

Genetically Modified (GM) Babies: what does this mean?

The Government announced just before Christmas that it is shortly going to ask Parliament to legalise the production of human beings who, in order to eliminate some rare but very serious diseases, have had part of the ova (their mother's eggs) from which they themselves came replaced by material taken from other ova. These re-constructed ova would have then been fertilised artificially (i.e. by In vitro fertilisation - IVF - in laboratories) and inserted into their birth-mothers' wombs.

So these children would effectively have three parents.

This would be something we have never before dared to do – or been allowed to do - to human beings. It is genetic modification (GM). Parliament banned this in 2008. But the Government is trying to pull wool over our eyes by calling it genetic 'donation'.

And they hope to smuggle it past Parliament without it reaching 'the floor of the House', i.e. being debated and voted on by all MPs and then the Lords. They plan to send it via a small committee of MPs which meets in a back room.

They say that what they propose is not GM and is therefore not unlawful. If it were already lawful there would be no need to ask Parliament to approve these regulations.

GM could have all sorts of very serious side-effects because it is tampering with the basic constituents of human beings. It could cause new congenital abnormalities in not just the children themselves but their descendants. GM experiments using animals have had some horrifying results. Most countries are holding back. The US Food and Drugs Administration, for example, has recommended extreme caution. Britain is rushing ahead.

GM will not cure any diseases. Rather, it could take away the incentive to conquer them. And it will inevitably result in ever more use of the technique. It's a slippery slope...

Above all we object to it because it is yet another assault on the sanctity and dignity of human life, yet another example of unacceptable manipulation and trivialisation of human life. We must do all we can to stop it.

Please sign the petition to our MP about it [*at the back of the church or wherever*]