

First National Savings and Clone

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Another sign of the times: I watched the announcement on television today of a way to bank your pet's DNA so that when technology makes it possible your favorite pet can be re-created for your very own enjoyment. Apart from whatever ethical issues may or may not be involved with cloning animals, one is struck by both the value humans place on their pets and the price tag of \$1000 to bank the DNA followed by the \$200,000 to bring your pet to life someday.

This would be merely ludicrous if it were not that the same offer was being made by such companies as the eneGene corporation to parents of newborns. The brochure accompanying the mailing to the parents of my newborn grandchild hints at possible uses of DNA banking for the future but stops short of providing any specific details. For the procedure of swabbing the inside of the mouth to collect cheek cells (DNA) there is a special introductory price of only \$149. For some parishioners this bargain will obscure the fact that a service which makes no promise of delivering a product comes close to resembling a scam.

What all of this means is that commercial exploitation has found a new niche in the marketplace. As cryogenics offers to freeze the dead until methods of commercially resurrecting the dead are found, so now the future can be governed by your decision to re-create a newborn or your pet if need should arise. Personally, I am intrigued by the prospect of the promise of "better health" described in the literature accompanying the mailing from eneGene. The Old Adam in me is also intrigued by the possibility of taking charge of life as if preservation and physical survival where the only hope of life. There is serious sermon material here. But if we use such material as illustrative of the times, let us not be so much cynical as prophetic. And let us not be exclusively Law-oriented in our condemnation, but also Gospel-oriented in the promise of God in Christ for having given us a better vision of things than such technologies can provide. As our world desperately grasps for control of human life, let us proclaim the blessed helplessness that comes by faith and the grace of God that brings us eternal life beginning already now.