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Author(s): STEVEN KETTELL

Article Title: Did Secularism Win Out? The Debate over the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

Year of publication: 2009

Link to published version:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2009.01959.x>

Publisher statement: The definitive version is available at www3.interscience.wiley.com

Did Secularism Win Out? The Debate over the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

STEVEN KETTELL

Introduction

The divide between secularism and faith is no more evident than in matters of science and religion. In the latest clash between the two, the debate over the controversial Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill has again raised questions about the extent to which religious belief should inform and shape public policy in Britain. In this instance, a brief review of the legislative outcome would seem to indicate a victory for secularism, as religiously motivated attempts to amend the Bill's key provisions were soundly defeated during the course of its passage through Parliament. Yet there are good reasons to believe that drawing such a conclusion would be too hasty. For one, although the composition of the debate over the Bill was for the most part polarised between secular and religious opinion, not all of those who opposed its more contentious aspects did so for religious reasons. Moreover, a second, and less obvious point concerns the way in which the religious lobby sought to shape the terms of the debate itself. Despite losing the Parliamentary votes by a large margin, the manner in which religiously motivated groups and individuals engaged in the broader public debate suggests a level of organisation and mobilisation that is unlikely to simply fade away. Indeed, what the debate over the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill reveals most is not so much the dominance of a homogeneous secularism, as a growing willingness on the part of those driven by religious belief to seek a greater role for their faith in the public sphere.

An act of science

While the process of secularisation in Britain continues its seemingly unrelenting progress,¹ questions about the role of religion in the public sphere remain matters of intense contention. A series of high-profile disputes over issues including free speech, the establishment of faith schools, the terms of sexual equality legislation and issues of identity and community cohesion, have all, in various ways, served to emphasise the point. With questions about the social and political role of faith appearing ever more often on the contemporary public agenda, so pressures for religion to be granted a greater influence in public affairs has also gained momentum. Often, this has been couched by its adherents as a rearguard action in the face of a vigorously assertive secularist lobby. The head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, for example, has recently implored against allowing the rising tide of secularism to turn Britain into a 'God free zone'—sentiments that have been echoed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who has persistently warned that the state will become 'sterile and oppressive ... unless it is continually engaged in conversation with those who speak for the gospel'. The case has also been put by a variety of multidenominational faith groups and organisations. Among them, Theos, a self-declared 'public theology think-tank' makes the point with particular clarity; promoting an 'overall aim of putting God "back" into the public domain'.²

The recent Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill provided fertile ground for the latest public confrontation between the secular and the religious. The Bill, which cleared Parliament in October 2008, is the latest in a series of legislative measures designed to maintain a regulatory and statutory framework for the conduct of research into human embryos. The debate over the first of these measures—the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act—was marked by two competing forms of discourse, described by Mulkey as a dichotomy between a rhetoric of 'hope', deployed by its supporters who sought to

emphasise the potential medical and reproductive benefits of embryo research, versus a rhetoric of 'fear', through which its opponents emphasised the adverse moral and social implications of unrestrained scientific advances. Primarily mobilised by religiously motivated individuals and organisations, this latter discourse centred on the 'special status' of a human embryo as an actual or potential life, and on the ethical transgression involved in any research that led to its destruction. During the course of events, however, the former discourse proved to be the more influential. Supporters of the Bill successfully managed to shape the debate in their favour through a campaign of practically demonstrating the science of IVF treatment to MPs, and by utilising the concept of a 'pre-embryo', defined as the first 14 days from fertilisation prior to the emergence of the 'primitive streak' (the point at which the cells that make up the unique characteristics of the embryo become differentiated), which could legitimately be denied personhood status and thereby made it possible for MPs to reconcile embryological research with convictions relating to the moral status of the unborn. The Bill was eventually passed on a free vote in the House of Commons (by 362 to 189), giving Britain one of the most liberalised human embryo research regimes in the world.³

By the turn of the century, a series of scientific breakthroughs in cloning and stem cell technologies had created pressures for the 1990 Act to be updated so as to permit research in these areas, especially into potential treatments for degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. In December 2000 the Act was subsequently amended on another free vote, with the debate once more hinging on the moral claims of human embryos versus the medical benefits of embryonic research.⁴ By 2004, however, with a growing sense of unease about the capacity of the regulatory framework to keep abreast of scientific developments, the government announced its intention to review the 1990 Act. This was followed by a public consultation in 2005, a White Paper in December 2006 and subsequently by a draft Bill, which was scrutinised by a Joint Committee drawn from both the House of Lords and the

Commons. The Bill was introduced in the former in November 2007, replete with whipped voting as the government sought to ensure that any attempts to amend its contents met with failure.

Having cleared the initial stage in the Lords, the Bill's passage through the Commons was a source of no little controversy. This was due as much to the government's handling of the Bill as to its actual contents. In particular, the intention to subject the Bill to a further round of whipped voting jarred with many Labour MPs, who regarded certain aspects of it as matters of conscience—a grievance heightened by the free votes that were allowed by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The three most notable of these were measures for the creation of human-animal hybrid embryos for research purposes (designed to circumvent a shortage of human eggs by inserting a human nucleus into an animal casing); for permitting the selection of embryos for the purposes of creating a 'saviour sibling' (screening embryos for a tissue match for an existing ill sibling who might benefit from a donation of stem cells); and for the removal of a clause stipulating the 'need for a father' for the provision of IVF treatment. Adding further to the pressure for a free vote, opponents of the Bill also declared their intention to table an amendment on lowering the time limit for abortion from its current level of 24 weeks—the first time that any change in the 1967 Act would be considered for 18 years.

Amidst concerns about a Cabinet rift, with Catholic ministers Paul Murphy, Ruth Kelly and Des Browne (along with several whips and junior ministers) believed to be willing to defy the government line in order to vote according to their consciences, by the end of March, Prime Minister Gordon Brown had been forced to relent. Under the terms of a compromise agreement, Labour MPs were permitted to vote according to their consciences on these particular provisions on condition that they supported (or at least did not vote against) the government when it came to the final vote in the House of Commons.

Taking sides

For many commentators, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill invoked a clearly demarcated battleground, ranging those in favour of science and rationality against the reactionary forces of faith. In the view of the former, the story of the public debate was one of ‘godly interventionists’ seeking to block the efforts of progress; of, as Richard Dawkins put it, ‘restless busybodies’ who ‘can’t resist inflicting their ignorant opinions on others’. In the view of the latter, on the other hand, science had now become, in the words of Comment on Reproductive Ethics (CORE), ‘the new fundamentalism ... particularly in the field of embryonic stem cells’. Or, as Tom Wright, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, put it, the Bill was merely the latest thrust from a ‘militantly atheist and secularist lobby’, the expression of its ‘tyrannical’ belief in the right to ‘kill unborn children and surplus old people’.⁵ Given such a clear and apparently irreconcilable divide, the Bill’s passage through Parliament, in which all attempts to modify or remove its most contentious points failed, would thus seem to indicate a victory for secularism over religion. To what extent, then, is this actually the case?

The degree to which any reasonable inferences can be drawn on this matter depends on the composition of the debate. Simply put, if the vast majority of those opposed to the measures contained in the Bill were religiously driven, and if the vast majority of those in favour were overtly secular, then this will provide reasonable grounds for claiming that the defeat of the measures indeed signified a secularist victory. The real picture, however, was not quite so clear cut. This is evidenced, firstly, by an analysis of the replies given to the 2005 public consultation exercise. These are categorised here as ‘secular’ (being from organisations with no overtly religious orientation), ‘religious’ (from organisations explicitly identifying themselves as religious, and individuals representing religious organisations, such as church leaders) and ‘other’ (from those whose religious or secular position was either

unstated or unclear). Three of the eventual four 'issues of conscience' on which MPs were permitted a free vote were addressed in the consultation questionnaire (the use of hybrid embryos, tissue typing for the creation of 'saviour siblings' and the 'need for a father' clause), and while the relatively small sample sizes involved (69 and 24 for the available 'secular' and 'religious' replies, respectively) caution against drawing any firm conclusions, the results are instructive nonetheless.

The first observation to be made is that the responses from the 'religious' category, including many organisations at the forefront of the campaign against the Bill such as Affinity (formerly the British Evangelical Council), CORE, the Christian Medical Fellowship and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, displayed an extremely high degree of uniformity. Here, all respondents were in favour of maintaining the 'need for a father' clause in some form, all were in favour of banning the use of hybrid embryos and 70 per cent were in favour of prohibiting the use of tissue typing for the creation of saviour siblings (the remaining 30 per cent being in favour only if such techniques were used as a last resort, on a case-by-case basis and under the strictest of conditions).

A second point of note is that opposition to the Bill's contentious measures was not limited to religious organisations. Many secular bodies, such as LIFE, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, the Royal College of Physicians and the Centre for Bioethics and Public Policy, expressed their own concerns over the proposals on ethical grounds. That said, of the available secular responses, the tendency was nonetheless supportive of the proposals. Of those expressing a view on these issues, almost four-fifths (78 per cent) supported the use of tissue typing, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) favoured scrapping the father clause and almost three-fifths (56 per cent) supported the use of hybrids. These findings were also repeated in the evidence given by religious and secular organisations to the Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos (Draft) Bill (as it was originally named)

during the summer of 2007.⁶

Somewhat contrary to the generic impression of the debate as being conducted between clearly demarcated secular supporters and religious opponents, the reality, then, is not one of rigidly and mutually exclusive positions, though neither is it an eclectic melting-pot in which both secular and religious campaigners share a mixture of views. Importantly, in terms of the inferences that can subsequently be drawn from this analysis, it cannot reasonably be said that the rejection of the ‘conscience issues’ signified a victory for a homogeneous secular camp (since no such camp existed), but, nonetheless, that it did mark a defeat for a more or less homogeneous religious lobby. Although not all opponents of the Bill were religiously motivated, the large majority of those campaigners motivated by faith were opponents of the Bill.

Land of hope and fear

These points are underscored by the debate that accompanied the Bill’s passage through Parliament. In terms of the four ‘conscience issues’ involving hybrid embryos, saviour siblings, the ‘need for a father’ clause and abortion, the discursive pattern earlier identified by Mulkay was once again evident as supporters and opponents utilised their respective emphases on ‘hope’ and ‘fear’.

Supporters of the Bill (which included secular organisations such as the Wellcome Trust, the Bioindustry Association, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the Medical Research Council, along with medical charities such as Cancer Research and the Motor Neurone Disease Association) adopted a discourse emphasising the benefits of potential medical treatments as well as equal citizenship rights. The ‘need for a father’ clause, for example, was presented as being discriminatory and unfair to single mothers and lesbians, as being incompatible with legislation on civil partnerships and human rights, and as being a

wholly benign move, there being no evidence of any negative emotional or psychological consequences for children of same-sex couples. Similar evidential claims underpinned the arguments both in favour of saviour siblings—namely that there was no evidence of any psychological burden on the ‘saviour’, and for retaining the current abortion limit, with its supporters citing evidence from recent studies (EPICure2 and Trent) that show there to have been no statistically significant improvement in survival rates for babies born before 24 weeks during the past 18 years. Aligned to this were the ethical advantages of such measures, ranging from the moral issue of women’s choice, to the potential medical benefits to be derived from the Bill’s provisions, with supporters responding to criticism about the limits of embryonic (as opposed to adult stem cell) research by pointing out that it was not surprising that its benefits had yet to be realised given the relatively recent nature of the technology. Taking issue with the ethical claims marshalled by opponents of the Bill, the Labour MP George Howarth offered a typical rebuff, insisting that ‘no one side has a monopoly on moral argument’.⁷

The oppositional discourse of fear was based on two core components: the first highlighting the moral rights of human embryos both to life and a conventional upbringing by a mother and a father, and the second utilising the ‘slippery slope’ hypothesis—namely that the measures contained in the Bill represented the worst of an unchecked science and would lead to progressive moral and social degeneration. The issue of saviour siblings, for example, was attacked in the Commons for the absence of consent on the part of the saviour, for the potential psychological damage that the saviour may endure in later life, as well as for the social consequences involved in the creation of designer children. Similar themes emerged on the proposal to remove the ‘need for a father’ clause—namely that this would erode a child’s right to a father (described by the Conservative MP Andrew Selous as ‘the most fundamental human right that any child in the world could ask for’), that it would undermine the role of

fathers (with Iain Duncan Smith telling the House that it would ‘send a powerful signal to everyone involved that fathers no longer matter’) and that such a move would be detrimental to child welfare. Critics maintained that there was ‘abundant evidence’ to show that children raised by a mother and a father enjoyed better social, emotional and educational development than their counterparts in non-conventional family units, and that children with absent fathers were more likely to fail at school, fall into drug and alcohol addiction, and endure unemployment or welfare dependency. On the case for reducing the limit for abortions, too, ethical principles were paramount to the case, with opponents of the current limit basing their argument heavily on the notion of embryo and foetal rights, claiming that medical advances had made it possible for babies to survive at below 24 weeks.

These arguments were played most strongly, however, in the case of hybrid embryos. The creation of human-animal hybrids was variously denounced by opponents as ‘revolting’, ‘monstrous’, ‘a radical violation of human dignity’ and as ‘plain wrong, and a slippery slope to who knows where’. As Bill Cash complained: ‘In many ways, our age is one of technology giants and ethical infants—we are like children playing with land mines, because we have no idea of the dangers posed by the technology that we are handling.’ A further ethical difficulty in all of this concerned the medical value of embryonic stem cell research itself, with those opposed maintaining that adult stem cells offered better prospects and should thereby receive more resources. As Edward Leigh put it, embryonic stem cell research was both ‘ethically wrong and almost certainly medically useless’.

While not all proponents of this discourse of fear were motivated by religious belief, the vast majority of religiously motivated campaigners were nonetheless adherents to this discourse. Moreover, the ethical stance of the oppositional arguments that were presented in the House are identical to those that were deployed by religious organisations in the broader public debate. In an Easter attack against the Bill, the head of the Catholic Church in

Scotland, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, for example, colourfully denounced the provisions for hybrid embryos as a 'Government endorsement of experiments of Frankenstein proportion', and slammed the Bill as a whole for its comprehensive attack on 'the sanctity and dignity of human life'. Similarly, if less controversially, the Church of England stated its opposition to hybrids on the basis of 'the scriptural distinction of "kinds" of creatures, taken together with the uniqueness of humans as those made in God's image'. Concerns about the progressively degenerative impact of unrestrained science were also evident. For ProLife, the fear was also that once measures such as the creation of hybrids were accepted, then British society would 'continue down an irresistible slide towards even more abhorrent experiments'; Affinity cautioned that 'without adequate ethical control' the social consequences of the Bill would be 'disastrous'; while Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor maintained that unregulated scientific progress 'could lead us to a kind of utilitarianism regarding human life which does no justice to the sanctity of life'. As R. David Muir, the Public Policy Executive Director of the Evangelical Alliance, put it: 'Just because science can do something doesn't mean that it should.'⁸

Similar arguments were also apparent in opposition to the removal of the 'need for a father' clause. The Evangelical Alliance warned that the welfare consequences for children were such that the step risked 'storing up unimagined consequences for society in the future'—a view backed by the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, which claimed that same-sex parenting had been shown 'to be a negative impact on the child' and that removing the clause 'would ultimately be to the detriment of society as a whole'. A concern for child welfare also provided the foundation for opposition from the Church of England, which maintained that a child's right 'not to be deliberately deprived of having a father' was 'greater than any right of a gay couple to commission a child by IVF'. From its Catholic counterpart, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor warned that in removing the clause the government were taking away 'not just the

need for a father but the right for a father' itself.⁹

Final hurdles

Opponents of the Bill reacted to its passage through Parliament with equal measures of anger and resolve. Following the Commons vote on the Bill's second reading in May (during which oppositional attempts to amend it were comprehensively defeated) the General Secretary of the Christian Medical Fellowship, Peter Saunders, declared that Parliament had shown itself to be 'seriously out of touch with the opinion of the British people'; Dan Boucher, the Director of Parliamentary Affairs for Christian Action Research and Education, called for the vote 'to provoke Christians to engage in the public square with greater energy and wisdom'; and Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor asserted that many people had been left 'deeply uneasy and perplexed' by the vote, and professed to be 'quite sure' that the issue of abortion would soon 'come up again'. On the same theme, Andrea Williams, Public Policy Director of Christian Concern for Our Nation and one of the more vocal critics of the Bill, called for the Parliamentary vote 'to be a wake-up call for the Church'—a view that was echoed by Cardinal Keith O'Brien, who held that the public debate had made a vital contribution to the church's attempt to 'begin the much needed task of awakening consciences in our society'. A call to arms from the Church of England was a further illustration of the hardening mood; a Church-commissioned report by the Von Hugel Institute criticising the government for being 'religiously illiterate' and for its 'lack of understanding of, or interest in, the Church of England's current or potential contribution in the public sphere'.¹⁰

Religiously motivated antipathy to the Bill proved to be instrumental in shaping the last phase of its legislative timetable. In mid-July, with the final reading of the Bill literally hours away, the Leader of the Commons and the Deputy Labour Leader, Harriet Harman, announced that the final Commons vote would now be put back until after the summer recess,

ostensibly in order to allow more time for the issues to be debated. For many commentators, though, the more likely reason for the surprise delay was to be found in the impending and increasingly tight-fought by-election in Glasgow East, scheduled to take place just days after the Commons vote; defeat in which, it was widely thought, could sound the death-knell for Gordon Brown's increasingly unpopular and crisis-ridden premiership. Heightened concerns, then, fell on the one-third of the Glasgow East electorate who were known to be Catholic, at least nominally, and on avoiding any unnecessary action that might jeopardise what would, in most circumstances, be a safe haul of Labour votes. In this context, remarks from the Bishop of Motherwell, Jim Devine, the second most senior Catholic figure in Scotland, whose diocese covered the constituency, would seem to have been influential. Criticising the government for pressing ahead with the Bill, just days before its postponement, the Bishop declared that Labour had 'broken its pact with Christian voters', that they were seeking 'to expel any notion of God from public debate and legislation', and that the party had 'lost its ethical credibility in the nation at large' and could no longer take Catholic support for granted.¹¹ That Labour subsequently lost the election by just 365 votes to the SNP, which overturned a Labour majority of more than 13,500, indicated just how precious every vote had now become.

The Bill's re-emergence after the recess was also marked by controversy. Portending this was the resignation of Ruth Kelly at the end of September, the publicly stated reason for which—to spend more time with her family—being widely thought to be supplemented by her ill-concealed opposition both to the contents and management of the Bill. Having been the only minister to be granted an exemption from voting at the second reading (being allowed to be in Brussels on government business), Kelly's comments in a post-resignation interview with the *Evening Standard*, during which she complained that it was 'difficult to be a Christian in politics these days' and that the government should have allowed MPs a free

vote on what was a matter of conscience, did little to alleviate suspicions that this was a significant factor in her decision.¹²

The following month the Bill faced its final Commons vote. The main focus in this, with most of the key provisions having been settled at the second reading, now fell on the issue of abortion as both pro-life and pro-choice campaigners (the former being strongly supported by the Catholic Church, particularly in their resistance to the legalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland) presented amendments that would either restrict or liberalise existing legislation. In the event, however, the prospect of any such changes making it onto the statute book was stifled by the timetabling of the vote. Keen to avoid any further controversy, and with abortion forming no part of the Bill's principal remit, the government imposed a programme motion allowing for just three-and-a-half hours of debate, and placed clauses relating to abortion at the end of the list of proposed amendments, effectively ensuring that parliamentary time would expire before they could be discussed by MPs. Not surprisingly, such tactics drew fervent protestations from both sides of the divide: Diane Abbott, a leading advocate of liberalisation, condemning it as 'a shabby manoeuvre'; Bill Cash, from the opposite camp, calling it 'an unbelievable disgrace to Parliament'. Unsurprising, too, was the express displeasure of the religiously driven to the Bill's final passage. Comparing it to the practices of the Nazis, Cardinal O'Brien declared that Britain had now come to embrace a 'culture of death', and announced that: 'Our fight, our battle ... should not therefore be solely with the elected but with the electorate!'¹³

Conclusion: a secular victory?

Of the arguments deployed during the debate over the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, those associated with a discourse of fear proved insufficiently persuasive to surmount those deployed by proponents of a discourse of hope. The latter's emphasis on civil rights and

medical and scientific progress resonated far more with the values of modern Britain than scripturally derived ethical claims and warnings of social decay. Indeed, a notable feature of the case made by critics of the Bill was that the overt religiosity of many prominent oppositional MPs was not reflected, for the most part, in the use of any explicitly religious arguments in the Commons—a strategic concession, perhaps, to a belief that the votes of most MPs are not swayed in such a fashion. By most measures the general public, too, were unconvinced by the case against the Bill, although exact sentiments are difficult to assess, and although opinions varied according to the issue to hand and to the framing of the questions put.

Yet while opposition from those acting from religious motives proved insufficient to derail the Bill, they nevertheless provide clear evidence of what is now a growing desire on the part of faith-based organisations to secure a more prominent role for religion in the public life of the nation. Indeed, the successful passage of the Bill was not a victory for a homogeneously constituted secularism (even if the failed attempt to amend its most controversial measures did mark a defeat for a religiously constituted opposition), and nor is it indicative of a marginalisation of religion within the public sphere. The real story of the debate over the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is not, therefore, one of a vanquishing of the faithful. On the contrary, what is demonstrated by these events is both the increasing organisation of faith groups and individuals, and their willingness to mobilise in order to press their case. While their battle on this occasion may have been lost, pressures for a greater role for religion in the public sphere are likely to remain a key feature of the British political landscape for some time to come.

Notes

- 1 See J. Morris, 'The strange death of Christian Britain: another look at the secularisation debate', *The Historic Journal*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2003, pp. 963–76; A. Crockett and D. Voas, 'Generations of decline: religious change in 20th-century Britain', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2006, pp. 567–84.
- 2 Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, lecture at Westminster Cathedral, 8 May 2008; Rowan Williams, Lecture at St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, 12 May 2007; N. Spencer, *"Doing God": A Future for Faith in the Public Square*, Theos Think Tank, 2006. <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/Files/MediaFiles/TheosBookletfinal.pdf>
- 3 See M. Mulkay, 'Rhetorics of hope and fear in the great embryo debate', *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1993, pp. 721–42; M. Mulkay, 'Frankenstein and the debate over embryo research', *Science Technology and Human Values*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1996, p. 157; also see M. Kirejczyk, 'Parliamentary cultures and human embryos: the Dutch and British debates compared', *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 29, no. 6, 1999, pp. 889–912; N. Richardt, 'A comparative analysis of the embryological research debate in Great Britain and Germany', *Social Politics*, Spring 2003; S. Fink, 'Politics as usual or bringing religion back in? The influence of parties, institutions, economic interests and religion on embryo research laws', *Comparative Political Studies*, November 2007.
- 4 A. Plomer, 'Beyond the HFE Act 1990: the regulation of stem cell research in the UK', *Medical Law Review*, vol. 10, 2002, pp. 132–64; T. Banchoff, 'Path dependence and value-driven systems: the comparative politics of stem cell research', *World Politics*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2005, pp. 200–30.
- 5 *New Statesman*, 15 May 2008; *Independent on Sunday*, 30 March 2008; Memorandum by Comment on Reproductive Ethics to the Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos (Draft) Bill. Volume II: Evidence. August 2007. HL Paper 169-II. HC Paper 630-II. London, The Stationery Office; *BBC News*, 23 March 2008.
- 6 The category of 'other' was excluded from the analysis, along with replies from individuals with no broader representative capacity (which comprised the large majority of the responses). The replies to the exercise can be found online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/DH_4132358/. Evidence to the Joint Committee can be found in Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos (Draft) Bill. Volume II: Evidence. London, The Stationery Office.
- 7 The comments in this and the following sections are from the debates that took place in the House of Commons on 12, 18, 19 and 20 May 2008.
- 8 *BBC News*, 21 March 2008; *The Times*, 21 May 2008; Memoranda to the Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos (Draft) Bill (Volume II: Evidence), by the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, and by Affinity; ProLife, 'The animal-human hybrid battle so far', 10 September 2007. <http://www.prolife.org.uk/show?item=276>
- 9 Memoranda to the Joint Committee on the Human Tissue and Embryos (Draft) Bill (Volume II: Evidence), by the Evangelical Alliance, by the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship and by the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council; *The Times*, 21 May 2008.
- 10 *The Times*, 21 May 2008; *Christian Today*, 21 May 2008; *Church Times*, 22 May 2008; *Scottish Christian News Monitor*, 6 June 2008; *Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 2008; *BBC News*, 8 June 2008.
- 11 *The Scotsman*, 11 July 2008; *Sunday Times*, 13 July 2008.
- 12 *The Evening Standard*, 26 September 2008.
- 13 House of Commons debates, 22 October 2008; *Catholic News Agency*, 24 October 2008; *Independent Catholic News*, 27 October 2008; *BBC News*, 29 October 2008.