

To Save Life, Apparently We Have To Kill It

Last week, President Obama signed an executive order to lift restrictions on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. He claimed that the decision between science and morality was "false." The order will not fund the creation of new stem cell lines, but will allow federally-funded scientists to conduct research on existing embryonic stem cells that under the previous administration were off limits.

Embryonic stem cells are used because they are "master cells" that can morph into any cell of the body. Scientists hope to use them to create replacement tissues to treat a variety of diseases. Embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos that develop from eggs that have been fertilized in an in vitro clinic and then donated for research purposes. When in-vitro fertilization is done, doctors fertilize a large number of eggs because they are uncertain how many will succeed and turn into embryos. Once fertilized they usually implant a small portion of those embryos (normally four or five days old) into the womb of the soon-to-be mother. The unused fertilized embryos are discarded. The controversy revolves around the question of using an embryo that would normally be thrown away.

Because I am not a scientist, the ultimate success of this research is beyond my capability to speculate. However, I do know that this is the murder of innocent life, even though it is only four or five days old. Life is a gift from God, and children are "*an heritage of the Lord*" (Psalm 127:3). I personally object to my tax dollars being used this way and couples who are willing to allow unused embryos to be discarded or used scientifically had better think deeply about the decision's moral implications.

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