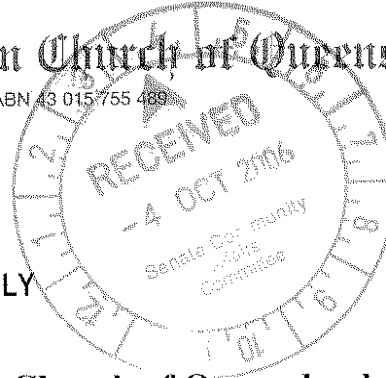




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# The Presbyterian Church of Queensland

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## THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF ASSEMBLY

### Presbyterian Church of Queensland Statement on Cloning and Stem Cells - September 2006

In approaching the matters of Cloning and Stem Cell experimentation both ethical and practical concerns are at issue.

#### **The Ethical Position of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.**

The Presbyterian Church of Australia is a confessional Church with the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments as the basis of its theological position.

In past years the Presbyterian Church of Queensland has, at its annual Assembly, carried the following resolutions in relation to cloning and stem cell experimentation;

1980 BB Minute 116

That the Assembly;

8. Affirm the Biblical teaching of the Right to Life, especially as this applies to the unborn child, that all life is sacred to God, and that human life is a gift of God from conception.

1983 BB Minute 123

That the Assembly;

18. Affirm that complete human ectogenesis (through the utilisation of animal or mechanical "wombs") is unacceptable as is also the concept of surrogate "motherhood".
19. Affirm that human cloning (should it become possible) should be prohibited because of the logical sequence of these convictions; namely:-
  - (i) the "oneness" of the marriage relationship;
  - (ii) the understanding that this "oneness" should be inviolate in the begetting, the non-begetting, or adoption of children;
  - (iii) the divinely ordained, complementary functions of husband and wife in their marriage, home and family;
  - (iv) the human rights of the child within the mother's womb and beyond;all combine to give the clear understanding that human reproduction by cloning is not and could never be acceptable.

2005 BB Minute 98

That the Assembly;

15. Advise the Prime Minister, the Minister for Health, the Leader of the Parliamentary National Party, the Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and the media that The Presbyterian Church of Queensland
  - (a) Is opposed to embryonic stem cell research and procedures using the products of embryonic stem cells because this Church affirms that personhood commences at conception.
  - (b) Supports further research using adult stem cells and cord (placenta) stem cells.
  - (c) Calls on the Government to amend legislation so as to:
    - a. No longer authorize embryonic stem cell research, and
    - b. Encourage adult and cord (placenta) stem cell research.

2006 BB Minute 134

That the Assembly;

- 9.(a) Congratulate Professors Alan Mackay-Sim and Peter Silburn, of Griffith University, for their dedication to science in the area of adult stem cell research.
- (b) Write to the Prime Minister, with a copy to the Minister for Health, the Leader of the Opposition and Senator Boswell, commending the Government for the establishment of an adult stem research Centre at Griffith University, and requesting the Government to abandon research on and use of embryonic stem cells.

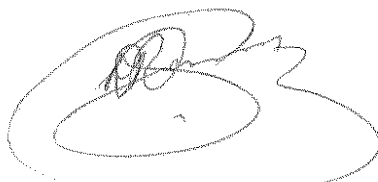
### **Other Considerations**

Since personhood occurs at conception, there is a need to make a distinction between the production of embryos with the intention that they will proceed to full term and birth, and the production of embryos as part of an IVF programme for storage if not implanted and then being discarded or used for experimentation or the production of embryos as part of a stem cell experimentation programme with the intention that they be destroyed within fourteen days.


What has changed since the legislation on cloning and stem cells was passed 2002? Apart from success with adult stem cell research and threats of scientists to move overseas if they do not get their own way in carrying out cloning and embryonic stem cell research beyond that allowed in the legislation, nothing has changed.

The use of semantics in matters relating to cloning doesn't change the fact that in both therapeutic cloning for research or reproductive cloning for a live birth, a living embryo is produced by somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), which if implanted in a woman's womb could go to term. The process is the same for both, and both are unacceptable. As cloning requires the use of hundreds of eggs per successful clone, there is a risk to the health of a woman if she is used to produce this number of eggs. Even more unacceptable is the possible use of animal eggs with human somatic cells in this process to produce an animal - human hybrid.

The Presbyterian Church of Queensland calls on all Senators and Members of the House of Representatives to oppose legislation which would allow cloning or further extend the use of embryonic stem cells in experimentation. We further request that more support be given to stem cell research using adult stem cells and stem cells obtained from umbilical cord blood, as there are no ethical problems in these areas and in fact positive results have already been obtained.



Rt Rev Rudi Schwartz  
Moderator, PCQ



Rev Ron Clark  
Clerk of Assembly, PCQ