

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

by Gene McCoy

The local newspaper solicited opinions regarding the use of federal funds for embryonic stem cell research. Our preacher was asked to submit a reply on behalf of the Baxter County Right to Life organization.

A person's opinion regarding embryonic stem cell research and its funding reflects the basis upon which he determines right from wrong.

If the basis for determining proper action is emotion, it would be easy to support embryonic stem cell research. Who among us would not like to see every person suffering from Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and diabetes cured? Emotion is the exclusive basis upon which many (Dare I say "most?") people are discussing this issue. Upon this basis, just the hint and hope of cures for dreaded diseases is enough for many people to justify it. The character of these people is not to be questioned or maligned unless their emotions cause them to disregard the fact that embryonic stem cell research requires the destruction of a human life. Such disregard for reality transforms so-called "compassion" for the diseased into either delusion or brutality. Regardless, emotional approaches are not consistent with either science or morality. Truth and morality are neither determined nor governed by feelings.

Others claim a scientific basis for their position that favors the harvesting of embryonic stem cells.

These people ignore the lack of even one instance that anyone has been cured of any disease thereby. Is it not true that embryonic stem cells have never been tested in humans for any purpose because of the dangers exhibited by the frequent formation of tumors in animals used in this research? Conversely, humans with 72 different diseases and conditions have received therapeutic benefit from treatment with adult stem cells. Could we not say, therefore, that science thus far overwhelmingly favors adult stem cell research by a score of 72 to 0?

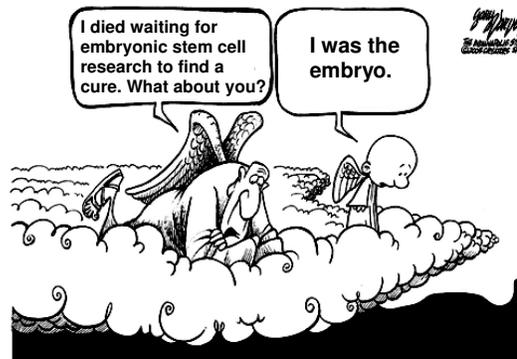
Favoring the destruction of a human embryo and denying that anything immoral and criminal has occurred flies in the face of science that is increasingly verifying the fact that this pre-born baby is every bit as much a human being as those who kill him in the name of compassion for those suffering from

baby feels pain when the abortionist penetrates the baby's skull and sucks out his brains or when the saline solution injected in the womb burns the baby to death. Empirical evidence, upon which science is based, favors other forms of stem cells to the exclusion of those derived from embryos.

If the basis for reaching a decision about embryonic stem cell research is morality, the answer is very clear. The taking of innocent human life is never justified. Those who can rationalize it or justify it are guilty of gross selfishness that is not guided by the moral compass. There is no moral justification for embryonic stem cell research. This would be true even if we had no other demonstrably viable options. But the fact is we have more favorable prospects from methods that are neither unethical nor immoral. Recent findings from researchers at

Wake Forest University indicate that stem cells from amniotic fluid share many of the same characteristics as those obtained from human embryos.

Anthony Atala, director of the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at



dreaded diseases. Science has demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that a

Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, NC, is the leader of this study. As reported in the Washington Post (January 8, 2007), Atala touts the advantages of stem cells derived from amniotic fluid. "They grow fast, as fast as embryonic stem cells, and they show great pluripotentiality." That means they can become many kinds of tissues. Like stem cells from embryos, those obtained from amniotic fluid are very flexible. On the other hand, they are dissimilar in an equally important aspect. They remain stable for years without forming

tumors.

So why would anyone, in the face of the facts, favor embryonic stem cell research? Many proponents are motivated by their agenda. It is an agenda driven by a world view that is willing to sacrifice innocent human life to advance political ambition, ideology, and ill-informed environmental concerns. Another obvious motivation is money. The bottom line for those who know the facts is not compassion after all. It is profit. This is the only apparent reason Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider, refuses to allow

women to have access to all available information. When a woman learns about the emotional trauma and increased risk of breast cancer after abortion, or sees her baby by means of ultrasound, or discovers that a baby suffers pain during an abortion, she will choose life in most instances. That is when science, compassion, truth and morality converge harmoniously to form the only proper answer to whether or not embryonic stem cell research should be pursued, regardless its source of funding. The answer is "Never!"

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