Human Cloning: Reproduction or Procreation?

Post Date: 03/31/1999
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Issues: Cloning
Reproductive Ethics

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Volume 5, Number 1, Spring 1999 issue of Dignity, the Center's quarterly publication. Subscriptions to Dignitas are available to CBHD Members. To learn more about the benefits of becoming a member click here.

Is it part of our God-given destiny to exercise complete control over our reproductive process? Richard Seed, in one of his first in-depth interviews after announcing his intentions to clone human beings commercially, made this very argument. U.S. President Bill Clinton offered the opposite view when he issued the ban on human cloning. Rather than seeing cloning as human destiny, he rejected it as "playing God." Is human cloning in line with God's purposes for us?

It is no accident that we call what we do when we have babies "procreation." "Pro" means "for" or "forth." To be sure, we do bring babies "forth." But the deeper meaning here is "for." We bring new human beings into the world "for" someone or something. To be specific, we continue the line of human beings for God-in accordance with God's mandate to humanity at the beginning to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). We also create for the people whom we help bring into being. We help give them life. They are the ones most affected by our actions-far more than the rest of society and even far more than we ourselves. What is particularly significant about this "procreation"-this "creation for"-is that it is a creation that is by its very nature subject to an outside agenda-to God's agenda primarily, and secondarily also with due respect to the needs of the child being created. In this sense, only God is Creator-the only one who creates something out of nothing ("ex nihilo") and is subject to no outside agenda.

The human cloning mindset, then, is hugely problematic. With unmitigated pride it claims the right
to create rather than procreate. It looks neither to God for the way that God has intended human beings to be procreated and raised by fathers and mothers who are the secondary—i.e., genetic—source of their life; nor does it look primarily to the needs of the one being procreated. It looks primarily to the cloner’s own preferences or to those of society. People operating out of the human cloning mindset see themselves as Creator rather than procreator. This is aspiring to be God which God has consistently chastised people for, and for which God has ultimately wreaked havoc on many a society and civilization.

Today, as we lose sight of the Creator God, we increasingly orient more to the material world than to God. We are more impressed with the Gross Natural Product than with the original creation. So we more commonly talk in terms of reproduction rather than procreation. In the process, we associate people more closely with things—with products—than with the God of Creation. No wonder our respect for human life is deteriorating. We become more like that with which we associate.

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