



## Soulless Clones and Spineless Men

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People are intrigued and repulsed by the idea of cloning humans. They sometimes express doubts that a cloned baby would have a soul, because the whole idea seems so offensive. They suppose that God would "refuse to cooperate" with cloning by never infusing a soul into a cloned human embryo.

Yet back in 1978 when the first human baby was created in a Petri dish by *in vitro* fertilization, one might likewise have argued that such an immoral action would result in God's not infusing a soul into any baby that was manufactured in laboratory glassware. We currently have more than one million babies produced this way, all of whom do have souls infused by God.

Likewise even though dropping nuclear bombs on cities of innocent people is gravely offensive, we know that God does not "refuse to cooperate" by suddenly suspending the laws of physics that permit such bombs to detonate. Clearly, God chooses to respect the laws of physics he has established, and likewise he remains beholden to the powers of biology that he himself has set in motion, even if it is true that those same powers can be used for offensive ends by man.

Apart from purely miraculous interventions, which appear to be

quite rare, God does not step in and break the humanly-initiated chain of causality which allows sinful actions and evil choices to play out with all their consequences. Nor does he actively prevent us from doing evil by abrogating physical laws or refusing to ensoul embryos.

Human cloning, in the final analysis, is simply a technique for making an identical twin of someone. While all of us have met various sets of identical twins over the years, none of us has ever met a pair where one of the twins lacked a soul. By similar reasoning, it is clear that the idea of a "soulless clone" is little more than an urban legend.

Imagine, for purposes of illustration, that Senator Ted Kennedy had been cloned when he was alive. The resulting cloned embryo would be his identical twin, so Senator Kennedy would have had an identical twin brother who was an embryo. Two uses for that embryo could be envisioned:

- 1) **Reproductive cloning** – the cloned embryo could be implanted into a woman's uterus to make a live-born, cloned child (Senator Kennedy's younger identical twin who

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would be his gurgling baby brother).

- 2) **Therapeutic cloning** – the cloned embryonic brother of the senator would NOT be implanted, but rather, he would be violated as an embryo, at the hands of researchers who would harvest his stem cells (for various noble purposes, like obtaining genetically matched cells to treat the senator for serious ailments as the senator got older and more frail). This approach is sometimes termed “clone and kill.”

Taking advantage of others to use them as our own “repair kits,” while convenient for those experiencing bodily decline, is also intrinsically immoral. Senator Kennedy himself, like many other elected officials in our country, promoted laws to encourage this form of cloning.

“The advantage of therapeutic cloning,” Kennedy once told the Boston Globe, “is, one, you can get the exact genetic match, and you eliminate the real possibilities of rejection, which is going to be key in this whole area of research.”

The Senator was correct about the benefits of an exact genetic

match, because by having the same genes, a pair of identical twins can use each other’s organs for transplants, and they will accept those transplants without the need for any immunosuppressive drugs. But the unspoken, darker side of this narrative is that the cloned twin is not even given a chance at life, so that in therapeutic cloning, he or she is expressly created for premeditated killing at the hands of researchers in order to benefit his or her older genetic match.

In fact, a patient who used therapeutic cloning would be destroying a family member, a blood relative, their own identical twin brother or sister, to obtain desired cells and tissues. When you clone to make a live born baby, on the other hand, as wrong as this still is, at least the cloned twin survives, breathes the same air, and has the chance to enjoy the good life that the rest of us enjoy each day.

The real paradox, then, is how our moral sensitivities have become so coarsened that many can no longer see how therapeutic cloning is actually worse, from the moral point of view, than reproductive cloning. Therapeutic cloning doesn’t produce soulless clones, but it does tempt

some spineless politicians and scientists to radically misuse the remarkable powers of science that God has given us.

*Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. Father Tad writes a monthly column on timely life issues. From stem cell research to organ donation, abortion to euthanasia, he offers a clear and compelling analysis of modern bioethical questions, addressing issues we may confront at one time or another in our daily living. His column, entitled “Making Sense of Bioethics” is nationally syndicated in the U.S. to numerous diocesan newspapers, and has been reprinted by newspapers in England, Canada, Poland and Australia.*

