

A large, circular, microscopic image of a cell, possibly a zygote or early embryo, is shown in a light blue/teal color. It has a textured, bumpy surface and some fine filaments extending from its periphery. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid on it.

**WHEN
DID YOU
BEGIN?**

“The being that is now you or me is the same being that was once an adolescent, and before that a toddler, and before that a foetus, and before that an embryo. To have destroyed the being that is you or me at any of these stages would have been to destroy you or me.”

Robert George, philosopher



“When Does Life Begin?”

from www.standforlife.net

Some give uninformed or flippant answers to the question: When does life begin? "Oh, nobody can agree on that." "Nobody really knows." "How can that tiny speck be a human?" But the answer from embryologists is that life begins at conception:

Dr. Ronan O'Rahilly and Dr. Fabiola Muller, *Human Embryology and Teratology*, 2nd ed., p.8, (1996):

"Although life is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is thereby formed."

Keith Moore and T.V.N. Persaud, in *The Developing Human*, p.16, (2003):

"Human development begins at fertilization when a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete to produce a single cell - zygote."

Dr. M. Krieger, *The Human Reproductive System*, p.88, (1969):

"All organisms, however large and complex they may be when full grown, begin life as but a single cell. This is true of the human being, for instance, who begins life as a fertilized ovum."

William Larson, *Human Embryology*, 3rd ed., p.1, (2001):

Male and female sex cells "unite at fertilization to initiate the embryonic development of a new individual."

Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefsen, *Embryo - A Defense of Human Life*, p. 53 (2008):

The combining of the chromosomes of the sperm and the oocyte generates what every authority in human embryology identifies as a new, distinct, and enduring organism ... the direction of its growth is not extrinsically determined, but is in accord with the genetic information within it. The human embryo is then, a whole, though immature, and distinct human organism - a human being."