

Children in the Early Church

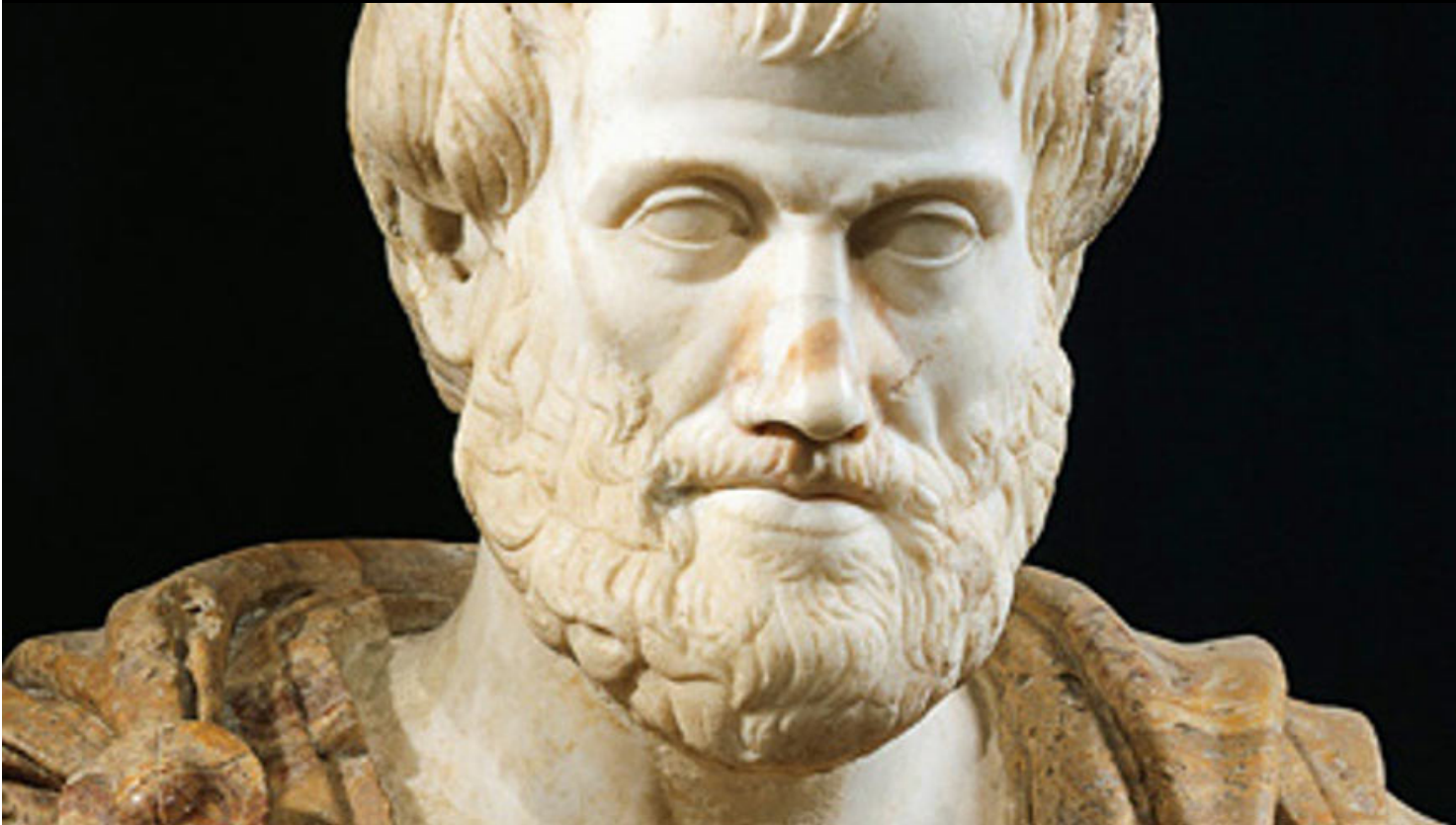
Mako A. Nagasawa

Outline

- Protecting Children
 - Abortion and Infanticide
 - Sex Between Adults and Children
- Developing Children
 - Culture Warriors? Public Schooling and Exposure to Culture

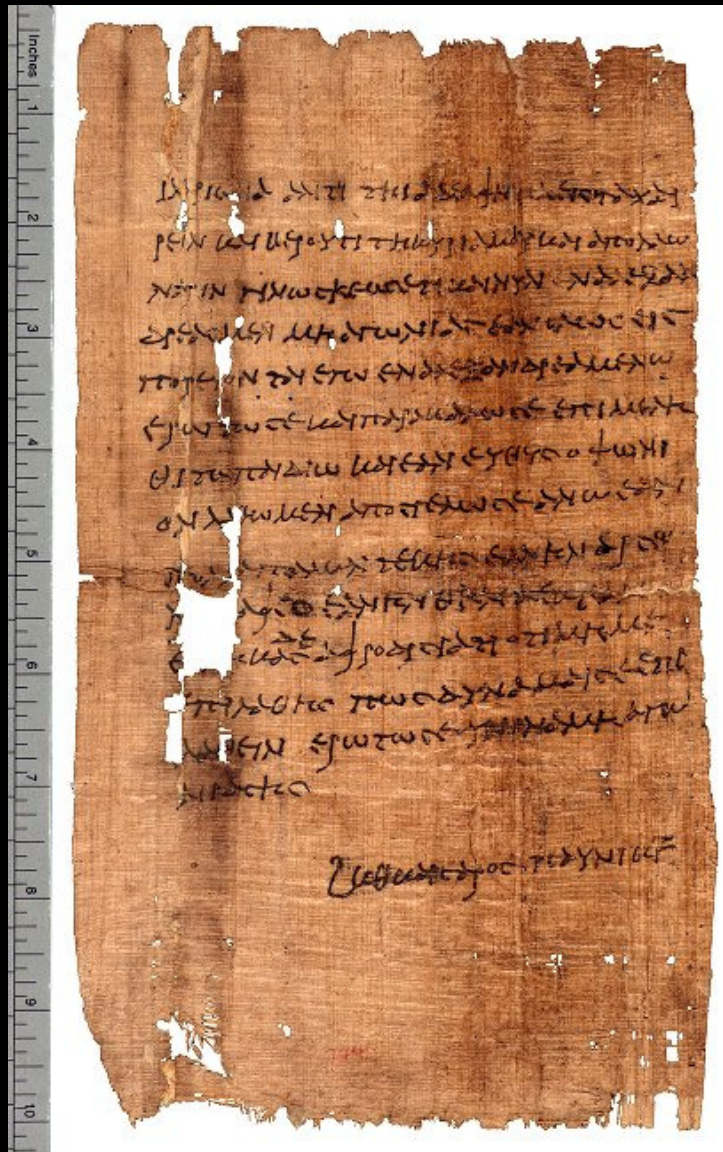
The Cultural Backdrop: Value of Life

- ‘As to the exposure of children, let there be a law that no deformed child shall live.’
 - Aristotle (384 – 322 BC), *On the History of Animals*, bk.7



The Cultural Backdrop: Value of Life

- ‘I am still in Alexandria [Egypt]. ... I beg and plead with you to take care of our little child, and as soon as we receive wages, I will send them to you. In the meantime, if (good fortune to you!) you give birth, if it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it.’
 - Papyrus Oxyrrhynchus 744 (1 BC)



The Cultural Backdrop: Sex

- Romans regularly exposed their children (*expositio*)
 - Biological reasons
 - Financial reasons
 - Political reasons
- Social birth, not biological birth
 - 8 days for boys
 - 9 days for girls



The Impact of Jesus

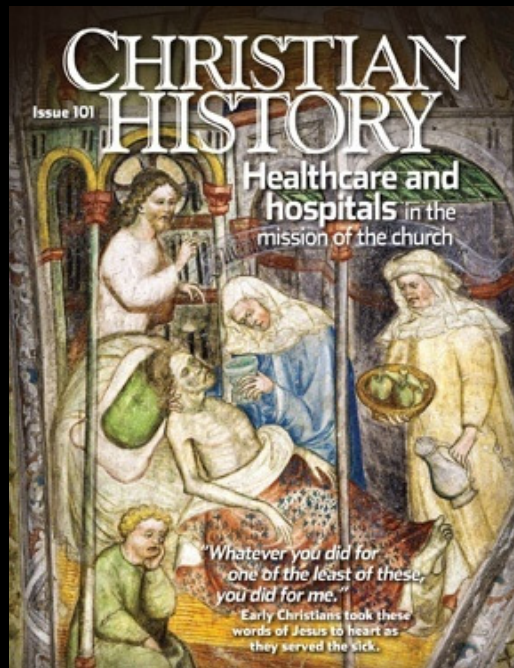
WHEN CHILDREN *The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity* BECAME PEOPLE



O. M. BAKKE

Protecting Children: Health Care

- Roman cities: 50% of people died before age 10
- The 'parabolani' in plague-stricken cities
- Home-based hospitals
- Formal hospitals: Council of Nicea (325 AD)



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten.’
 - *Didache* 2:2 (50 – 100 AD), probably Palestinian

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘You shall not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shall you destroy it after it is born. You shall not withdraw your hand from your son, or from your daughter, but from their infancy you shall teach them the fear of the Lord.’
 - *Epistle of Barnabus* 19:5 (70 – 130 AD)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘And near this flame there is a great and very deep pit and into it there flow all kinds of things from everywhere: judgment, horrifying things and excretions. And the women (are) swallowed up (by this) up to their necks and are punished with great pain. These are they who have procured abortions and have ruined the work which he has created... Tiny beasts that devour flesh...turn and torture them forever, with their husbands.’
 - *Apocalypse of Peter*, ch.8 (~130 AD)
 - Note: This should not be taken as orthodox in its understanding of eternity. Alan Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (1993) observes that the *Apocalypse of Peter* is unusually retributive.

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘But as for us, we have been taught that to expose newly-born children is the part of wicked men; and this we have been taught lest we should do any one an injury, and lest we should sin against God, first, because we see that almost all so exposed (not only the girls, but also the males) are brought up to prostitution. And as the ancients are said to have reared herds of oxen, or goats, or sheep, or grazing horses, so now we see you rear children only for this shameful use; and for this pollution a multitude of females and hermaphrodites and those who commit unmentionable iniquities, are found in every nation...

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘...And you receive the hire of these, and duty and taxes from them, whom you ought to exterminate from your realm. And any one who uses such persons, besides the godless and infamous and impure intercourse, may possibly be having intercourse with his own child, or relative, or brother. And there are some who prostitute even their own children and wives, and some are openly mutilated for the purpose of sodomy; and they refer these mysteries to the mother of the gods, and along with each of those whom you esteem gods there is painted a serpent, a great symbol and mystery.’
 - Justin Martyr of Rome, *First Apology* 27 (~150 AD)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘Women who practice abortion are murderers and will render account to God for abortion...’
 - Athenagoras of Athens, *Legatio* (177 AD) addressed to Emperor Marcus Aurelius, explaining that contrary to rumor, Christians do not practice cannibalism, incest, or abortion

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘But with us, murder is forbidden once for all. We are not permitted to destroy even the fetus in the womb, as long as blood is still being drawn to form a human being. To prevent the birth of a child is a quicker way to murder. It makes no difference whether one destroys a soul already born or interferes with its coming to birth. It is a human being and one who is a man, for the whole fruit is already present in the seed.’
 - Tertullian of Carthage, *Apology* 9.8 (197 AD) addressed to Roman governors and Emperor Septimus Severus

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘The law of Moses, indeed, punishes the man who causes an abortion.’
 - Tertullian of Carthage, *De Anima* 37 (210 – 213 AD), referring to Exodus 21:22 – 23; cf. *De Anima* 23 – 37

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘Children who were exposed by parents are delivered to a protecting angel, by whom they are brought up and nourished. And they shall be, it says, as the faithful of a hundred years old here... The *Apocalypse of Peter* says that children born abortively receive the better part. These are delivered to a care-taking angel...’
 - Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae Propheticae* 41 (~200 AD)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘And in fact, it is a practice of *yours*, I observe, to expose your own children to birds and wild beasts, or at times to smother and strangle them; a pitiful way to die; and there are women who swallow drugs to stifle in their own womb the beginnings of a man to be – committing infanticide before they give birth to their infant.’
 - Marcus Minucius Felix of Rome, *Octavius* (~230 AD)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Council of Elvira (~306 AD): 19 bishops and other leaders from Roman Hispania (southern Spain)
 - Canon 63: If a woman becomes pregnant by adultery while her husband is absent, then takes the child's life, she 'shall not be given communion even at the end, since she has doubled her crime'
 - Canon 68: if a female catechumen becomes pregnant after committing fornication and then causes the death of her child, 'her baptism is to be postponed until the end of her life'
 - Compare: any act of fornication was five years of penance (canons 47 and 48)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Council of Ancyra, capital of Galatia in modern Turkey (314 AD): bishops from Asia Minor and Syria
 - Canon 21: 'Women who prostitute themselves and who kill the children thus begotten, or who try to destroy them while in their wombs, are by ancient law excommunicated to the end of their lives. We, however, have softened their punishment, and condemn them to the various appointed degrees of penance for ten years.'
- This rule remained influential until well into the Middle Ages

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- 313 AD: Constantine converts to Christianity, issues Edict of Milan (tolerance, not theocracy)
- 315 AD: Constantine imposes the death penalty on those who kidnap and enslave children
- 318 AD: Constantine declares infanticide to be a crime, later forbids separating slave families, and permits manumission before a bishop.



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- 322 AD: Constantine issues an edict in response to economic distress in Italy and North Africa. 'If any parent should report that he has offspring which on account of poverty he is not able to rear, there shall be no delay in issuing food and clothing, since the rearing of a newborn infant will not allow any delay.'
- Inspired by the Roman church (?), who had been running a food network for 4000 (?) poor people



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- 329 AD: Constantine issues an edict in response to economic distress in North Africa. ‘Therefore if any such person should be found who is sustained by no substance of family fortune and who is supporting his children with suffering and difficulty, he shall be assisted through Our fisc before he becomes a prey to calamity.’



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- 329 AD: Constantine grants that extremely poor parents can sell (rather than expose) their children, but are not immediately entitled to get them back
- 374 AD: Valentinian I mandated the rearing of all children, since exposing babies, especially girls, was still common, and would continue to be
- 381 AD: Council of Constantinople declares infanticide to be homicide



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- ‘A woman who deliberately destroys a fetus is answerable for murder. And any fine distinction as to its being completely formed or unformed is not admissible amongst us. For in this case not only the child which is about to be born is vindicated, but also she herself who plotted against herself, since women usually die from such attempts. And there is added to this crime the destruction of the embryo, a second murder – at least that is the intent of those who dare these deeds. We should not, however, prolong their punishment until death, but should accept the term of ten years [of penance]; and we should not determine the treatment according to time but according to the manner of repentance.’
 - Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 188.2 (374 AD)

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- If a woman abandons ‘her newborn child uncared-for on the road, if, although she was really able to save it, she disregarded it, either thinking in this way to conceal her sin or scheming in some entirely brutal and inhuman manner, let her be judged as for murder. *[But] If she was unable to protect it and the child perished through destitution and the want of necessities of life, the mother is to be pardoned.*
 - Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle 217.52*
 - Cf. Ambrose of Milan, *De Nab. Hist. 5:19 – 25*

Protecting Children: Value of Life

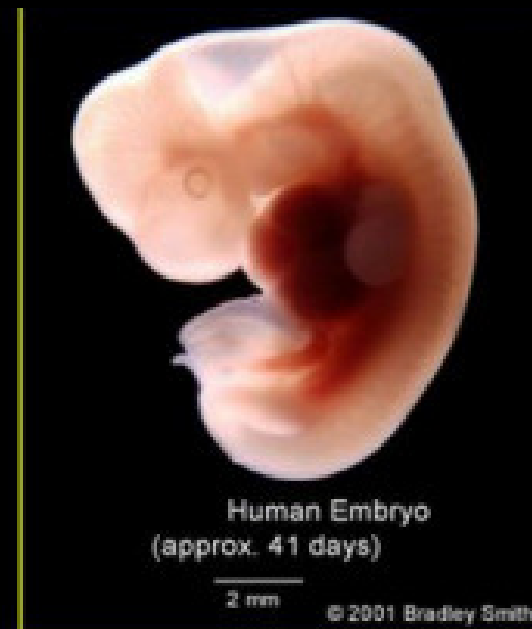
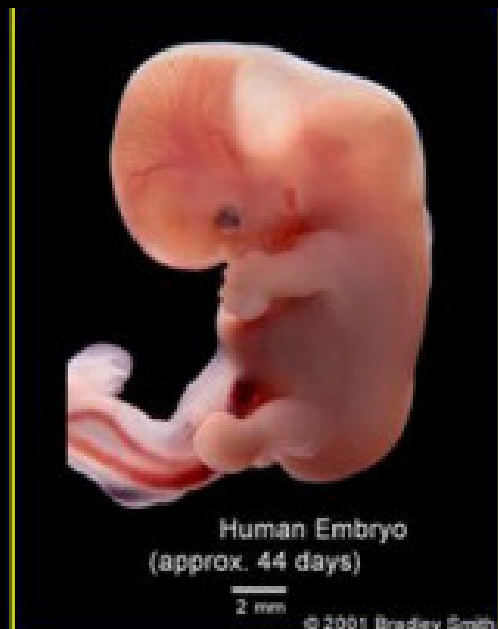
- ‘Foundlings whom heartless parents have exposed in order that they may be cared for by any passer-by ... are presented for baptism by these persons’ who picked up the children
 - Augustine of Hippo, *Epistle 98.6*

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Augustine ‘argues that the abortion of an unformed fetus is not murder, since one cannot say whether it already had a soul at that stage. Although the abortion even of an unformed fetus is morally reprehensible, the punishment for this act is limited to a fine.’
 - O.M. Bakke, *When Children Became People*, p.133 quoting Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2.80, where Augustine cites Exodus 21:22 – 23; cf. Augustine of Hippo, *Epistle 121* where he cites Jerome’s agreement
- My note: No attempt to exegete Deuteronomy 22:13 – 30?
 - Relevant under either the hymen theory or the pregnancy theory
 - Was marital unfaithfulness more important than pregnancy here?
 - Principle of mother and unborn child treated as a unit?

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- From the 5th century onward, Christians accepted Aristotle's 'scientific' view that the embryo goes through vegetable to animal stages to ensoulment, at 40 days
 - Only in the final stage was it human
 - Abortion was generally considered a sin, but not a murder



Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1099): “No human intellect accepts the view that an infant has the rational soul from the moment of conception.”
 - Frank K. Flinn, J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (Facts on File Encyclopedia of World Religions, 2007), p.4
- Catholic canon law *Decretum Gratiani* (mid 1100's) affirmed that abortion was not murder; replaced by the 1917 Code of Canon Law which called abortion 'murder'
- Thomas Aquinas believed boys were ensouled at 40 days, girls at 90
 - David Albert Jones, *Soul of the Embryo* (Continuum International, 2004), p. 221

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Pope Gregory VI (1045-6) said, 'He is not a murderer who brings about abortion before the soul is in the body'
 - Frank K. Flinn, J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (Facts on File Encyclopedia of World Religions, 2007), p.4
- Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85) said it was not homicide to kill an embryo of less than 40 days since it was not yet human
- Pope Gregory XIV (1590-1) said Pope Sixtus' censures against abortion were to be treated as if he had never uttered them
 - Peter De Rosa, *Vicars of Christ* (Poolbeg Press, Dublin, 2000), p.374-375
- In 1621 the Vatican issued another pastoral directive permitting abortion up to 40 days

Protecting Children: Value of Life

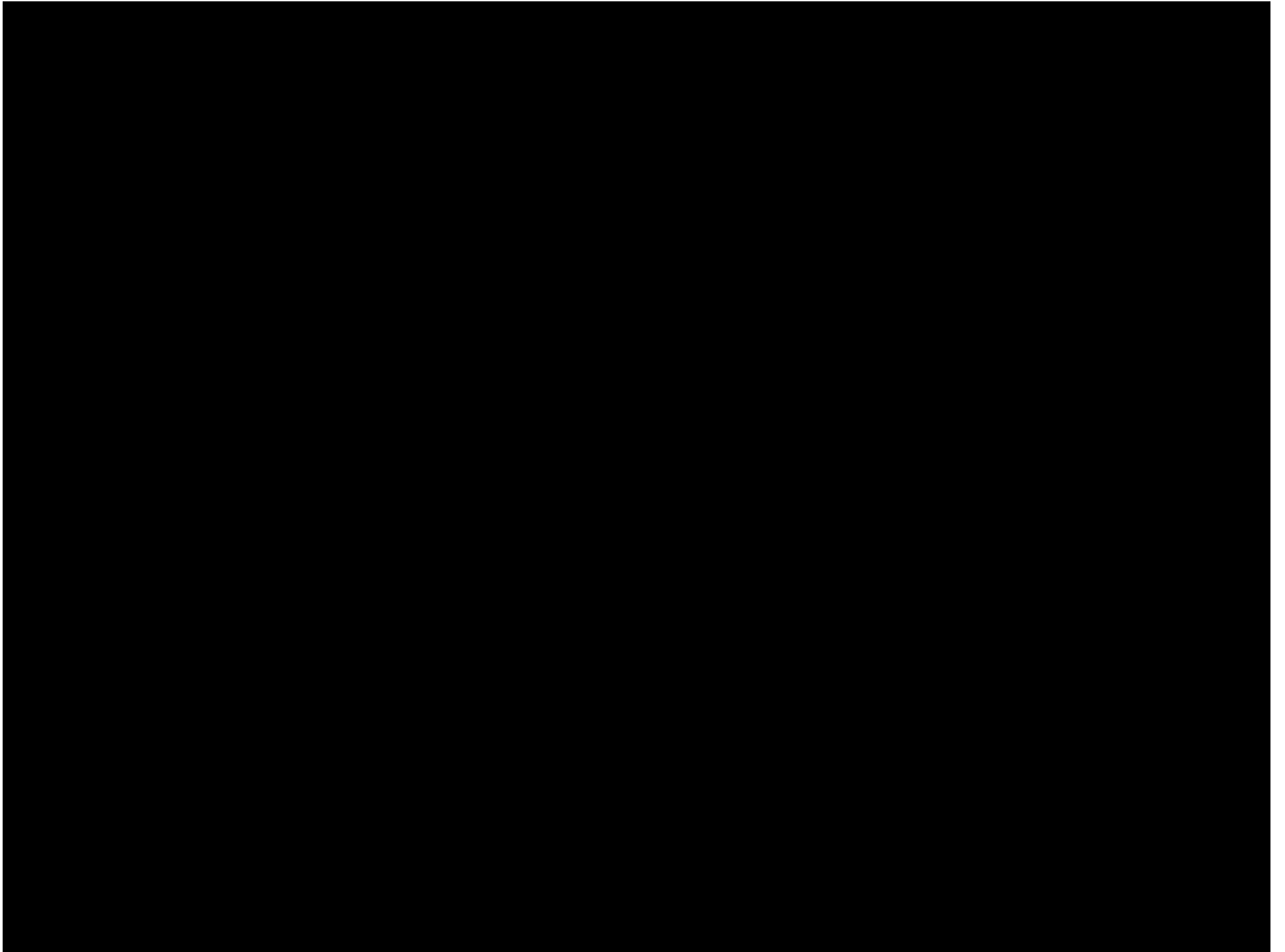
- The prevailing 'scientific' view taught by Aristotle influenced Christian ethics
 - For fourteen hundred years
 - Until the late nineteenth century!
 - Catholics, including Popes, believed that the soul is not infused at conception
 - This was the view of the American Puritans and the authors of the Constitution
 - Life did not begin until 'quickening' which was the first time the mother felt the baby kick

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Does the current scientific view influence the church?
 - The Catholic Church argues that the embryo must be treated as a person with a right to life, from conception
 - ‘A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate's permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.’
 - Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Denver Catholic Register*, July 21, 2004) later Pope Benedict XVI

Protecting Children: Value of Life

- Does the current scientific view influence the church?
- Symmetry between End of Life and Beginning of Life
 - End of life
 - Functioning nervous system constitutes personhood without a doubt
 - Beginning of life
 - What constitutes personhood beyond a doubt?
 - Can a nervous system, present at 3 – 4 weeks, constitute personhood without a doubt?



Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

- Fathers might be hiring their own children as prostitutes because of *expositio*
 - Justin Martyr of Rome
 - Clement of Alexandria

Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

- ‘Do you, therefore, show me yourself, whether you are not an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a thief, or a robber, or a purloiner; *whether you do not corrupt boys*; whether you are not insolent, or a slanderer, or passionate, or envious, or proud, or supercilious; whether you are not a brawler, or covetous, or disobedient to parents; and whether you do not sell your children; for to those who do these things God is not manifest.’
 - Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (c.180 AD), *Autolycum* 1.2

Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

- ‘For those who have set up a market for fornication, and established infamous resorts for the young for every kind of vile pleasure – who do not abstain even from males, males with males committing shocking abominations, outraging all the noblest and comeliest of bodies in all sorts of ways, so dishonoring the fair workmanship of God... These adulterers and paederasts defame the eunuchs and the once-married.’
 - Athanagoras of Athens, *Legatio pro christianis* 34

Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

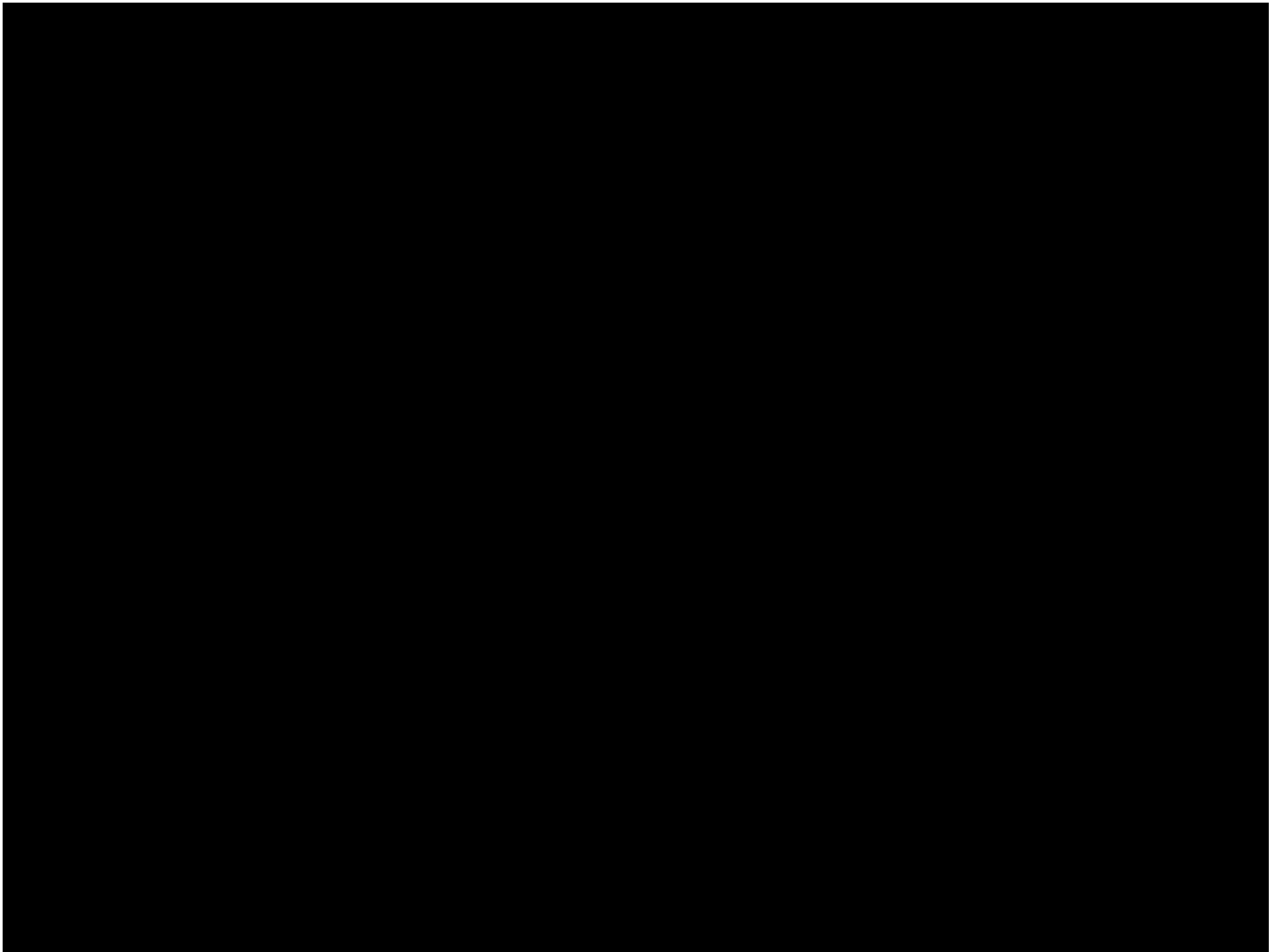
- Council of Elvira (~306 AD)
 - Canon 71: One who seduces boys will be excommunicated for the rest of his life
- Gregory of Nyssa, *Epistle Can.4*
 - Limits the period of penance in church discipline to nine years

Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

- The devil attempted to seduce Antony (a founder of Egyptian monasticism), appearing first as a woman, then as a young black boy.
 - Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 6

Protecting Children: Sex Crimes

- ‘It is frequently the case with young men that when rigorous self-restraint is exercised, the glowing complexion of youth still blossoms forth and becomes a source of desire to those around them. If, therefore, anyone is youthful and physically beautiful, let him keep his attractiveness hidden until his appearance reaches a suitable state. Sit in a chair far from such a youth; in sleep do not allow your clothing to touch his but, rather, have an old man between you. When he is speaking to you or singing opposite you, look down as you respond to him, so that you do not by gazing on his face take the seed of desire from the enemy sower and bring forth harvests of corruption and loss. Do not be found with him indoors or where no one can see what you do, either for studying the prophecies of Holy Scripture or for any other purpose, no matter how necessary.’
 - Basil of Caesarea to monks, *Renunt.6* and *Sermo asceticus 323*



Outline

- Protecting Children
 - Abortion and Infanticide
 - Sex Between Adults and Children
- Developing Children
 - Culture Warriors? Public Schooling and Exposure to Culture

Developing Children: Greek Lit

- ‘Let us see, then, the necessity of literary erudition; let us reflect that partly it cannot be admitted, partly cannot be avoided. Learning literature is allowable for believers.’
 - Tertullian of Carthage (c.155 – c.240 AD), *De Idolatria* 10, although Christians are not to be *teachers* because teachers had to praise the foreign gods and make sacrifices

Developing Children: Greek Lit

- ‘Now to that other life [the eternal life] the Holy Scriptures lead the way, teaching us through mysteries. Yet so long as, by reason of your age, it is impossible for you to understand the depth of meaning of these, in the meantime, by means of other analogies which are not entirely different, we give, as it were in shadows and reflections, a preliminary training to the eye of the soul, imitating those who perform their drills in military tactics, who, after they have gained experience by means of gymnastic exercises for the arms and dance-steps for the feet, enjoy when it comes to the combat the profit derived from what was done in sport. So we must... associate with poets and writers of prose and orators and with all men from whom there is any prospect of benefit with reference to the care of our soul...’
 - Basil of Caesarea, *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature* (363/4 or late 370's), 39, citing Moses trained in Egyptian wisdom, Daniel in Babylonian
 - Cf. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom

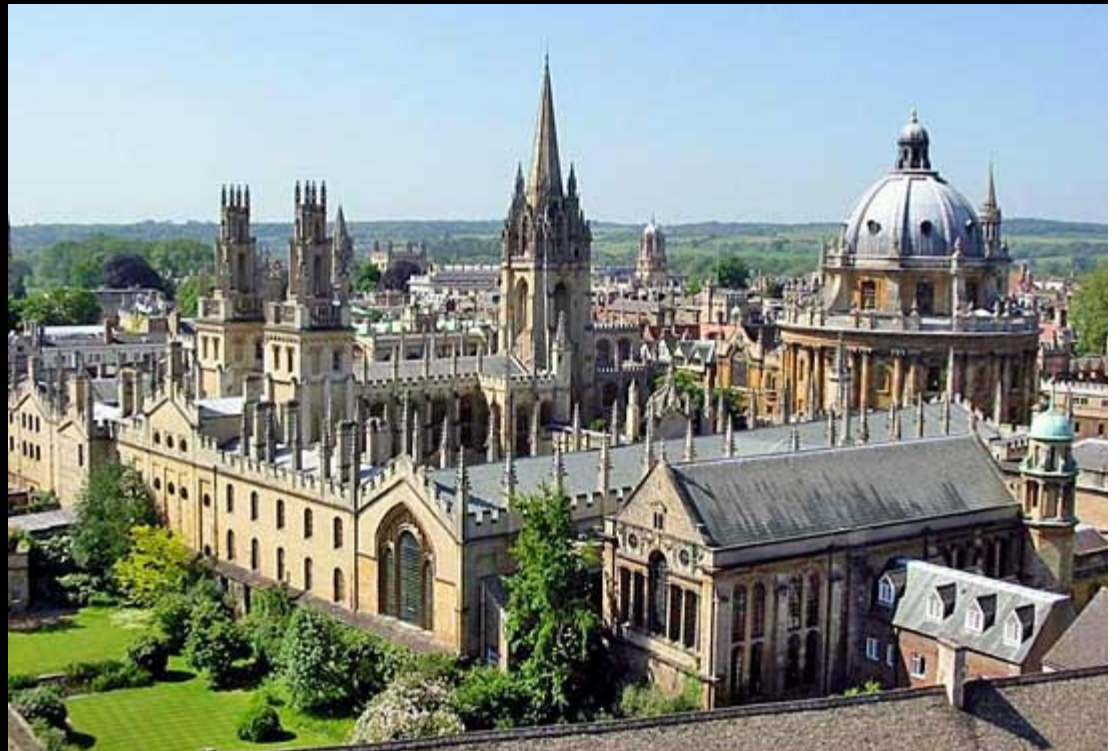
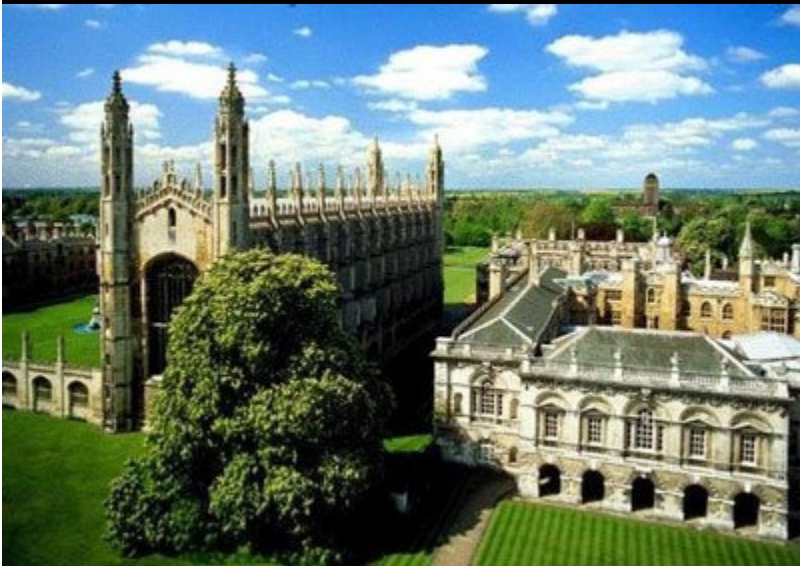
The Impact of Jesus

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The Impact of Jesus



The Impact of Jesus

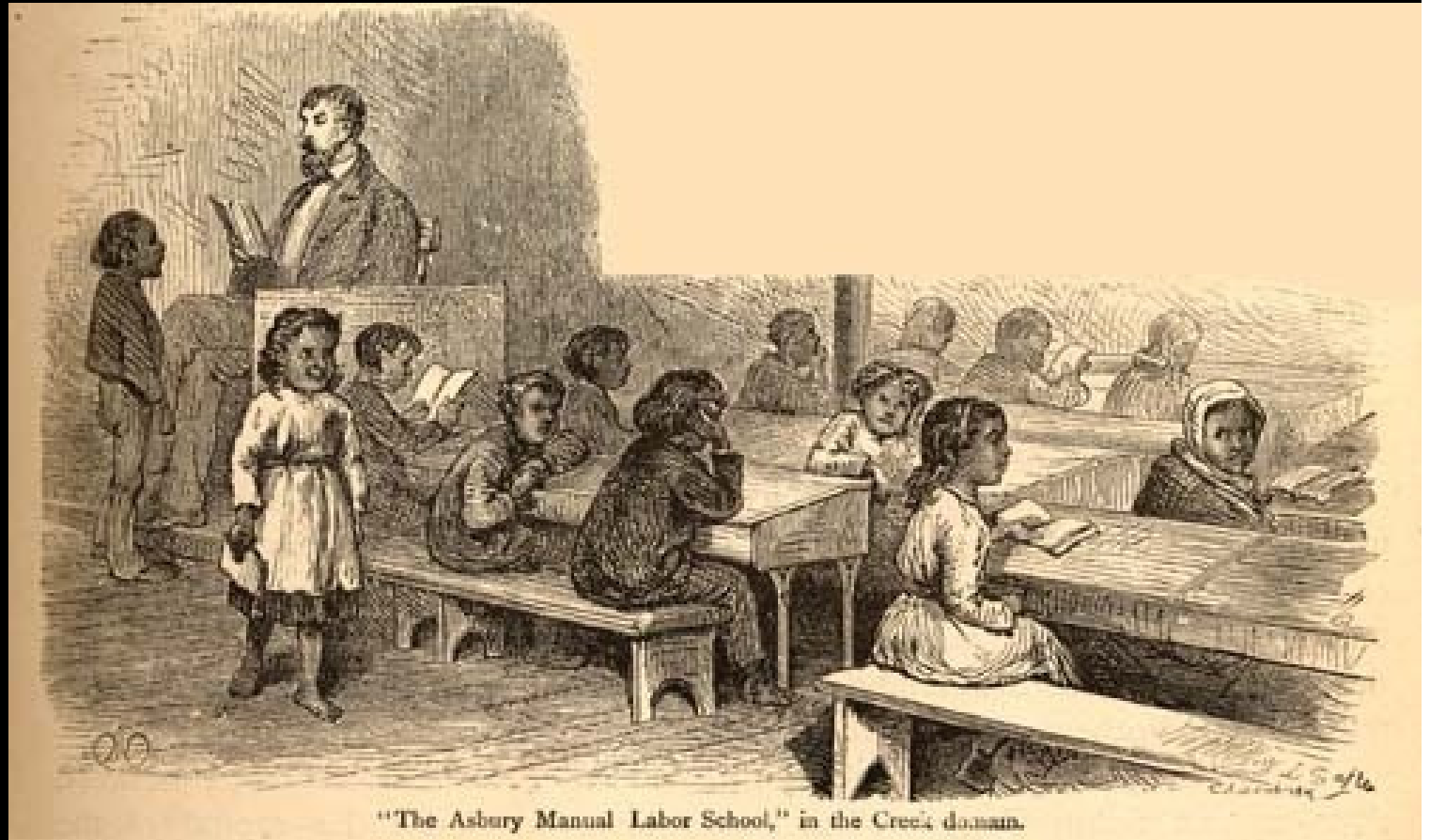
'I shall really go after the shameful, despicable, damnable parents who are not parents at all but despicable hogs and venomous beasts devouring their own young.'

Martin Luther, on parents who don't teach their children to read



The Impact of Jesus

The Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647 in Massachusetts: started the first public school in America, funded by taxes.



The Impact of Jesus

Child Labor Reform

**RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR RELATIVE
TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN
UNDER SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE**

**STANDARDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
FOR GRADING INDUSTRIAL PLANTS**

EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 1933.



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
A. L. FLETCHER, Commissioner
RALEIGH, N. C.



The Impact of Jesus

Child Labor Reform



Edgar Gardner Murphy

Problems of the
Present South