A Theologian’s Brief

This statement on the place of the human embryo in the Christian tradition and the theological principles for evaluating its moral status was submitted to the House of Lords Select Committee on Stem Cell Research on June 1, 2001, by an ad hoc group of Christian theologians from the Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, and Reformed traditions.

Basis of This Submission

1. In a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, it is appropriate to take account not only of secular arguments concerning the place of the human embryo but also of arguments expressed in the religious language of some sections of the community. It is particularly important to understand the Christian tradition in this regard because of the place Christianity has had in shaping the moral understanding of many citizens in this country, and because this tradition has already been invoked in the context of public debate.1

2. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Research Purposes) Regulations 2001 greatly expand the purposes for which research using human embryos can take place, and thus, if implemented, will inevitably lead to a massive increase in the use and destruction of embryos. The Select Committee has expressed its wish not “to review the underlying basis of the 1990 Act”;2 however, the ethical and legal issues surrounding “the Regulations as they now stand” cannot adequately be addressed without considering the moral status of the human embryo. Similarly, the “regulatory framework established by the 1990 Act” cannot operate effectively if it is flawed in principle.

3. Adding more purposes for which human embryos can be created for destructive use builds upon a mistake that has already been made in the
existing legislation. By far the most important ethical issue involved in the Regulations “as they now stand” relates to the ethical significance of embryonic human individuals whether produced by cloning or by the ordinary process of fertilization. The spectacle of thousands of stock-piled frozen human embryos being destroyed at the behest of this legislation bore witness that, even in the area of fertility treatment, too little consideration had been given to regulating the initial production of human embryos, as opposed to their subsequent disposal. The Regulations 2001 make the situation even worse in this regard.

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

4. Some scholars, considering the prospective benefits to be derived from experimenting on human embryos, have alleged that the Christian tradition had already set a precedent for treating the early human embryo with “graded status and protection.” In support of this it has been noted that there were seventh century books of penance (“Penitentials”) which graded the level of penance for abortion according to whether the foetus was “formed” or “unformed.” The same distinction was invoked in Roman Catholic canon law which, from 1591 to 1869, imposed excommunication only for the abortion of a “formed” foetus. Furthermore, St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the most authoritative theologians of the Middle Ages, explicitly held that the human embryo did not possess a spiritual soul and was not a human being (homo) until forty days in the case of males or ninety in the case of females. Texts from the Fathers of the Church could easily be found to support a similar conclusion.

5. Nevertheless, the contention that for most of Christian history (until 1869) the human embryo has been considered to possess only a relative value—such as might be outweighed by considerations of the general good—relies on a misreading of the tradition. Even in the Middle Ages, when most Western Christians held that the early embryo was not yet fully human, it was held that the human embryo should never be attacked deliberately, however extreme the circumstances. To gain the proper historical perspective it is necessary to supply a wider context by incorporating other elements of that tradition.

6. The earliest Christian writings on the issue declared simply, “you shall not murder a child by abortion”: the embryo was held to be inviolable at every stage of its existence. The first Christian writings to consider the question of when human life began asserted that the spiritual soul was present from conception. As one account puts it: “The Early Church adopted a critical attitude to the widespread practice of abortion and infanticide. It did so on the basis of a belief in the sanctity of human life; a belief which was in turn an expression of its faith in the goodness of creation and of God’s particular care for humankind.”

7. The earliest Church legislation also contains no reference to the dis-
tinction of formed and unformed, and St. Basil the Great, who did consider it, saw it as a sophistical exercise in splitting hairs: “We do not consider the fine distinction between formed and unformed.”

8. In the fourth and fifth centuries some theologians argued that human life began at conception, some held that the spiritual soul was “infused” at forty days or so (following Aristotle) and some held that the timing of the infusion of the soul was a mystery known to God alone. However, whatever their views about the precise moment when human life began, all Christians held that abortion was gravely wrong, an offense against God the Creator and either the killing of a child, or something very like the killing of a child. If it was not regarded as homicide in the strict sense, “it was looked upon as anticipated homicide, or interpretive homicide, or homicide in intent, because it involved the destruction of a future man. It was always closely related to homicide.”

9. In the Anglo Saxon and Celtic “Penitentials” (from the seventh century) and in the canon law of the Latin Church (from the eleventh century), abortion of a formed foetus sometimes carried heavier penalties than did abortion of an unformed foetus. Yet canon law has an eye not just on objective harm done but also on subjective culpability and on enforcability. The decision of Gregory XIV in 1591 to limit the penalty of excommunication to the abortion of a formed foetus was expressly due to problems enforcing earlier legislation. Abortion of an unformed foetus was sometimes regarded as, technically, a different sin—and sometimes (though not universally) as a lesser sin—than abortion of a formed foetus, but it continued to be regarded as a grave sin closely akin to homicide.

10. From the twelfth century until the seventeenth century, convinced by the anatomy of Galen and the philosophy of Aristotle, most Christians in the West came to believe that the spiritual soul was infused forty days or so after conception. Nevertheless, during this whole period, there was no suggestion that the unformed foetus was expendable. The unformed foetus continued to be regarded as sacrosanct. It was never seen as legitimate to harm the embryo directly, only incidentally, and only then in the course of trying to save the mother’s life.

11. The first theologian to suggest explicitly that the embryo had a graded moral status, that is, a relative value that could be outweighed by other values, was Thomas Sanchez in the late sixteenth century. He and other “laxists” proposed that a woman could legitimately abort an unformed foetus to avoid public shame of a kind which might endanger her life. This suggestion constituted a radical departure from the thinking of previous moralists such as St. Raymond of Penafort or St. Antoninus of Florence and provoked the criticism of Sanchez’s contemporaries, the scandal of the faithful and, in 1679, the condemnation of Pope Innocent XI.

12. Between this discredited school of the seventeenth century and the re-emergence of similar views in the late twentieth century, there is no sig-
significant or continuous strand of Christian tradition—either in the Catholic
or the Reformed churches. The most balanced and representative Catholic
moralist of the eighteenth century, St. Alphonsus Liguori, allowed no ex-
ception to the prohibition on “direct” (intentional) abortion and allowed
“indirect” (unintentional) abortion only in the context of attempting to save
the mother’s life. In a statement reminiscent of St. Basil he declared that
the distinction of formed and unformed made no practical difference.21 He
is the last great moralist to consider the inviolability of the “unformed”
foetus as such, because, during his time, the prevailing medical opinion
moved away from the distinction between formed and unformed. In his
later writing (on baptism) St. Alphonsus also became sympathetic to the
view that the spiritual soul was infused at conception.22

13. From the seventeenth century the classical biology of Galen and
Aristotle had begun to be displaced by a variety of other theories. One, in
particular, gave a more equal role to the female and male elements in gen-
eration, and therefore increased the significance of “fertilization,” that is,
the moment of the union of male and female gametes.23 This theory was fi-
nally confirmed in 1827 with the first observation of a mammalian ovum
under the microscope, a scientific development which informed the deci-
sion of Pius IX in 1869 to abolish the distinction in legal penalties between
early and late abortions. By the mid-nineteenth century the prevailing
opinion, among both Reformed and Roman Catholic Christians, was that,
most probably, the spiritual soul was infused at conception.24

14. In asserting that “life must be protected with the utmost care from
conception”25 and rejecting “the killing of a life already conceived,”26 twen-
tieth-century Christians were in continuity with the belief of the Early
Church that all human life is sacred from conception. This had remained a
constant feature of Christian tradition despite a variety of beliefs about the
origin of the soul and a similar variety in what legal penalties were thought
appropriate for early or late abortion.27

15. In the tradition, the only precedents for attributing a “graded status
and protection” to the embryo can be found in the speculations of some of
the Roman Catholic laxists of the seventeenth century and the re-emer-
gence of similar and even more radical views among some Protestant and
Roman Catholic writers in the late twentieth century.28 The great weight of
the tradition, East and West, Orthodox, Catholic, and Reformed, from the
apostolic age until the twentieth century, is firmly against any sacrifice or
destructive use of the early human embryo save, perhaps, “at the dictate of
strict and undeniable medical necessity”;29 that is, in the context of seeking
to save the mother’s life.

SOME THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

16. For a Christian, the question of the status of the human embryo is
directly related to the mystery of creation. In the context of the creation of
things “seen and unseen” the human being appears as the microcosm, reflecting in the unity of a single creature both spiritual and corporeal realities. The beginning of each human being is therefore a reflection of the coming to be of the world as a whole. It reveals the creative act of God bringing about the reality of this person (of me), in an analogous way to the creation of the entire cosmos. There is a mystery involved in the existence of each person.

17. Often in the Scriptures the forming of the child in the womb is described in ways that echo the formation of Adam from the dust of the earth (Job 10:8-12; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Ezekiel 37:7-10; cf. Wisdom 7:1, 15:10-11). This is why Psalm 139 describes the child in the womb as being formed “in the depths of the earth” (139:15). The formation of the human embryo is archetypal of the mysterious works of God (Psalm 139:15; Ecclesiastes 11:5). A passage that is significant for uncovering the connections between Genesis and embryogenesis is found in the deuto-canonical book of Maccabees, in a mother’s speech to her son:

I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again (2 Maccabees 7:22-23).

18. The book of Genesis marks out human beings from other creatures. Only human beings—male and female—are described as being made in “the image and likeness of God”; only they are given dominion over creation; only Adam is portrayed as receiving life from God’s breath and as naming the animals (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 19-20). However, at the same time, it is clear that human beings are earthly creatures, made on the same day as other land animals, made from the dust of the earth, not descending out of heaven. Because they are earthly, human beings are mortal: “Dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19). There is no sign in these stories of the dualism of body and soul that is found in Pythagoras or in the ancient mystery religions. The soul is not a splinter of God that is trapped in a body. The soul is the natural life of the body, given by the life-giving God.

19. It was because of the Jewish conviction of the unity of the human being that, when hope was kindled within Israel for a life beyond the grave, it was expressed as a hope for the resurrection of the body (Daniel 12:2-3; cf. Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:24). The disembodied life of the shades in the gloomy underworld of Sheol (Job 10:21-22; Psalms 6:5, 88:10, 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:3-6; cf. Homer Odyssey XI. 485-491) was not an image of hope but an image of death. The resurrection of the body was presented as the triumph of the Lord over death, the vindication of those who had been
faithful to the Lord, even unto death (Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14; cf. 2 Mac- 
cabees 7:9-14), and for Christians was given new meaning and foundation 
in the resurrection of Jesus (John 11:1-44). The story of the empty tomb and 
the description of the resurrection appearances emphasized the bodily real-
ity of the life of the resurrection. Jesus walked with the disciples and ate 
with them and invited them to touch his hands and his feet. “Handle me 
and see that I am no bodiless phantom.”32

20. The Fathers of the Church attempted to do justice to the scriptural 
truths of the bodily resurrection and of the mysterious parallel between 
the origin of each human individual and the origin of the entire cosmos. 
From different competing beliefs, the doctrine which prevailed was that 
the spiritual soul—what makes each individual human person unique, and 
gives each one the ability to know and to love—is neither generated by the 
parents nor does it pre-exist the body, but it is created directly by God 
with the coming to be of each human being.33 Throughout the history of 
the Church, Christians have used the language of “body and soul” to un-
derstand the human being, but in such a way as not to deny the unity of 
God’s creation. In the fourteenth century, in an attempt to defend this hu-
man unity, the Ecumenical Council of Vienne defined the doctrine that the 
soul was “the form of the body” (forma corporis),34 by which it meant: what 
gives life to the body. Christians held, and continue to hold, that the spiri-
tual soul is present from the moment there is a living human body35 until 
the time that body dies.

21. The Scriptures also emphasize how God’s provident care for each 
person is present before he or she is ever aware of it. The Lord called his 
prophets by name before they were born: “The Lord called me from the 
womb, from the body of my mother he named my name” (Isaiah 49:1) “Be-
fore I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I 
consecrated you” (Jeremiah 1:5). It is possible to understand these passages 
as referring not only to the prophets, but to each one of God’s children. 
The Lord calls each one from the womb, forms each one, gives each one 
into the care of his or her mother, and will not abandon his creature in 
times of trial (Psalms 22:10-11, 71:6; Job 10:8-12).

For it was you who created my being, 
knit me together in my mother’s womb. 
I thank you for the wonder of my being, 
for the wonders of all your creation.

Already you knew my soul 
my body held no secret from you 
when I was being fashioned in secret 
and moulded in the depths of the earth.

Psalm 139
22. Such passages do not establish when human life begins, but they establish God’s involvement and care from the very beginning, a concern that is not diminished by our lack of awareness of him.

23. “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of the human being truly becomes clear.” To illuminate the mystery of the origin of human persons it seems reasonable to turn to the mystery of the Incarnation. In order to do justice to the infancy narratives, especially that of the Gospel of Luke, one must believe that, from the moment of the Annunciation to Mary of Jesus’s birth, Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and carried the Saviour in her womb. This is emphasized by the story of the Visitation—where one pregnant mother greets another, and the unborn John bears witness to the unborn Jesus.

24. The Incarnation was revealed to the world at the Nativity when Jesus was born, but the Incarnation began at the Annunciation, when the Word took flesh and came to dwell within the womb of the Virgin. This understanding of the text of Scripture is confirmed by the witness of the Fathers of the Church, by the development of the feast of the Annunciation and, not least, by the solemn declaration of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE):

   We profess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God, for God the Word became flesh and was made man and from the moment of conception (ex autēs teis sullepseoes / ex ipso conceptu) united himself to the temple he had taken from her.

25. In the Eastern Church, St. Maximus the Confessor turned to the Annunciation to illuminate the intractable problem of when human life begins. Jesus is said to have been like to us in all things but sin (Hebrews 4:15) and Christians believe that Jesus was a human being from the moment of conception: therefore, it seems, every human being must come into existence at the moment of conception.

26. In the West, Christians were more strongly influenced by the biology of Galen and the philosophy of Aristotle and held that the spiritual soul was only infused at the moment when the body was perfectly formed, forty days after conception. The great medieval Christian thinkers all held that the conception of Jesus was an exception, and that he was unlike us in the womb. This was an unhappy conclusion, forced upon theologians by an erroneous biology. Is it really sustainable to argue that Jesus was unlike us in his humanity? A more adequate vision was supplied by the seventeenth century Anglican theologian Lancelot Andrewes, in a sermon on the Nativity:

   For our conception being the root as it were, the very groundsill of our nature; that he might go to the root and repair our nature from the very foundation, thither he went.
27. The words of this sermon bring our attention, not only to the work of the Redeemer from the beginning of his life, but also to our need for redemption from the beginning of our lives. It was this need that David recognized in himself according to the psalm, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5), where these words refer not to his mother’s sinfulness, but to the complete extent of his own sinfulness. This psalm and the Eden story were given a deeper sense by Christians in light of the redemption accomplished by Jesus. As Jesus had achieved a total transformation, so all human beings were in need of a total transformation: total in the sense of including their very origins. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul drew out the parallel between Adam and Christ and so asserted the involvement of all human beings in Adam’s sin (Romans 5:12-21).

28. This association of sin and conception is also shown within the Roman Catholic tradition in the development of the doctrine of Mary’s complete redemption from sin. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception appears to imply that Mary was receptive to grace from the moment of her conception in her mother’s womb. This Roman Catholic argument is simply an expression of a more widely accepted argument from the Christian doctrine of original sin. Both arguments express the general truth that each and every human being needs the help of God from the very first—which is constantly and, it seems, inevitably expressed as “from the first moment of his or her conception.”

29. The Christian churches teach not that the early embryo is certainly a person, but that the embryo should always be treated as if it were a person. This is not only a case of giving the embryo the benefit of the doubt—refraining from what might be the killing of an innocent person. It is also that the ambiguity in the appearance of the embryo has never been thought of as taking the embryo out of the realm of the human, the God-made and the holy. When Pope John Paul II asks, “how can a human individual not be a human person?” he is not denying the mysteriousness of the implied answer. Christians recognize the embryo to be sacred precisely because it is inseparable from the mystery of the creation of the human person by God. What is clear, at the very least, is that the embryo is “a living thing—under the care of God.”

30. The following, then, are five principal considerations which should inform any Christian evaluation of the moral status of the human embryo:

I. Though penalties have varied, the Christian tradition has always extended the principle of the sacredness of human life to the very beginning of each human being, and never allowed the deliberate destruction of the fruit of conception.

II. The origin of each human being is not only a work of nature but
is a special work of God in which God is involved from the very beginning.

III. The Christian doctrine of the soul is not dualistic but requires one to believe that, where there is a living human individual, there is a spiritual soul.

IV. Each human being is called and consecrated by God in the womb from the first moment of his or her existence, before he or she becomes aware of it. Traditionally, Christians have expressed the human need for redemption as extending from the moment of conception.

V. Jesus, who reveals to Christians what it is to be human, was a human individual from the moment of his conception, celebrated on the feast of the Annunciation, nine months before the feast of Christmas.

31. Jesus reveals the humanity especially of the needy and those who have been overlooked. Concern over the fate of embryos destined for research is inspired, not only by the narratives of the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Nativity, but also by the parable of the good Samaritan and the parable of the sheep and the goats: “Just as you did it to one of the least of these little ones you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). The aim of an ethically serious amendment to the 1990 Act should be to regulate the procedures in fertility treatment and non-destructive medical research on human embryos such that these human individuals are adequately protected.46

PREPARED BY:
Rev. David Jones, M.A. M.A. M.St., Director of the Linacre Centre for Healthcare Ethics, London.

ENDORSED BY:
Cardinal Cahal B. Daly, B.A. M.A. D.D., Peritus at Vatican II, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh, Primate Emeritus of All Ireland
Rt. Rev. Kallistos Ware, M.A. D.Phil., Bishop of Diokleia in the Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies, Oxford University.
Rev. Prof. Benedict M. Ashley O.P., M.A. STL Ph.D. Ph.D. S.T.M., Adjunct Professor, Center for Healthcare Ethics, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO.
Dr. Margaret Atkins, M.A. M.A. Ph.D., Lecturer in Theology, Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds.
Rev. Prof. Michael Banner, B.A. D.Phil., Professor of Moral and Social
Theology, King’s College, London.
Rev. Prof. Nigel M. de S Cameron, M.A. B.D. Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Culture, Trinity International University, IL.
Prof. Celia Deane-Drummond, B.A. M.A. Ph.D. Ph.D., Professor in Theology and the Biological Sciences, Chester College, University of Liverpool.
Prof. Michael J. Gorman, B.A. M. Div. Ph.D., Dean, The Ecumenical Institute of Theology, Professor of New Testament and Early Church History, St. Mary’s University and Seminary, Baltimore, MD.
Prof. Vigen Guroian, B.A. Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Ethics, Loyola College, Baltimore, MD, and Visiting Lecturer, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.
Prof. Andrew Louth, M.A. M.A. M.Th. D.D., Professor of Patristic and Byzantine Studies, University of Durham.
Prof. William E. May, B.A. M.A. Ph.D., Professor of Moral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Washington, DC.
Rev. Herbert McCabe OP, STL B.A. S.T.M., Lecturer in Theology, Blackfriars Hall, Oxford University.
Prof. Gilbert Meilaender, B.A. M. Div. Ph.D., Professor of Christian Ethics, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN.
Prof. John Milbank, B.A. M.A. Ph.D. D.D., Professor of Philosophical Theology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
Dr. C. Ben Mitchell, B.S. M.Div. Ph.D., Senior Fellow, The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, Bannockburn, IL.
Rev. Prof. Oliver O’Donovan, M.A. D.Phil., Canon of Christi Church, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, Oxford University.
Prof. John Rist, M.A., F.R.S.C., Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, Visiting Professor, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Rome.
Prof. John Saward, B.A. M.Litt., Professor of Dogmatic Theology, International Theological Institute, Gaming Austria, Aquinas Fellow, Plater College, Oxford.
Dr. Robert Song, M.A. D.Phil., Lecturer in Theology, University of Durham.

NOTES
1 Hansard (House of Lords Debates) Vol. 621, No. 16, column 35-37 (22 January 2001).
2 In its “Call for Evidence.”

4 *Commentary on the Sentences*, book IV, d. 31 exp. text.

5 *Didache* 2.2; *Epistle of Barnabas* 19.5.


7 St. Clement, *Prophetic Ecglogues* 41, 48-49; cf. M. J. Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish & Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 52; and Tertullian, *On the Soul* 27. “Now we allow that life begins with conception, because we contend that the soul also begins from conception; life taking its commencement at the same moment and place that the soul does.”


9 Elvira (305 CE) canons 53, 65; Ancyra (314 CE) 21; Lerida (524 CE) 2; Braga (527 CE) 77; Trullo (692 CE) 91; Mainz (847 CE) 21; cf. S. Troianos, “The Embryo in Byzantine Canon Law.”

10 Basil, *Epistle* 118.2.


12 Lactantius, *De Opificio Dei* 12; Ambrosiaster, QQ *Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 23.

13 *On the History of Animals* VII.3, 4:583.

14 St. Jerome, *On Ecclesiastes* 2.5; *Apologia adversus Rufinum* 2.8; St. Augustine, *Enchiridion* 85, *On Exodus* 2.80; though each of these sometimes state that the foetus is not a man (homo) until he is fully formed.


18 Connery, 114-134; Grisez, 166-168; Noonan, 26-27.


21 *Theologia Moralis* III, 4.1, n. 394.

22 *Theologia Moralis* VI, 1.1, dubia 4, n. 124; cf. Connery, 210; Grisez, 176; Noonan, 31.

23 The theory developed by Fienus (1567-1631), Zacchia (1584-1659), and Cangiamila (1701-1763); cf. Connery, ch. 10-11; Grisez, 170-172; Noonan, 34-40.

24 This has also become the prevailing opinion among followers of St. Thomas Aquinas; cf. B. Ashley, “A Critique of the Theory of Delayed Hominization” in D. McCarthy and A. Moraczewski, *Evaluation of Fetal Experimentation: An Interdisciplinary Study* (St. Louis, MO: Pope John Center, 1976); B. Ashley and A. Moraczewski, “Cloning,

25 Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et Spes, 51.


27 “The Church has always held in regard to the morality of abortion that it is a serious sin to destroy a fetus at any stage of development. However, as a juridical norm in the determination of penalties against abortion, the Church at various times did accept the distinction between a formed and a non-formed, an animated and a nonanimated fetus.” R. J. Huser, The Crime of Abortion in Canon Law (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 1942), preliminary note.


31 Gregory of Nyssa, On the Making of Man; John Damascene, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith II.12; Creed of Lateran IV, Tanner, 230.


33 John Damascene; Peter Lombard; St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae Ia Q. 118 AA. 2-3; Pius XII, Humani Generis.

34 Council of Vienne, On the Catholic Faith; Tanner, 361.

35 The debate about the timing of the “infusion of the soul” was a debate about when the living human body came into existence.

36 Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et Spes, 22.


38 Epistle of St. Cyril to John of Antioch; Tanner, 70.

39 II Ambigua 42.


41 Sermon IX on the Nativity in J. Saward, 100.

42 For example, “The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception.” Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae 60, emphasis added.

43 Ibid.


45 Athenagoras, Legatio 35.

46 This article appeared in Ethics & Medicine: An International Journal of Bioethics 17:3 (Fall 2001), 143-154, and is reprinted by permission.