

Mother wanted for Neanderthal baby

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A distinguished scientist is determined to turn back time and recreate a Neanderthal baby – but he needs an adventurous woman to help.

Harvard Medical School genetics professor George Church is adamant he can bring our extinct ancestor back to life now technology is so advanced, but he first needs to find a female willing to carry the baby, [the Daily Mail has reported](#).

Neanderthals were the closest extinct human relative, who lived between [200,000 and 28,000 years ago](#).

Archaeologists first discovered the species in Germany in 1856 and have been studying their DNA structure since.

Church, whose ideas formed the plot for Jurassic Park, believes he can recreate Neanderthals through modern medicine and his colleagues agree.

"I have already managed to attract enough DNA from fossil bones to reconstruct the DNA of the human species largely extinct. Now I need an adventurous female human," he told German magazine, Der Spiegel.

"It depends on a lot of things, but I think it can be done. The reason I would consider it a possibility is that a bunch of technologies are developing faster than ever before.

"In particular, reading and writing DNA is now about a million times faster than seven or eight years ago. Another technology that the de-extinction of a Neanderthal would require is human cloning.

"We can clone all kinds of mammals, so it's very likely that we could clone a human. Why shouldn't we be able to do so?"

Recreating Neanderthals could benefit mankind, Church said.

"Neanderthals might think differently than we do. We know that they had a larger cranial size. They could even be more intelligent than us.

"When the time comes to deal with an epidemic or getting off the planet or whatever, it's conceivable that their way of thinking could be beneficial."

His main goal was to increase diversity, stating that low diversity was bad for culture and evolution.

"If you become a monoculture, you are at great risk of perishing. Therefore the recreation of Neanderthals would be mainly a question of societal risk avoidance."

Church is a pioneer in synthetic biology and helped initiate the Human Genome Project that created a map of the human genome in the 1980s.

For his idea to come to life, the Neanderthal genome would need to be sequenced, something which has already been done, he told Der Spiegel. The next step would be to chop this genome up into, say, 10,000 chunks and then synthesize these. Finally, you would introduce these chunks into a human stem cell.

If we do that often enough, then we would generate a stem cell line that would get closer and closer to the corresponding sequence of the Neanderthal."

Then all the "chunks" are assembled in a human stem cell, which would then form a Neanderthal clone.

That's when the human female comes in as a surrogate mother.

It might sound far-fetched, but experts told the Daily Mail that Church's plan was feasible.

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What is your first reaction to this idea?

What are the "positives" of doing this?

What is the scientist not thinking about?