HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIGHT OF CHILDREN: A CHRISTIAN CHILDIST PERSPECTIVE

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The concept of "human rights" enjoys a long history from the Enlightenment onwards and is ubiquitous today in global conversations about politics, society, and ethics. "Children's rights" arrived on the scene relatively recently, for the most part over the course of the twentieth century. This notion marks an increasing sense that children are not just parts of families but also distinctively affected by public policy issues of poverty, health care, gender discrimination, violence, and the like. The growing idea of children's rights has, however, caused significant controversy. Some argue that children lack the full moral autonomy to take on equal rights-holding responsibilities; others that treating children as rights-bearing individuals obscures their vulnerabilities and dependency, thus ignoring what makes childhood distinctive; others, especially in the United States, see a rights framework as undermining the central importance to children of family responsibilities.

This paper argues that Christians should support children's rights but also press further for considerations of children to transform our understanding of human rights as such. That is, traditional conceptions of human rights should be reinterpreted in light of these littlest human beings among us. This complex hermeneutical procedure is far from alien to Christianity which, after all, traces its origins to the transforming birth two thousand years ago of an infant. I argue that Christian ethics in particular has frequently not just applied itself *to* children but also rethought itself *in light of* children. This self-reflective gesture I call "childism," in analogy to similar hermeneutical gestures of feminism, womanism, environmentalism, and even humanism, all of which childism (in fact though not in name) arguably predates. The following pages show that placing children at its center has informed and challenged Christian ethical norms throughout history in conflicting and sometimes surprising ways. My conclusion is that a new Christian ethical childism can be developed that takes elements of this complex tradition but also fashions a new sense of children's social participation. Human

rights in light of children can then be understood, not as protections of autonomy, but as markers for social transformation in the direction of a more inclusive love and hope.

I also illustrate the need for new interpretations of human rights around the United Nations' 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. This document is in fact an attempt to forward a similarly "childist" aim of starting from the point of view of children rather than adults. This aim has also motivated the scholarly field of Childhood Studies — among sociologists, anthropologists, historians, lawyers, and others — many practitioners of which, in the 1980's, were involved in drafting this Convention and have taken the lead in its continuing interpretation. Christian ethicists and church leaders have not been as involved in these discussions as they could be. International conferences on children's rights, such as a meeting of over a thousand childhood studies experts at the University of Oslo in 2005, only contain marginal Christian and other religious voices.[1] The dearth of religious ethical reflection on children's rights is especially evident in the United States, which is also the only country other than Somalia not to have ratified the 1989 Convention, in large part over the concerns of Christian groups. However much rights language is not the only way to speak ethically about children, failing to address children's rights proves in the end to have many negative repercussions for children themselves, both in the United States and worldwide. The solution is not to abandon rights language, which can and has taken many meanings in history. It is to transform it in light of children so that it may more adequately meet children's distinctive experiences in today's world.

Childism in Christianity

The Christian moral tradition has reshaped itself in light of children in at least three distinctive ways. These can be termed "bottom-up," "top-down," and "dialectical." Such historical forms of childism do not succeed one another but have gained relative prominence at diverse times throughout Christian thought and practice. They do, however, share certain fundamental moral questions, including most prominently these three: What does childhood teach us ontologically about the nature or "being" of humanity? How does it redefine society's teleological purposes or aims? And how does the lens of childhood help to reinterpret human deontological responsibilities toward one another? These are questions, respectively, of faith, hope, and love. Answers to them have provided a vast array of different and even contrary perspectives

on children, as well, therefore, as diverse interpretations today of the meaning and significance for children of human rights.

The "bottom-up" approach has frequently taken as its touchstone Jesus' proclamation in all three synoptic gospels that "unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."[2] Each singular human being enters the world in infancy with its own unique good gifts from God. Sinfulness derives not from children but from the corruptions of larger collective society. In children we discover the purest and most immediate "image of God" in the world, to which adults should aspire in their hope to become "children of God." Thus, for example, second and third century theologians like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Gregory of Nyssa encourage adults to imitate children's moral simplicity, freedom from desire, sexual purity, and indifference toward worldly status and wealth.[3] John Chrysostom sees in children's purity from passions and resentments "the height of true wisdom."[4] In modernity, Jean-Jacques Rousseau refashions such an argument around the more secular lines that children present society with uncorrupted "noble savages" who love fully rather than only for self-gain.[5] And the father of modern Protestantism, Friedrich Schleiermacher, declares children "the pure revelation of the divine": they incarnate natural "gifts" for joy — indeed children are the true "gift" of Christmas — and the love of children "baptizes" adults into God, showing them what is truly meant by "the feeling of absolute dependence" on the divine.[6]

In America, such a view of children still profoundly shapes moral beliefs about both children and society: from children's own sentimentalization as pure and good, their being defined in terms primarily of needs, American "nationhood" expressing a nostalgic wholesome "natality," the enormous value placed on the private haven of the family against a corrupted public realm, and a strong ethos of market capitalism that assumes individual desires are fundamentally good. It also deeply shapes how Americans in particular think of human rights. As legal theorist Barbara Bennett Woodhouse has pointed out, the Constitution and its subsequent interpretation are built primarily around so-called "negative" or liberty rights, rights to state and social *non*-interference. In contrast, "positive" rights to state and social aid and welfare for children remain in the United States relatively suspect. Why? Because on a bottom-up view of human goodness, the public realm itself is presumed largely corrupt. Government is more likely to be the problem than the solution, especially in relation to the private haven of the home.

The irony of this childist perspective is that in the process of humanizing childhood it also profoundly dehumanizes it. In a similar way to women and minorities, it tends to place children on such an ethereal pedestal that it ends up justifying their larger public marginalization. If children are *models* of the good, then beyond negative or liberty protections, adults and societal institutions owe them very little. This irony helps to explain why children in early Christianity, for example, were highly valued but also frequently left behind by parents seeking to become martyrs, or sometimes even encouraged to become martyrs themselves. It also allows the wealthiest country in the world, the United States, to romanticize children in politics and mass media while denying them guaranteed health insurance (unlike in any other developed country) and leaving them by far the poorest age group. Children as "images of God" can be driven to the extreme of removing them from real earthly concern.

In contrast, a "top-down" tradition of Christian childism, more frequently derived from Paul's letters and the prior influence of Plato, has insisted instead that children enter the world embodiments of human unruliness or original sin. Children should not be left to their own devices but require strong community and society disciplining into reason and morality. Paul says one must "put an end to childish ways" in order to overcome the passions of the flesh and live according to the grace of the spirit.[8] This echoes Plato's two major writings in social ethics, *The Republic* and *The Laws*, which had argued extensively, five hundred years earlier, that child rearing is the key to turning humanity's animal brutishness into reasoned social order.[9] Likewise, the neo-Platonism of Augustine in the fourth century sees in children the embodiment of human being's original sin: their violent disregard for others and narrowness of pride, faults we should strive to root out as we grow up toward God.[10] Reformation Protestants like Martin Luther and John Calvin similarly suggest that in childhood we find the "the seeds of sin" which need disciplining by God's grace enacted through a powerful church, society, and state.[11] And even Immanuel Kant, in a non-theological way in his last published work *Education*, describes rational moral autonomy as the victory of "cultivation" or *Bildung* over children's heteronomous animal desires.[12]

Such a view is today enjoying something of a resurgence, particularly in movements in the United States and globally that are concerned with a perceived corrosion of social order and children's moral upbringing. On the whole, this top-down tradition has stood at the forefront of opposing the application of human rights to children.

It sees children as unready for the public responsibilities that human rights entail. However, it also yields an at least implicit, and sometimes explicit, notion of the rights of families and communities. These are again "negative" rights, but in this case to raise one's children free of public interference and according to one's own particular moral and traditional values. The danger, however, is a different form of children's dehumanization: the notion that children must be socialized *into* morality because they lack an intrinsic moral sense of their own. It is difficult to think of children as possessing their own voices and agency in the world when one's focus lies principally in their needs for clear moral disciplining. At its extreme, this form of childism, like its opposite above, both humanizes and dehumanizes children in the very same movement.

Different again is a third "dialectical" childism that is neither bottom-up nor top-down but dialectical or developmental. This tradition arises in Christianity from syntheses of biblical norms chiefly with Aristotelianism, often via Islam. Aristotle himself, disagreeing with his teacher Plato, sees children's animality as not so much unruliness as inherent natural potential. While children remain incapable of full virtue or happiness, in Aristotle's view, they nevertheless can *develop* reason, morality, and civilization through natural emerging processes. I call this view "dialectical" because such processes of development arise through social relations to adults such as attachment to parents and gradually increasing participation in the community.[13] Similarly, the medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas's "natural law" ethics is both reflected in and reflective of his view that children develop through four natural seven-year stages of increasing reason and morality.[14] A different kind of Enlightenment dialectical perspective arises in John Locke's theory of children as "lumps of wax" able to be molded over time by adult education into scientific and moral rationality.[15] In this, Locke differs from his Enlightenment successors Rousseau and Kant, even if all share an aim of social reason. More recently, Catholic subsidiarity theory has interpreted child rearing dialectically as furnishing children's moral development with concentric circles of family, church, community, and state support.

Today, this dialectical or developmental kind of childism has its greatest influence, especially in America, through developmental psychology. A child from this view, broadly speaking, does not begin life morally good or evil but rather increases gradually over time, through interaction in family and society, toward moral and social capabilities. In terms of human rights, dialectical childism tends to yield a more "positive" notion, especially for children, of rights to active state and

social aid. This is because it recognizes a need for deliberate and active public investment in children's lives if children are eventually to develop into productive members of the public world themselves. Children are owed such things as health care, education, and economic support because these are vital for children's dialectical emergence into full social citizenship.

The recent emergence of Childhood Studies, especially among sociologists and educationalists in Europe, has pointed out the paradoxical dimensions of such a view.[16] Here, unlike in the United States, developmental psychology holds significantly less sway over parenting and schooling. The argument is that the developmental view grants children positive human dignity and rights chiefly from the angle of that which children are *not yet*, namely developed adults. While Europeans have traditionally provided children high levels of positive rights, they are increasingly concerned with granting children moral agency and humanity in full rather than merely in potential. Among some Christian ethicists, the more bottom-up notion of children as "images of God" has been used to argue that children are not just potentially moral creatures but moral through and through.[17] Aristotle and Locke had both in fact argued against children's citizenship rights on account of their relative lack of developed moral reason and hence need to be protected from harming themselves. Again, the effort to humanize children, in this case by attending to their complex developmental growth, can lead in isolation to children's subtle dehumanization.

A More Fully Childist Grounding of Human Rights Today

This history provides many resources for rethinking human rights today, but it also raises serious conundrums. Part of the problem lies in the need for a more fully childist methodology. Briefly, though I cannot pursue it here, I would build on advances in feminism and phenomenology to argue for what I call a "hermeneutical ellipse": a hermeneutical circle of historical interpretation, as described for example in Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney, but decentered or disrupted by the "second center" of others like children who cannot speak up fully for themselves.[18] In short, children call, methodologically, for societies to reshape themselves asymmetrically from the point of view of those who can less powerfully reshape societies for themselves. Whatever the methodology, it should be bottom up and top down at once without being merely dialectical. Childhood should be included in the full circle of

social discourse in its simultaneous humanity and difference. And so in this way should all humanity insofar as it remains other from itself.

Normatively, I propose here a fourth childist conception of human rights that is not bottom-up, top-down, or dialectical but rather "circular" (or "transformative").[19] I do so around one of the central symbols in both human rights and child-related discourse, even for secularists like Locke and Kant, namely the Genesis 1:26-27 affirmation of humankind as an "image of God." While this symbolism is a staple in much of Christian childism throughout history, it requires still further re-interpretation. The notion of children as images of God informs perhaps the most extensive effort in recent times to rethink children's rights from a Christian perspective, namely Kathleen Marshall and Paul Parvis' argument that children's rights derive from their "incarnating" God in the world. This argument is grounded significantly in Irenaeus' early Christian theology of the Word made flesh: "At the end of the day children have rights because they have human bodies. And that means, from a Christian point of view, that they are made in the image of the Word who took flesh and came into the world."[20] My own contribution is to read the Genesis symbolism in such a way that considerations of childhood transform how we understand human rights as such. Just as feminism has transformed contemporary ethical understanding so also, but in different ways, can childism.

Feminists like Elizabeth Johnson and Sallie McFague have used this "image of God" symbolism to speak of God's and humanity's possibility for "bodying forth" into an ever more concretely inclusive world. Childism can take this notion even further by highlighting humanity's social *creativity*. Humankind in its origins is an image of a Creator who creates this world over mythic time (in seven days), in narrative speech ("And God said ..."), and even as wanting and needing a human image of itself. To be an image of *this* world-Creator God is interpreted in the story's next line, Genesis 1:28, in God's very first command in the Bible to humanity: namely, to "be fruitful and multiply." Narrowly or literally read, this command calls us to create or pro-create children, perhaps as worldly images of ourselves. But such a reading cannot, of course, apply to children themselves, since children cannot yet biologically reproduce. More broadly or symbolically interpreted, Genesis 1:28 commands us to imitate God through *social reproduction*. We are to create our own shared worlds of meaning through culture, communities, families, traditions, economics, politics, and so on. In this case, children do in fact belong as images of God in their remarkable capabilities for play and pretend, transforming the lives of parents and

others around them, energetic imagination, and embracing and finding wonder in the world's around them. The capability for this broader kind of social fruitfulness and multiplication is in fact invested in us precisely in our status as "children" of God, beings who can bring our own primordial imaginations and play into recreating our given worlds anew. This is the case however much we also use these capabilities also for destruction. Genesis, from a childist point of view, commands our ongoing social generativity.

Human rights based on the image of *this* Creator calls to transform our broken world. What is commanded is not a particular moral narrative but rather the exercise of a moral narrative capability. We are commanded *to narrate*. This capability, shared by children and adults alike, is realized to the extent that given history is transformed in the impossibly possible direction of a fully inclusive humanity (in the image of a fully inclusive God). Not only are children also capable of this defining human practice, but from birth they serve as its greatest exemplars. They more than anyone face the struggle, in the face of fragmentation and corruptability, of creating meaningful worlds and relations. But it is adults and adult social institutions who shoulder the greater responsibility, for they can in principle through time exercise the capacity for social reproduction in the most expansive ways. All human beings narrate, even if adults possess on the whole wider narrative experience and resources.

Human rights in light of children are then neither just negative "bottom-up" liberty protections, nor "top-down" bulwarks for family or traditional values, nor only positive entitlements to "dialectical" societal aid. They function in a more complex "circular" way as markers of a called-for social generativity. They name those both bottom-up protections of freedom and top-down infusions of goods that in combination seek to transform human relations in a more loving, just, and inclusive direction. Like in a hermeneutical ellipse, a right recognizes a "second center" around which social affairs should revolve, a concrete point through which the voices and experiences of "others" should be welcomed into more fully shared social processes. As ultimately both negative and positive at once, human rights open space for greater agency and furnish it with greater interdependent contexts of support. In a parallel way to feminism, childism may then evolve beyond "first wave" rights to basic citizenship and "second wave" rights to equal agency to "third wave" rights to children's own distinctive experiences and struggles transforming the very fabric of social meaning. In this way, societies are creatively humanized.

Children remind us that to be made in "the image of God" is not just to bring a pure and unsullied innocence to the world. Nor is it something utterly lost in the Garden of Eden that can only be recovered through strict moral and spiritual disciplining. Rather, as images of God, all human beings, including children, are engaged in a struggle to create meaningful human relations within concrete historical time. Children may engage in this struggle in relatively less expansive and powerful ways than adults. But children are equally images of their Creator who deserve the "right" to participate in creating shared worlds as fellow human beings. This right underlies, from this childist Christian point of view, all other rights to bottom-up protections of social liberty and top-down provisions of social support. However different in the case of children, human rights are calls for an ever more inclusive social transformation.

Reinterpreting the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The value of a more circular or elliptical conception of human rights for children can be illustration by re-interpreting the significance of the United Nation's 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The usual argument for this Convention is primarily bottom-up: children should be recognized as full social agents in and of themselves, just as have women and other groups in the past. The focus is on the language of children's "agency."[21] It is also secondarily dialectical: children in addition have special developmental needs like education that require deeper positive social support. What is principally rejected is a top-down view that sees children as passive receptors of adult socialization. This rejection has led to charges by its critics that the Convention ignores the important socializing roles of families, undermines local traditional values (and hence also represents a subtle form of new European colonization), and gives children too much freedom over parents. However, these criticisms miss the Convention's important larger purpose: namely, to affirm children as not only members of families but also full social citizens in their own right. Children are not just encased within families and small communities but also, and at the very same time, engaged in direct relations to public arenas like mass media, culture, economics, education, and medicine. The argument that children need more than rights does not obviate their need for human rights nonetheless.

What is distinctive about the 1989 Convention can be seen by comparing it to the two major international agreements that preceded it

and on which it is built: the League of Nations' 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the United Nations' 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The shorter 1924 and 1959 declarations contain, respectively, 5 and 10 children's rights. These rights are almost entirely "positive" rights to society's active aid and welfare: such as to adequate nutrition, health care, education, the love of a family, and priority in aid relief. These include top-down rights to deliberate community investment (such as to family love) and dialectical rights to future-oriented development (such as to education). The longer 1989 convention, however, contains approximately 34 distinct rights. About 10 of these are similar kinds of positive rights, including in addition to an adequate standard of living and to state promotion of children's best interests. But a greater number, around 24, are "negative" or liberty rights, that is, rights to state and social non-interference. These are what have caused all the controversy and what are most assiduously defended in the field of childhood studies. They include the very first right of the convention, that to non-discrimination (which is the one negative right also found in the 1959 Declaration, though not in 1924), as well as rights to such things as freedom of expression, privacy, non-coerced separation from parents, and freedom of culture and religion. These negative rights are in essence bottom-up rights. They make space for children to shape and interpret the world around them as they see fit to do so for themselves. Beyond needs for external socialization and support, children should be guaranteed their own agency and voices.

This suggests that the usual bottom-up interpretation of the 1989 Convention is missing an important part of the picture. The Convention in fact contains a robust mixture of new liberty or negative rights and older welfare or positive rights largely inherited from the earlier declarations. The latter do not exactly follow the feminist or liberationist model. They apply to children somewhat distinctively. Adults in general do not have specific states rights to such things as an education, a loving family, relief priority, or promotion of their best interests. To a large extent, adults must secure such positive goods and benefits for themselves. The 1989 Convention shows that, however much it may also be the case for adults, children's rights must necessarily be constituted as both bottom-up and top-down at once. That is, children's rights — and therefore to some extent human rights — are on some level profoundly circular. Social liberties must be supported by basic social goods, which in turn are best distributed and interpreted through the most inclusive possible social liberties.

Children's rights are thus better interpreted through the above lens of the right to participate in circular social reproduction. In fact, children's rights are its most concrete and vivid illustration. What children ultimately call for from society is an elliptical — or simultaneously top-down and bottom-up — response to their easy social marginalization. Children are not little adults, non-adults, or merely developing adults but socially generative human beings. The interaction of liberty protections and welfare provisions allows children to take part as images of their Creator in the fully human cycle of social creativity. Each right marks a concrete marker around which children should be more fully welcomed as centers of social participation in and of themselves. From the point of view of a fully circular Christian childism, a human right in general is a guarantee of inclusion as far as possible in processes of social reproduction.

To take just one concrete example: The right to health care in the United States is currently largely a negative right to participate in the health care free market. (Or, for example for the elderly, it is a positive right gained through the negative right to demand it freely through the vote). Health care insurance and provision are disproportionately lower for children in this country because their ability to exercise such negative liberties are distinctively constrained. The right to health care should not be conceived of as only a negative right to the *liberty* to pursue health care. It should, rather, from a childist point of view, be understood in a robustly elliptical way. Health care should include a right to health liberty and to health support at once. Both children and adults, but children especially, require active societal aid if they are to be able to make their own particular health choices. Health freedom alone is not the answer. It remains deeply constrained insofar as it is not provided a context of health support. From the point of view of Christian childism, health care rights in the United States should be based on the desire to reproduce society in more loving and inclusive ways. Like all human beings, children call for a certain basic level of social generosity in order to participate generously in society in turn.

Conclusion

Children's rights so understood are not just an accommodation to secular values but one of the most powerful ways to express the depths of Christian love. Childism will ultimately agree with Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that between faith, hope, and love, "the greatest of these is love": for it is love to which we are ultimately called by children as the very

littlest among us. Love in this sense does not mean simple self-sacrifice, for we wish to include children in love as well. Nor can it be reduced to mere attachment or equality, for children still point out the requirement for a dimension of superabundant regard.[22] The larger problem raised by considering children is how to love creatively or decenteredly, how to respond to one another in a way that in the process also transforms society and ourselves. From a childist point of view, love commands an asymmetrical or elliptical responsibility endlessly to expand toward one another, both the least and the greatest, just as the Creator responds lovingly to his children.

This socially creative love is a common thread throughout an otherwise diverse Christian childist history. When Chrysostom and other early theologians wonder at children's innocence and simplicity, they are in part calling adults to respond to children in loving self-transformation. Schleiermacher's interpretation of childhood as divine incarnation, however overly romanticized, asks a corrupt world to change through love and become renewed. At the same time, when Augustine insists on children's original sin, the purpose is in part to awaken adults and society to the superabundant moral and spiritual regard that children (and the rest of us) therefore require. Calvin and others' interpretations of children as unruly brutes is ultimately made in the service of sharpening adults' own senses of responsibility for society's transformed regeneration. In these and other ways, otherwise quite opposed Christian ethical perspectives on childhood share a command to love one another creatively and inclusively in the image of an ultimately all-loving Creator. This, among other things, is what children teach us.

Human rights in light of children are, or should be, incarnations of God's transforming love. They are imperfect human creations, but they can still unsettle and decenter our settled moral horizons in ways that open up the voices and experiences of others. Children are the greatest tests of this kind of love. The difficult self-critical gesture of childism requires nothing less than fundamental ethical soul-searching. It is not enough simply to grant children equal justice; they demand a creative justice that is ever more inclusively expansive. Through this kind of socially reproductive love we may hope that seemingly intractable problems like children's global poverty, lack of health care, and all manner of social violence may be provided culturally transforming solutions. Human rights are invitations to shared circular generativity with and for even the least among us. They should be interpreted as calling us to the primordial wager that, as children of God, our increasing generosity is also our increasingly incarnated humanity.

Endnotes

[1] "Childhoods 2005: Children and Youth in Emerging and Transforming Societies," an international conference on childhood studies, University of Oslo, June 29-July 3, 2005.

[2] Matthew 18:3-5; Mark 9:33-37; and Luke 9:46-48 (New Revised Standard Version).

[3] See O.M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, translated by Brian McNeil (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

[4] Chrysostom, Hom. in Mt. 62.4., in J-P Migne, ed., *Patrologia graeca* (Paris: 1844-64), cited in Bakke, p. 78.

[5] Rousseau, *Emile*, or *On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

[6] Schleiermacher, *Christmas Eve*, pp. 36, 39, 45, 55, and 62; Schleiermacher, *The Christian Household: A Sermonic Treatise* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991); and Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 15, 29, etc..

[7] See Caroline Levander, Voices of the Nation: Women and Public Speech in *Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[8] 1 Corinthians 13:11.

[9] Plato, The Laws in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), VII, 808d, p. 1379.

[10] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), I.7, p. 27.

[11] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 4.6.18; 4.15.10-11 and 20; and 4.16.9, 21, and 32. For commentary on Calvin's view of children see Barbara Pitkin, "'The Heritage of the Lord': Children in the Theology of John Calvin," in Bunge, ed., *The Child in Christian Thought*, 167.

[12] Kant, *Education*, trans. Annette Churton (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 11 and 6 respectively.

[13] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, in Aristotle, *Introduction to Aristotle*, Second edition revised and enlarged, ed. Richard McKeon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), I.9, 1100a1, p. 361, VIII.1, p. 509, and VIII.12, pp. 527-28; and Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in Aristotle, *Introduction to Aristotle*, Second edition revised and enlarged, ed. Richard McKeon (Chicago: The University of

Chicago Press, 1947), I.2, p. 599 and I.12-13, pp. 616-19.

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1948), II-II, Q. 10, a. 12, and III, Supplement, Q. 43, a. 2. For Thomas's developmentalism, see Cristina L. Traina, "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood," in Bunge, ed., *The Child in Christian Thought*.

[15] Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, in J. W. and J. S. Yolton, eds., *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 105 and 138-39.

[16] Allison James and Alan Prout, eds., *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: New Directions in the Sociology of Childhood* (New York: Falmer Press, 1990).

[17] See, for example, the British Anglican theologian Adrian Thatcher's "theology of liberation for children" in *Marriage after Modernity: Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp. 132-70; and the British authors Kathleen Marshall and Paul Parvis, *Honouring Children: The Human Rights of the Child in Christian Perspective* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Saint Andrews Press, 2004).

[18] For a fuller description of this childist methodology see my "Childhood Studies, Hermeneutics, and Theological Ethics," *Journal of Religion* 86.4 (October 2006), pp. 523-548; and "Fallen Angels: A Contemporary Christian Ethical Ontology of Childhood," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 8.2 (Fall 2004), pp. 160-184.

[19] The Christian ethical basis for such language is developed in my *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[20] Marshall and Parvis, *Honouring Children*, p. 324.

[21] See for example, Peter B. Pufall and Richard P. Unsworth, eds., *Rethinking Childhood* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

[22] On this, see Don S. Browning, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Pamela D. Couture, K. Brynolf Lyon, and Robert M. Franklin, *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate*, Second Edition (Louiville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).