



FAMILY LIFE INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA Ltd.

PO BOX 205, BROADWAY NSW 2007

176 Parramatta Rd, Camperdown NSW

Phone (02) 9519 9111 Fax (02) 9519 9622

Email: fliaust@internode.on.net

SUBMISSION TO THE

Inquiry into the Legislative responses to Recommendations of the Lockhart Review

Continuing the work of Fr Paul Marx OSB

Pope John Paul II to Fr. Marx: "You have much experience; you are doing the most important work on earth" – 17 November 1979

“The human being must be respected - as a person - from the very first instant of his existence. Life once conceived, must be protected with the utmost care; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.”¹

“Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves ‘the creative action of God’² and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end.³ God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being.⁴ Human procreation requires on the part of the spouses responsible collaboration with the fruitful love of God;⁵ the gift of human life must be actualised in marriage through the specific and exclusive acts of husband and wife, in accordance with the laws inscribed in their persons and in their union.⁶

This is the guiding principle of Catholic teaching regarding human procreation. One of its basic implications is that human beings are not commodities to be traded or mere tissue for experimentation with a view to some alleged, greater common good.

The Lockhart review violates this respect for human life in many of its recommendations.

Therefore, Family Life International Australia Ltd (FLI) opposes firstly **Recommendation No 14** which recommends that ‘research should continue to be permitted, under licence’ of ‘excess embryos’ generated by Assisted Reproductive Technologies. The implementation of legislation to permit such research will have the effect of normalising an inhuman and bizarre practice of experimentation exceeding even that of the Nazi doctors of World War II. The resolve of many from the Nuremberg trials was that such experimentation should never happen again in the history of man. But this evil has returned with a vengeance, where the human beings involved have no say in the outcome of the experiments. The claim of the doctors is the same, that scientific benefits will result from these experiments.

Another issue of concern for FLI is the demand for eggs to generate embryos for these experiments:

1 Instruction On Respect For Human Life In Its Origin And On The Dignity Of Procreation
Replies To Certain Questions Of The Day

2 POPE JOHN XXIII, Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, III: AAS 53 (1961) 447; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Discourse to priests participating in a seminar on "Responsible Procreation"*, 17 September 1983, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VI, 2 (1983) 562: "At the origin of each human person there is a creative act of God: no man comes into existence by chance; he is always the result of the creative love of God".

3 Cf. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 24.

4 Cf. POPE PIUS XII, *Discourse to the Saint Luke Medical-Biological Union*, 12 November 1944: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi VI* (1944-1945) 191-192.

5 Cf. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

6 Cf. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 51: "When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral character of one's behaviour does not depend only on the good intention and the evaluation of the motives: the objective criteria must be used, criteria drawn from the nature of the human person and human acts, criteria which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love".

a) The harvesting of human eggs

The Lockhart review in its introduction on p xviii noted that there could be problems relating to the acquisition of human eggs e.g. (1) the risk to the donors of the eggs and (2) the consent of young women who were the best candidates for the healthiest eggs was open to abuse. Thus they recommended that ‘egg donation should be managed by strict ethical guidelines and that payment to donors should not be permitted beyond reimbursement of reasonable expenses.’

But this recommendation for such acts to be strictly guided by ‘ethical guidelines’ is in reality no more than a fig leaf to cover the fact that doctors bitten by the bug of killing human beings for monetary gain almost cannot stop themselves ignoring such risks and paying large sums to acquire them. A classic example of this inevitable crossing of boundaries is evident in the UK where the British Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA) granted permission in July 2006 to an English fertility centre to pay women undergoing IVF treatment to donate their eggs for research cloning.

Groups like ourselves know, from common sense morality, that any relaxing of prohibition on money for eggs can only lead to induce poor women to undergo the dangers of such egg harvesting. The European Commission has launched an investigation, even as we speak, into this practice as alleged to have occurred in Spain targeting poor immigrant women.

(b) Hybrid fertilisation

The Lockhart Committee describes this as “embryos created by nuclear transfer or other methods not involving fertilisation of eggs by sperm, human–animal hybrid or chimeric embryos, embryos with genetic material from more than two persons, embryos with genetic alterations and so on..”.⁷ The Lockhart Committee goes on to make the following statement:

“The Committee has therefore also recommended that hybrid fertilisation should be permitted, under licence, up to, but not including, the first cell division.”

The Lockhart idea is that researchers can produce a hybrid embryo for experimentation but it must be destroyed before 14 days. The proposal is put in this form to keep everyone happy: those who oppose the using of such hybrids beyond a certain point and at the same time allows any alleged usefulness implicit in the hybrid to be gleaned before the 14 days expire.

Another aspect of such experiments has been the issue of mixed DNA inheritance. Peer reviewed scientific research shows the dangers inherent in the practice of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT).

‘The use of nuclear transfer can result in both donor cell and recipient oocyte mitochondrial DNA persisting through to blastocyst and being transmitted to the offspring. The degree of donor mitochondrial DNA transmission appears to be random and currently no evidence exists to explain this phenomenon’⁸

7 Lockhart Review xiv

8 Genetics, Vol. 172, 2515-2527, April 2006, doi:10.1534/genetics.105.055145 Aberrant Nucleo-cytoplasmic

‘Offspring produced by nuclear transfer (NT) have identical nuclear DNA (nDNA). However, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) inheritance could vary considerably’.⁹

The scientists whom so many politicians want to appease know full well that such hybrids are already a reality around the world. In January of this year scientists in the UK applied for permission to create rabbit-human embryos.¹⁰ An ordinary Google search shows that there are a myriad of other hybrids in the offing at the moment, demonstrating that already many around the world are salivating about the illusory benefits to be gained by such experiments.

FLI is totally opposed to all forms of cloning and calls for the Senate Committee reviewing the Lockhart Committee recommendations to reject their proposals.

Cross Talk Results in Donor Cell mtDNA Persistence in Cloned Embryos Rhiannon E Lloyd, Joon-Hee Lee, Ramiro Alberio, Emma J Bowles, Joao Ramalho-Santos, Keith H S Campbell and Justin C St John.

⁹ Genetics, Vol 167, 897-905, June 2004, doi:10.1534/genetics.103.025049 Paternal Mitochondrial DNA Transmission During Nonhuman Primate Nuclear Transfer Justin C St John, Gerald Schatten.

¹⁰ <http://www.cnn.com/2006/TECH/science/01/13/rabbit.human/index.html>