

Subject: Inquiry into surrogacy
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

My wife and I had been married for 14 years when my wife became pregnant and so we had our first of two daughters.

Before that time we had been trying to have a baby for about 7 years without any success. Finally, after one attempt with in vitro homologous artificial insemination (that did not work) we gave up the desire to give birth to a baby, but could not give up the desire to raise a baby and become a family. Such desire convinced us to start the adoption process... And it was at that time that my wife got pregnant the first time.

Before becoming parents we thought and still think as parents that the *right* of an existing baby to have a mother and a father is by far superior to any *desire* of giving birth to a child and even more so about having a baby *just one way or the other*. Such desire, as strong as it may be, in our opinion cannot be called a *right*: it is a human desire and as such must be respected but it cannot be confused with a *right*. One has a right to live, to an education, to health care and so on, but one does not, cannot have any *rights* to have a baby. *One* cannot claim any rights when it comes to another person.

My wife and I would have never taken advantage of altruistic surrogacy! In fact we did not even think about the possibility of heterologous artificial insemination. But we understand that this is our personal opinion based on our culture and religious beliefs. So we can accept the idea that a good law could try to regulate altruistic surrogacy, although we think that surrogacy and related practices are socially dangerous and we would vote against such a law. Indeed, we would rather recommend childless couples to try homologous artificial insemination and if it does not work to start a child adoption process.

Having said that, we would never accept and would fight against any laws that would allow commercial surrogacy: life does not have a price, it is priceless, a gift; a baby is not a commodity; money cannot buy everything: not true love nor real happiness nor another human being. At this level, it is not a matter related only to culture or religious beliefs: first of all it is a matter regarding universal human rights.

Commercial surrogacy would mean that someone's desire to have a baby is considered a right so important to justify any likely risks of someone else's exploitation and harm. This would not be proper nor reasonable nor ethical of any civilized society and it would be against Art. 1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

Would the child born of a commercial surrogacy arrangement consider herself / himself equal in dignity and rights to any other person, knowing that a price was paid for her / him? The same goes for illegal adoptions...