

Chapter Three

RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES

Over the last twenty-five years religious thinkers have discussed the prospect of human cloning in the context of long-standing religious traditions that often influence and guide citizens' responses to new technologies. Religious positions on human cloning are pluralistic in their premises, modes of argument, and conclusions. Nevertheless, several major themes are prominent in Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic positions, including responsible human dominion over nature, human dignity and destiny, procreation, and family life. Some religious thinkers argue that cloning a human to create a child would be intrinsically immoral and thus could never be morally justified; they usually propose a ban on such human cloning. Some other religious thinkers contend that human cloning to create a child could be morally justified under some circumstances but hold that it should be strictly regulated in order to prevent abuses.

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Media reports often depict the debate over the prospects of cloning humans as a classical confrontation between science and religion. This depiction is misleading. Not all arguments against cloning humans are religious, and not all religious thinkers oppose the cloning of humans in all circumstances. Furthermore, many contend that the possibility of cloning humans offers an opportunity for substantive dialogue between scientists and theologians. Probing the intersections of ethics, science, and theology can offer mutual enrichment. Scientists can see how research in genetics and biology raises theological questions, while theologians can consider whether and how religious convictions can accommodate new scientific knowledge (Gustafson, 1994). Therefore, the Commission sought to determine the positions on human cloning via somatic cell nuclear transfer held by a variety of religious thinkers and the arguments they offer to support their positions. The Commission was interested in religious arguments and conclusions about human cloning because religious traditions influence and guide many citizens' responses to various issues in biomedicine, including such novel developments as human cloning.

For purposes of recommending public policy in a democratic society, the Commission was also interested in the extent to which moral arguments in various religious traditions rest on premises accessible to others outside those traditions. Sometimes religious thinkers appeal to categories such as "nature," "reason," "basic human values," and "family values" that may speak to citizens outside their traditions because these categories do not necessarily depend solely on particular faith commitments, scripture, revelation, or religious authority. Such categories may therefore contribute to a broader societal discussion of the ethical arguments for and against cloning humans, which are examined further in the following chapter. Indeed, NBAC was interested in determining whether various religious traditions and secular approaches achieve a

rough consensus about appropriate public policy toward creating children through somatic cell nuclear transfer at this time.

Finally, the views of a wide range of communities, including religious communities, are important in determining whether policies under consideration are feasible and whether their social benefits outweigh their social costs. For example, a particular policy may not be feasible, and may even be counterproductive, if it engenders vigorous, widespread, and sustained moral objection.

NBAC solicited oral and written presentations from scholars in several religious traditions, contracted for a scholarly analysis of the views of these and other religious traditions,⁵ and received public testimony and written submissions from various other individuals and groups with religious orientations. What follows builds on these materials and presents some of the key themes in several western religious interpretations and evaluations of cloning humans. This chapter is presented in the spirit of sustaining a national dialogue but also in complete awareness that the Commission may not have fully understood the traditions described. (This chapter concentrates on Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic views; a discussion of other religious views appears in the commissioned paper by Courtney Campbell.)

Religion and Human Cloning: An Historical Overview

It is possible to identify four recent overlapping periods in which theologians and other religious thinkers have considered the scientific prospects and ethics of the cloning of humans. The first phase, which began in the mid-1960s and continued into the early 1970s, was shaped by a context of expanded choices and control of reproduction (e.g., the availability of the birth control pill), the prospects of alternative, technologically-assisted reproduction (e.g., *in vitro* fertilization [IVF]), and the advocacy by some biologists and geneticists of cloning “preferred” genotypes, which, in their view, would avoid overloading the human gene pool with genes that are linked to deleterious outcomes and that could place the survival of the human species at risk.

Several prominent theologians engaged in these initial discussions of human genetic manipulation and cloning, including Charles Curran, Bernard Häring, Richard McCormick, and Karl Rahner within Roman Catholicism, and Joseph Fletcher and Paul Ramsey within Protestantism. The diametrically opposed positions staked out by the last two theologians gave an early signal of the wide range of views that are still expressed by religious thinkers.

Joseph Fletcher advocated expansion of human freedom and control over human reproduction. He portrayed the cloning of humans as one of many present and prospective reproductive options that could be ethically justified by societal benefit. Indeed, for Fletcher, as a method of reproduction, cloning was preferable to the “genetic roulette” of sexual reproduction.

⁵ Much of the material in this chapter is derived from a commissioned paper prepared for the National Bioethics Advisory Commission by Courtney S. Campbell, Department of Philosophy, Oregon State University, titled “Religious Perspectives on Human Cloning.”

He viewed laboratory reproduction as “radically human” because it is deliberate, designed, chosen, and willed (Fletcher, 1971; 1972; 1974; 1979).

By contrast, Paul Ramsey portrayed the cloning of humans as a “borderline” or moral boundary that could be crossed only at risk of compromise to humanity and to basic concepts of human procreation. Cloning threatened three “horizontal” (person-person) and two “vertical” (person-God) border crossings. First, clonal reproduction would require directed or managed breeding to serve the scientific ends of a controlled gene pool. Second, it would involve non-therapeutic experimentation on the unborn. Third, it would assault the meaning of parenthood by transforming “procreation” into “reproduction” and by severing the unitive end (expressing and sustaining mutual love) and the procreative end of human sexual expression. Fourth, the cloning of humans would express the sin of pride or hubris. Fifth, it could also be considered a sin of self-creation as humans aspire to become a “man-God” (Ramsey, 1966; 1970).

A second era of theological reflection on cloning humans began in 1978, a year that was notable for two events, the birth in Britain of the first IVF baby, Louise Brown, and the publication of David Rorvik's *In His Image*, an account alleging (falsely) the creation of the first cloned human being (Rorvik, 1978). Christian theologians concentrated more on the ethical issues raised by IVF, while Jewish scholars, such as Seymour Siegel and Fred Rosner, also directed attention to cloning humans, and were neither as supportive as Fletcher nor as critical as Ramsey. They instead indicated the need for more extensive discussion of this topic within the Jewish community.

This period also witnessed the beginning of formal ecclesiastical involvement with questions of genetic manipulation. In 1977 the United Church of Christ produced a study booklet on “Genetic Manipulation,” which appears to be the earliest reference to human cloning among Protestant denominational literature (Lynn, 1977). It provided a general overview of the science and ethics of cloning humans but stopped short of a specific theological verdict.

Protestant-organized ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches (1975, 1982, 1989) and the National Council of Churches of Christ (1980, 1983, 1986), as well as some individual denominations, issued resolutions or position statements that cautiously endorsed genetic interventions for therapeutic purposes. In addition, in 1979, concerns about genetic engineering expressed by Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic leaders led President Jimmy Carter to ask the President’s Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research to examine the scientific, ethical, and social issues of gene splicing (President's Commission, 1982). The President’s Commission addressed the aspects of “genetic engineering” that use recombinant DNA technology to treat disease, but it did not address other procedures often encompassed by the phrase, such as IVF or cloning organisms.

The discussions of the 1970s continued into the 1980s with particular attention to IVF, artificial insemination by donor, and surrogacy. These techniques challenged traditional notions of the family by separating genetic and rearing fatherhood and genetic, gestational, and rearing

motherhood, as well as raising questions about whether the contractual and commercial ties in many of these arrangements were inimical to traditional religious views of the family.

A third era of religious discussion began in 1993 with the report from George Washington University of the separation of cells in human blastomeres to create multiple, genetically identical embryos. The Roman Catholic Church expressed vigorous opposition to the procedure, and a Vatican editorial denounced the research as “intrinsically perverse.” Catholic moral theologians invoked norms of individuality, dignity, and wholeness in condemning this research (McCormick, 1993; 1994; Shannon, 1994). While many Conservative Protestant scholars held that this research contravened basic notions of personhood such as freedom, the sanctity of life, and the image of God, some other Protestant scholars noted its potential medical benefits and advocated careful regulation rather than prohibition.

The fourth and most recent stage of religious discussion has come in the wake of the successful cloning of Dolly the sheep through the somatic cell nuclear transfer technique, as the cloning of a human once again appeared to be a near-term possibility. Several Roman Catholic and Protestant thinkers have reiterated and reinforced past opposition and warnings. For example, Protestant theologian Allen Verhey drew on the arguments initially voiced by Paul Ramsey in concluding that an account of the good life in a family is “inhospitable” to the cloning of humans (Verhey, 1994;1997).

However, some Protestant thinkers, in reflecting on the meaning of human partnership with ongoing divine creative activity, have expressed qualified support for cloning research and for creating children using somatic cell nuclear transfer techniques. Likewise, some Jewish and Islamic thinkers encourage continuing laboratory research on animal models and even laboratory work on the possibility of cloning human beings (only in pursuit of a worthy objective), while expressing deep moral reservations, at least at this time, about the transfer of a human embryo obtained by nuclear transfer techniques to a womb for purposes of gestation and birth. Testimony presented to NBAC in public hearings on March 13 and 14, 1997, provides some of the earliest theological statements in this renewed discussion of the ethics of cloning research and of cloning humans.

Several conclusions emerge from this brief historical overview:

- Over the past twenty-five years, theologians have engaged in repeated discussions of the prospect of cloning humans that anticipate and illuminate much current religious discussion of this topic.
- Theological and ecclesiastical positions on cloning humans are pluralistic in their premises, their modes of argument, and even their conclusions. In short, they exhibit the pluralism characteristic of American religiosity.

- The religious discussion of cloning humans has connected it closely with on-going debates about technologically-assisted reproduction and genetic interventions.
- Despite changes in scientific research and technical capability, the values that underlie religious concerns about cloning humans have endured and continue to inform public debate.

Themes in Theological Bioethics

This section, without any pretense of comprehensiveness, examines several major, overlapping themes in Western faith traditions that bear on positions taken on the cloning of humans. It considers both broad religious convictions and moral norms. These traditions have articulated a variety of ethical norms to address a wide range of practical issues and problems. These norms may be derived from sacred writings, traditions of interpretation, reason, and personal experience, among other sources, and they can be applied to the wide array of moral choices people confront from the beginning to the end of life.

The Biblical Account of the Creation of Humans

The question of personhood or human distinctiveness is commonly described and explained in Judaism and Christianity with reference to the theological theme of creation in the image of God. Interpretations of the moral meaning of the image of God depend on prior convictions about the nature of God and the characteristics of God that human beings are believed to reflect. The biblical story of creation is most commonly used for interpreting the image of God. Particularly significant is the language of Genesis, chapter 1, verses 27-28: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (Revised Standard Version).

Several characteristics of humanity have been inferred and explicated from the biblical story of creation:

- Human beings as created in God’s image receive the gift of freedom and moral agency. Moral agency is inherent in the human self and creates moral responsibilities that include respect for the equal freedom and agency of other persons. The moral correlate of personal freedom is personal responsibility for actions before one’s conscience, others, and ultimately God.
- Humans are fundamentally equal because they are all created in God’s image. Their fundamental equality transcends any differentiation based on gender, race, class, or ethnicity.

- Human beings are also relational and social creatures. They are created in and for relationships with God and for community with other persons as well as the rest of creation.
- The image of God is reflected in human diversity, including, but not limited to, gender diversity. The differentiation of the sexes represents the divine warrant for procreation as well as a positive evaluation of sexuality.
- Human beings are embodied selves. The person is revealed and experienced through the body, not merely as an intellectual or spiritual essence, or as a disembodied mind or will.
- Although human beings are in nature, they also transcend nature, and they express the image of God through the exercise of their creative capacities and potential, including their “dominion” over the natural world.
- Although human beings are created in God's image, they are not God. They are finite and fallible, with limited capacities to predict and direct the course of actions they initiate, or to assess accurately the outcomes of these actions.

Each of these features of the image of God helps explain religious responses to the prospects of creating a child through human cloning. Nevertheless, different religious traditions and strands within those traditions interpret and weight these features and their implications somewhat differently, particularly in relation to the divine commands that follow the creation of humans in God's image. These different views of humans as created in the image of God, with certain responsibilities, are reflected in major religious themes regarding the cloning of humans: responsible human dominion over nature; human dignity; and procreation and families.

Responsible Human Dominion Over Nature

Warnings Not to Play God. As often happens when a powerful new scientific tool is developed, the announcement that mammalian somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning was possible generated strong warnings against “playing God.” This slogan is usually invoked as a moral stop sign to some scientific research or medical practice on the basis of one or more of the following distinctions between human beings and God:

- Human beings should not probe the fundamental secrets or mysteries of life, which belong to God.
- Human beings lack the authority to make certain decisions about the beginning or ending of life. Such decisions are reserved to divine sovereignty.
- Human beings are fallible and also tend to evaluate actions according to their narrow, partial, and frequently self-interested perspectives.

- Human beings do not have the knowledge, especially knowledge of outcomes of actions, attributed to divine omniscience.
- Human beings do not have the power to control the outcomes of actions or processes that is a mark of divine omnipotence.

The warning against “playing God” serves to remind human beings of their finiteness and fallibility. By not recognizing appropriate limits and constraints on scientific aspirations, humans reenact the Promethean assertion of pride or hubris. In the initial theological discussions of cloning humans, Ramsey summarized his objections by asserting: “Men ought not to play God before they learn to be men, and after they have learned to be men, they will not play God” (Ramsey, 1970).

Even within religious communities, however, the warning against “playing God” may not be considered a sufficient argument against human cloning. Allen Verhey contends that this warning is simply too indiscriminate to provide ethical guidance. Furthermore, it overlooks moral invitations to play God, particularly in the realm of genetics (Verhey, 1995). While agreeing with Ramsey that human beings are not called to “play God,” Protestant Ted Peters argues that this does not by itself define what is necessary for us to be human. Hence, we are responsible for using our creativity and freedom (features of the image of God) to forge a destiny more consonant with human dignity. In “playing human,” Peters contends, there is no theological reason to leave human nature unchanged, and no theological principles that the cloning of humans necessarily violates (Peters, 1997).

The Quest for Knowledge. For major strands of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions, the quest for scientific knowledge is not, in general, theologically problematic or threatening. Islamic scholars, for example, emphasize that all scientific discovery is ultimately a revelation of the divinely ordained creation. Scientific knowledge is thereby a symbol or sign of God's creation (Hathout, 1997). Along these lines, Sheikh Fadlallah, a Shi'ite Muslim jurist, commented that the recent cloning discovery occurred “because God allowed it” (Fadlallah, 1997), and Abdulaziz Sachedina, an Islamic scholar, observed that cloning may be a divinely given opportunity for human moral training and maturation (Sachedina, 1997). Positive general assessments of scientific inquiry also appear in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish traditions. One ecclesiastical statement in the Calvinist tradition, which views the world as a theater of God's glory, suggests that “in the sciences, the human does indeed receive glimpses of God's theater” (Reformed Church in America, 1988).

The prospects for dialogue and agreement between religion and science can dissipate in the context of specific scientific applications. For the religious traditions under consideration, scientific descriptions of the world, however important, do not supply theological interpretations or provide the moral standards for acting in the world. Instead, these traditions insist that two principal questions—who controls technological developments, and what are the ends and

purposes of technology—are ethical rather than scientific or technical. Thus, these traditions generally endorse the scientific quest for knowledge, while at the same time sharply criticizing and even rejecting particular applications of scientific discoveries, just as many thinkers within these traditions do with respect to the prospect of cloning humans to create children. Some religious thinkers also take pains to distinguish their reservations about cloning humans from their response to genetic research in general (Duff, 1997).

Finally, while generally supporting science, many religious thinkers criticize what they perceive to be a “technological imperative,” frequently propelled by commercial forces, to pursue such projects as the cloning of humans when they appear to be possible and/or potentially profitable without giving sufficient attention to the risks involved (Cahill, 1997). Still others insist that, however valuable, scientific “progress” remains an optional goal for the society and its individual members, who should not transgress important moral and human limits in its pursuit (Meilaender, 1997).

Responsible Dominion. Religious traditions variously interpret the biblical mandate of human dominion over nature. Three different interpretations are particularly significant in debates about cloning humans. One common model is an ethic of stewardship, which holds that humans are entrusted with administrative responsibility for creation. Human stewardship involves caring for and cultivating creation after the manner of a gardener. This stewardship ethic, one version of which is prominent in Roman Catholicism, accepts nature as a good to be maintained and preserved.

A second model suggests a “partnership” between human beings and God in caring for and improving upon creation. Rabbi Dorff (1997) notes that “we are God’s ‘partners in the ongoing act of creation’ when we improve the human lot in life.” The Jewish tradition emphasizes that God has given humans a “positive commandment” to “master the world” (Tendler, 1997), and some Jewish thinkers explicate human mastery over nature by reference to the two directions for Adam and Eve in the Garden: They were “to work it [the garden] and to preserve it” (Genesis 2:15). To “work” nature is to improve it to meet human needs, and this activity is both right and obligatory “as long as we preserve nature” (Dorff, 1997). It also includes efforts to heal. Human responsibility, in the final analysis, involves “balancing” human and divine actions in this partnership (Dorff, 1997).

This second model also appears in some Islamic thought. One Islamic scholar stresses that “as participants in the act of creating with God, human beings can actively engage in furthering the overall well-being of humanity by intervening in the works of nature, including the early stages of embryonic development, to improve human health” (Sachedina, 1997). The natural world on this second model is inherently malleable and can be shaped in several different ways in service of valuable human and divine goals. Proponents of this model could view cloning research, and perhaps even cloning humans in some circumstances, as using human creative potential for good.

A third perspective, which some Protestants defend, is potentially even more receptive to the prospect of cloning humans. It understands human beings as "created co-creators." On the one hand, human beings are created, dependent on God, and finite and fallible. On the other hand, they assume the role of co-creator to acquire and implement knowledge to improve humanity and the world. Human beings are called to "play human" (Peters, 1997) through their freedom and responsibility in creating an essentially open human future. Reproductive and genetic technologies, along with technologies to create a child through cloning, can express responsible created co-creatorship.

Although Genesis notes that creation is "good" and humanity "very good," humans have displayed, according to some traditions, an irremediable propensity to use their divinely authorized dominion for unauthorized domination, to violate their covenant of partnership with God, and to create after their own image rather than the divine image. The person created in the image of God is thus also marked by a tendency to transgress limits, to commit what some traditions call sin. As a consequence, all human activities are pervasively imperfect. The narratives in Genesis of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, their eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the later Tower of Babel often appear in religious discussions of human temptations and tendencies to transgress appropriate limits (see, for example, Tandler, 1997, and Dorff, 1997).

The prospect that humans can and will choose evil rather than good dictates caution as a moral necessity (Gustafson, 1994; Duff, 1997). Even though human imperfection does not necessarily justify halting technological advances, it should, according to many religious thinkers, evoke modesty about human aspirations and achievements (Hefner, 1997).

Human Destiny. Theological views of medicine and medical interventions grounded in themes of creation may be somewhat conservative with respect to reproductive or genetic technologies, not to mention cloning, because of the divine evaluation of nature, including human beings, as good. For instance, the goal of medicine may be conceived as that of restoring disordered biological organisms to their initial goodness, rather than improving them. By contrast, theological positions that focus on human destiny rather than nature can sometimes support an array of reproductive and genetic interventions as ways to improve the human condition.

The question of human destiny has been an underlying theme in the debate about cloning humans from its inception. Several decades ago scientific proponents such as Muller and Lederberg were pessimistic about the survival of the species because of genetic overload. Cloning represented a prospective intervention to avoid this "genetic apocalypse" and promised a future of unlimited possibility. Paul Ramsey's theology of cloning likewise assumed an apocalyptic prognosis of human destiny, though very different in content: "Religious people have never denied, indeed they affirm, that God means to kill us all in the end, and in the end he is going to succeed" (Ramsey, 1970). The end of species survival did not, for Ramsey, justify the means of cloning. Survival is meaningful only if values of human dignity and freedom are respected.

The use of cloning to save the endangered human species is no longer part of the debate, although cloning techniques have received some support to rescue endangered animal species. However, the general question of the extent to which human beings are shapers and creators of their personal and collective futures continues to be important and contested. Some theologians in the debate about cloning humans reject a rigid and static conception of human nature and destiny in favor of a conception that is more open. This more open conception reflects an image of a creative God and a dynamic view of history. The specific theological-ethical interpretation of cloning humans then turns on the nature of human responsibility in the face of uncertain, and perhaps unforeseeable, outcomes.

Some Jewish thinkers affirm that the divine mandate of mastery empowers human beings with the responsibility to shape a malleable world through discovery and innovation. They stress that the Jewish tradition is relatively optimistic because of divine control and care in the face of uncertainty about unanticipated consequences. Indeed, to be overly cautious to the point of moral paralysis may invite trouble. As one Orthodox rabbi has expressed it: “Human beings do the best that they can. If our best cost/benefit analysis says go ahead, we go ahead. ‘G-d protects the simple’ is a Talmudic principle that allows us to assume that when we do our best G-d will take care of what we could not foresee or anticipate. If things do not work out, the theological question is G-d's to answer; not ours” (Freundel, 1994; 1997). On this view, cloning humans could express moral responsibility insofar as it is directed to the service of God and humanity. Furthermore, some affirm, “children are our destiny” (Dorff, 1997).

Often Jewish thinkers also emphasize the moral education of progeny who will live in the generations to come. One form of immortality discussed in rabbinic sources comes through the influence of parents (and others) on their children. The generations are bound together in part by the ongoing obligations of transmitting knowledge and skills and by teaching and developing moral dispositions. Rabbi Tendler emphasizes the importance of moral education as the best form of human control over cloning technology: “Are we good enough to handle this good technology? Of course we are, if we can set limits on it. And when we can train a generation of children not to murder or steal, we can prepare them not to use this technology to the detriment of mankind” (Tendler, 1997).

Some Protestants emphasize the idea of “continuing creation,” coupled with the theme that persons are co-creators who are called to participate with God in shaping a better future. Indeed, human destiny is so open and indefinite that the Christian may be a “co-explorer” with God in discovering new and unlimited possibilities through innovative technologies (Cole-Turner, 1987). This perspective on human destiny can offer qualified support to human cloning, insofar as it is technically feasible and publicly supported.

These theological accounts of human destiny do not simply bless and anoint scientific progress, because they are balanced, within each tradition, by repeated warnings, often in narrative form, about not crossing certain lines or boundaries. The archetypal figure is Prometheus in Greek mythology, but religious traditions have their own Promethean analogues. The theological caveat

is that creative initiative may be a form of rebellion of the created against the creator. The consequences of such rebellion may include catastrophic havoc and perhaps even destruction of the human creator or of what has been created. This lesson is as fundamental to religious narrative as it is to modern science fiction. The task for religious traditions is to identify what lines may not be crossed and to determine whether cloning a human to create a child is one such line. Much of the debate about limits focuses on human dignity and several related concepts.

Human Dignity

It has been argued that the most significant issue genetic science forces on society concerns the understanding of human nature (Gustafson, 1992). This same issue emerges in theological discourse on the cloning of humans. Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner argues that cloning is a “revelation of the human situation. . . In cloning, we are, in fact, addressing ourselves, and it is about ourselves that we have the greatest questions” (Hefner, 1997). One major theme in the theological conception of creation in God’s image is human dignity: Humans have dignity because they are created in God’s image.

Appeals to human dignity are prominent in Roman Catholic analyses and assessments of the prospects of human cloning, which base “human dignity” on the creation story and on the Christian account of God’s redemption of human beings. The Catholic moral tradition views the cloning of a human being as “a violation of human dignity” (Haas, 1997; see also Moraczewski, 1997). Concerns about human dignity also appear in religious perspectives that are more receptive to the possibility of human cloning; these concerns emerge in the moral limits or conditions they set for human cloning. Even when the language of human dignity is not used, arguments for and specifications of the rights of persons created through cloning often represent what others include under the phrase “human dignity.” And when the language of human dignity is used, it is often specified in more concrete concepts and norms, such as human equality and the sanctity of life.

Religious thinkers generally do not question whether a person created through cloning is a human being created in God’s image. They extend to persons created through cloning the same moral protections that already apply to other persons created in the image of God. For instance, Rabbi Elliot Dorff argues that “[n]o clone may . . . legitimately be denied any of the rights and protections extended to any other child” (Dorff, 1997). However, many fear that the human dignity of persons created through cloning will be violated by the denial of such rights and protections, for instance, through enslavement to others and other forms of “man’s mastery over man” (Tendler, 1997).

Human cloning would violate human dignity, according to some religious opponents, because it would “jeopardize the personal and unique identity of the clone (or clones) as well as the person whose genome was thus duplicated” (Moraczewski, 1997). This problem does not arise in the case of identical twins, because neither is the “source or maker of the other” (Moraczewski, 1997). Religious concerns about identity and individuality focus mainly on how persons created through cloning will inevitably or possibly be treated, rather than whether such

persons are actually unique creatures in God's image. Rejecting genetic determinism, religious thinkers hold that cloning humans would "produce independent human beings with histories and influences all their own and with their own free will" (Dorff, 1997). The person created through cloning will be "a new person, an integrated body and mind, with unique experiences." However, it will doubtless be harder for such persons "to establish their own identity and for their creators to acknowledge and respect it" (Dorff, 1997). Even for absolute opponents, the process of cloning humans only violates human dignity; it does not diminish human dignity: "In the cloning of humans there is an affront to human dignity. . . . Yet, in no way is the human dignity of that person [the one who results from cloning] diminished" (Moraczewski, 1997).

Sanctity of life is one norm associated with human dignity. For instance, the prohibition of the shedding of human blood is connected with God's creation of humans in his own image (Genesis 9:6). Opponents often view the cloning of a human as a breach, or at least as a potential breach, of the sanctity of life. In rejecting human cloning, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger of the Vatican insisted that "the sanctity of [human] life is untouchable" (quoted in Moraczewski, 1997). Even those who offer limited support for human cloning, in part on the grounds that it could be used in support of life, argue that it is necessary to set conditions and limits in order to prevent harm to persons who are created through cloning. Not only do they rule out such egregious violations of the sanctity of life as sacrificing persons created through cloning in order to obtain their organs for transplantation, they also worry about what will be done with the "bad results," that is, the "mistakes" that will be inevitable at least in the short term (Dorff, 1997). In addition, most recognize that the risks to persons created through cloning are now so unknown that we should virtually rule out human cloning for the present, because those who create children in this manner could not be sure that they are "doing no evil" (Tendler, 1997).

Objectification also represents a fundamental breach of human dignity. To treat persons who are the sources of genetic material for cloning or persons who are created through cloning as mere objects, means or instruments violates the religious principle of human dignity as well as the secular principle of respect for persons. Cloning humans would necessarily involve objectification, some religious thinkers argue, because it would treat the child as "an object of manipulation" by potentially eliminating the marital act and by attempting "to design and control the very identity of the child" (Moraczewski, 1997). Cloning humans is wrong, in short, because "it subjects human individuals at their most vulnerable, at their very coming-into-being, to the arbitrary whim, power and manipulation of others" (Haas, 1997). For other religious thinkers who accept human cloning under some circumstances, it is necessary to reduce the effects of objectification, for example, by a commitment to accept and care for the "mistakes" made in cloning (Dorff, 1997).

Objectification can become commodification when commercial and economic forces determine whether and how a person is treated as an object. Religious opponents of human cloning stress that objectification through commodification is a major risk and worry that "economic incentives will control when humans will be cloned" (Cahill, 1997). Commodification would deny "the sacred character of human life depicted in the Jewish tradition, transforming it

instead to fungible commodities on the human marketplace to be judged by a given person's worth to others" (Dorff, 1997).

Religious thinkers note that the process of human cloning would or could violate the human dignity of agents, that is, those who create children through cloning, as well as the children who are so created. The concepts and norms associated with human dignity cannot be reduced to secular ideas of autonomy, even though they may overlap to some extent. Human dignity sets more limits than autonomy does on what the agent may do. Even though Protestants are often pictured as "stout defenders of human freedom," as one Protestant theologian notes, "they have not located the dignity of human beings in a self-modifying freedom that knows no limit. . ." (Meilaender, 1997). Likewise, a Roman Catholic statement insists that "there is an affront to human dignity for the ones who actively participate in the process as well as for the one who results from the cloning" (Moraczewski, 1997).

Whether creating a human being through cloning necessarily or only under certain circumstances violates human dignity depends on the conception of rights and duties that specify human dignity. For instance, some religious thinkers argue that human cloning would violate inherent human dignity "by exceeding the limits of delegated dominion," a topic that was discussed above (Moraczewski, 1997; see also Haas, 1997). The next section on Procreation and Families will explicate the claim, strongly associated with human dignity in Roman Catholic thought (as well as in some Protestant thought), that those coming into being have a fundamental "right to be engendered by the personal act of a man and a woman committed to one another and their future children in marriage" and not to be subjected to "impersonal manipulative actions which render them susceptible to being used, and thereby abused, by those manipulating them into being" (Haas, 1997).

Procreation and Families

Procreation and Reproduction. In the initial phase of theological debate about cloning humans, Paul Ramsey argued that the covenant of marriage includes the goods of sexual love and procreation, which are divinely ordained and intrinsically related: Human beings have no authority to sever what God had joined together. On this basis, Ramsey, a Protestant, joined with several Roman Catholic moral theologians, such as Bernard Häring and Richard McCormick, in objecting to the cloning of humans as part of the panoply of reproductive technologies. They claimed that such technologies separate the unitive and procreative ends of human sexuality and transform "procreation," which at most puts humans in a role of co-creator, into "reproduction." The Vatican's 1987 Instruction on Respect for Human Life (Donum Vitae) rejected human cloning either as a scientific outcome or technical proposal: "Attempts or hypotheses for obtaining a human being without any connection with sexuality through 'twin fission,' cloning, or parthenogenesis are to be considered contrary to the moral law, since they are in opposition to the dignity both of human procreation and of the conjugal union" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987).

A similar critique distinguishes “begetting” (procreating) from “making” (reproducing). According to the Nicene Creed of early Christianity, Jesus, as the authentic image of God and the normative exemplar of personhood, is “begotten, not made” of God. The theological interpretation of “begetting” emphasizes likeness, identity, equality; begetting expresses the parent's very being. By contrast, “making” refers to unlikeness, alienation, and subordination; it expresses the parent's will as a project.

Drawing out the implications of this distinction, Oliver O'Donovan, an Anglican theologian, portrays the cloning of humans as the culmination of scientific or technical “making” in human reproduction: “[T]he development of cloning techniques. . . will be a demonstration, if it occurs, that mankind does have the awesome technical power to exchange the humanity which God has given him for something else, to treat natural humanity itself as a raw material for constructing a form of life that is not natural humanity but is an artificial development out of humanity” (O'Donovan , 1984; see also Meilaender, 1997). Thus, this exercise of technological power would come at the cost of an artificial, diminished humanity. It would also disrupt the fundamental relational ties of likeness, identity, and equality. A child created through cloning is designed and manufactured as a product, rather than welcomed as a gift (Meilaender, 1997). Moreover, the process is itself inauthentic, or “fabricated,” with respect to what it means to be human (Ramsey, 1970).

For some religious thinkers, this sharp distinction between begetting and making also challenges widely accepted reproductive technologies. For instance, Lutheran Gilbert Meilaender testified before NBAC that even though human cloning “marks a new and decisive turn,” he “would have gotten off the train” of reproductive technology long before it reached cloning (Meilaender, 1997).

However, many religious thinkers do not accept the sharp separation between begetting and making, because it could rule out various reproductive technologies that they find acceptable, just as many do not accept the absolute connection between unitive and procreative meanings of sexual acts, in part because it would rule out artificial contraception, which they find acceptable. They may, nevertheless, still reject the cloning of humans to create children because they perceive it to be radically different from all other methods of technologically-assisted reproduction. Thus, they may stress the radically new features of human cloning, perhaps even viewing it as a “genuine revolution” in reproduction.

Concerns about the Family. Religious traditions usually approach the cloning of humans to create children from the standpoint of familial relationships and responsibilities rather than from the standpoint of personal rights and individual autonomy. Hence, a primary moral criterion is the impact of cloning humans on the integrity of the family, a concern that includes but also goes beyond the inseparable goods of marriage and the primacy of begetting over making.

The family has been valued as the prime social institution and, in some religious traditions, a divinely ordained institution for the bearing and nurturing of children. Within Roman Catholic

moral teaching, procreation and education of offspring are requirements of natural law. Paul Ramsey's opposition to the cloning of humans stemmed in part from a view that Christians perform their primary responsibility to future generations through procreation and care for children. Jewish law and Islamic law also impose fundamental duties and responsibilities through spousal, parenting, and familial relationships, and through intergenerational ties.

Protestant theologian Allen Verhey appeals to the concept of a “good life in a family” to reject human cloning. He maintains that the primary justifications for human cloning—the principle of freedom and the principle of utility—are necessary but insufficient guidelines for the moral life of a family. In particular, Verhey focuses his critique on the potential disruption of the parent-child relationship: The cloning of humans risks transforming children into “products” of technological achievement rather than “gifts” created in love (Verhey, 1997). As products, children become objects, and objectification violates what it means to treat a child as a gift.

Similarly, Lisa Cahill, a Roman Catholic moral theologian, argues that “the child who is truly the child of a single parent is a genuine revolution in human history, and his or her advent should be viewed with immense caution.” She further contends that cloning violates “the essential reality of human family and ... the nature of the socially related individual within it. We all take part of our identity, both material or biological and social, from combined ancestral kinship networks. The existing practice of ‘donating’ gametes when the donors have no intention to parent the resulting child is already an affront to this order of things. But, in such cases, as in cases of adoption where the rearing of a child within its original combined-family network is impossible or undesirable, the child can still in fact claim the dual-lineage origin that characterizes every other human being. Whether socially recognized or not, this kind of ancestry is an important part of the human sense of self (as witnessed by searches for ‘biological’ parents and families), as well as a foundation of important human relationships.” Cloning humans to create children, Cahill concludes, would constitute an “unprecedented rupture in those biological dimensions of embodied humanity which have been most important for social cooperation” (Cahill, 1997). At the extreme, cloning humans would not only free human reproduction from marital and male-female relationships, but would “allow for the emancipation of human reproduction from any relationship” (Mohler, 1997). Furthermore, echoing Cahill’s concern about “intergenerational family networks,” Protestant theologian Meilaender stresses that the cloning of humans “would symbolically represent an enormous shift in our understanding of the

relation of the generations,” and that this symbolic shift would have incalculably risky effects that should not be unleashed (Meilaender, 1997).

Concerns about lineage and intergenerational relations in other religious traditions also set limits on or challenge the cloning of humans to create children. For example, Islamic scholar Abdulaziz Sachedina suggests that Islam could accept some therapeutic uses of human cloning “as long as the lineage of the child remains religiously unblemished” (Sachedina, 1997, pp. 6-7). And some Jewish thinkers worry that cloning humans may diminish the ethic of responsibility because of changed roles (father, mother, child) and relationships (spousal, parental, filial). It may be unclear who has what responsibilities to whom between and among the generations. According to Rabbi Tendler, “we do not live well with generational inversion” of the sort that human cloning could produce (Tendler, 1997). In particular, he stresses concerns about honoring parents and inheritance laws. However, cloning humans, for acceptable ends, may in some narrow respects be morally “easier” for the Jewish tradition, from the standpoint of its potential impact on the family, than reproductive technologies that use donor insemination or egg donation because it would not raise the same concerns about consanguineous relationships (Dorff, 1997; Tendler, 1997).

Even though concerns about family relationships dominate much of the religious discussion of human cloning, some religious thinkers challenge these concerns. For example, while giving “top priority” to children’s interests in a religious-moral assessment of human cloning, and while noting “serious reasons” for reservations about research into human cloning, Protestant ethicist Nancy Duff argues that “the idea that it would undermine the relationships between men and women or the basic family unit is not . . . morally or theologically convincing” (Duff, 1977, p. 11).

Assessments of Acts and Public Policies

Religious thinkers and traditions often provide moral guidance to participants in their own communities. As a result, they direct many of the themes, norms, and arguments presented in this chapter primarily to those within particular faith traditions. However, religious thinkers and communities also frequently address the larger society, sometimes even proposing specific public policies in addition to trying to alter cultural beliefs, values, and norms. They often base their proposals for public policy on appeals to the “common good” or “public welfare” or “public interest” (for example, Cahill, 1997; Haas, 1997; Duff, 1997; Dorff, 1997; Sachedina, 1997).

Religious perspectives on public policies regarding human cloning vary for several reasons. One critical factor is whether the tradition views every possible act of cloning humans as intrinsically evil (as, for example, Roman Catholicism does) or whether it recognizes that cloning humans could conceivably be justified in some circumstances, however few they may be (as, for example, many in the Jewish tradition do). The Roman Catholic tradition argues that the very use of cloning techniques to create human beings is contrary to human dignity: “One may not use, even for a single instance, a means for achieving a good purpose which intrinsically is morally flawed” (Moraczewski, 1997). And, for that tradition, creating a child through human cloning is

intrinsically morally flawed. Some thinkers in other traditions also hold that such an action is always morally wrong, whatever good might come from it (see Meilaender, 1997).

By contrast, some other religious thinkers believe that cloning a human to create a child could be religiously and morally acceptable under certain conditions. They may view the technology as “morally neutral” (Dorff, 1997) and then consider which uses are morally justified; or they may oppose human cloning from matured (differentiated) cells except in the most exceptional circumstances and then identify those exceptional circumstances.

Two hypothetical scenarios are quite common. The first one involves cloning a sterile person to create a child. Rabbi Tendler poses the case of “a young man who is sterile, whose family was wiped out in the Holocaust, and [who] is the last of a genetic line.” Rabbi Tendler says “I would certainly clone him” (Tendler, 1997). The debate about this type of case hinges in part on different views of infertility. The Jewish tradition often views infertility as an “illness” and thus brings it under the responsibility to heal. According to others, for example, some in the Protestant tradition, the problem of infertility is not serious enough to warrant research into or actual human cloning (Duff, 1997).

A second case involves cloning a person who has a serious and perhaps fatal disease and needs a compatible source of biological material, such as bone marrow. Rabbi Dorff, for instance, holds that it would be “legitimate from a moral and a Jewish point of view” to clone a person with leukemia with the intent of transplanting bone marrow from the created child as long as the “parents” intend to raise the child as they would raise any other child (Dorff, 1997; Tendler, 1997). Some Protestants concur on this case, even when they reject the first type of case (Duff, 1997). Those who consider the second type of case justifiable rule out destruction or abandonment of the created child, as well as the imposition of serious risks of harm. Indeed, acceptance of either type of hypothetical case—as well as a third type of case involving the cloning of a dying child—presupposes that the procedure is safe for the child created by cloning. Other conditions include the protection of the created child’s rights and the lack of acceptable alternatives to cloning persons in such cases.

Those who view cloning humans as intrinsically wrong may also respond sympathetically and compassionately to people’s suffering when they are infertile or have a disease that brings death or disability. However, they usually hold that the good of overcoming this suffering does not justify cloning humans: Cloning “is entirely unsuitable for human procreation even for exceptional circumstances” (Moraczewski, 1997). Indeed, religious critics may view the exceptional circumstances featured in the cases as “temptations” to be resisted (Meilaender, 1997).

Some rough correlations hold between evaluations of particular cases and proposals for public policy. Religious thinkers who view the cloning of a human being as intrinsically wrong,

i.e., wrong in and of itself, under any and all circumstances, tend to support a permanent ban on cloning humans through legislative and other means. Any use of cloning technology to create a human child abuses that technology, which is, however, acceptable in animal reproduction. By contrast, religious thinkers who hold that, in some conceivable circumstances, it could be morally justifiable to clone a person to create a child tend to support public policies that regulate the procedure, with varying restrictions, or that ban the procedure for the time being or until certain conditions are met. In assessing public policies, this second group is particularly concerned to prevent potential abuses of the technology in cloning humans rather than condemning all uses. For instance, they may hold that the government should impose some regulations on cloning “to prevent the most egregious abuses” (Dorff, 1997). Some “egregious abuses,” such as creating people for organ transplants and then discarding their remains, would already be prohibited by criminal law, but new laws and policies may be needed to prevent others.

Most religious thinkers who recommend public policies on cloning humans propose either a ban or restrictive regulation. A few examples will suffice. On March 6, 1997, the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention issued a resolution entitled “Against Human Cloning,” which supported President Clinton’s decision to prohibit federal funding for human-cloning research and requested “that the Congress of the United States make human cloning unlawful.” The resolution also called on “all nations of the world to make efforts to prevent the cloning of any human being.”

The Vatican’s 1987 Instruction on Respect for Human Life (Donum Vitae) argued for a legal prohibition of human cloning, as well as many other reproductive technologies. Official Roman Catholic statements since that time have condemned non-therapeutic research on human embryos and human cloning and have called on governments around the world to enact prohibitive legislation. Most recently, in the wake of the cloning of “Dolly,” a Vatican statement reiterated the basic teaching of Donum Vitae: “A person has the right to be born in a human way. It is to be strongly hoped that states ... will immediately pass a law that bans the application of cloning of humans and that in the face of pressures, they have the force to make no concessions” (“Vatican Calls for Ban,” 1997).

By contrast, Rabbi Elliot Dorff argues that “human cloning should be regulated, not banned.” He holds that “the Jewish demand that we do our best to provide healing makes it important that we take advantage of the promise of cloning to aid us in finding cures for a variety of diseases and in overcoming infertility.” However, “the dangers of cloning . . . require that it be supervised and restricted.” More specifically, “cloning should be allowed only for medical research or therapy; the full and equal status of clones with other fetuses or human beings must be recognized, with the equivalent protections guarded; and careful policies must be devised to determine how cloning mistakes will be identified and handled” (Dorff, 1997). Although Dorff stresses legislation, particularly to regulate privately funded research, he recognizes that legislation will be only partially effective, and for that reason calls for increased attention to hospital ethics committees and institutional review boards, in part because of the self-regulation involved. Hence, although legislation is important “to ban the most egregious practices,” most supervision “should

come from self-regulation akin to what we already have in place for experiments on human subjects”(Dorff, 1997). Many religious thinkers also stress public and professional education.

Several factors other than moral judgments about the moral acceptability or unacceptability of particular cases enter into proposals for public policy. They include, along with the various religious-moral arguments—for example, about the family—already examined in this chapter, the history of eugenics, particularly the Nazi experience; fear of “man’s mastery over man” (Tendler, 1997); the risk of social discrimination and coercion; and the risks of psychological harm to the child created by cloning a human. The most fundamental concern, which is addressed more fully in the Chapter Four, focuses on unknown physical risks to the child (see, for example, Tendler, 1997). Many supporters of a ban or regulation also want to ensure that it will be narrowly and tightly drawn in order to permit necessary and potentially beneficial research.

One important background policy issue for some religious thinkers concerns justice, fairness, or equity in the allocation of resources. Public decisions about funding research, such as research on cloning humans, involve more than assessments of safety and the broad ethical questions that have already been raised in this chapter and will be examined more fully in the next chapter. They also involve setting priorities in the allocation of funds (Sachedina, 1997). Hence, one Protestant theological ethicist argues that society should not proceed with research into cloning humans until it considers the larger questions of allocation, including the “responsible use of limited resources” (Duff, 1997). One standard of evaluation that focuses on the common good targets (a) the most serious problems of disease and disability, and (b) the welfare of society’s most vulnerable members (Duff, 1997).

Conclusions

The wide variety of religious traditions and beliefs epitomizes the pluralism of American culture. Moreover, religious perspectives on cloning humans differ in fundamental premises, modes of reasoning, and conclusions. As a result, there is no single “religious” view on cloning humans, any more than for most moral issues in biomedicine. Nevertheless, discourse on many contested issues in biomedicine still proceeds across religious traditions, as well as secular traditions. Specifically with regard to cloning humans to create children, some religious thinkers believe that this technology could have some legitimate uses and thus could be justified under some circumstances if perfected; however, they may argue for regulation because of the danger of abuses or even for a ban, perhaps temporary, in light of concerns about safety. Other religious thinkers deny that this technology has any legitimate uses, contending that it always violates fundamental moral norms, such as human dignity. Such thinkers often argue for a legislative ban on all cloning of humans to create children. Finally, religious communities and thinkers draw on ancient and diverse traditions of moral reflection to address the cloning of humans, a subject they have debated off and on over the last thirty years. For some, fundamental religious beliefs and norms provide a clear negative answer: It is now and will continue to be wrong to clone a human. Others, however, hold that more reflection is needed, given new scientific and technological

developments, to determine exactly how to interpret and evaluate the prospect of human cloning in light of fundamental religious convictions and norms.

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