

## **Surrogate Motherhood: A Clerical Case**

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January, 1999

Recently a newspaper carried the headline, "Wisconsin Woman Turns To Best Friend To Bear Child." The woman to be the surrogate is a Methodist minister and her argument for justifying her offer of surrogacy is sadly a reflection on the misrepresentation of marriage, conception and the gift of a child by God. Among other things she said, "I want to have the experience [of bearing a child] in my own life. I'm doing it for me." When asked whether it will be hard to give up the child at birth, she responded, "It's not an exercise for the faint of heart, it requires maturity to stay clear." She jokes, calling herself a "gestational engineer" and opines that having a child "is a neat way to feel connected" to generations through all time.

One distinctly gets the impression that the child is not a consideration in this surrogate's decision. The surrogate's own ego finds satisfaction in the "experience" of pregnancy but not in the bearing of a child to love and cherish; in portraying herself as courageous in not taking responsibility for the child she bears; and in claiming that "maturity" consists in "staying clear" of commitment to the new life within her. All this is consistent once the biological and the relational are separated in the conception and bearing of children. Accordingly, a woman may experiment with experiences of pregnancy without the responsibility, the biology of childbirth without commitment, and human life as something to "stay clear" of when it interferes with your own life.

But the union of biological and relational in marriage and conception is more the meaning of Paul's reference, in Ephesians 5, to the likeness between marriage and our union with God in Christ. The whole point of marriage as a paradigm of God's relationship with his people is to illustrate the oneness of what we are given in marriage and in the gift of a child as its outcome. Careless sentimentality in reproductive ethics erases this message of God to us.