luke has been variously translated as “peace on earth, to *men of goodwill*”? Perhaps goodwill is what will change the world to one of peace. We are free to accept this peace, or reject it, but not free to accept it and remain unchanged.

As we celebrate Christmas, the Christ Mass, perhaps the character of Christ will be more on our minds than shopping and Christmas cards, even more than national crises and patriotic wars. May this “Peace beyond understanding,” in all its soothing comfort and raging glory, touch our hearts and nourish our souls, and maybe even change our world. Merry Christmas.

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We will remember.

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