

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-4343 (925) 944-5351

E-Mail: callife@calright2life.org

Web Site:

www.calright2life.org

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Skins Cells to Stem Cells

Embryonic Stem Cells Made WITHOUT Destroying Early Human Life

Scientists at both the University of Kyoto (Japan) and the University of Wisconsin (birthplace of embryonic stem cell research) have successfully reprogrammed adult stem cells back to an embryonic-like state.

In the November 20 issue of the journal Nature Shinya Yamanaka of the University of Kyoto in Japan reported that his team had created pluripotent cells from human skin cells. And on the same day, a team of researchers led by James Thomson at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, reported the same results. "Pluripotent cells are stem cells like embryonic stem cells which are believed to be capable of becoming any kind of cell."

Bioethicist Wesley Smith, consultant to the Oakland based Center for Bioethics and Culture, commented, "Researchers reverted human connective tissue cells back to an embryonic-stem-cell-like state - and then differentiated them into all three of the body's major tissue types. If this work pans out, there will be no need to create human cloned embryos for use in embryonic-stem-cell therapies."

Richard Doerflinger, deputy director of pro-life activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, called the new work "a very significant breakthrough in finding morally unproblematic alternatives to cloning. ... I think this is something that would be readily acceptable to Catholics."

This avenue of stem cell research is so promising that Dolly the Sheep creator Ian Wilmut sent shock waves through the scientific world in mid-November when he announced that he was dropping human cloning to pursue this new research. Wilmut said that the new research was "extremely exciting and astonishing" and that he has no doubts "that in the long term, direct reprogramming will be more productive" than so-called "therapeutic" cloning, human cloning which creates a cloned embryo subsequently destroyed for stem cells.

This discovery could mean the end of the rationale for cloning to obtain patient-specific cells for treatment, because it will no longer be necessary to clone and destroy human embryos to obtain embryonic stem cells that will not be rejected by the receiving body. Many researchers support cloning because even if they could make use of all the embryos frozen in lockers in fertility labs, they would not begin to provide the genetic diversity necessary for patient specific matches. Cloning is their attempt to procure genetic matches.

This news has wide ramifications. Wesley J. Smith commented, "We now have the very real potential of developing thriving and robust stem cell medicine and scientific research sectors that will bridge, rather than exacerbate, our moral differences over the importance and meaning of human life."

There's also vindication of President Bush's policy. Smith said, "President Bush deserves some credit for the exciting research into 'alternative methods' of deriving pluripotent cells. Had the president followed the crowd instead of leading it, most research efforts would have been devoted to trying to perfect embryonic stem cell and human cloning research which, despite copious funding, have not worked out yet as scientists originally had hoped." Thank you, President Bush, for standing tall!

Since cloning humans for stem cells is no longer necessary to create a source of embryonic stem cells, the NIH and the states should stop funding "clone and kill" research and move the billions of dollars in taxpayer funding to this more promising alternative. The Congress should move to outlaw human cloning by passing the Brownback Landrieu Human Cloning Prohibition Act. Cloning to create human embryos not only treats human life as raw materials for manufacturing, it also increases the chance that cloning to reproduce children will occur. We can't afford this tampering with human life. If human cloning is allowed, it will not be long before children are engineered to meet our specifications.

All of this is still in the experimental stage; however, this is great news for sufferers of many diseases. In theory, these reprogrammed cells could be converted into any of the other 200 types of cells that make up tissues, and organs.

What's more, Dr. Yamanaka says, "Any scientist with basic technology in molecular and cell biology can do reprogramming." "If we can overcome the issue [of having to use dangerous viruses to ferry the genes into cells], many more people will move from nuclear transfer (cloning) to this method."

The rationale for cloning is gone. Women need not be exploited for their eggs used to clone tiny infants in a petri dish. These early stage human lives created by cloning will not be murdered. Skin cells can be taken from your own body, cultured, nurtured and returned to your body, all using ethical means.

However, don't expect everyone to join us in the celebration as this research goes forward. ESCR supporters are likely to debunk and downplay these discoveries, saying that important work still needs to be done with cloning humans for embryonic stem cells. ESCR/ "clone and kill" supporters have expended too much political capital and credibility to let go easily. Too much money is involved in current (unethical) research methods and ESCR will continue to have political capital, that is, until we as a pro-life community can educate others on the alternative research means that are ethical and do not require exploitation of women for their eggs nor the death of mere days-old embryos.

(We first reported this news via our e-mail network on November 20. Would you like to be added to our distribution? Send us your e-mail address to callife@calright2life and you too can receive these newsflashes and other important information in a timely

manner. We also e-mail upcoming events that occur between newsletter publication dates. Join our e-blast group; be informed as things happen!)

Safely Surrendered Baby Campaign

We continue to hear of newborn babies abandoned; occasionally the infant dies before anyone discovered the abandonment. In an effort to educate the general public, we are repeating an article from a past newsletter. Please read the article below and tell all your friends.

We would like to take this opportunity to make our members aware of a law in California; the **Safely Surrendered Baby Campaign... A confidential Safe Haven for Newborns...**In California, the Safely Surrendered Baby Law allows an individual to give up an unwanted infant without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment. The law does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered. Parents are permitted to bring a baby within 72 hours (3 days) of birth to any hospital emergency room or other designated safe haven in California. The baby will be placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home.

The law allows for at least a 14-day cooling off period, which begins the day the baby is voluntarily surrendered. During this period, the person who surrendered the child can return to the hospital to reclaim the child. (A bracelet will be placed on the baby for identification and a matching bracelet given to the parents. The bracelet will help identify the child if the parent changes their mind during the cooling off period.)

For further information <http://www.babysafe.ca.gov/>

Counseling for Abortion Alternatives

*Annually we provide a listing of pro-life resources;
Please keep this listing handy for future reference!*

Pregnancy Centers (800) 395-HELP www.optionline.org

Free pregnancy testing and counseling; information on abortion and other alternatives; medical, legal & community resource referrals; childbirth & parenting classes, maternal and infant clothing, baby furniture, adoption referrals.

Birthright (800) 550-4900

www.birthright.org

Free pregnancy testing, support services, community resource information on housing, medical care referrals, infant & maternity clothes, and adoption referrals.

Gabriel Project (800) 910 -0191 www.gabrielproject.com

Church-based support system and pregnancy help hotline to assist anyone in need due to a pregnancy-related crisis.

America's Crisis Pregnancy Helpline

(800) 67-BABY-6 / (800-672-2296)

www.thehelpline.org

Provide education and information concerning prenatal care, nutrition, fetal development, or possible complications during your pregnancy, your options including abortion and adoption questions.

Nurturing Network

(800) TNN-4-MOM (4666) www.nurturingnetwork.org

Support network for pregnant women. Educational, and employment assistance, as well as medical, residential and counseling services.

Crisis Pregnancy Hotline

800-848-LOVE (5683)

<http://www.pregnancycenters.org/batesville>

The Crisis Pregnancy Hotline is committed to helping to provide pregnant women a place to call where they can anonymously receive counseling and support to allow them to make an informed decision about their pregnancy, referrals to agencies which provide financial and medical aid, clothes, and shelter.

First Resort Pregnancy Consulting

www.firstresort.net

Oakland 510-891-9998

San Francisco 415-409-TALK (8255)

Redwood City 650-261-9115

Free Pregnancy testing, counseling on all options, ultrasound services for women contemplating abortion; prenatal care and medical consultation; parenting classes;

referrals for maternity and baby supplies; adoption referrals; post-abortion counseling.

Project Rachel / After the Choice

1-877-HOPE-4-ME.

www.rachelsvineyard.org

A process to assist those suffering after abortion in a group setting, usually over a weekend, or several evenings; a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion.

End of Life Issues

For assistance with "end of life" issues, including durable power of attorney for health care

International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

P.O. Box 760, Steubenville, OH 43952

740-282-3810

<http://www.internationaltaskforce.org>

Addressing the issues of euthanasia, assisted suicide, advanced directives, right to die cases, disability rights, pain control and much more.

The International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide is an international leader in the ever-increasing debate over assisted suicide and euthanasia. Their goal is to make certain that a patient's right to receive care and compassion is not replaced by a doctor's right to prescribe poison or administer a lethal injection.

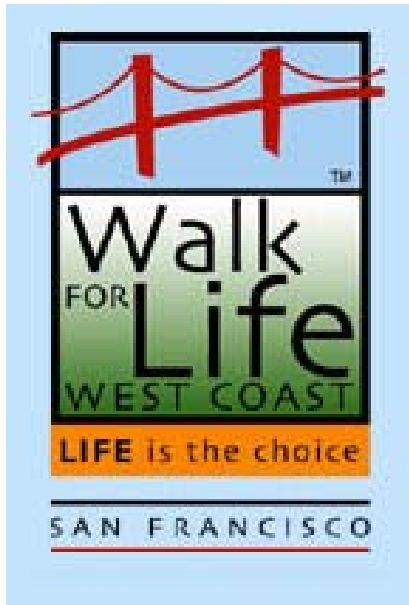
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(For the latest information, visit www.calendarforlife.org)

4th Annual

Walk for Life West Coast

January 19, 2008



Speakers beginning at Justin Herman Plaza at 11 a.m. followed by the Walk starting at noon. Plan to join us for the biggest pro-life event on the West Coast! Over 20,000 people participated in last year's walk, and an even bigger crowd is expected in 2008.

Meet at Justin Herman Plaza at the Embarcadero, dress warmly, wear comfortable shoes, and bring a bag lunch. For further info, please visit: www.walkforlifewc.com.

Interfaith Service at St. Mary Cathedral Friday, January 18

As in past years, the Interfaith Committee for Life plans an Interfaith Service at St. Mary Cathedral the evening before the Walk for Life. Contact this office at callife@calright2life or 925-944-5351 if you are interested in obtaining further information.

Around the Office

We received several "special donations" in the past few months, including an indefinite loan of a brand new portable DVD player for our mall table. This will allow us to play a recently acquired DVD of the developing baby (perhaps even excerpts of the National Geographic "In the Womb"). These videos will draw even more people to our information table.

Please remember California Right to Life Educational Fund in your year-end giving. We are your voice for life, and we need an ongoing flow of funds to keep our cupboards stocked with pamphlets, bumper stickers, bookmarks and other pro-life materials to distribute at our information tables, at conferences, and to students and teachers giving class presentations. You may not be able to give a classroom speech; however, through your donation you are providing the resources for our speakers.

A missionary once said, "Some go to the missions, others support the missions, all are missionaries." Be a pro-life missionary through your donations. And if you have a couple of free hours and would like to volunteer at a mall table, help with a newsletter mailing, write articles for our newsletter, or be part of our speaker forum, contact this office: 925-944-5351.



*Merry Christmas
From the Board of California Right to Life Education Fund*