



## Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities

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### **STEM CELL REALITY CHECK # 4**

***Myth: “Human life begins in the womb, not the Petri dish”***

***Reality:*** Actually, it usually begins in the fallopian tube, but it can also begin in a Petri dish.

The testimony of modern science is clear on this point: “At the moment the sperm cell of the human male meets the ovum of the female and the union results in a fertilized ovum (zygote), a new life has begun.”

Considine, Douglas (ed.). *Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia*. 5th edition. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976, p. 943. See Moore, Keith L. *Essentials of Human Embryology*. Toronto: B.C. Decker Inc, 1988, p.2; Dox, Ida G. et al. *The Harper Collins Illustrated Medical Dictionary*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993, p. 146; Sadler, T.W. *Langman's Medical Embryology*. 7th edition. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins 1995, p. 3; Carlson, Bruce M. *Patten's Foundations of Embryology*. 6th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996, p. 3.

The issue is not whether human life is present, but how society ought to treat it.

**Even President Clinton’s bioethics advisors said: “We believe most would agree that human embryos deserve respect as a form of human life...”**

– National Bioethics Advisory Commission  
on stem cell research, September 1999  
(emphasis added)

“Stem cell research” refers to research using stem cells that come from embryos or other sources, such as adult tissue, placentas, or umbilical cord blood. The only way to obtain *embryonic* stem cells, however, is to kill the living human embryo. The embryos killed for their stems cells are about a week old and have grown to about 200 cells.

**Embryonic stem cells have not helped a single human patient, while adult stem cells and similar ethically acceptable alternatives have helped hundreds of thousands.**

***Let’s fund promising medical research that everybody can live with.***

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