

# A Person's A Person, No Matter How Small

Andrew McCracken



OTTAWA - The lawyer representing the widow of Theodor Seuss Geisel, known around the globe as children's writer Dr. Seuss, is protesting the reprinting of a quote from the author's work, *Horton Hears a Who!*, on an anti-abortion poster being distributed in Ottawa Roman Catholic churches. Cathy Bencieengo said she will ask the

local anti-abortion group Action Life Ottawa to remove the line "A person's a person, no matter how small" and Dr. Seuss's name from a color poster showing an embryo.

One of the most important questions in the abortion debate is whether or not the embryo (and later, the fetus) is a person. Recall that under American and Canadian law, you must be a 'person' to have rights. People who support abortion claim that the embryo or fetus is not in fact a person. They may admit that it is some form of human life, but they refuse to believe that it has the rights you and I have.

Did you know? In 1928 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that women were not 'persons'. As a result, they were not entitled to hold office as Senators. This ruling held until it was overruled by the British Privy Council.

Here are some of the things abortion supporters may say about the embryo/fetus with some possible responses:

An embryo is just a bunch of cells. It can't be a person!

Yes, but so are you and so am I. The fact is, an embryo will grow into a fetus, which will grow into a baby ... and a toddler ... and a teenager ... and an adult. So it's not just a bunch of cells; it's a human being at the very earliest stages of development.

But an embryo/fetus is a part of its mother's body.

No, it's inside its mother's body. Big difference, right? After all, if the fetus was part of the mother, every pregnant woman would have two heads, four hands, and 50% of all pregnant women would have penises!



# A Person's A Person, No Matter How Small

Andrew McCracken

Okay, it's a separate life, but it still can't be called a person. It will grow into a person, but it's not a person while it's in the womb.

So what is it then, an ape? A fish? If it's not a person, how does it become a person?

It becomes a person by acting like a person. People think. Embryos do not.

Not all people think all the time. Does this mean that not all people are persons? For example, you don't think when you are in deep sleep. You don't think when you are in a coma. Are you sometimes a non-person? Newborn babies have very limited thinking abilities compared to teenagers. Does this mean that they are not people?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Adapted from Peter Kreeft's "Human Personhood Begins at Conception", Catholic Education Resource Center. (<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/abortion/ab0004.html>)

