

5-2016

A Historical Analysis of the Early Christian Church Fathers' Opinions Regarding Abortion

Lauren Taylor Provencher

Follow this and additional works at: http://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Political Theory Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Provencher, Lauren Taylor, "A Historical Analysis of the Early Christian Church Fathers' Opinions Regarding Abortion" (2016).
Honors Theses. Paper 381.

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

A Historical Analysis of the Early Christian Church Fathers' Opinions Regarding
Abortion

by

Lauren Taylor Provencher

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Political Science

May 2016

Approved by

Troy Gibson, Ph.D., Thesis Adviser
Associate Professor of Political Science

Edward Sayre, Ph.D., Department Chair
Department of Political Science

Ellen Weinauer, Ph.D., Dean
Honors College

Abstract

Due to scarce material on the subject in the Bible and supposed discord among Early Christian Church Fathers, the debate on abortion is one that is often hotly contested in the United States. From the religious political aspect there is much debate over whether the Early Christian Church had a single mindset towards the notion on abortion or was deeply divided on the subject as we are today. A popular narrative, even among many in academia, is that the Church was not unified on the topic. Some even go so far as to ascribe to a pro-Choice stance on abortion because they believe the Early Church and Early Church Fathers were not in agreement. Drawing inspiration from a political and religious statement made by then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi this study analyzes the Church Fathers Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine and subsequently their viewpoints on the topics of abortion, personhood, and ensoulment. Evidence was found to support the existence of a common doctrine on the topic of abortion—the life and soul of a human being begins at the moment of conception. This conclusion produces political implications for the abortion debate and also for political ethics as a whole in that it seems the Christian tradition has played a consistent role in sanctifying the sacredness of life and has greatly influenced our Western traditions.

Keywords: Early Christian Church Fathers, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Augustine, personhood, ensoulment, abortion.

Dedication

My family, my friends, and especially the Lautenslagers:

Thank you for your love, support, and kind words when needed the most.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank my thesis advisor, Troy Gibson, for being the inspiration behind this project and always helping me during the process of completing this study. This work would not have been possible had it not been for his unwavering patience. Thank you for everything.

Additionally, I would also like to pay thanks to the faculty of The Honors College. During my time at The University of Southern Mississippi, they have never failed to go above and beyond to help me with anything and everything.

Lastly, I would like to pay special thanks to the faculty of the Political Science Department at The University of Southern Mississippi. Each individual in this department has always found a way to put a smile on my face and even when life seemed impossible they reminded me of what a joy it is to study political science.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	3
Tertullian.....	4
Irenaeus	7
Augustine	10
Chapter 3: Methodology	13
Chapter 5: Discussion	16
Position on Abortion.....	16
Position on Personhood.....	18
Position on Ensoulment	21
Modern Day Comparison and Analysis.....	26
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	33
References.....	35
Appendices.....	39

List of Tables

Table 1: Determined Beliefs of the Early Christian Church Fathers	26
Table 2: The Church Fathers on Abortion	39
Table 3: The Church Fathers on Personhood.....	40
Table 4: The Church Fathers on Ensoulment	44

Introduction

To provide some political context behind the origins of this it is beneficial to take a look at Nancy Pelosi's comments on this subject. Nancy Pelosi has over 27 years of service under her belt as a representative in the United States House of Representatives. From 2007 until 2011 she was the first woman to serve as the Speaker of the House. As an outspoken member of the Democratic Party she is a formidable woman who has great influence in the political world, and this is why her beliefs and logic behind them have great value. In a *Meet the Press* interview with NBC during 2008 Nancy Pelosi was asked by Tom Brokaw about her viewpoints concerning the matter of when life begins;

I would say that as an ardent, practicing Catholic, this is an issue that I have studied for a long time. And what I know is, over the centuries, the doctors of the Church have not been able to make that definition. St. Augustine said 'at three months'. We don't know. The point is that it shouldn't have an impact on a woman's right to choose.

Pelosi's comment leads one to believe that her political stance supporting a woman's right to have an abortion is based on the fact that she does not know whether the Christian Church has been able to agree on a single definition of when life begins. This conclusion is what led this study to ask the question of whether or not Christian Church Fathers, and more importantly the Christian tradition, had a cohesive opinion of abortion and the moment at which life for humans begins.

Throughout the history of the Christian Church there have been many figures that have worked within the Church to uphold their beliefs and to defend those of the Church

and Christianity. Those who were ordained within the Christian Church are what we have come to call Church Fathers.

In order to test the validity of the viewpoint articulated in Pelosi's comment it is constructive to explore possible connections between the opinions of the Early Church Fathers and other Church documents using the topics of abortion and those in relation to the life of humanity—personhood, which is the inherent essence of humanity, and ensoulment, which is the notion of when a human receives a soul. Based upon the Church Fathers' beliefs on abortion, personhood and ensoulment this study can conclude what these men believed and whether there was a consensus between them or not. Based upon the slow-paced communications and great distances that separated the Early Christian Church Fathers, I hypothesized that their writings would not show any significant degree of agreement.

To further relate this to political thinking and the comment made by Pelosi it is beneficial to limit the study to what is considered the Early Church. This is partly because Pelosi references a particular Church Father (St. Augustine), and partly due to the fact that this period of time within the Church allows us to see the progression of thought after the life and times of Jesus Christ. The analysis of Early Church Fathers was narrowed down to the works and beliefs of Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine in order to review a wide scope of opinions from men in the Early Church within a limited time frame. Each of the men were prominent and authoritative Church Fathers, leaders, theologians, and inadvertently philosophers who managed to leave a legacy of learning and a breadth of wisdom that generations have come to respect. Even within their lives (approximately

within the following five centuries after the death of Christ) each was well revered within their region for their teachings.

The analysis of these men and the primary sources that are their writings helps to form a valid conclusion about how the Early Church Fathers viewed the topic of abortion and to what degree there was a consensus or discord amongst them. Furthermore, an establishment of a consensus between these men could suggest the existence of a so-called ethical orthodox; this would mean there existed a common set of beliefs regarding abortion or at least the ethical status of the unborn. A consistent tradition like this would repudiate the argument for an indefinite stance on abortions from a religious perspective. This in turn would have political implications for those who believe women should be free to choose whether or not they wish to utilize the practice of abortion and follow the same logic.

Literature Review

The main purpose of this literature review will be to address the previous research on Augustine, Irenaeus, and Tertullian and their beliefs about personhood, ensoulment and abortion. Past research tends to study each of these three individually instead of directly comparing these men. Furthermore, much of the research presented is pulled from philosophical journals, religious articles or books, and from other various academic journals. These previous researchers conducted a plethora of studies analyzing the works of these theologians and have made insightful conclusions therefrom.

In relation, many both within and outside the academic sector have offered their claims and writings of individual Church Fathers. In fact, it is important to highlight that

some scholars within the studies of Christian ethics conclude based on their studies that abortion within approximately the first trimester is not sinful because the fetus is believed to lack a rational soul at this stage of development (Jones 2013). However, there is not much information in regards to the extent to which there was disagreement between these men; of which this study expects to find some to a certain degree. Based upon beliefs on personhood and ensoulment, and of course abortion of some of the more prominent theologians this study can conclude what these men believed and to what degree there existed a consensus or discord between them. To make this an efficient study, this study will review the works of three prominent Church Fathers and theologians, particularly Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine. By determining a presence of similarity in their opinions or lack thereof this study will conclude whether or not the Church had a single idea regarding the practice of abortion.

Tertullian (born c. 155/160, died after 220)

Background. To begin with, Everett Ferguson writes that Tertullian was a resident of the city of Carthage within the region of Northern Africa sometime around 200AD.

Tertullian grew up a pagan and was very heavily influenced by Stoicism (Ferguson 2009). This is worth noting because many of his beliefs were based upon this doctrine. The doctrine of Stoicism mainly states a belief in the foundation of logic, stern morality, and an apathetic attitude towards all things external such as any kind of emotion or material possession. Despite not converting to Christianity until after his adolescent years, Tertullian did not grow up without knowledge of Christianity and its happenings. His parents were well-to-do and Tertullian received a well-rounded education (Ferguson 2009).

Personhood. Tertullian's past was vital in shaping his future writings. This is evident in his strict references to his firm belief that the body and soul are separate entities. Many of Tertullian's writings concerning this physical division come from a rebuttal towards another theologian named Marcion. Previous research notes that Tertullian's rejection against Marcion's ideas lead to his view of Christ as the "dirty physician" who uses the flawed human form to heal humanity. Sin, therefore, is a principal part of what make us human and to Tertullian is the key to salvation (Radler 2009). This is not to mean that being 'dirty' is necessarily a bad thing. An analysis of Tertullian's clear distinction between body and soul does not reveal a distaste of the flawed bodily flesh. Rather the imbuelement of the soul within the human body "bears the imprint of the image and likeness of God and [the soul infused within the flesh] is the queen of God's creation" within the imperfect physicality of humanity. Moreover, Radler states that Tertullian believed that the sin possessed within humanity is what gave rise to God endowing it with souls (Radler 2009). The flesh without the soul is viewed as nothing but a sinful vessel, and the soul by itself is not able to do well without the vessel. Sin, however, is not the only virtue that characterizes what a human being is. Previous researchers like Ferguson conclude that Tertullian's definition of human beings not only means having been made in the image of God, but to also possess spirit, reason, and freedom (Radler 2009). Without these vital qualities humans could be considered too different from God and therefore would not constitute as being anywhere close to symbolizing the image of God. Summarized, these interpretations of Tertullian reveal a connection between the physicality of humanity and the soul. These combined are what constitute being made in

the image and likeness to God and cannot be separated from our humanity and personhood.

Ensoulement. This leads to how Tertullian addresses the topic of the soul. In his research Ferguson points out that much of the research derived from the writings of other authors conclude that ensoulement i.e., the precise moment when a human is determined to have a soul, occurs a significant amount of time after conception. However, Ferguson concludes from his own analysis that Tertullian believed in the idea of ensoulement at the moment of conception. This is predicated upon the idea that God breathes life into each and every person. This does not mean that the soul is “alive” as he describes it; the soul resides within the flesh of humans and has the ability to be awakened upon worship of God (Ferguson 2009). Broken down it can be gathered that Tertullian believed from the moment of conception humans possess a soul bestowed upon them by God. This soul is not functional though and only contains potentiality until the body it is residing in has gained the ability and rational to fully accept God.

Abortion. It is clear from his writings that the opinions Tertullian held about personhood and ensoulement, and his disinclination towards abortion are well defined also. Ferguson reveals that Tertullian explicitly denies the validity of abortion. Whether a fetus is born or yet to be born it is sinful to willingly abort the life of a child. This is due in part to the sinfulness of slaying a fellow human endowed with a soul, which in turn is due to the introduction of original sin by Adam, and also due to the fact that a fetus, in Tertullian’s eyes, is completely innocent until about the age of fourteen or when they reach puberty (Ferguson 2009). This statement of belief is hard to refute, and it would seem that the argument for this study stops here. Even though Tertullian unambiguously repudiates

abortion, the focus of this study will be to determine this Church Father's beliefs on abortion using the entirety of his beliefs and inferring a conclusion based on his opinions regarding similar subjects.

Irenaeus (born c. 120/140, died c. 200/203)

Background. Next it is imperative to look closely at another Church Father. Scholars argue that Irenaeus was born sometime around 140 A.D in or near Smyrna, which was located in modern day Turkey. Author and academic theologian Robert McQueen Grant spent much of his time researching this antiquated man. Based on Irenaeus' various works and letters, Grant found that Irenaeus was eager to migrate from Asia to Gaul, as was common for men in this time, and consequently his fascination and great admiration with the Church led him to become a missionary among the Celts of Gaul (Grant 1996). Irenaeus' work was especially important during his lifetime because of the widespread movement of Gnosticism. These were heretical Christian groups that outspokenly challenged many Church beliefs. Irenaeus served to help cement the Church's more traditional philosophies. His work for the Church conceded Irenaeus recognition from many Church fathers for his righteousness (Grant 1996). This importance and respect Irenaeus received within the Church brings more clout to this Church Father and theologian and is a major contributing factor to his inclusion within this study of Early Church Fathers.

Personhood. Irenaeus' works span a wide array of topics, but I will primarily focus on personhood, ensoulment, and abortion. An Australian scholar by the name of Eric Osborn uncovered this theologian's perspective on personhood through his writings on the topic of humans being made in the image of God. His previous discussions on Irenaeus'

writing reveal that having been made in the likeness of God does not necessarily mean one is fully human and destined for salvation. For Irenaeus the likeness man possesses is more of a similarity because all of humanity possesses free will and is able to strive to be more God-like (Osborn 2003). Therefore, Irenaeus' perception of personhood can be summed up in one idea: free will. This emphasis on free will is based on the idea that a human is made in the likeness of both Christ and the Father (which will be treated the same for the purposes of this research), in which Christ represents the limitations that the flesh imposes on the body (i.e. the original sin of Adam that subsequently caused many generations to become sinners). Humanity's possession of free will allows individuals to willingly strive to overcome this limitation imposed on them by the fall of Adam and Eve in order "to become [more] like God in the perfection of his goodness" (Osborn 2003).

Ensoulement. Personhood and the idea of it transitions into the idea of ensoulment. Aside from personhood and original sin, ensoulment was a major problem that he had to face directly. He did so by first looking to God. Since God bestows upon us life, it seems only natural in the eyes of Irenaeus that he must somehow bestow the soul upon us as well. Irenaeus discovered this revelation through his recognition of a clear distinction between the flesh and the soul. Many researchers have thoroughly analyzed the works of Irenaeus throughout the years, but one such researcher derived a certain meaning about Irenaeus' belief about the difference between the existence of the body and soul. Irenaeus believed that while God may "breath life" into us, He cannot breathe our soul into us; the soul awakens when it is able to exalt God (Osborn 2003). Just as humanity is defined by its possession of free will so too is the soul in the sense that it is not alive until it has freely

chosen to worship God. Compared to the Tertullian, Irenaeus draws a much clearer discrepancy between the subjects of personhood and ensoulment.

Abortion. Information about Irenaeus' beliefs about the topics previously discussed is readily available among past literature; information regarding his views on abortion is not however. Although, it can be argued (and several have) that his understandings of abortion were derived from his commitment to apostolic succession. To explain further, during his life Irenaeus was known to have studied under Bishop Polycarp in Smyrna. This bishop in turn was also known to have been a disciple of the Apostle John (Sisk and Reid 2004). This was formidable in shaping how Irenaeus came to believe what he did and also why he held the Church in such high regards and why he subscribed to the notion of apostolic succession. The system of apostolic succession is not only the succession of bishops with the Church, but also the succession of knowledge and ministry beginning with the Apostles. Based on this, Irenaeus would have held any beliefs displayed from the Apostles in the utmost regard, including abortion.

On this note, it is vital to have an understanding of how the Apostles regarded abortion. Having been called to mission by Christ many scholars have logically come to the assumption that the Apostles' opinions on sin were largely predicated upon interactions with Jesus and upon Jewish teachings such as the Ten Commandments (Coppieters 1907). It is safe to extrapolate from these assumptions that the Apostles' views were chiefly untainted by centuries of theological arguments and blind extrapolations due to the privileged position they enjoyed in regards to proximity with Jesus. One prime text that scholars often refer back to is the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which was written no later than 100 A.D. and is an encompassing

description of Christian ethics (Noonan 1967). One noted scholar named John T. Noonan writes a description of this work that includes a wide range of topics, and luckily for the purposes of this study it contains direct references to abortion. This reference is included among a list of sins related to sexual transgressions, murder, and medicine in which it clearly states that one shall not kill a child by means of abortion (Noonan 1967). This clear statement of opinion that is attributed to the twelve apostles can be linked through the generations to Irenaeus due to the knowledge of his connection with the Apostle John.

Augustine (born Nov. 13, 354, died Aug. 28, 430)

Background. The next Church Father included in our study is a much more prominent figure in academia. The Church Father referenced here would be none other than Augustine of Hippo. Augustine was influential not only in his time period, but also has had a major influence in both the development of Western culture and the political philosophy thereof. One of his more significant accomplishments was the integration of ancient Greek philosophy and Christian theology and scripture (Mendelson 2012). Much of his life was spent either teaching or writing. His early years in North Africa, however, were not spent with the Church. Augustine started his career teaching, but later on left this profession due to his dissatisfaction with it and the morality of his students.

Afterward certain circumstances caused him to lose his female companion, his son, and much of his family and friends; because of all this he devoted his life to the Church and was ordained as Bishop in 395 A.D. (Mendelson 2012).

Personhood. Next it is important to look at the research others have conducted in order to reach a valid conclusion on Augustine's beliefs about personhood. In order to do this it is imperative to have an understanding of his appraisal of language. Language is the

means by which humans understand and explain the world around them. Augustine believed in a hierarchy of language in which human speech is at the bottom, and then human intellectual thought, and at the tier is the human approximation of the Word of God (Stock 2011). Therefore, since humans can achieve the first two it is obvious that humans use these methods to attain a definition of what they are. This consequently means that humans cannot achieve a true definition of who they are because that definition can only be derived from God's image and likeness i.e. the Word of God. Moreover, even though the true definition of personhood cannot be attained, a similar definition can be reached through the strive to find oneself. This strive to find oneself involves the struggle to become more Godlike and to understand Christ's crucifixion and redemption. Through this understanding one comes to the realization that the self is embodied in the incorporation of the soul and the body (Stock 2011).

Ensoulement. That being said Augustine's views on ensoulement are slightly less based on what is generally believed to be Christian teaching. To fully understand his stance on this subject it is important to revisit his past. On top of the fact that he had sexual relations with a woman and bore a child out of wedlock he was also known to have been involved in Manichaeism. In fact, records show that he spent nine years of his life following this unorthodox sect, and even though in his writings later on he denounced many of the beliefs of this sect many scholars assert that they wielded a certain influence on him (Shanzer 2009). Taken altogether it stands to reason that Augustine had many Christian and non-Christian influences upon his stance on ensoulement. Therefore, it can be claimed that he did not hold what has become the traditional view of ensoulement at conception. Rather, even as Pelosi asserted in her comment upon which this study is based off of, that

Augustine viewed ensoulment as something that occurred after a period of time from the moment of conception. To explain, it is known by many scholars that Augustine believed, similarly to Aristotle, that the soul is imbued once the form [fetus] is complete, which Augustine believed was forty days after conception for males and eighty days for females (Disney and Poston 2010). This stance is a very clear distinction of Augustine's early views. However, later on his life his views became more in line with Christian orthodoxy as described in his *Confessions*.

Abortion. The degree in difference between a male fetus just created and one forty days after conception is what led scholar Riddle to conclude that Augustine, along with many other early theologians were in consensus about the idea that there is a difference between a formed and unformed fetus (Riddle 1992). Despite this analysis that humanness is not achieved until after conception Augustine was not so quick to condone abortion. In fact, he associated this act, or any similar act as homicide. Christian scholar Noonan notes that Augustine wrote that when a married woman makes use of a poison of sterility or aborts an unborn child that it has dire consequences for the foundation of the marriage (Noonan 1967); it is therefore based on seduction rather than God's intended purpose for marriage. This is why Augustine makes a clear distinction between personhood, ensoulment, and abortion. He believed that personhood and ensoulment were not achieved until later on during the later stages of formation for a fetus; however, he believed that the killing of an unformed fetus was sinful due to its repercussions for marriage and its resemblance to the homicide of another living man.

Conclusion

In summation, an analysis of other theologians and philosophers along with the Early Church fathers leads several researchers to determine that the humanness of a person is not just a gift from God at the moment of conception, but something that is developed as a person evolves in complexity (Jones 2013). The combination of this all of the sources utilized from various academic scholars will allow this study to have a better understanding of the many opinions and conclusions derived from the writings of these three prominent theologians on personhood, ensoulment and abortion, and it also will set up a better foundation and consideration of the works of these men that have lasted for over millennia. The intention is to use this greater knowledge as a stepping-stone to analyzing the primary sources of Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine.

Methodology

This research comprised the close reading of mostly primary sources directly relating to the three Church Fathers involved in this study. These primary sources involved in this analysis are the writings of Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine.

Much of the attention directed towards Tertullian is narrowed down to his particular writings that have relevance. The works included in this study were as follows: *Apology of Tertullian*, *Ad Uxorem* (To my Wife), *De Testimonio Animae* (On the Soul), and *De Pudicitia* (On Modesty) (Reeve 1889; Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885b; Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885d; Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885a).

For Irenaeus, since his work *Against Heresies* is an all-encompassing work it was the only one referenced (Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c). The analysis of this piece

of writing from Irenaeus will allow this study to see what the foundation of his beliefs were and the process of sorting through to find them will further allow an opportunity to possibly find a connection with the other Christian Church Fathers.

Many of Augustine's writings have not only survived over centuries, but have also increased in popularity and importance. For the purposes of this study Augustine's works *The City of God* and his *Confessions* were analyzed (Augustine 1972; Schaff 1887). Within these works contain references to foundational beliefs regarding the subject of this study. Moreover, these works cover several different times throughout Augustine's life and reflect his varying opinions through the years. It should be noted also that although this study will have political implications the research will be conducted using historical qualitative methods.

In keeping with qualitative research methods for this study, after identifying which works could be included in this study, a first round of analysis was conducted by setting a parameter and categories of key words similar to the examples used in Saldaña's *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2008). Then subsequent trigger words were identified to help code quotes relating to the topics of abortion, personhood and ensoulment. These are as follows:

- Category 1: Abortion
 - Code: Abortion
 - Code: Homicide
 - Code: Murder
 - Code: Kill; killing
 - Code: Infanticide
 - Code: Sin; sinful, sinfulness
 - Code: Life
 - Code: Child
 - Code: Infant; embryo
 - Code: Born; birth
 - Code: Womb

Code: Conception

Category 2: Personhood

Code: Personhood; person

Code: Life

Code: Creation

Code: Body

Code: Flesh

Code: Womb

Code: Conception

Code: Nature

Code: Human

Code: Man

Code Phrase: Image and Likeness to God

Category 3: Ensoulment

Code: Ensoulment; soul

Code: Spirit; spirituality

Code: Human

Code: Conception

Once quotes containing one or more of these key words were collected a second round of analysis was conducted on an individual basis to determine their actual relevancy to the topic at hand. Those that contained one or more of the words and contained a statement regarding abortion (the life of a human yet born), personhood (the condition of being human), and ensoulment (the condition of having a soul) were collected and identified as the data set.

Due to the philosophical nature of this study, hermeneutics were applied in the interpretation of the collected quotes. Roughly speaking hermeneutics involves the interpretation of usually Biblical or religious texts, but has been implemented in various different ways by many different religious thinkers and philosophers. For the sake of this study though, I will utilize Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, which implements both faith and reason in analysis; to summarize simply this process involves separating the writing from

the source initially to derive an interpretation, putting that writing in context of the writer, comparing both derived meanings, and arriving at a unique interpretation (Haryatmoko 2011).

Then the quotes and their final interpreted meaning were compared to determine any similarities among the three categories of abortion, personhood, and ensoulment. Using the comparison, a chart was created in order to show straightforwardly whether there were any similarities among the three men's opinions. A great degree of similarity would point to the possible existence of a single Church doctrine on abortion and a lack thereof would provide evidence for the opposite.

Discussion*

The question at hand is whether or not the early Christian Church had a common core belief regarding the act of aborting a child yet born. This study has analyzed various writings from the early Church Fathers Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine. Having collected quotes relating to abortion it is now possible to compare the data that has been found in an effort to test the validity of a common core position on this subject.

Position on Abortion

The direct question of the sinfulness of aborting a child before it is born was addressed in the examined writings of both Tertullian and Augustine; however, in the examined writings of Irenaeus no direct reference was found. This may be because much of his writing focused more on the philosophical nature of the human being rather than

* All quotes collected from the writings of the Church Fathers can be found in the appendices.

real world repercussions. His thoughts on these issues will be addressed within the following sections.

As stated both Tertullian and Augustine directly address the sinfulness of murder, but from the data we see that Tertullian goes into the most detailed depth regarding this subject. Referencing *table 2* Tertullian states in his *Apology* that “to kill a child before it is born is to commit murder by way of advance.” For Tertullian there is no difference between the murder of a child before or after birth. In his *Ad Uxorem*, Tertullian recognizes that Christians are weighed by a tremendous amount of burdens that the Gentiles could not ever dream of being weighed down by. One such burden is that of abortions. Here and in the previous quote Tertullian is directly condemning the act of abortion as immoral. There is absolutely no ambiguity regarding his beliefs on this subject according to this set of data. Determining Augustine’s stance, however, is a task that is slightly more indefinite.

Much of Augustine’s writings takes on the form of philosophical questioning of abstract concepts. Particularly after his conversion later in life one can witness the hardening of his Christian beliefs through his writing. Rationality is an especially favorite topic of his. He distinguishes the differences between humans and everything else like animals and plants. Relating this to the command of ‘*Thou shall not kill*’ we can see in *table 2* that the sinfulness of murder “appl[ies] to human beings, that is, other persons and oneself.” In order to distinguish Augustine’s feelings on abortion we must distinguish what he considers a human being both literally and spiritually.

Position on Personhood

Similar to the topic of abortion, Tertullian addresses the question of personhood very directly. It does not matter at what stage in life a man is; he is still a man. We can see in *table 3* he describes a fetus as being only different in that he is “like the fruit in blossom”. He may not have the form of what people generally ascribe to man, but he is man nonetheless. Therefore, it is wrong to take the life of such, particularly because his potential has been robbed of him. What can be taken away from this is that at the moment of conception a fetus is indeed a person, both literally and spiritually.

From here, Irenaeus and Augustine seem to diverge slightly on the treatment of personhood in that the relationship to ensoulment is seemingly more important. Just as Tertullian used rationality to distinguish humanity from the likes of other earthly creatures, Irenaeus and Augustine both adhere to this but also add that among humans there is a clearer distinction between what makes a person a person and what it means to have a soul.

More so than Tertullian, but slightly less than Augustine, Irenaeus discusses the body and soul as separate but important to each other. In *table 3* there is a quote from his writings against the heretics that says “...just as He brings an infant which has been conceived in the womb into the light of the sun, and lays up wheat in the barn after He has given it full strength on the stalk...”. First off, Irenaeus is not comparing the life of a human being to that of a living plant; however, it is still a somewhat compelling metaphor. When a farmer plants wheat into the ground with a seed it is just that— a seed. From that point on though, when water and nutrients from the soil are there to fertilize that seed it becomes the plant we call wheat. Even though it is not in the final form as we

would commonly recognize it, the farmer still refers to it as wheat. This thought process can be applied to the life of a human as Irenaeus points out. Physically speaking the mother and father together can be inferred as the farmer to the wheat plant; spiritually, God is the farmer who fertilizes the plant that is a human being, and though it is not in a commonly seen form it is still considered a human being.

Image of God. Yet another interesting notion that is important to this debate is the idea of humanity being made in the image and likeness of God. In the Old Testament the story of God and his works in creating the universe and all things in it is described meticulously; in particular, it is noted that “God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them...” Genesis 1:27 (NRSV). This concept is important in attempting to understand personhood from a spiritual sense because it is the definition of what a human is to God. Irenaeus mentions this notion several times in his writing and mostly in relation to sin. Looking at *table 3* we can see where he states, “...what we had lost in Adam— namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God— that we might recover in Christ Jesus,” and “that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil”. Taken literally the image of God is interpreted to be man in perfect form, which the fall of Adam and Eve tarnished but Christ redeemed. This might suggest that in our physical form human beings do not fully reflect the image of God, but another quote from Irenaeus clears this confusion.

“For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature”. This study takes this quote as to mean two different things for human beings. The distinction lies in that there is an inherent difference between a human and humankind. A human is created from the coupling of male and female; whereas,

humankind or humanity is seen as a more spiritual concept created directly by God. This more philosophical viewpoint focuses more on the fundamental good and bad within man—the everlasting battle against sin. This concept paves the way for a greater understanding between personhood and ensoulment for Irenaeus.

Even more so than Irenaeus, and surely Tertullian, the notions of personhood and ensoulment are even more tied together for Augustine. The two are so closely tied together that in fact, one cannot live without the other. The one being the physical body. In *table 3* we can see Augustine outlines the relationship of the body and soul in which, “the body derives life from the soul when the soul is alive in the body, whether the soul derives its life from God or not”. Therefore, we are all human in that we contain a soul—which has the capacity to conduct a relationship with God. The soul’s ability to strive for resistance from sin gives humans the spark that makes them humanity, and humanity (similar to Irenaeus) is the reflection of the image and likeness to God. To reiterate this point, Augustine discusses who is responsible for the creation of life, whether it be to the mother or to God. Augustine states “We must not attribute to a woman the creation of her child, but instead to [God]... The mother’s consciousness can induce some special characteristics in the unborn child.... even so, the mother has not made the nature that is produced, any more than she has made herself”. Upon analysis this description is taken to mean that females are responsible for producing the physicality of the child, but the life that it holds, it’s humanity, was given to it solely from God Himself. This viewpoint shows two different sides of people, but which exactly defines personhood according to Augustine?

Taken in the literal sense humans become a person at some point after their creation, but at what point is this? Looking at Augustine's view of humanity being made in the image of God might help. Augustine, in discussing this topic he points out there is talk of man-made in the image of God and man made from the earth. The latter takes the form of our physical bodies and the former he says is "the rational soul, as God implanted it in man (in his body, that is) by breathing on him — 'by inspiration' might be a more suitable phrase". Here we can see that in the spiritual sense our personhood begins with the 'implantation' of our soul i.e., ensoulment. Unfortunately, the answer to when exactly a human's physical body becomes a person is less clear. Later in his life Augustine wrote the *Confessions* in which he examined much of his life, including his infancy, according to descriptions from others. In his writings it seems he refers to life beginning the moment of birth such as when he states, "none is free from sin, not even the infant which has lived but a day upon the earth". This seemingly points to the assumption that life and personhood in the physical sense begin here, but the data is not entirely conclusive on that.

Position on Ensoulment

It would seem obvious that Tertullian would have a definitive stance on what the soul is and when humans are endowed with it, but that is not entirely the case. There is one thing he is certain about, and that is the important qualities the soul brings to humanity—rational thought and knowledge. In his writings on the soul he spends much effort discussing more of humanity's relation to God rather than on the exact nature of the soul.

In *table 4* we can see two statements that seem to contradict each slightly on the beginnings of the soul. In his second statement taken from his writings he describes nature as a mistress and the soul as “her disciple”. Today the word mistress tends to have a negative connotation associated with it, however, a simple glance at (almost) any dictionary will show that this word really means a woman with power. It is important to understand this before analyzing the quote further. Here he is recognizing nature as a powerful (and surprisingly feminine) force, and humanity as a product of this force. However, nature is a direct product of God, and therefore so is humanity and the soul that lies in each individual.

Looking at the first statement of Tertullian’s on ensoulment then helps to clarify that the soul is the reason humans are different from every other living creature, which is our intelligence and logical reasoning. This statement and the first can lead to two analyses. One is that since God is the Creator of all and all processes begin with Him that the souls of humans are imparted with them at the moment nature begins their physical form. The other being that because the formation of humanity is a process the physical form must be created first by nature, in which case God later steps in to imbue each human with it’s respective soul. Knowing Tertullian’s position on abortion (sinful) and personhood (begins in the womb), we can effectively conclude the first analysis fits in more logically with his reasoning.

Irenaeus speaks of the soul very similarly to Tertullian, particularly on what the soul is to humanity. In *table 4* we can see he directly states that “the intellect of man— his mind, thought, mental intention, and such like— is nothing else than his soul”. The individual soul of man, the thing that gives him rational thought and reasoning, sets him

apart from all the other creatures of this earth. Hence, there is shame and sin in terminating such a creature. Irenaeus goes on to discuss the importance and connection that the soul and body have towards each. This being in part due to widespread confusion over whether the body lived on after death. He says in his writings that in a sense it would be an insult to the One who created humanity if His divine power could only save the substance of the flesh and not the other.

Having attributed all glory and creation to God, Irenaeus talks of the process of the creation of humans and consequently the ensoulment of humanity. Again, this process can be seen in both a physical sense and a spiritual sense. “For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature”. The physical act of creating a child is, well, a physical act of this world. However, the spiritual creation of humans and humanity as a whole is attributed to God by Irenaeus. There would be no copulation without God having created humans and their ability to engage in this act. There would be nothing special about humanity had God not imbued them with souls. The point at which God gives individual souls is correlated to their personhood. For Irenaeus God gives humans a physical body at the same moment as their soul; “...as each one of us receives his body through the skillful working of God, so does he also possess his soul”. This can be interpreted to mean that at the moment of conception (when a physical form is created although miniscule) a fetus is given both personhood and a soul. This status is definitively in a spiritual sense, but possibly also in the physical sense due to the presence of a physical form.

For Irenaeus, there is an additional concept that can be deduced from his writings on the nature of the soul. It is reasonable for him that there is a difference between having

what this study has determined as just a *soul* and an *awakened* soul. He states at one point in his writings that “by the participation of life the soul became alive; so that the soul, and the life which it possesses, must be understood as being separate existences”. All humans, as previously determined, are given a soul upon their physical formation. However, this does not necessarily define their life. What this is given to mean is that a human can have a soul without ever being spiritually awoken. Irenaeus sums this up by saying, “Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was [molded] after the image of God”. Here he is saying that any regular human is made up partly of his/her soul. What differentiates between that regular person and the “perfect” person is the “spirit of the Father”; this phrase is taken to mean redemption from sin and strive for good because of Irenaeus’ view of the image and likeness to God. Noted earlier, Irenaeus mentions in his writing that humanity lost its privilege of being accorded to the image and likeness of God due to Adam and the fall of man, but recovered this when Christ died for humanity’s sins. Therefore, humanity’s redemption from sin and strive for good is determined to be the meaning behind having an awakened soul.

Much like the other two early Christian Church Fathers, Augustine attributed humanity’s intelligence and rationality to the existence and characteristic of the soul, but to further understand Augustine’s perspective on the soul it is essential to go back to his understanding of personhood. As seen in *table 4* he says “the life of the bodies of the ungodly is not the life of their souls but of their bodies, a life which souls can confer even when those souls are dead, that is, when God abandons them”. In essence what he is

saying can be understood as meaning that individuals receive life through their souls; otherwise they would just be humanoid creatures walking upon the earth. Even if their souls do not connect with God, God Himself has given humanity as a whole a soul which personifies their existence. Given this it can be deduced that humans can only be considered fully human when they have their soul. So at what point, according to Augustine, do humans receive their souls?

Based on the data collected in this study from Augustine's writings it would seem at first glance that he has two opinions. Both of these come from his most famous work *City of God*, and are written in a highly metaphorical way. The first states, "God fashioned man out of the dust of the earth and gave him a soul of the kind I have described. This he did either by implanting in him, by breathing on him, a soul which he had already made, or rather by willing that the actual breath which he produced when he breathed on him should be the soul of the man. For to breathe is to produce a breath".

The second opinion then states, "There is another kind of form which operates internally; this form supplies the efficient causes, and it derives from a secret and hidden decision of a living and intelligent nature, which, being itself uncreated, is responsible for the creation not only of the natural, physical forms, but also of the souls of living creatures". Summarized crudely, the first statement seems to make the argument that God first created humanity's physical form and then imbued it with a soul; the second being the opposite in which humanity's physical form only begins once the soul is present. To deal with this seemingly contradiction this study concludes that Augustine is referring to two separate processes. The first being humanity as a whole and humanity in the beginning. God used the earth to create humanity and then "breathed" life into it by

giving it a soul. Humanity on an individual basis is then multiplied from this process. Since God has already created humanity and it's soul, the physical form of each human has therefore been given life and can subsequently develop. This analysis helps to clear the confusion between the two contradicting statements.

Table 1: Determined Beliefs of the Early Christian Church Fathers

<i>Determined Beliefs of the Early Christian Church Fathers</i>			
	Abortion	Personhood	Ensoulment
Tertullian	Sinful	Conception	Conception
Irenaeus	Sinful	Conception	Conception
Augustine	Sinful	Conception	Conception

Modern Day Comparison and Analysis

Solely analyzing the Early Christian Church Fathers is not enough to conclusively state whether the Early Church had a common doctrine on abortion and the status of an unborn child. To further substantiate this claim I examined Holy Scripture in order to show that the Church Fathers were simply building upon an existing revelatory body of truth. Moreover, in order to add further evidence towards the conclusion of a common Church tradition regarding abortion, I referenced other Church documents that are considered more modern day to not only further substantiate this common doctrine, but to show its progression. These documents include the Catholic Catechisms and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Biblical Scripture. For Christianity as whole the works of the Holy Scripture represent the true Word of God, and therefore are vested with all the authority of God. From this most

Church thinkers, including the Church Fathers included in this study, find inspiration in treating both earthly and spiritual matters. By looking at how the Holy Bible treats the subjects of abortion, personhood and ensoulment it can lend a better understanding for how the Early Church Fathers in this study arrived at the singular belief of life beginning at the moment of conception. For the sake of clarity and in keeping with academic standards, this study will be using the New Revised Standard Version Bible.

The most detailed description of abortion, or in this case the death of a fetus, can be found in the book of Exodus in the Old Testament. It says;

When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands, paying as much as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe (NRSV; Ex. 21:22-23).

If one continues to read through Exodus, it goes on to describe punishments for various different crimes. What all of these crimes have in common is that when an action results in the death of another human (or sometimes even a living creature) that some form of repayment is deemed necessary or the life of the person responsible is called to execution. These heavy punishments place a high value on human life, and in Ex. 21:22-23 that value is placed upon both the life of a fetus and that of the mother. Therefore, it is both unlawful to commit such a crime and also sinful; lending a spiritualness, whether good or bad, to the act. In this case it seems that the act is being condemned.

As for the issue of personhood and ensoulment, the Bible seems to address these issues through symbolic language. Within the Old Testament is a description of when Rebekah finally is able to conceive it is said that “The children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is to be this way, why do I live?” So she went to inquire of the Lord,” (NRSV Gen. 25:22). Instead of referring to them as fetuses, they are called children, which gives them humanlike qualities. Moreover, in the book of Job on conception it is said “Remember that you fashioned me like clay; and will you turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit,” (NRSV Job. 10:8-12). Conception here is presented as a process that with it brings life to the individual human; it is not just physical form that gives humanity, but also the process—conception.

There are several instances in the Bible where God is discussed as knowing humanity before existence. From His perspective it is said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations,” (NRSV; Jeremiah. 1:5) and then, “Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed,” (NRSV; Ps. 139:16). It is implied in both of these statements that God knows each individual human before they exist in the physical form. Therefore, God can be said to know a person’s spiritual form before their physical. In this case it is arguable that since a spiritual form of a person exists before they are “created” that ensoulment and achievement of personhood begin at the same time; at the time a

physical form is created (the moment of conception) the soul, already having existence, has a form to embody.

Additionally, there is another statement to suggest that at the moment of conception a fetus has a spiritual essence to it. The Bible says, “Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me,” (NRSV; Ps. 51:5). If at the moment of conception, a fetus or child is burdened with the original sin of man, or any sin for that matter, it is logical to suggest that conception is the moment with which humanity receives its personhood and ensoulment.

Much of this explains how the Church Fathers Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine all arrived at a common core belief of life beginning at the moment of conception.

The Catechisms of the Catholic Church. This study was conducted using writings starting from the 2nd century up to the 4th century AD. Having provided evidence to support the notion that the early Christian Catholic Church did have a common attitude towards abortion and relating topics it is beneficial next to discuss whether this commonality can be found in the Church of today. If this study can show a continuity of belief where the Church still advocates the same beliefs as of the Church Fathers included in this study it will provide even more evidence to disprove the notion that the Early Church Fathers did not agree on the issue of abortion.

To begin with, this study will address the catechisms of the Catholic Church. This is included in the study because it is a document that serves to highlight the major beliefs of the Church. The catechisms of the modern day Catholic Church according to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops were created under the guidance of Pope John Paul II and specifically serve to express “the essential and fundamental content of

Catholic faith and morals... [and the] declarative exposition of Catholic doctrine” (usccb.org). The importance this lends to the catechisms shows how it is used to spread the essential beliefs of the Church around the world. So what exactly do the catechisms of the Catholic Church say on abortion, personhood and ensoulment?

For the purposes of this study the Catechisms of the Catholic Church will always be referenced from the archives of the Vatican’s website (Vatican.va). Directly in part three of the catechisms there lies discussion of the Ten Commandments. Within chapter two the fifth commandment, *thou shall not kill*, is discussed. The topic of abortion is not skirted around either; rather, the catechisms directly state in line 2270-2271;

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life... Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law (Vatican.va).

Not only does this directly state that the Church believes in life beginning at the moment of conception, but this also matches the interpretations this study deduced from the Early Church Fathers. This further adds to evidence that abortion as a sinful act has been a common doctrine of the Church continuously. Similarly, within the catechisms the discussion on personhood and ensoulment reads almost as a flashback to Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine.

First off, it is noteworthy to mention that just as the three Church Fathers separated the soul from the flesh so do the catechisms. Line 362 states, “The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual” (Vatican.va). Simplified this means that to be a human being means to possess both an earthly flesh and a soul. Moreover, the section goes on to note that the soul is not created from the parents or the physical act of fertilizing an egg in the womb; rather the soul is created by God beforehand so that when this physical act occurs and the flesh is created God imbues this instantaneously with the soul—creating a human being (Vatican.va 362). This, of course, is back up by the previous mention of the catechisms stance on life beginning at the moment of conception.

It is clear that the Catechisms of the Catholic Church reflect the beliefs of Tertullian, Irenaeus and Augustine. Although, some might point out that this is an obvious conclusion since the catechisms are based off of the Early Church Father’s opinions. However, they are not solely based off them, instead they are based off of many things including, “Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the lives and writings of the saints, conciliar and papal documents and liturgical texts” (uscbb.org). Because of this, this study regards this document as an accurate reflection of Church beliefs, and as stated has proved to add to the evidence of a cohesive doctrine on abortion.

The Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith is a document that, much like the Catechisms of the Catholic Church, are very important to many Protestants of the Christian faith. Similarly, it also gives an outline of doctrinal beliefs for followers to read and adhere to. This study has chosen to include this

document for further analysis in order to further add evidence for or against the notion of cohesiveness within the Christian Church on abortion.

The Westminster Confession of Faith reaffirms two things that both the Church Fathers in this study have agreed with, as well as the Catechisms aforementioned: the souls that lie within humans are responsible for their intelligence and knowledge (they also coincide with being made in the image and likeness of God) and moreover, the commandment of “thou shall not kill” is applied to all men in respect of each other. The Westminster Confession states, “...[He] created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it...” (opc.org). This statement was made in the chapter concerning the creation of man, which even though it does not give a direct statement dictating when exactly humanity received their souls or personhood, should be taken to mean at the moment of creation of all humanity. Furthermore, throughout the Confession there is much discussion of predestination. This is a belief that all humans, even before they are born, are predetermined to either have their souls go to heaven or hell. This suggests that humanity’s personhood and ensoulment have already been created and determined long before a physical act of conception—this would support the previous findings of this study that say most agree with the statement that life definitely begins at the moment of conception.

Also, with regards to abortion in general it can be related to the commandment of *thou shall not kill*. Since individuals have their souls before they are even born it would seem to coincide with the belief that man should not kill another man. The Confessions

state that this commandment is applied to all men, whether good or bad, predestined for heaven or hell. In conclusion, although slightly vague, this Protestant Christian document adds further evidence to support the notion that not only does the Catholic Church support the condemning of abortion, but it also suggests that Christianity as a whole might support this as well. It is important to note that this document was not as explicit as others included in this study, and as such these interpretations might be classified as more personal.

Conclusion

In summation of this direct analysis of the data collected it would seem that my hypothesis has been disproved. In the beginning of this analysis I based this project on Nancy Pelosi's political stance on abortion—siding pro-choice because as a Catholic she asserted the early Christian Church Fathers did not agree at which point life truly began. I sided with her not because I agreed with her, but rather I looked to history. Historically speaking, the Church at the time of most of the fathers included in this study was very widespread and could not communicate closely due to distance and persecution. Therefore, I assumed at the beginning that their opinions on abortion, personhood, and ensoulment would be very different.

After analysis however, it seems that rather than their opinions being different the only thing differing these three men is the way they write about their opinions. The one thing that could be found almost word for word among their writings was their agreement that humanity's souls give them rationality and intelligent thought and is what separates humanity from other creatures of this earth. From this point their writings styles diverge greatly, but their opinions not so much. From Tertullian to Irenaeus and to Augustine, the

thing that separates their opinions is the amount in which they express their thoughts in a metaphorical sense. Tertullian was the most straightforward, with Irenaeus using the next highest amount of metaphors, and Augustine using the most amount of metaphors; which made Augustine the hardest to analyze.

It is noted that Tertullian made the assertions that life begins at the moment of conception. At that moment humans are also given their souls, which is why he states that it is wrong to kill a child in the womb. Next Irenaeus asserts that at the moment of conception humans are given a soul and their personhood. Although Irenaeus' opinion on abortion was not directly stated in the writings analyzed in this study, it is most likely that his opinion reflected Tertullian's. Finally, Augustine's position on these subjects, while much harder to discern, was almost the exact same. In the spiritual sense, God creates all things, including humanity. So beginning at the physical formation the ensoulment of a person begins at the exact same time, which means that for Augustine life begins at conception. Subsequently, since life begins at this moment and murdering a human is a sin, it is wrong to murder a child in the womb.

References

Augustine, Saint. 1972. "Saint Augustine City of God". New York, NY: *Penguin Books*.

Coppieters, H. 1907. Apostles. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved March 28, 2016 from New Advent:
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01626c.htm>

Coxe, A. C., Donaldson, J. and Roberts, A. (Eds.). (1885). On Modesty. In K. Knight (Eds.), In *Ante-Nicene Fathers: translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A. D. 325*. (Vol. 4). (S. Thelwall, Trans.) Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0407.htm>

Coxe, A. C., Donaldson, J. and Roberts, A. (Eds.). (1885). To His Wife. In K. Knight (Eds.), In *Ante-Nicene Fathers: translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. (Vol. 4). (S. Thelwall, Trans.) Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0404.htm>

Coxe, A. C., Donaldson, J. and Roberts, A. (Eds.). (1885). Against Heresies. In K. Knight (Eds.), In *Ante-Nicene Fathers: translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. (Vol. 1). (Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut, Trans.) Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103.htm>.

Coxe, A. C., Donaldson, J. and Roberts, A. (Eds.). (1885). A Treatise on the Soul. In K. Knight (Eds.), In *Anti-Nicene Fathers*. (Vol. 3). Peter Holmes, Trans.) Buffalo,

- NY: Christian Literature Publishing CO., 1885. Retrieved from
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0310.htm>
- Disney, Lindsey, and Larry Poston 2010. "The Breath of Life: Christian Perspectives on Conception and Ensoulment." *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 2: 271.
- Ferguson, Everett. "Tertullian." *Expository Times* 120, no. 7 (April 2009): 313-321. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 1, 2015).
- "Genesis 1 - NRS - Bible Study Tools." *Bible Study Tools*. Accessed February 23, 2016.
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/genesis/1.html>.
- Grant, Robert M. 1996. *Irenaeus of Lyons*. London: Routledge.
- Haryatmoko, J. 2011. "Critical Reason and Faith: The Contribution of Ricoeur's Hermeneutics." *Prajña Vihara: Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 12, no. 1: 113-130. *Philosopher's Index*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 26, 2016).
- Interview on *Meet the Press* (NBC news program), 24 August 2008. The transcript of the interview is available at
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26377338/ns/meet_the_press/t/meet-press-transcript-august/
- Jones, David Albert. 2013. "Aquinas as an Advocate of Abortion? The Appeal to 'Delayed Animation' in Contemporary Christian Ethical Debates on the Human Embryo." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26, no. 1: 97-124. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 1, 2015).
- Mendelson, Michael, 2012 "Saint Augustine", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

- Noonan, John T. Jr., 1967 "Abortion and the Catholic Church: A Summary History".
Natural Law Forum. Paper 126.
http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/nd_naturallaw_forum/126
- Osborn, Eric. 2003. "Irenaeus: Rocks in the Road." *Expository Times* 114, no. 8: 255.
Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed February 8, 2015).
- Radler, Charlotte. 2009. "The Dirty Physician: Necessary Dishonor and Fleshly
Solidarity in Tertullian's Writings." *Vigiliae Christianae* 63, no. 4: 345-368.
Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed February 23, 2015).
- Reeve, WM. (1889). The Apology of Tertullian. tr. and annotated by W. Reeve [1889.] In
Series: Ancient and modern library of theological literature. (Vol. 31). (WM
Reeve, Trans.) London and Sydney: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh Newberry
House., 1889. Retrieved from
http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm
- Riddle, John M. Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance.
Cambridge, Mass.: *Harvard University Press*, 1992.
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2008. "The coding manual for qualitative researchers." *Sage*, 2015.
Accessed March 14, 2016. [http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-
binaries/24614_01_Saldana_Ch_01.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/24614_01_Saldana_Ch_01.pdf)
- Schaff, Philip. (1887). The Confessions. In K. Knight (Eds.), In *Nicene and Post-Nicene
Fathers, First Series*. (Vol. 1). (J.G. Pilkington, Trans.) Buffalo, NY: Christian
Literature Publishing CO., 1887. Retrieved from
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm>

- Shanzer, Danuta. 2009. "Voices and Bodies: The Afterlife of the Unborn." *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 56, no. 2/3: 326-365. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 9, 2015).
- Sisk, Gregory C. and Reid, Charles J. 2004. "Abortion, Bishops, Eucharist, and Politicians: A Question of Communion." *Catholic Lawyer*, 43 (255). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=619388>
- Stock, Brian. 2011. "Self, Soliloquy, and Spiritual Exercises in Augustine and Some Later Authors." *Journal of Religion* 91, no. 1: 5-23. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 23, 2015).

Appendices

Appendix A: The Church Fathers on Abortion Data

Table 2: The Church Fathers on Abortion		
Tertullian	Irenaeus	Augustine
<p>But Christians now are so far from homicide, that with them it is utterly unlawful to make away a child in the womb, when nature is in deliberation about the man; for to kill a child before it is born is to commit murder by way of advance; and there is no difference whether you destroy a child in its formation, or after it is formed and delivered.</p> <p>(Reeve 1889, <i>Apology</i> pg. 32)</p>		<p>...it remains that we take the command 'You shall not kill' as applying to human beings, that is, other persons and oneself.</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 1, CH20)</p>
<p>Burdens must be sought by us for ourselves which are avoided even by the majority of the Gentiles, who are compelled by laws, who are decimated by abortions; burdens which, finally, are to <i>us</i> most of all unsuitable, as being perilous to faith!</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885b)</p>		<p>Was it that which I passed in my mother's womb? For of that something has been made known to me, and I have myself seen women with child. And what, O God, my joy, preceded that life?</p> <p>(Schaff 1887, <i>The Confessions</i>, Book 1, CH6)</p>
<p>Witness the midwives likewise, how many adulterous conceptions are slaughtered.</p> <p>(Cox, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885a, <i>De Pudicitia</i>, CH5)</p>		

Appendix B: The Church Fathers on Personhood Chart

Table 3: The Church Fathers on Personhood		
Tertullian	Irenaeus	Augustine
<p>For we Christians look upon him as a man, who is one in embryo; for he is in being, like the fruit in blossom, and in a little time would have been a perfect man, had nature met with no disturbance.</p> <p>(Reeve 1889, <i>Apology</i> pg32)</p>	<p>The human race passes through five ages first infancy, then boyhood, then youth, then maturity, and then old age.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2, CH24)</p>	<p>We must not attribute to a woman the creation of her child, but instead to him who said to his servant, ‘I knew you, before I formed you in the womb (Jer. 1, 5).’ The mother’s consciousness can induce some special characteristics in the unborn child.... even so, the mother has not made the nature that is produced, any more than she has made herself.</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 12, Chapter 25)</p>
	<p>...just as He brings an infant which has been conceived in the womb into the light of the sun, and lays up wheat in the barn after He has given it full strength on the stalk...</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2 CH28)</p>	<p>The soul therefore derives life from God, when its life is good — for its life cannot be good except when God is active in it to produce what is good — while the body derives life from the soul when the soul is alive in the body, whether the soul derives its life from God or not. For the life of the bodies of the ungodly is not the life of their souls but of their bodies, a life which souls can confer even when</p>

		<p>those souls are dead, that is, when God abandons them; for their own life, in virtue of which they are immortal, still persists, in however a low degree...</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 13, CH2)</p>
	<p>But as the animal body is certainly not itself the soul, yet has fellowship with the soul as long as God pleases; so the soul herself is not life, but partakes in that life bestowed upon her by God. (Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2 CH34)</p>	<p>We must, in fact, understand what is meant by speaking of ‘man made in the likeness of God’, and ‘man who is earth, and destined to return into the earth’. The former refers to the rational soul, as God implanted it in man (in his body, that is) by breathing on him — ‘by inspiration’ might be a more suitable phrase. While the latter statement applies to man’s body, as devised by God out of dust, the thing which was given a soul so that it should become an animal body, that man should be made into a living soul.</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 13, CH24)</p>
	<p>...what we had lost in Adam— namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God— that we might recover in Christ Jesus.</p>	<p>Even then I had life and being; and as my infancy closed I was already seeking for signs by which my feelings might be made known to others.</p> <p>(Schaff 1887, <i>The Confessions</i>, Book 1, Ch6)</p>

	(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i> , Book 3 CH18)	
	<p>...neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things.... For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, Let Us make man after Our image and likeness; Genesis 1:26 He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 4 CH20)</p>	<p>For before You none is free from sin, not even the infant which has lived but a day upon the earth.</p> <p>(Schaff 1887, <i>The Confessions</i>, Book 1, Ch7)</p>
	<p>It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 4, CH20)</p>	
	<p>For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God. Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance</p>	

	<p>be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 4, CH38)</p>	
	<p>...that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 4, CH38)</p>	
	<p>But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being. For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 4, CH39)</p>	
	<p>For the breath of life, which also rendered man an</p>	

	<p>animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 5, CH12)</p>	
--	--	--

Appendix C: The Church Fathers on Ensoulment Chart

Table 4: The Church Fathers on Ensoulment		
Tertullian	Irenaeus	Augustine
<p>[the soul] from whatever source, and in whatever way, thou makest man a rational being, in the highest degree capable of thought and knowledge...”</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885d, <i>De Testimonio Animae</i> pg. 282)</p>	<p>...if righteousness and faith, why should these not save those bodies which, equally with the souls, will enter into immortality? For righteousness will appear, in matters of this kind, either impotent or unjust, if indeed it saves some substances through participating in it, but not others.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2, CH29)</p>	<p>God fashioned man out of the dust of the earth and gave him a soul of the kind I have described. This he did either by implanting in him, by breathing on him, a soul which he had already made, or rather by willing that the actual breath which he produced when he breathed on him should be the soul of the man. For to breathe is to produce a breath.</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 12, Ch24)</p>
<p>Well, nature is the mistress here, and her disciple is the soul. But everything the one has taught or the other learned, has come from God—the Teacher of the teacher.</p>	<p>For the intellect of man—his mind, thought, mental intention, and such like— is nothing else than his soul; but the emotions and operations of the soul itself have</p>	<p>There is another kind of form which operates internally; this form supplies the efficient causes, and it derives from a secret and hidden decision of a living and</p>

<p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885d, <i>De Testimonio Animae</i> pg286)</p>	<p>no substance apart from the soul.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Books 2, CH29)</p>	<p>intelligent nature, which, being itself uncreated, is responsible for the creation not only of the natural, physical forms, but also of the souls of living creatures.</p> <p>(Augustine 1972, <i>City of God</i>, Book 12, Ch25)</p>
	<p>But, as each one of us receives his body through the skillful working of God, so does he also possess his soul. For God is not so poor or destitute in resources, that He cannot confer its own proper soul on each individual body, even as He gives it also its special character.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2, CH33)</p>	
	<p>...Genesis 2:7 teaching us that by the participation of life the soul became alive; so that the soul, and the life which it possesses, must be understood as being separate existences.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 2, CH34)</p>	
	<p>Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the</p>	

	<p>admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God.</p> <p>(Coxe, Donaldson, & Roberts 1885c, <i>Against Heresies</i>, Book 5, CH6)</p>	
--	---	--