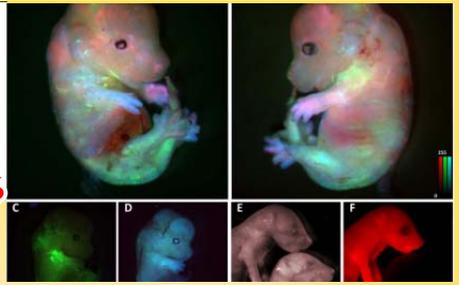




Where do babies

come from?



If you have been following recent news, you will know that not only is talk of birds and bees irrelevant, but even mothers are. Yes, I know that creating a human foetus from skin cells and sperm is a long way away, and presumably would need some sort of womb in which to grow, but the scientists assure us that they have done it with mice so it is potentially possible.

Blurring boundaries

It seems that every area of society is determined to challenge boundaries. And that isn't necessarily a bad thing: all scientific advance results from someone thinking or acting 'outside the box': looking for ways to overcome the boundaries. But I do have an issue with challenging and changing for change's sake—and with the assumption that if science CAN do something it is morally neutral. The fact is that although some scientists may be thinking about implications, science itself does not ask moral questions AT ALL. Science asks how; disciplines like sociology ask why; theology asks whether it is right or wrong.



Complementary interpretations

I think I've written before about the possible parallels between the answers you might find in science and Christianity. Some scientists express their work as 'thinking God's thoughts after him—finding out how He works'.

Born then adopted

But thinking back to my opening question: does it matter if people create babies in a different way from the tried and tested method? Scientifically it may: there may be unforeseen health implications which only time would reveal. Sociologically, it also matters: the weight of evidence so far is that children thrive best in a family with a father and a mother. Theologically it's less obvious, though I think God might be surprised that anyone would want to bypass his gift of marriage, sex, and family. Whether something is wrong or not may depend on why it is being done. But I don't think the person created from skin cells would be any less of a person than you or me. What really matters theologically is what the baby becomes. Christians who trust in Jesus are adopted as his brothers: it is not where or how we are born which matters, but everything after that.

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