

U.N. Denounces Cloning

By Wendy Wright

In a rare twist, what began as an attempt to gain international approval for cloning humans for research ended with the United Nations approving a total cloning ban in February.

Germany started the process in 2001 to ban “reproductive cloning,” that is, to forbid the survival of a human clone. Yet the proposal was silent on “therapeutic cloning,” a sneaky way to gain implicit consent for creating human clones for science experiments.

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No one wants the live birth of a cloned baby, it was argued, but countries should be free to permit cloning embryos for the goal of advancing science.

Ironically, Germany has a national law banning all human cloning. However, the German constitution states that international law supersedes national law. The few German leaders who support cloning hoped to use the U.N. to undo Germany's national ban.

So, when pro-lifers at the U.N. leaked that, during a debate, a German delegate called “criminal” anyone who didn't agree with “therapeutic cloning,” the German people were furious.

As a result, Germany's Parliament passed a resolution calling on the government to end efforts for a “reproductive cloning” ban and to work with the United States for a total ban.

Costa Rica, with the enthusiastic help of the United States, valiantly led the charge for a true ban. The successful message: It's wrong for countries to pursue cures for diseases and disabilities at the expense of human life itself.

The United Kingdom, Belgium and Singapore demanded that the “greater good” of scientific progress trumps the idea that embryos deserve respect as members of the human race.

Since the debate began, I and other pro-lifers took every opportunity to talk with delegates about the dangers of human cloning. As our opponents brought up new arguments, we quickly dug up information to disprove them.

The most receptive delegates were from developing countries. Cloning is a rich man's folly at poor women's expense, I explained, since disadvantaged women would be targeted to extract the billions of eggs needed for cloning research. Cloning



is a violation of human dignity. And, adult stem cells are already doing what cloning only promises, by providing near-miraculous treatments for patients with a variety of illnesses, such as Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, heart failure, cancer and blindness.

At the final vote, the United Kingdom vowed to defy the ban.

The Netherlands, in the midst of a scandal that its doctors are euthanizing newborn babies, opposed the ban, declaring: "Fully aware of the ethical questions concerned, we simply cannot and will not go that far."

Costa Rica cut to the heart, saying, "It is surprising and sad that at the beginning of the 21st century certain delegations have objections to [calling] upon states to protect 'human life.'"

Nigeria reminded delegates, "The United Nations was set up primarily to stop all acts, including self-serving applications of science and technology, capable of violating the sanctity and dignity of human life. ... It is the pride, and most ardent desire, of older generations, to see that younger ones grow up so as to take over the affairs of their community. Human cloning for therapeutic purposes

would reverse this natural order of things. It would want us to kill children at the very formative stages of life to serve oth-

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ers. ... [It] gives the impression that some human lives are much more important than others."

While opponents crowed that the declaration is "nonbinding," the European Parliament promptly used it to discourage funding for cloning.

What a great privilege to see that, through your support, CWA's work is having an international impact. ■

Wendy Wright, CWA's senior policy director, lobbies frequently at the United Nations on pro-family issues.

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