

Do We Have the Right to Do What Is Wrong?

By Stephanie Gray, special to CBC News

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With all the buzz about Henry Morgentaler being named to the Order of Canada, I wonder, “Why are we surprised?” For Canada to bestow this honour on him simply makes sense, given that abortion is legal and is government-funded through taxes. Furthermore, the majority of abortions occur in the first trimester, which is when a majority of Canadians support abortion.

Don’t get me wrong, though. This concerns me. And I certainly believe Morgentaler is undeserving of the award. But I’m simply saying it doesn’t surprise me. What does surprise me is that it took this long to give Morgentaler credit for making “a difference to this country,” as the Order of Canada committee would have it.

But as much as I disagree with the notion that the difference Morgentaler has made has “enriched the lives of others” (ibid), his receipt of the Order of Canada is not the real problem. The real problem is the mass killing—genocide—of tiny, weak, defenceless human beings.

The real problem is ripping their bodies apart in what should be a safe place—their mothers' wombs. Morgentaler’s award is simply a symptom of a more deeply rooted crisis.

The assumption

Across a period of four decades, more than 2.8 million human beings have been killed because of an assumption — that they were not human.

Case in point: Morgentaler claims abortion is safer, but to be accurate he must assume that the unborn aren’t human (because killing them certainly isn’t safe for them!). Morgentaler also claims abortion has decreased the crime rate—which may carry some weight if one doesn’t consider killing defenceless human beings a crime.

Furthermore, many people support abortion because of poverty, unwantedness, abuse or rape. Yet again, the assumption being made is that the unborn are not human. After all, we do not permit killing born humans because of poverty, unwantedness, abuse or if their fathers are rapists.

And so, because of one major assumption, abortion becomes legal and an abortionist gets an award. And as it turns out, the assumption is wrong.

Moore and Persaud’s widely used embryology textbook, [The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology](#), 6th ed. states that “[a] zygote is the beginning of a new human being.”

That makes sense given that science has determined that one’s DNA is established at fertilization, and that a being at fertilization is alive (because living things come from other living things), and that the being is of his parents’ species (because living things reproduce after their own kind). This leaves one to conclude that the only difference between a zygote at fertilization and a newborn at birth is the same as the difference between a newborn at birth and a teenager at graduation: age.

Because of age, the unborn are smaller. Because of age, they are less developed and more dependent. Because of age, they are in a different place. But the same could be said about a toddler in comparison with an adult and we wouldn't kill the younger in that situation. So we must honestly ask ourselves: Do those of us who are older have a right to kill those who are younger?

Who is to blame

And who is to blame for this life-ending misunderstanding? Some will point the finger at Morgentaler. Others will point it at the Order's selecting committee. And others will point it at the government and its politicians. We can blame others because that's easy. But what's difficult is to blame ourselves.

How often have we avoided seeking out the facts because we fear the deep implications of what we might learn? How often have we refused to speak up because of fear? How often have we been more concerned about what people think of us than in doing what is right? How often have we refused to take blame because it hurts, forgetting that hurt feelings can move us through a healthy process of reconciliation and healing?

As I reflect on Morgentaler's award, as much as I abhor what he does, it occurs to me that I could have some gratitude in the situation.

That is, I could thank the selection committee for re-opening the abortion debate, thus providing sleepy Canadians the opportunity to wake up from this nightmare and ask: Do we have the right to do what is wrong?