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AUGUSTINE'S TWO-CITIES DOCTRINE: ITS APOLOGETICAL ROLE IN THE *CITY OF GOD* AND RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Doctor's Degree in Theology

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the loving memories of my parents, Bernard Irabor Odiahi and Patricia Airamoehi Odiahi. You will live forever in my heart, for your inspirations and worthy Christian life. Rest in God's Peace!

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is an original result of my own research and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part for a degree in this or any other university. All sources used in this research have been accordingly acknowledged.

I agree to deposit this dissertation in the University's library to be accessed according to the rules guiding the use of academic materials in the library.

Odiahi

Joseph-Bernard Ehigiator Odiahi

Date 16/7/2023

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INTRODUCTION

Christian apologetics has had to respond to pressing issues confronting the church at various eras. In recent decades the church has experienced a decline in the number of those who still believe in God or practice the Christian faith. There does not seem to be a "need" for God. The "purpose," of theistic belief, if we may speak thusly, has faded away in a secularized society that has become seemingly self-sufficient. One reason for this might be that the world has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in the growth of technology and development in the sciences. Amidst the present situation today, where secularism is visibly present, it behoves the church to find a way of credibly presenting the truths of Christianity. There is need for a robust Christian apologetics.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Christian Apologetics

Christian apologetics means the defence of the Christian religion through systematic argumentation and discourse. Christian apologetics seeks to defend and commend the faith or the truth-claims made by Christianity.[1] While apologetics is generally the defence of the Christian faith against objections levelled against it, it does so, first, by giving a meaningful account of so-called "natural truths," those which either no one really disputes – such as the presence of human suffering and death – or which can be shown to be true or at least credible by sustained rational (or philosophical) reflection – such as God's existence and the doctrine of creation. Apologetics, however, also highlights the possibility and rational coherence of – while not presuming to prove – those truths which we can come to know only through supernatural revelation – such as those concerning the Trinity or the Incarnation or the church.

[1] James K. Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 18.

Despite its chequered history and the negative connotations often associated with a defensive posture, the immediate goal of Christian apologetics is neither to convert others, nor to reduce Christian religious discourse to proofs, but to respond to objections levelled against Christianity by showing why it is reasonable to be a Christian and how Christian living is meaningful and fruitful today. Simply put, the apologist presents reasons that could bring about a better understanding of the faith even if one's interlocutor (in this case a critic or curious inquirer) has no intention of becoming a believer.

Every age engages in apologetics. While the style of doing apologetics today would be different from that of the fourth century, the essential task remains: to establish the reasonableness of the faith against the objections levelled against it. Today, this reasonableness must be sought within a fast-growing technological era. Apologetics, as a kind of fundamental theological discourse, then, is still relevant, especially in a world that is increasingly secularized, positivist, and empiricist. In addition to the economic-technological developments in western culture, the church also faces a number of other crises: intellectual, social, spiritual, and ecclesial.

Fruitful Christian apologetics refrains from knee-jerk condemnation, but seeks rather to analyse cultural, social, and intellectual trends to see what, in them, is compatible with Christianity, and what is not; and in doing so, apologetics can work towards purifying both the Christian faith and pointing out the intellectual shortcomings or inconsistencies of Christianity's critics.

This scrutinizing of the Christian faith occurs both within and without Catholic Christianity. One is not surprised that some of these questions are generated from within, among those who still practice the Christian faith but do not agree with one or another teaching and way of life. In short, Christian apologetics has the dual task of addressing the credibility

of the Christian faith to both non-Christians and those who might be baptized or even practicing, but do not accept the entirety of the Christian faith.

While it is naturally the case that no particular apologetic from past centuries can comfortably suit the overall needs of the present age, it remains that certain basic issues or problems consistently recur, and have been taken up by Christian thinkers throughout history. It behoves, therefore, the contemporary Christian apologist to look to the past for assistance. The *ressourcement* movement serves not only systematic, moral, and liturgical theology, but also apologetics.

In addition to *ressourcement*, the ongoing effort in the New Evangelization also highlights the need for apologetics. Though it is the case, today, that apologetic is not at the forefront of Catholic theology as would catechesis or the New Evangelisation, Christian apologetics is closely related to them.

The New Evangelisation aims to re-introduce people to the faith. Catechesis, in turn, is the instruction of Christians (or of those who wish to be baptized) in the *credenda* of faith. Whereas evangelization seeks to proclaim the Gospel in a compelling way to those who are not Christian (or lapsed in the case of the New Evangelization), catechesis is addressed to practicing Christians or catechumens. Apologetics, while formally distinct from both of these activities, is closely related to both.

Apologetics anticipates the problems or challenges of those to whom catechism or evangelization is directed and devises strategies that will help answer questions arising. Apologetics prepares the ground for evangelization; it removes obstacles that may prevent people from welcoming the gospel message or teachings about the Catholic faith. There can also be an apologetical component to catechesis whenever, for example, the catechist offers a defense of some point of Christian doctrine to a common objection which catechumens or

practicing Christians are likely to encounter in their ambient culture. In other words, apologetics can be at the service of both evangelization and catechesis.

In an increasingly post Christian world today, apologetics responds to cultural, attitudinal, conceptual variances and thereby strengthens the intellectual case for the reasonableness of being a person of faith in the 21st century. The work of apologetics is directed to both Christians and non-Christians alike in a culture where almost every aspect of human life is subjected to questionings. According to Beilby, "apologetics is what happens when the Christian humbly yet confidently proclaims the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a world where truth and reasons for belief matter."[2]

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium,* Pope Francis has called for "a creative apologetics which would encourage a greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all." This "creative apologetics" entails Christians working towards fostering an "encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility."[3] This dissertation, then, is inspired not only by the Pope's Exhortation, but also by twentieth-century Catholic theology's movement of *ressourcement*, which involves a return to the sources, including patristic ones.

The Relevance of St Augustine

Christian theologians and scholars of antiquity acknowledge that Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* or *City of God* not only contributed significantly to the development of Christian theology, but also provided a resource for philosophy and history alike. Significantly, almost

[2] James K. Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics,* 34.
[3] Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), 132. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#_ftn161 [accessed 4 Dec 2019]. Elsewhere, Pope Francis reminds us that dialogue is not the same as apologetics: "dialogue is not doing **apologetics**, although sometimes you must do so, when we are asked questions that require an explanation." See his "Meeting with the Clergy," (Palatine Chapel in the Royal Palace of Caserta, 26 July 2014). http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140726_clero-caserta.html [accessed 4 Dec 2019].

every writer on early Christian apologetics acknowledges this work as an important source for apologetics as well. Avery Dulles, for example, remarks that, of Augustine's works, the *City of God* occupies a preeminent place in the history of patristic apologetics.[4] The eminent Dutch Patrologist, Johannes Van Oort, in his respected work on the *City of God*, while analysing the sources of Augustine's doctrine on the two cities, likewise acknowledges that the two-cities doctrine is elaborated as part of an apology.[5]

My dissertation lies at the crossroads between Augustine studies, on the one hand, and apologetics, on the other. These two intellectual arenas – Augustine studies and apologetics – are not easily navigable, nor are they without controversy. The difficulty with the former is the magnitude of Augustine's written corpus, and the diverse and historically-charged receptions of it.[6] The latter faces the challenge of a loaded history in which a spirited defence of the Christian religion, in the wrong hands, easily devolves into polemics, cheap *ad hominems*, rationalizations of the Christian faith, and a certain triumphalism. Despite these risks and challenges, Augustine continues to be a philosophical and theological authority for Christian scholars, and the need to "give an answer" (1 Pet 3:15) will continue to exist so long as Christians engage with the world they inhabit. For these and other reasons to be treated below, it should come as no surprise, then, that the last decades have witnessed a renewed appeal to St. Augustine in contemporary Christian apologetics.

The dissertation, then, includes both an historical-reconstructive aspect, and a contemporary apologetical aspect. The first has to do with an analysis of Augustine's *City of God* itself, while the second has to do with applying the fruits of that analysis to apologetics

[4] Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatian Press, 2005), 74. Dulles recognises the Part I of the *City of God* as the most excellent of all the Christian refutations of pagan religion. However, this does not make the Part II less important since it lays a foundation for theology of history from creation to the final restoration of all things in Christ. See Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 85.
[5] Johannes Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013), 167.
[6] With Augustine, the golden age of patristic literature reached its peak in the West. Indeed, most authors would confidently refer to Augustine as undoubtedly the greatest among the Latin Fathers of the Church.

today. Understandably, such an approach might be met with a scepticism rooted in an unease about a certain pre-modern dualism between Christianity and the world, a dualism which is both characteristic of Augustine on the one hand, and which some theologians sought to overcome, especially in the twentieth century.[7]

Augustine's designation and division of the human race into "two loves" and, hence, into "two cities" does indeed suggest a certain dualism: two distinct entities, always in conflict. This dualism is not a strict dualism insofar as it would be utterly foreign to Augustine's thought to posit two co-equal powers in struggle.[8] There is an asymmetry to Augustine's two cities which qualifies its dualism. Good and evil are not on a par. Even Satan is a finite creature. To the extent that Augustine's thought is dualistic, it simply reflects a biblical view of the created order. An example of this is John's understanding of darkness and light, or his understanding of 'the world' as that which rejects Christ (cf. Jn 1:5; 3:19)

Moreover, one could argue that Augustine's two-cities doctrine need not be interpreted as programmatic, as if Augustine is teaching that there *ought* to be rivalry between the cities. Rather, his doctrine can be interpreted in a way that invites us to reflect on *the fact* that human society is composed of both good and evil alike – that the world is, to use a phrase applied in a different context, a *corpus permixtum*, delineated along the lines of different goals or visions for human life. These visions or goals are determined by tendencies, desires and, ultimately, in each city's respective love, though each person has been bestowed with the ability to aim for what is good by a good and benevolent God. Perhaps the clearest articulation of Augustine's two-cities doctrine is found in Bk 14, where Augustine writes:

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[7] From a Catholic perspective, the more optimistic and enthusiastic interpreters of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes,* would see the Council as precisely moving away from a certain antagonism vis-à-vis the world, towards a more cooperative framework. It is no surprise that the critics of the document were more Augustinian than, say, Thomist. For a survey of these trends, if perhaps broad-brushed but informative, see Ch 4, "The Church and the World: Augustinians and Thomists," in Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist, 2012), 66–90.

[8] Given Augustine's understanding of evil, this dualism is not an ontological one.

> Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience.[9]

Augustine uses the term cities in an allegorical way. Their identity is chiefly defined by their eschatological destinies, "of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil."[10] The two-cities doctrine will be further elaborated, including an engagement with its historical formulations by Augustine, in order to show that my study of Augustine's *City of God* and its two-cities doctrine is not intended to exacerbate a dualistic worldview, but to examine relevant tendencies that could exist within humankind. According to the Anglican former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, for example, Augustine's *City of God* is not a division of human life into two realms, but an examination of human life in relation to what is its last end.[11] Following the line of Williams, my dissertation will be situated around an eschatological interpretation of the two cities in connection to contemporary Christian apologetics (and not delving into contemporary political theory or relations between church and state). In other words, the emphasis will be on what could be necessary or useful in the two-cities doctrine in Christian apologetics today.

Augustine's *City of God* is composed of 21 books, divided into two parts. In Part I, (Books 1-10), Augustine directly confronted the pagans, defending the truth of Christianity against those who blamed Christians for being the cause of the demise of the city of Rome. There, Augustine remarks that "the glorious city of God is the theme in his work" and that he has undertaken the task of defending this city against those who prefer their own gods to the

[9] Augustine, *City of God,* trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc; 2011), Bk 14, Ch 28. This edition of Augustine's *City of God* is used in this study.
[10] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.
[11] Rowan Williams, "Politics and the Soul: A Reading of the City of God," *Milltown Studies* 19/20 (1987). See Michael Bruno, *Political Augustinianism*, 148.

Founder of the glorious city. The apologetical nature of the work is clear from the start: "For to this earthly city belong the enemies against whom I have to defend the city of God."[12]

Within the somewhat "hostile" environment for Christians after the sack of Rome, Augustine took upon himself the task of defending Christians especially after the worship of the traditional deities had been abolished by the ruling emperor. Part I (Bks 1-10), then, the clearly apologetical part, begins with a narration of Roman history, in which Augustine shows how their worship of the roman gods had not profited them as a people – as a *res publica*. And he further argued that their gods were in fact, false gods. Subsequently, Rome had lost the true meaning and pursuit of the common good. Augustine highlights further the insincerity of the Roman and pagan lifestyle that led to the fall of Rome; and he also pointed out that various calamities were suffered by Rome even before the coming of Christ.

While Augustine deploys numerous arguments to defend Christianity from being held responsible for the fall of Rome, I intend to show that the continuation of his ultimate response to his detractors is found in his elaboration on the genesis, progress, and destinies of the two cities in Part II (Bks 11-22) of the work.[13] One key task of my study is to elaborate how these two parts would be inseparable in understanding the apologetical import of Augustine's two-cities doctrine.

Within the broad topic of Augustine's "two-cities" doctrine, this dissertation will focus on three themes: (i) the apologetical purpose or role of Augustine's "two-cities" doctrine in *The City of God* as a whole; (ii) its ecclesiological dimensions, or the relationship that the two-cities doctrine implies between the Church and the world, and (iii) its relevance to contemporary

[12] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 1, Ch 1.

[13] In Part II, Augustine begins his more in-depth elaboration on the two cities. He traces the history of the human race and how out of pride, the human city built itself against the will of its Creator. His pattern is defined by the series of events as accounted for in the Old Testament. There are those whose wills are ordered to God and those whose wills are ordered towards themselves, giving rise to what he would refer to as "two cities" which are formed from peoples' various interior dispositions and recognised in external acts. While God is the author of all creatures, their wills and desires separate them. Members of these cities are mixed together in one social body for the time being, yet separated in heart, living together throughout the course of time.

Christian apologetics. The research, then, will be centred around Augustine's apologetics in "*The City of God*" and the task of contemporary Christian apologetics.

SURVEY OF RESEARCH

In many ways, Augustine's *City of God* has remained an unavoidable work in the contemporary humanities. Beyond its historical value for understanding the life of early Roman culture, the classic has become relevant in philosophy, dogmatic theology, political philosophy and social theory, and ethics. Contemporary Augustinian studies can be categorized into historical and theological/apologetical groups of scholarship. Although a significant aspect of Augustine studies is thoroughly informed by a purely historical interest,[14] it is the theological-apologetic strand of Augustine studies that is more relevant to this study.

Augustine scholarship has recognized that secularism is one area in which Augustine's thought finds renewed relevance. Like today, Augustine's discourse took place not in a homogeneous medieval Christendom, but in a highly pluralistic context of competing narratives. Charles Taylor recognises secularism as "the decline of Christian belief; and this decline as largely powered by the rise of other beliefs, in science, reason, or the deliverances of other sciences."[15] Interestingly, two items in Taylor's list – science and reason – are precisely those items which Pope Francis believes a "creative apologetics" must dialogue with. However one understands the doctrine of the two cities, it cannot preclude dialogue, for Augustine's arguments all presupposed a real engagement and familiarity with the worldviews of his contemporaries.

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[14] Historical interpreters consider Augustine's *City of God* as an influential work of history and one of antiquity's most incredible rhetorical achievements. Some of these interpreters include, Paul J. Cornish, "Augustine's contribution to the Republican Tradition," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, no. 2 (2010): 133-148; Eugene Portalie, *A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960); and Gervase Charmley, "Augustine and 'The City of God'*," Peace and Truth 3* (August 2015), https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/articles/2015/augustine-and-the-city-of-god/.[accessed 12th December 2018]

[15] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

Theological and Apologetic Interest in Augustine

The most relevant approach for this dissertation is the theological/apologetical approach. These scholars look to Augustine for answers to contemporary questions. While they might acknowledge that some level of historical reconstruction of Augustine's thought and context is necessary, it is not their fundamental priority.

In recent scholarship, there have emerged both optimistic and more pessimistic interpretations of the two-cities doctrine. Among the pessimists would be Peter Kaufman. According to his reading of the two cities, Kaufman doubts that Christianity, as narrated by Augustine, could have any impact on wider society.[16] He believes that Augustine' s elaboration of the two cities would only make Christians become uninterested in political life and indifferent to possible reforms in human society. On the other hand, there are interpreters who consider Augustine's two-cities doctrine in a more positive way with respect to how Christianity is understood in the world. These interpreters include, Robert Markus, Theodore Mommsen, Joseph Ratzinger, John Milbank, and Jacques Ellul. Added to this list is Jorge Maria Bergoglio (Pope Francis), who recognises Augustine's *City of God* as model for a theology of politics. He highlighted the ecclesial and political relevance of Augustine's work.[17]

Markus proposes a "secularist" reading of Augustine by affirming that Augustine's *City of God* points to a Christian presence in society. Markus regards *The City of God* as a fine formulation for a Christian social history. He also argues that every human society could be categorised into two kinds of people, corresponding to Augustine's understanding of the origin of the two cities.[18] Mommsen interpreted Augustine's *City of God* as constructing a Christian

[16] Peter Kaufman, *Incorrectly Political: Augustine and Thomas More* (Notre Dame: University Press, 2007), 227.
[17] Massimo Borghesi, *The Mind of Pope Francis: Jorge Mario Bergoglio's Intellectual Journey* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2018).
[18] Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

understanding of progress in the world, offering a theological interpretation of the meaning and course of history.[19]

It is beyond dispute that Ratzinger, as a theologian, sought his inspiration more from St Augustine and his disciples (e.g., Bonaventure) than, say, Aquinas. As a more mature theologian and even as pope, Ratzinger deployed Augustinian themes throughout his writings, including the primacy of love and grace and the coherence of faith and reason.[20] In his analysis of the *City of God,* Ratzinger acknowledges that Augustine confronted the political theology of Rome.[21] He observes that, in the face of the pagan reaction that sought to isolate the Christian religion, Augustine pointed out the untruthfulness of the pagan political religion of Rome, and argued that Rome's worship of idols was foolish and rooted in baseless affectations. For his part, Ratzinger also considers the sacramental and eschatological dimension of the heavenly city, living in this world as a sign of the coming world. Ratzinger intends to show that for Augustine, earthly endeavours, civics, the state, and patriotism held second place, since God's state was where true life can be found. Even if all the earthly cities were to be ruled by Christians, they still remain earthly. Our ultimate concern should therefore be on the *civitas caelestis* (the heavenly city).

Jacques Ellul is more critical of the city of man. He sees a strong opposition and dichotomy between the earthly and heavenly cities. According to Ellul, everything is wrong

[19] Theodore E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12, no. 3 (1951): 346-374.

[20] Ratzinger's doctoral dissertation on Augustine's ecclesiology was the beginning of this development, in which he saw the dialogical posture of Augustine's teaching. See Joseph Ratzinger, "Self-Presentation of His Eminence Card. Joseph Ratzinger as member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences," http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/biography/documents/hf_ben-xvi_bio_20050419_self-presentation.html [accessed 4 Dec 2019]

[21] Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith and Politics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018), 62-87. Augustine's influence on Ratzinger is present in some of his other works: Joseph Ratzinger, *Credo for Today: What Christians Believe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006); Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers: From the Early Church through the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011); Benedict XVI, *A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995. Elsewhere, Suzanne Wentzel explored Augustine's influence on Ratzinger's perspective on Creation. See Suzanne Wentzel, "In His Light See Light," *CONCEPT* 36 (2013).

with the earthly city. He believes that the earthly city symbolises the supreme work of man, built by the man Cain and, as such, represents humanity's ultimate rejection of God. Hence, the city *as such* is the direct consequence of Cain's murderous act and of his refusal of God's protection.[22] Ellul draws our attention to Augustine's teaching that the heavenly city ought to be the only object of the human person's desire.

John Milbank proposed an interpretation of Augustine's *City of God* that is based on the uniqueness and importance of the church in the human society. As the *de facto* leader of the Radical Orthodoxy movement, Milbank is a strong critic of modernity, the Enlightenment, and liberalism and its capitalist outgrowth.[23] He posits that to respond to a failed and fractured modern world, we need to re-evaluate and re-narrate human history from a Christian perspective. According to Milbank, claims to objective truth, goodness and happiness can only be made in relation to a form of life that participates in them; and Christianity represents such a form.[24] To achieve this goal, Milbank advocates that we retrieve and elaborate the account of history presented by Augustine in the two-cities doctrine.[25]

Curtis Chang understands Augustine's *City of God* as providing the framework on how to engage with and interact with a post-Christian society. That involves being aware of the pattern of thought of those we are dealing with, especially in apologetics. Augustine worked within his opponents' story in Part I and in Part II he presents his historical narrative based on scripture. His challengers went the way of history and Augustine, in turn, with historical narrative reveals the errors in the pagan stories; his story is centred around God. Chang considers the whole work (Part I and II) as Augustine's strategy of response to his pagan

[22] Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, trans. Dennis Pardee (Eugene: Wipf and Stock publishers, 2011), 1.
[23] William Cavanaugh is another significant voice who expresses the contemporary discontent with modernity and the social and economic ills that have resulted from it. He is suspicious of the competency of the modern state. See William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 9.
[24] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (2nd Edition) (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 262.
[25] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 391.

challengers.[26] More recently, Joshua Chatrow and Mark Allen acknowledged Augustine as the greatest apologist of the Latin West, and that his ideas in the *City of God* still hold good in the contemporary world. They both hold that apologists can learn from Augustine's journey, context, theology and approach. Augustine encouraged modern apologists to adapt to a challenging culture in their approach to apologetics; he implicitly asks apologists today to engage more with the changes in the society, just as his approach was enough to handle the changes he experienced in his culture.[27]

In a more contextualised appeal to Augustine, Deborah Broome, in her thesis, proposed reading Augustine's *City of God* through the lens of public theology (bringing theological insights or Christian faith to bear upon contemporary issues and offer its contributions), in order to discover how Augustine's reflections on the two cities might inform the role of Christians in New Zealand. She understands Christians to be both citizens of the secular society and Christian society. One of the key themes in Broome's work is that the citizens of the city of God are a pilgrim community; from this starting-point, Broome explores how the contemporary Christian in New Zealand might engage more with society with an eschatological view. Her intention will be more of what the Christian community brings to bear upon the immediate environment and institutions of New Zealand.[28]

Literature on Augustine's *City of God* is immense. This short survey is simply indicative of some of the different kinds of approaches to this famous work. On the whole, however, while these studies on Augustine's *City of God* acknowledge its apologetical character, little progress

[26] Curtis Chang, *Engaging Unbelief: A Captivating Strategy from Augustine and Aquinas* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000).
[27] Joshua D. Chatrow and Mark D. Allen, *The Augustinian Way: Retrieving a Vision for the Church's Apologetic Witness* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023).
[28] Deborah Broome, "Living in Two Cities: Lessons for the Church Today from Augustine's *City of God*" (master's thesis, University of Otago, New Zealand, 2014), https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/5575/BroomeDeborahL2015MTheol.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

has been made in unpacking the specifically apologetical import or role that the two-cities doctrine plays in the *City of God* as a textual whole since it is more of a theological treatise on the two cities than what will normally be referred to as apologetics. This dissertation will make a theological/apologetical analysis of Augustine's *City of God*, following the line of the more optimistic interpreters of Augustine, such as Ratzinger. This study will consider some of Augustine's response to pagans of Rome in Part I and show specifically how he continued these in Part II in his theological insights on the two cities. For example, in Part I, Augustine showed his pagan interlocutor how the pagan gods of Rome offered nothing to prevent the calamities that befell Rome, and in Part II, he regards these gods as offshoots of the rebellious angels who, themselves, are enemies of the true God and founders of the earthly city. Chapters 3 and 4 of this study present more examples of these connection in Augustine's apologetical strategy.

The relevance of Augustine's two-cities doctrine to contemporary Christianity stands out as one of the major contributions of this study on existing scholarship on the *City of God*. Broome acknowledged that Augustine's treatise on the two cities informs Christian ecclesiology, especially considering the church as a pilgrim people, and offers a strategy for Christians to play their part in some of the challenges facing New Zealand at the time. My study on the relevance of Augustine's two-cities doctrine is particularly focused on Christian faith and the church as a whole, in a modern day, secularised and technologically advanced world. In particular, what sets this study apart is the attention paid to the inter-textual relationship between Parts I and II in the Augustine's work, and how Augustine's theological narration in Part II not only enhances Part I, but shows us that such a theological narration can enhance contemporary apologetics as well. Challenges and questions have arisen as to what use Christians faith is when the human person can more or less achieve whatever he or she wants, with the aids of the fruits of science and technologically-driven investigation. The task is to show that contemporary Christian apologetics can argue for the relevance of Christian

faith or of the church using Augustine's thoughts on the beginning, progress and end of the two cities: in short, the goal is not *removing* God from our experiences in human society simply because of the progress we make in the earthly city.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The target of this dissertation is to analyse and understand the two-cities doctrine and how this forms the solid ground for carrying out Pope Francis' call for a 'creative apologetics'. In other words, the leading question guiding this dissertation is: What is the benefit of Augustine's two-cities doctrine for apologetics? This broader question can be reduced to three more specific ones that this dissertation will address:

1. In Augustine's work, The City of God*, what is the apologetical importance of his two-cities doctrine?*

The structure of *The City of God* raises the question about the relationship between apologetics and the two-cities doctrine. In Part I Augustine makes a direct defence of Christianity, yet it is only in Part II that we find a thorough elaboration of the two-cities doctrine. Part I is apologetical, whereas Part II appears to be more of a theological-dogmatic treatise. The first research question of this dissertation arises, then: how are Parts I and II related? How is Part II's dogmatic treatise on the origin, progress, and destiny of the two cities related to Part I's defence of Christianity against its pagan objectors? Is Part II necessary for the coherence of Part I, where Augustine does his best to defend Christianity against pagans? Does the second part enhance the understanding of Augustine's defence of Christianity in the first part? Would Augustine's apologetics in Part I make any sense without Part II?

2. What are the ecclesiological dimensions of Augustine's two-cities doctrine?

The ecclesiological dimension of the two-cities doctrine is related to the rest of this dissertation on apologetics because Christian apologetics is done by the whole church as a community of faith. That is, Christian apologetics belongs to the whole church. I hope to explore how scholars interpret the two-cities doctrine in relationship to the church. How is the two-cities doctrine

related to our study of the church and its relationship to the world? To what extent is the church and the world distinct and separate? What are those core identities about the church that can be deduced from the *City of God*? Do they have any influence or aid our understanding and appreciation of the church today?

3. How is Augustine's two-cities doctrine relevant to contemporary Christian apologetics?

The third question highlights the contemporary relevance of the proposed research. After arguing for the interconnectedness of the two parts in *The City of God,* and highlighting the work's ecclesiological dimension, this dissertation will argue further that contemporary Christian apologetics can learn from Augustine's thoughts on the two cities. Amid the numerous challenging issues, can contemporary apologetics speak for the *reasonableness* of being part of the church today? In what way is the two-cities doctrine relevant to our understanding of the church, as the body of Christ (the Body of Christ, holy, yet constantly in need of purification)?

METHOD AND STRUCTURE

Situating this dissertation within a fixed theological sub-discipline is not straightforward because there are multiple components to it. The exposition of Augustine's teaching on the two cities requires a close textual reading of the work. The reflections on apologetics and the ecclesial dimension of the two cities lie in the field of historical-systematic theology. And the last chapter, while not at all a defense of Christianity in the strict sense, is simply offering a sketch of some starting points from Augustine's work that might help an apologist address some contemporary problems. The dissertation, then, includes, historical, systematic, and fundamental-theological components.

Given the overarching research question concerning the utility of Augustine's two-cities doctrine for apologetics, the dissertation is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1 will

present Augustine's life, his conversion, his style of thought and his emergence as a Christian apologist. Chapter 2 will discuss the meaning, history and relevance of Christian apologetics. It will begin with an exposition of a Christian understanding of apologetics, and how it has manifested itself in various periods such as in the New Testament and in the Graeco-Roman world. It will consider the development and various styles of Christian apologetic; what apologetics is and what it is not. It will then consider some possible philosophical and theological objections – past and contemporary – to the very project of Christian apologetics and offer an alternative "creative apologetics" which has begun to be articulated by Pope Francis. The chapter will then show how Augustine's deployment of the two-cities theme qualifies as an apologetical tool integral to the strategy employed in the work as a whole. As such Augustine's *City of God,* so it will be argued, not only meets the requirements for being considered an apologetical work, but does so in a unique way.

Chapters 3 and 4 delve into the text of the *City of God.* Chapter 3 begins with a consideration of the context in which Augustine is writing his work. It focuses on Part I and Augustine's critique or Roman religion and his defense of Christianity. I highlight a number of specific arguments Augustine deploys against the Romans. Chapter 3 concludes with a brief summary of Part II and the sources for Augustine's two-cities doctrine.

Chapter 4 dives more deeply into the two-cities doctrine by examining the origin, progress, and destiny of the two cities as Augustine presents them in Part II. I will show how the theme of the "two cities" is the apologetical backbone of the entire work. In other words, I will demonstrate how the two-cities doctrine in Part II strengthen or enhance Augustine's defence of Christianity in Part I. By reading the two Parts together, and by interpreting the apologetics of Part I in light of the theological analysis of the two cities in Part II, a more integral vision of Augustine's apologetic will emerge.

Chapter 5 will examine the relationship between the two-cities doctrine and ecclesiology. It establishes how the two-cities doctrine helps us understand the themes used in ecclesiology, such as the Body of Christ and People of God; and that considering Augustine's understanding of the church, the visible church is the city of God on earth. Another major insight of Augustine's is that the church is always journeying (*peregrinari*) towards her eschatological home, the heavenly Jerusalem. Like any journey, the church's is a struggle filled with challenges and even failures. Nevertheless, she sets before her gaze the supreme good, wherein she finds peace.[29] The church as pilgrim is always interacting with the earthly city, faced with challenges and questions; therefore, there is always need for apologetics.

Chapter 6 will identify how Augustine's apologetics in the two-cities doctrine is relevant to contemporary Christian apologetics. The chapter will bring Augustine into dialogue with Pope Francis's plea for a creative apologetics as articulated in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Specifically, the chapter will address a series of challenges to Christianity today which include, but are not limited to; some of which come from *Evangelii Gaudium* – others of which I have identified myself – with the help of Augustine's two-cities doctrine: (i) practical and theoretical atheism; (ii) an exclusively humanist alternative to the Christian faith; (iii) consumerism (iv) clerical abuse (past and present); (v) an inauthentic practice of the faith (or Christian hypocrisy) vis-à-vis the gospel message; (vi) conflicting interpretations of the Christian faith and the resulting proliferation of different Christian communities.

The ultimate argument of this dissertation is that Augustine's doctrine of the two cities is beneficial for apologetics because it provides a framework that is pregnant with a variety of doctrines or principles that can be useful for the apologist in addressing various challenges. A

[29] Concerning the Church's relationship with the world, Augustine's two-cities indicates that, despite the inherent tension between the Church and the world, there are some important areas of cooperation. Augustine, for example, is explicit about how the Church uses the earthly city for the peace that it can provide. This peace, however, is only a relative one. Augustine's view of the Church-world relationship highlights both the cooperative dimension between the two, but also provides a sober reminder about the limits of any ambition that is not rooted in a love of God.

two-cities-inspired apologetics, far from consisting of a flippant condemnation, would instead involve a critical listening and assessment of objections or conflicting positions with a view to assessing the extent to which they aim at the "first love" or the second – whether they aim at the social or the selfish, the common welfare or social control, the quiet or the restless, the peaceful or the trouble-making, flourishing or subjugation.[30] These doctrines include, for example, the historical and dynamic journey of the two cities, their visible and invisible dimensions, the motivations of each, and the co-existence of sinners and saints in one visible body that is the church. These Augustinian doctrines, and more besides, all cohere in the two-cities doctrine, which ultimately constitutes Augustine's take on a Christian worldview.

I will argue, then, that Augustine's two-cities doctrine is a versatile framework; it can be applied to a number of challenges, because a number of Christian doctrines are implied within it. The Augustinian worldview of the two cities helps the apologist anticipate challenges, acknowledge sin, and narrate the Christian vision of the highest good. In this way, Augustine's contribution can help address some of the contemporary challenges which Pope Francis assigns to a "creative apologetics."

[30] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 14.

CHAPTER ONE

AUGUSTINE: THE EARLY CHURCH CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST

Augustine embodies an endearing charisma that easily attracts many wishing to investigate and explore the kind of person he was. Among his contemporaries he stands out as that intelligent, coordinated, and systematic scholar and theologian. He is referred to as one of the greatest among the early Church Fathers and a prominent apologist. Augustine immediately appeals to many as someone whose aimless and unsettled lifestyle ultimately yielded to the practise of Christian faith. Immediately after his conversion, a new man emerged, filled with passion for God and the Church. This passion extended, however, to learning, especially in the areas of theology, philosophy, and politics. Augustine's achievement in these areas has been determinative in the western Christian tradition.

Augustine's passion for theology is not unconnected to his whole life experience. Hence, any consideration of his theology and apologetic ought to be prepared by a familiarity with his biography, including the key events and prevalent thoughts which influenced him. Concerning his personal life, especially his conversion, some writers seem to disagree as to whether Augustine was a devotee of Greek philosophy rather than a convinced Christian. Some writers who are sceptical about Augustine's conversion are: Adolf Harnack, S. Loofs, L. Gourdon, and W. Thimme. However, most recent Catholic scholars agree that despite the fact that Augustine did have intellectual interactions with Plotinus, Porphyry or Stoicism, he sincerely accepted the essentials of Christianity at the time of his baptism as an adult.[1] Despite the controversies surrounding having a unified account of Augustine's life among historians,

[1] Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thoughts of St. Augustine* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), xxiv.

Portalié noted, that one can rely on the documents found in Augustine's *Confessions*, the *Retractions*, and the *Life of Augustine* by Possidius[2] (Augustine's friend).[3]

In this chapter I will give a general survey and introduction to the life of Augustine and some of his works. The bulk of the chapter will survey his biography, including his intellectual formation, development, and conversion.[4] The end of the chapter will briefly consider his contributions to Christian theology, as well as his responses to theological controversies such as Arianism, Pelagianism Manicheanism, and Donatism. This will set the stage for considering his apologetics in the *City of God.*

THE LIFE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

Aurelius Augustine was born in Thagaste, North Africa in 354 AD. Thagaste as this time had just been affected by the Donatist schism. His father Patricius, a town councillor, was not a Christian, but most in his surroundings, including, obviously, his mother Monica, were Christian. Patricius's baptism at his death bed in the year 371 is attributed to Monica's dedication and witness.

The city where Augustine was born was a well-developed city in an influential region. Augustine spent his early childhood within a prosperous and stable environment. Much of the prosperity present in Thagaste could be attributed to the influence of the Romans presence in the entire empire. The city was in the south of Hippo Regius, where Augustine became bishop and spent the second half of his life. Thagaste was known for its agricultural prosperity, often described as land perched high on the uplands.

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[2] Possidius was bishop of Calama in the Roman province of Numidia in the 5th century. He was one of the clergy of Augustine's monastery. In his biography of Augustine, he describes his friendship with the latter for forty years. Possidus work: Possidius, *Sancti Augustini Vita*, trans. Herbert Weiskotten (Merchantville: Evolution Publishing, 2008).

[3] Eugène Portalié, "The Life of St. Augustine of Hippo," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 2, ed. Charles Herbermann et al (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), 84.

[4] This study commends the work of Robin Fox on the biography of Augustine. See Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions and Confessions* (New York: Basics Books, 2015).

At the time Augustine was born, Constantine II, survival of Constantine's sons, was ruling, and the empire was experiencing some difficulties.

> Alamans and Franks were ranging unchecked in Gaul; from the east the emperor's cousin Gallus, fresh from suppressing a variety of disturbances – revolt in Galilee, Isaurian pirates, food riots in the great metropolis of Antioch – was recalled to court and executed.[5]

Apart from these, there was also, especially in Thagaste, the ongoing disagreement between the Donatist sect and the minority Catholics. The provinces in North Africa were heavily affected by these issues. Though the empire experienced civilisation and economic progress, it was not spared politico- religious disagreements and the inevitable tensions accompanying diverse cultures and classes. O'Meara recounts that Thagaste at this period was mostly occupied by Berbers with a scanty number of Roman officials and traders, as well as a few Greeks and Jews. Life in this city was always bustling, and one would expect that Latin was used during official ceremonies and on documents. Apart from Latin, which was often used by the educated classes, some families spoke Punic, but the language of the ordinary people was Berber.[6]

1. Augustine's Immediate Family

Apart from Augustine, Monica and Patricius had two other children. Augustine's family had a Roman influence, though not the wealthy and upper-class type. He had Latin influence right from his young age (the culture of his home and school was Latin). His family was a respectable one since his father held the office with the title of *decurio*. This office was such that his father was a member of the town council. Being a *decurio* does not necessarily make one wealthy, the reason as O'Meara recounts: "The *decuriones* had to make up for deficiencies in the

[5] Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), 1.
[6] John O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1954), 25.

revenue and at the same time spend large sums of their own money to finance public services and entertainments."[7] This office was also passed on to their children, unless one decides to take on another profession, the likes of teaching, as done by Augustine. Despite the financial nature of Augustine's family, Patricius was able to own some small fields from which the family could afford a comfortable life.

2. The Influence of Monica

An account on the life of Augustine would arguably be insufficient without stating the influence of Monica in the shaping of his spiritual life. According to O'Meara, Monica immediately comes to mind when we begin to assess the influences that played upon the growing Augustine.[8]

Monica was a devout mother of whom Augustine would honourably pay tribute to in Bk 9 of his *Confessions* thus:

> I was a catechumen living at leisure in that country house with Alypius, a catechumen like myself, and my mother, who never left us. She had the weak body of a woman but the strong faith of a man, the composure of her years, a mother's love for her son, and the devotion of a Christian.[9]

Not minding how complicated and unendearingly Augustine displayed in his attitude to life in his early years, his mother showed the kind of love only a hopeful and patient mother could show towards her child.

> Monica did more for Augustine than could be expected of an ordinary mother. But Monica was no ordinary mother. We shall see her planning everything for him. We shall see how she overcame every obstacle that stood in the way first of Augustine's worldly career and later, insofar as it was in her power, of his spiritual salvation[10]

[7] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, 25.
[8] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, 25
[9] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 9, Ch 4.
[10] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, 33.

Apart from being the caring and supportive mother, Monica could be said of as discovering a "great pearl of value" in her child that needed direction and protection, that even when the young Augustine was obstinate about making spiritual progress, she was always with him and showing love. According to Peter Brown, Augustine did talk about his inner life in his *Confessions*, but most of this narrative of his inner life is dominated by constant clue to an important figure, his mother, Monica.[11]

Concerning the eventual conversion of Augustine, Monica is presented as a patient, loving and optimistic mother who constantly prayed for the conversion of her son. Monica was always concerned about the spiritual life of her sons and would be worried if any of them went astray. She became terribly injured when Augustine became rebellious and remained obstinate for a period of time. Augustine seemed to be aware how hurt his mother was during the periods when he sought after his own wills aside from doing the will of God. Augustine mentions in his *Confessions* how happy his mother was, before her death, knowing that he, Augustine had become a Christian and giving up on worldly pleasures.

> There was one reason, and one alone, why I wished to remain a little longer in this life, and that was to see you a Catholic Christian before I died. God has granted my wish and more besides, for I now see you as his servant, spurning such happiness as the world can give. What is left for me to do in this world?[12]

Monica's extraordinary prowess is noticeable in the manner she related with her husband, Patricius. The latter had become a Christian shortly before he died; but Monica was a completely devoted mother and wife, having love and respect to her husband. O'Meara mentions: "She advised her women friends to maintain the same respectful attitude towards their husbands…" and "in all matters inside the house or without she behaved with discretion

[11] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*: *A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 29.
[12] Augustine, *Confessions,* Bk 9, Ch 10.

and thought only of spreading peace in every way she could."[13] Such were the excellent gifts that Monica possessed that played significant role in the life of Augustine.

AUGUSTINE'S EDUCATION AND FORMATION OF CHARACTER

From a tender age, Augustine exhibited interest in learning. His attitude and mindset towards education was focused on success. He recounts: "I was told that it was right and proper for me as a boy to pay attention to my teachers, so that I should do well at my study of grammar and get on in the world. This was the way to gain the respect of others and win for myself what passes for wealth in this world."[14] Augustine's mother had him enrolled among the catechumens. "Along with the vague but constant instinct of God's presence went the impression of an other-worldly life, and, with the human punishments, the ideal ones and everlasting joys."[15] This is the kind of awareness that young Augustine must have come to acquire from his mother which later, when he experienced illness, and feared that he might die, asked to be baptised. He soon recovered from his illness and this desire for baptism was dropped. That Augustine chose not to be baptised at the time is not surprising because there was a belief among some Christians that baptism is better postpone until right before death so as to mitigate the possibility of sinning after baptism. Despite not receiving baptism, Augustine had in his mind the idea of eternal life, the future life, and its sanctions. He attested to this in his *Confessions*: "while still a boy I had been told of the eternal life promised to us by Our Lord, who humbled himself and came down among us proud sinners."[16]

Patricius was desirous for his son to be educated. Augustine's family made the necessary sacrifice to send him to school at Madauros to learn grammar and rhetoric.[17] There

[13] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, 35.
[14] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 1, Ch 9.
[15] Cyril C. Martindale, "A Sketch of the Life and Character of St. Augustine," in *A Monument to St. Augustine*, ed. Martin C. D'Arcy et al (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 86.
[16] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk.1, Ch 11.
[17] Augustine learnt more of grammar in Madauros. He had only encountered rhetoric in the same Madauros but partly. It was in Carthage that he got most of his knowledge in rhetoric. O'Meara recounts that at the time, "Grammar and Rhetoric were not very sharply divided and there was a good deal of overlapping both in matter and technique between the two." See O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, 49.

he was educated to become master of the spoken word. In Madauros, principal authors studied were Virgil, Cicero, Sallust and perhaps, Terence. The method applied in studying these aforementioned authors was by memorising and knowing the text by heart. "The passage was first read aloud or recited from memory, due attention being given to diction and punctuation."[18] The method of reading and memorisation was commonly used in the study of grammar. In the study of rhetoric, the reading and memorisation of any given author was aimed at developing styles of eloquence for the pupils, which could be used to demonstrate a point, to argue for one's case before a court, or to counsel someone. Augustine's training in rhetoric would be decisive for his future as a polemicist and orator.

This method of learning (reading and memorisation) involved in rhetoric was less conducive to learning a foreign language, for instance, Greek. There is another significant reason why Augustine had little interest in Greek.[19] He found Greek boring, and Latin was also what most elite used in communicating, so its utility to Augustine was not obvious. His failure to learn Greek would later be an issue for him in his college days in Carthage in the Late Roman educational system. Augustine's lack of Greek as a university student in Carthage is captured in this way:

> As a young man, he will set out, pathetically ill-equipped, on a traditional philosopher's quest for Wisdom. A cultivated Greek audience would have treated this exclusively Latin-speaking student from the university of Carthage as 'a dumb fool', acquainted as he was only 'with the opinions of Greek philosophers, or rather, with little snippets of these opinions, picked up, here and there, from the Latin dialogues of Cicero'; not 'with these philosophical systems as they stand, fully developed, in Greek books.'[20]

Apart from Augustine's seeming 'failure' in the spoken Greek language in Madauros, his excellent mastery of grammar and rhetoric is worth commending. He longed to acquire the

[18] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine* 41.
[19] "The knowledge he shows of Greek in his books is confined to elementary words, etymologies common to discussions of a special nature, technical and some Christian terms." See O' Meara, *The Young Augustine*, 45
[20] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 36.

skills of an eloquent orator through which he could present his opinions or thoughts in the most refined and articulated way as possible. He admired the excellence with which Virgil wrote and his aim was to measure up to the style and perfection of ancient classics. Within this experience and interest of a young scholar, Augustine would very easy be referred to as a perfectionist. Just like Virgil, Augustine was concerned about not making mistakes in his presentation, committed himself to delivering speeches eloquently and he was often admired by many.

One of Augustine's benefits from his studies in Madauros was his mastery of Latin literature, quite effectively as people of the upper class. Apart from the intellectual growth, Augustine at this time had developed into a more mature person: he has got the knowhow of expressing himself in a way that others could understand. He became thoroughly gifted and able to demonstrate how much he loved what he was learning; his memory has greatly developed, and a refined attitude towards detailed explanations.

While Augustine would have loved to continue his studies, he returned home for a year until his father saved enough to support his going to Carthage for university studies [21]. The period he spent waiting was marked by long unruly behaviours. Augustine saw himself as one who wanted to break rules out of youthful exuberance. He was in his sixteenth year at this time. Augustine would later speak about this 'fatal' year in his *Confessions*:

> Yet I was willing to steal, and steal I did, although I was not compelled by any lack, unless it were the lack of a sense of justice or a distance for what was right and a greedy love of doing wrong. For of what I stole I already had plenty, and much better at that, and I had no wish to enjoy the things I coveter by stealing, but only to enjoy the theft itself and the sin.[22]

Almost immediately in the *Confessions*, Augustine speaks of how, by his vice, his soul wandered away from God. He regarded all his unruly behaviours at that time as a purely

[21] Patricius was anxious for Augustine to go to Carthage to pursue his university career. He was determined on getting the money needed for this: he asked of it from family and friends and within a year, his desire was met, and Carthage was the next location for Augustine.
[22] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 2, Ch 4.

unprofitable and inordinate pursuit of what was appealing to the senses. Augustine's studies were marred by unbridled sexual immoralities; the pursuit of pleasure took over. At some point, all these distressed him greatly, but was he willing to give it up? He was frightened in spirit and prayed that God should give him chastity; but almost immediately, with what could be referred to as being true to himself and his instinct, Augustine would add: "but not yet."[23]

Towards the end of the year 370, Augustine moved to Carthage to continue his education. Finally moving to Carthage is one of those moments in the life of Augustine that he cherished; at least for the fact that life in Carthage was exciting. Carthage was a city with bustling activities, with lots of seductions and still half pagan; but the life in the big city was not much a worry for the young Augustine; in fact, he loved the atmosphere. It was an opportunity for Augustine to become a student of rhetoric and also to meet and relate with other young people with such passion for pleasure as his: "The students were rowdy, as was only to be expected among boys who had come from little provincial towns all over Africa to their first experience of freedom in a big city."[24] Augustine at this time was seventeen, already exposed to what people of his age were accustomed to. He just wanted to get as much pleasure he could get in life. It could be assumed that the boisterous life in this city and his general life attitude aided Augustine's quick access to the kind of life he wanted.[25] He loved "the licentiousness of other students, the theatres, the intoxication of his literary success, and a proud desire always to be first, even in evil."[26] In Carthage, Augustine was caught up in lust and in pursuit of it. This was a craving he sought all means to satisfy.

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[23] The exact picture of what was happening in the life of the young Augustine at that time is presented in Bk 8 of his Confessions: "As a youth I had been woefully at fault, particularly in early adolescence. I had prayed to you for chastity and said, 'Give me chastity and continence, but not yet.' For I was afraid that you would answer my prayer at once and cure me too soon of the disease of lust, which I wanted satisfied, not quelled…" "I had pretended to myself that the reason why, day after day, I staved off the decision to renounce worldly ambition and follow you alone was that I could see no certain goal towards which I might steer my course." See Confessions, Bk 8, Ch 7.

[24] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 38.

[25] Augustine longed to be loved and to love; and most of all to enjoy the company and body of one who loved him.

[26] Eugène Portalié, "The Life of St. Augustine of Hippo," 85.

> I went to Carthage, where I found myself in the midst of a hissing cauldron of lust. I had not yet fallen in love, but I was in love with the idea of it, and this feeling that something was missing made me despise myself for not being more anxious to satisfy the need. I began to look around for some object for my love, since I badly wanted to love something.[27]

These years in Augustine's life could be said to be when he allowed his emotions and quest for pleasure to get the best of him; but in general, he was not a glutton or a heavy drinker. At this time in 372, Augustine had a son Adeodatus with his mistress, and for a long time, he struggled with the thoughts of letting Monica know about his involvements and subsequently fathering a son. Augustine separated from this woman in Milan, after fifteen years of being with her. Despite Augustine's libertine attitudes in Carthage, he was keen to excel in rhetoric as a profession.

1. Augustine's Quest for Wisdom

Augustine's love and search for wisdom was instrumental in bringing him to a new phase in life. Some Augustinian historians, the likes of Peter Brown, confirm that despite the fact that the young Augustine exhibited the aforementioned character, he kept a certain dignity; meaning that he desired some sense of compunction and control over his life and unruly behaviours. According to Brown, this hidden desire played a positive role which metamorphosed into a true desire to set himself free from his captivity.[28]

Finally, in 373, at the age of 19, Augustine began to exhibit a new attitude to life. This new outlook was a gradual road to his first conversion. This initial change in his life was intense that one begins to wonder what exactly happened to the earlier exuberant young man. His radical change was influenced by reading Cicero's exhortation to philosophy, "*Hortensius*". Augustine's ambition to be an excellent orator inspired him to read Cicero's work and from

[27] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 3, Ch 1.
[28] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 7.

Cicero, he acquainted himself with, and fell in love with the concept of wisdom which Cicero spoke of. Thereafter, a new desire arose in his soul: he looked upon his rhetoric merely as a profession; his heart was knit to philosophy. Augustine recounts: "All my empty dreams suddenly lost their charm, and my heart began to throb with a bewildering passion for the wisdom of eternal truth. I began to climb out of the depths to which I had sunk, in order to return to you."[29] Augustine saw his gradual change as a way of retracing his steps back to God. "On his own account he found it overwhelming, and it temporarily dimmed his ambition for a political career as he felt 'an incredible burning desire' in his heart to fly away from earthly things to God and Wisdom."[30]

Undoubtedly, Cicero's "*Hortensius*" played significant role in Augustine's desire for wisdom. However, Cicero's presentation of the concept of wisdom was surely not the kind and understanding of wisdom that he expected: this wisdom was pagan; a wisdom lacking the name of Christ. Augustine had been brought up in a Christian home; despite his dissipation in his earlier years in Carthage, the Christian lessons he got from his mother was unconsciously still part of his life. Cicero awoke in Augustine a desire which popular paganism clearly could not satisfy.

> In Carthage he will watch the great festivals that were still celebrated at the great temple of the *Dea Caelestis*: but he will do so in the manner of a Protestant Englishman witnessing the solemn Catholic processions of Italy – they were splendid and interesting; but they had nothing to do with religion as he knew it.[31]

2. Augustine's involvement with the Manicheans

Cicero's presentation of wisdom did not satisfy Augustine's quest for a Christian concept of wisdom. His search for a Christian understanding of wisdom led him to pick up a Bible and

[29] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 3, Ch 4.
[30] John M. Rist, *Augustine*: *Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.
[31] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 41.

read. However, Augustine was disappointed how the narratives in the Bible did not fit into his understanding of what makes for a critical and well-ordered presentation. His intention for searching through the Bible was to see if it fits into what he had read in Cicero and the Platonist books; but he found the content quite obscure and the style of the narrative primitive. The difference he discovered in the Bible and the classical materials he had read was great. According to Henry Chadwick, "the Old Latin Bible (the reconstruction of which by modern scholars has been a remarkable critical operation) was not a book to impress a man whose mind was full of elegant Ciceronian diction and Virgilian turns of phrase, and who enjoyed good plays at the theatre."[32] O'Meara posits that apart from being influenced by what he read from Cicero, Augustine's mind must have been preoccupied with these considerations, namely, the desire for truth, the love of the name of Christ, and dissatisfaction with the Scriptures.[33]

With this unreconciled thought in his heart, Augustine's faith and his life in general experienced a crisis. His dissatisfaction with what he made of the Scriptures eventually led to his suspicion of Christianity. Did Augustine's attitude towards the Scriptures and Christianity come from intellectual pride or that he expected the Scriptures to be as highly sophisticated like the classical books he was used to at this time? Since neither the Bible nor his Christian faith could satisfy his quest for wisdom, he had to go the way of the Manicheans.

Augustine's involvement with the Manicheans was a huge moment in his life. It was the year 373, and he and his friend Honoratus has become admirers of the Manicheans. The Manicheans were a group founded by the Persian Mani who claimed to have received an inspired message in Mesopotamia.[34] Before Mani's death, he had gathered followers who continued the spread of his teachings. His disciples were particularly well spoken in universities and good in oratory. It was much easier for them to convince their listeners about

[32] Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: University Press, 1986), 12.
[33] O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, 61.
[34] Mani was executed by the Persian government in 276 A.D.

their teachings, especially those whose Catholic faith were shaky. This sect was desirous about telling people to seek out for the truth. Their insistence on 'truth' would have been enough to capture the mind of Augustine. Obviously, some of the Scriptural narratives did not make sense to the Manicheans.

> Their demolition of the traditional Christian Scriptures was intelligent and persistent. They claimed, that 'putting aside the terror of authoritative commands to believe, they would lead all men who cared to hear them to God, and would free them from error, by a remarkable use of reason.[35]

They prided themselves as the true Christians, and regarded Catholics as inauthentic, preferably to be referred to as mere 'semi-Christians'. The radical spread of the Manichean's teaching was furthered by the religious turmoil at the time. There were various sects, each claiming to possess the authentic form of Christianity. Manicheans, for instance, prided themselves as being the only ones who taught a Wisdom that combined and even surpassed that of other previous sects, especially of the Christians of the Roman world.

Christ was a central figure for the Manicheans. Christ was understood as the source of Wisdom, and encountering this wisdom means humans separate themselves from every error that emanates from the world and from what we unconsciously assimilate because of love and respect for authority. Christ, Wisdom *par excellence*, enlightens every human person; leads them to true knowledge of themselves. Manicheans believed it was this Wisdom that awoken Adam from his drunken slumber to communicate to him what Cicero would have done in a more classical term: that his soul was divine.[36] No doubt, Augustine would have been fascinated by their presentation about the person of Christ as the principle of Wisdom *par*

[35] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 43-44.
[36] Allberry, *Manichean Psalmbook*, quoted by Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 43, 44.

excellence and thereafter saw the Manicheans as answers to his yearning for the Christian understanding of wisdom.[37] Manicheism became Augustine's way towards the truth.

At this time too in Augustine's life, he had deep interest in the natural sciences. He wanted to discover a scientific explanation of nature and its mysterious phenomena. The Manicheans on the other hand assured him that nature had revealed all secrets to Faustus, their teacher. Augustine hoped to find in the Manicheans an explanation that would satisfy his curious mind. The ever serious and critically minded Augustine loved to be part of this noble sect, the Manicheans, whom he believed would satisfy his interest in the scientific knowledge of the world.

Augustine and the Manichean's Dualism

Augustine was tormented with the problem of the origin of evil in the world. The fundamental question about the problem of evil was: If God is the principal cause of every good, what then is the cause of evil? Apart from Manichaean's radical teachings which involved how to acquire the true Wisdom, it seemed to provide an answer to the young Augustine about the origin of evil. Augustine found Manichean dualism to be a convincing explanation for the existence of evil in the world. According to this dualism, there were two real forces or principles in the world, one for good, the other for evil. For a religiously minded sect like the Manicheans, it will be totally unthinkable to assign to God as the source of this evil. The thought of such will be absurd to the rational thinker. God cannot be seen as being responsible for evil, his 'innocence' must be protected at all costs.

In order to safeguard the idea that nothing evil can come from God who is all good, the Manicheans proposed dualism. The Manicheans posited there are two forces or principles in

[37] Augustine would have also been fascinated by the way they appeared and lived: the Manicheans were the 'Elect', a special kind of a group of men and woman who were often observing the ritual of fasting and guided with series of taboos. They often appeared as austere men and women with little or no interest with the world except for the purpose of obtaining wisdom.

the world: good and evil. These two forces are always in conflict with each other. They were convinced that evil is the result from the invasion of the good, evil was the kingdom of darkness always hostile to the kingdom of light. The Manicheans would further stress that one who wishes to be part of the elect must possess the ability to distinguish between these two principles of Light and Darkness. And they wished all human beings possessed this special ability of discerning between these forces.

> The first thing a man must do', says the Chinese Manichaean catechism, 'is to distinguish the Two Principles (the Good and the Evil). He who would enter our religion must know that the Two Principles have natures absolutely distinct: how can one who is not alive to this distinction put into practice the doctrine?'[38]

According to Manicheans' teaching, these forces, or Principles in the world both have strength and weaknesses such that neither can obliterate the other. Each is filled with the ability to let its effect felt where it was present. As a result of the effects of the damage by the realm of the Dark on the realm of Light, little fragments of God are scattered in all living creatures in the world, plants and animals included. The Manicheans considered Melons and Cucumbers as possessing large amount of divinity; and so, members of the group are to have these meals in their diets, and wines were usually forbidden.

Manichean doctrine also believed that the material world was completely ruled by the force of Darkness; therefore, a true disciple must flee from the dictate of the physical world, transcends its allure in order to be truly purified. The Manichean dualism between the pure soul and the base body seemed to resonate with Augustine's past struggles with sexual vices. He considered the lust he had plunged into in the past as moments he slipped into allowing the baser nature to gain the upper hand in his decisions. "For Augustine, the need to save an

[38] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 48.

untarnished oasis of perfection within himself formed, perhaps, the deepest strain of his adherence to the Manichees."[39]

Once Augustine became confident about Manichaean doctrine, he was willing to commit himself entirely to the sect. Having immersed himself in Manichean thought, Augustine was confident that he could defend its teachings. He was often in debate with some Christians who desired to stand up to their faith, and as often as these happened, Augustine was successful in his debates and argued eloquently, defending his position. His attack on the Catholic faith was vehement. His successes with his opponents in debates encouraged him to appreciate his association with the Manicheans the more.

Augustine as a professor

Augustine was still a student in Carthage when he got involved with the Manicheans – Manichaeism had become for the young Augustine the sort of religion that could provide answers to his curious mind. It had provided him with the answer to the source of evil in the world. According to Martindale, "while a mysterious instinct kept him sure that God in no case could be Author of Evil, he found a reason to convince himself for the existence of evil which hardly involved his self."[40]

Coincidently, Augustine had developed academically and would be deemed qualified to take on a teaching job. After his study years in Carthage ended, Augustine was well qualified to enter the law courts (*forum litigiosum*), but he preferred to return to Thagaste to teach literature. Augustine returned to his native town, Thagaste, with his Manichean mind set and newfound "Wisdom". He was enthused about his career and was looking forward to a successful period as a professor of grammar among his natives. However, on his arrival at Thagaste, Monica was surprised that Augustine had fallen into error of the Manicheans and

[39] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 51.
[40] Cyril C. Martindale, "A Sketch of the Life and Character of St. Augustine," 91.

would not let him into her house. To an African Catholic, the Manicheans were a heretical group to be avoided at all costs. Augustine narrated in his *Confessions* how his mother was pacified after it has been made know to her in a dream and her consultation with a priest, that her son would come back to her religion:

> this other answer you gave her through the mouth of one of your priests, a bishop who had lived his life in the Church and was well versed in the Scriptures. My mother asked him, as a favour, to have a talk with me, so that he might refute my errors, drive the evil out of my mind, and replace it with good...He told her that I was still unripe for instruction because, as she had told him, I was brimming over with the novelty of the heresy and had already upset a great many simple people with my casuistry. At the same time, he told her that when he was a child his misguided mother had handed him over to the Manichees. He had not only read almost all their books, but had also made copies of them, and even though no one argued the case with him or put him right, he had seen for himself that he ought to have nothing to do with the sect; and accordingly, he had left it.[41]

Augustine understood that he was in a territory where his religious orientation was suspicious and unacceptable. The immediate response to this was to seek out for where he could find a base to begin his teaching career and spread his Manichean wisdom. However, in 375, Augustine moved back to Carthage and opened a school where he continued teaching rhetoric. While in Carthage, he attracted young students to his school and was admired by his pupils. Apart from teaching his students rhetoric, Augustine fervently introduced them to the Manichean "Wisdom" that he had become loyal to. One of Augustine's faithful disciples was Alypius, much younger than him, who had also imbibed the Manichean teachings and was devoted to it.[42] For a while, Augustine's school flourished. Augustine's rhetoric had also developed such that he could easily attract admirers with his style; and he was aware that he could influence people through his speeches, even more than he expected. His witty style and

[41] Augustine, *Confessions,* Bk 3, Ch 12.
[42] Alypius later gave up his allegiance to Manichaeism, and afterwards was baptised with Augustine in Milan, eventually becoming the bishop of Thagaste, his native city.

sarcasm were well managed when he delivered speeches or argued in defence of Manichaeism. About Augustine's intelligence and eloquence in Carthage, Eugène Portalié remarks thus:

> His native talents shone with all their true brilliance. Here he put the finishing touches to the complete formation of his mind by his tireless study of all the liberal arts. Having taken part in a famed poetic contest, he carried off the trophy. The proconsul Vindicianus crowned him with the laurel of victory before all the people in the theatre.[43]

Augustine's exposure to books in liberal arts would later influence his decisions on giving up on the Manicheans.

At the initial stage of promoting the Manichean ideas, there was an aspect of the Manichaeism of Augustine that stood out. Augustine's Manichaeism was reserved for a specific group: a cultivated *intelligentsia* of the university of Carthage and of the small-town nobles of Thagaste. Carthage was a favourable ground for Augustine to flourish because it was a small town such as Thagaste and was distant from the watchful eyes of Catholic authorities. Many of those who followed Augustine in his Manichean ways came straight from paganism, and it was easy for this sect to be attractive to pagans who were not comfortable with the insistent rise of Christianity.[44] Despite Augustine's profound progress in his Manichean "Wisdom" and devoted interest in spreading it, Monica was hopeful that Augustine would, one day, gives these up and return to the Catholic faith.

Along with his love for rhetoric and promoting Manichean ideals, Augustine's interest for the liberal arts became deeper. He read philosophical books and was reflecting on philosophical issues and logical problems, some of which he encountered in rhetoric. It was at this period that Augustine completed his first work in aesthetics, '*On the Beautiful and the*

[43] Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 10. Augustine says in his Confession, how at the age of Twenty, he read and understood with help, Aristotle's book on the "Ten Categories" and other books on the liberal arts. "I read and understood by myself all the books that I could find on the so-called liberal arts, for in those days I was a good-for-nothing and a slave to sordid ambitions." See Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 4, Ch 16.
[44] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 54.

Fitting'. His commitment to study left him restless and subsequently, gradually, his discontentment with the Manicheans started setting in.

3. Augustine's discontent with the Manicheans.

One would be quick to ask, why did Augustine become disillusioned with the Manicheans? Already as a neophyte, though Augustine demonstrated his enthusiasm for the teachings of Mane, Manicheism could never quieten his restlessness; he was never fully satisfied. He was accused of being a priest of the sect, but he never really recognised himself as such or initiated among the elect; he remained at the lowest degree (an auditor) in the hierarchy. His restless mind could not be satisfied as he kept looking for answers and at some point, sought magic for answers, as he narrates in his *Confessions*: "the same reasoning did not prevent me from consulting those imposters, the astrologers, because I argued that they offered no sacrifices and said no prayers to any spirit to aid their divination."[45]

Earlier, we had noted that Augustine found in the dualist teaching of the Manicheans the principle of evil in the world. However, part of his discontent with the Manicheans was being unable to fully come to terms with what this principal cause of evil meant. The more he went deeper into Manichaeism, wishing to find a lasting conviction about the problem of evil, the less he could find solution to his quest; his anxiety could not be put to rest by the Manichean position. Part of Augustine's disillusionment with the Manicheans began as soon as he came into contact with certain fundamentalist Manichean groups. One of such was a group of 'cultivated men' comprised of stalwart schoolmasters, who subscribe only to reason. A prominent character of this group was that they were deeply rooted in the doctrine and practice of the Manichean movement and would often refer to themselves as the reformers of Christianity.[46] There was the other strand whose members regarded themselves as the most

[45] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 4, Ch 3.
[46] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 54.

dedicated of the Manichean groups and were particularly admired by intellectuals. It was a common practice for members of these sets of Manicheans to accept the revelations of Mani as the literal truth. Augustine regarded this attitude of unquestionable adherence with uneasiness because they would uphold, without compromise, whatever it was that had been entrusted to them by the books of Mani.

Despite Augustine's unsettled mind about the principal cause of evil, and his encounter with the fundamentalist Manichean groups, his major disappointment and discontent with the Manicheans was his discovery of the emptiness of the Manichean philosophy – "they destroy everything and build up nothing." Augustine, in his *De Utilitate credenda*, decries his disillusion with Manicheans philosophy and their attack of Christianity and the holy scriptures, especially the Old Testament.

> …it is then my purpose to prove to you, if I can, that the Manichees profanely and rashly inveigh against those, who, following the authority of the Catholic Faith, before that they are able to gaze upon that Truth, which the pure mind beholds, are by believing forearmed, and prepared for God Who is about to give them light… (*De Utilitate Credendi*, no. 2)

> For you well know that the Manichees move the unlearned by finding fault with the Catholic Faith, and chiefly by rending in pieces and tearing the Old Testament: and they are utterly ignorant, how far these things are to be taken, and how drawn out they descend with profit into the veins and marrows of souls as yet as it were but able to cry. And because there are in them certain things which are some slight offense to minds ignorant and careless of themselves, (and there are very many such,) they admit of being accused in a popular way: but defended in a popular way they cannot be, by any great number of persons, by reason of the mysteries that are contained in them. But the few, who know how to do this, do not love public and much talked of controversies and disputes: and on this account are very little known, save to such as are most earnest in seeking them out. Concerning then this rashness of the Manichees, whereby they find fault with the Old Testament and the Catholic Faith, listen, I entreat you, to the considerations which move me. But I desire and hope that you will receive them in the same spirit in which I say them. For God, unto Whom are known the secrets of my conscience knows, that in this discourse I am doing nothing of evil craft; but, as I think it should

> be received, for the sake of proving the truth, for which one thing we have now long ago determined to live; and with incredible anxiety, lest it may have been most easy for me to err with you, but most difficult, to use no harder term, to hold the right way with you. But I venture to anticipate that, in this hope, wherein I hope that you will hold with us the way of wisdom, He will not fail me, unto Whom I have been consecrated; Whom day and night I endeavour to gaze upon: and since, by reason of my sins, and by reason of past habit, having the eye of the mind wounded by strokes of feeble opinions, I know that I am without strength, I often entreat with tears, and as, after long blindness and darkness the eyes being hardly opened, and as yet, by frequent throbbing and turning away, refusing the light which yet they long after; specially if one endeavour to show to them the very sun; so it has now befallen me, who do not deny that there is a certain unspeakable and singular good of the soul, which the mind sees; and who with tears and groaning confess that I am not yet worthy of it. He will not then fail me, if I feign nothing, if I am led by duty, if I love truth, if I esteem friendship, if I fear much lest you be deceived.[47]

Aside from Augustine's denouncing the philosophy of the Manicheans, he became worried about how hypocritical the lifestyle of the 'elect' was. He noticed that their exterior austere life was contrary to the scandalous interior lives that they lived. Therefore, he regarded the "elect" as not sincere in the practice of what they teach. That Augustine had become discontent with the Manicheans because of their hypocrisy is no surprise because he had often shown in the past his search for that which is true and authentic. His initial enthusiasm for the teachings of Mani was influenced by his convictions that these teachings answered his yearnings for truth and meaning amidst several opinions that he had come across.

Another key reason for his discontent was that the Manicheans prided themselves of providing answers to scientific knowledge – science in the modern sense of nature – but Augustine, having made enquiry into Manichean teaching, did not find any of these scientific knowledges, and he became disappointed. Augustine asked the Manicheans about the movements of the stars and their causes, and he could not get an answer from any of them.

[47] Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi*, no. 4, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887).

Rather, he was told to wait for Faustus of Milevis (a renowned Manicheans bishop) who on his arrival would explain everything to him. In the summer of 382 Bishop Faustus arrived in Carthage. Augustine met him and was disappointed at the outcome of their meeting, having expected so much from him. Augustine was surprised at his sheer ignorance of scientific culture. Augustine narrated his frustration in his *Confessions* of his meeting with the Manichean Bishop Faustus:

> At last he arrived. I found him a man of agreeable personality, with a pleasant manner of speech, who pattered off the usual Manichean arguments with a great deal more than the usual charm. But my thirst was not to be satisfied in this way, however precious the cup and however exquisite the man who served it.[48]

Obviously, Faustus failed to meet Augustine's expectations. The inability of the Manicheans to answer his scientific quest could be referred to as and the 'straw that broke the Camel's back' in his disillusion with the Manicheans.

Disappointed, Augustine despaired, doubting that he could address issues that preoccupied his mind. With his interest in Manicheans diminishing, he abandoned his pursuit of progressing in the sect. However, Augustine did not cut from the Manicheans immediately; "but as I could find nothing better than the beliefs which I had stumbled upon more or less by chance, I decided to be content with them for the time being, unless something preferable clearly presented itself to me."[49] Augustine kept contact with some of his Manichean friends but had lost interest in their doctrine. For a period of nine years, from 373-383, Augustine was devoted to the Manicheans. Apart from his disillusion with the Manicheans, he became open to the vulgarity of the average student in Carthage and was infuriated by their frequent horseplay.

[48] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 5. Ch 6.
[49] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 5, Ch 7.

4. Augustine left Carthage for Italy (Rome and Milan)

Augustine had a major turnaround when he eventually left for Italy. He will later in his *Confessions* mention that it was through God's guidance that he was persuaded to go to Rome to teach rhetoric which he had previously taught in Carthage. Compared to Carthage, Augustine heard that in Rome, students were better disciplined and strictly supervised by the emperor.[50] Going away to Rome was where he expected that such behaviours as at Carthage did not occur.

In 383 Augustine left Carthage for Rome, without telling Monica the truth while he was leaving.

> I deceived her with the excuse that I had a friend whom I did not want to leave until the wind rose and his ship could sail…But she would not go home without me, and it was all I could do to persuade her to stay at night in a shrine dedicated to Saint Cyprian, not far from the ship. During the night, secretly, I sailed away, leaving her alone to her tears and her prayers.[51]

On arrival in Rome, Augustine fell very sick and almost died. He attributed this sickness to his numerous sins and evils that he had committed against God, against himself, and against others. Despite his critical state at the time, Augustine did not ask to be baptised. On his recovery he opened his school of rhetoric.[52] But soon, yet again, he was disgusted by the behaviour of his students, such as not paying their tuition fees. Augustine frowned at such acts from his tricky pupils. At the time, he learned from Symmachus (the city-prefect) that Milan was seeking for a professor of rhetoric for its school. Augustine applied for this position and was accepted.[53] His task in this school was to teach the pupils how to make speeches, and being the professor

[50] In Carthage students often indulge in outrageous activities, which normally should be punishable by law, but are protected by customs. As a student Augustine refused to partake in these behaviours, but as a teacher he had to endure it in others.
[51] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 5, Ch 8.
[52] Augustine attributes his recovery to God. He noted that God restowed the health of his body, so that he might live to receive far better and more certain kind of health. See, *Confessions*, Bk 5, Ch 10.
[53] Aside from his personal brilliance in rhetoric, the choice for Augustine would probably have been influenced by Symmachus' Manichean friends who approach him to appoint Augustine, as a way of looking after their own.

of rhetoric, he was usually called upon to deliver official panegyrics on the emperor and on consuls. Augustine excelled in these tasks while in Milan. "For Augustine, Milan meant new interests, new learning, great chances of success. For a year he threw himself into its life with vigour and whole-hearted ambition. Yet in the long, it became for him a symbolic city, with an unexpected figure at its centre."[54] One can already presume that this "unexpected figure" is Ambrose.

AUGUSTINE'S ENCOUNTER WITH AMBROSE AND NEO-PLATONISM

Much of what we may consider as the "other side" of Augustine came about after he encountered the much-loved pastor and bishop of Milan at the time, Ambrose. In Milan he frequented the preaching of Ambrose and found himself becoming interested in the content of his preaching as well as his eloquence. Augustine did not attend these sermons because he wanted to be converted to the faith but to admire the rhetoric of the learned bishop; but Ambrose's preaching did turn him away from the Manicheans. Augustine in his *Confessions* speaks about Ambrose and why he wanted to listen to him speaking:

> In Milan I found your devoted servant the bishop Ambrose, who was known throughout the world as a man whom there were few to equal in goodness…My heart warmed to him, not at first as a teacher of the truth, which I had quite despaired of finding in your Church, but simply as a man who showed me kindness. I listened attentively when he preached to the people, though not with the proper intention; for my purpose was to judge for myself whether the reports of his powers as a speaker were accurate, or whether eloquence flowed from him more, or less, readily than I had been told.[55]

Augustine loved the style and knowledge with which Ambrose taught the doctrine of salvation; unlike the Manichean bishop Faustus who, according to Augustine, had lost his way among the fallacies of the Manicheans. Augustine admired Ambrose's style of defending the Old Testament against the Manicheans. From Ambrose, Augustine was able to understand the Old

[54] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 72
[55] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 5, Ch 13.

Testament patriarch from a different perspective. "I was glad too that at last I had been shown how to interpret the ancient Scriptures of the law and the prophets in a different light from that which had previously made them seem absurd, when I used to criticize your saints for holding beliefs which they had never really held at all."[56] It was at this time that Augustine started taking instructions in the faith, probably to please his mother who had followed him to Milan, having found him a suitable girl to marry (Augustine had already dismissed the mother of his son, Adeodatus).

In Milan, Augustine still faced unresolved questions. Some of these questions include: How we are certain of what we know? How sufficient are words in communicating what we know? He turned again to the philosophical dialogues of Cicero, the "*New Academy*". The dialogues seem to him to deny the possibility of the human mind reaching truth. Augustine was in doubt about all things and would refrain from taking or upholding any definite position. Augustine turned to the philosophy of the academics which at the time promoted scepticism. However, there is an alternative to Augustine's position on the Academic's scepticism: "the alternative which he continued to consider throughout this time came more naturally to him: that men might use some 'authority' to point the way to truth."[57] According to Brown, Augustine was influenced by Cicero in his alternative position, for the latter only deployed his scepticism against the philosophers of his era. He would not attack the established religions of his ancestors.[58]

In his state of pessimistic scepticism, Augustine started reading some works of Plato and Plotinus. The Roman rhetorician had translated some of these works and Augustine was

[56] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 6, Ch 4.
[57] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 80. "Often it seemed to me that it could not be found, and huge waves of my thoughts would roll toward deciding in favour of the Academics. Often again, with what power I had, looking into the human soul, with so much life, with so much intelligence, with so much clearness, I thought that the truth lay not hid, save that in it the way of search lay hid, and that this same way must be taken from some divine authority." See Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi,* no. 20.
[58] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 80

able to read them in Latin. Gradually Augustine was rescuing himself from persistent doubts. At this point Augustine became a Neo-Platonist, filled with enthusiasm and with the hope of finding the truth. He read the Platonic books when he was gradually letting go of his support for the Manicheans. He could not, for instance, find it impossible to think of God as both present to him, and at the same time separate from him.[59] Reading the books of the Platonists made Augustine consider truth as something that was totally incorporeal; however, by constantly listening to the preaching of Ambrose, Augustine began to discover a form of Christianity interpreted in the way of Neo-Platonism. He began to read the Scriptures, and when he read the Gospels, he was specially interested in the prologue of the Gospel of John, where Jesus is depicted as the Word.

Through his reading of the Scriptures, Augustine came to acknowledge that Jesus was the only way to truth and salvation. Though Augustine remained Neo-Platonist, he read all Platonic books with a Christian mindset. Plato revealed to him the "True God", different from the semi-material god of the Manicheans; and from Plotinus, he received a better insight on the notion of God's Word: that the Word became flesh, and the Word redeemed. Portalié refers to this moment as when light began to illumine the mind of Augustine.[60] According to Rist, the discovery of Christ as the true way took Augustine beyond the Platonic books; for while the Neo-Platonists might speak the truth about the nature of God, they failed to provide the means of accessing it. The underlying weakness of Neo-Platonism might have been that it was only theoretical, without the power to inspire right action.[61]

[59] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 98
[60] Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 13.
Augustine believes that his reading of the Platonist books prepared him for a better appreciation of the Holy Scriptures… "because you wished me always to remember the impression they had made on me, so that later on, when I had chastened by your Holy Writ and my wounds had been touched by your healing hand, …" See Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 7, Ch 20.
[61] John Rist, *Augustine*, 3.

With Augustine's inspiring encounter with Ambrose, and his new Christian attitude with reading the works of Plato and Plotinus, one would expect him to immediately convert to Christianity. But it was different. Despite the fact that he had come to accept Christ as the true way to God, Augustine's decision to be baptized was preceded by a gradual process and moment of soul-searching.

1. The Conversion of Augustine

Augustine's decision to receive baptism was finally influenced by a strong pull to the ascetic life. The period to his conversion were moments of assiduous reflection and decision-making on how he wanted his life to be henceforth.

> Neoplatonic spirituality and the stress on interiority and on liberation from the distractions of the external world, sharpened Augustine's feeling of being pulled in two different directions with his sexual drive as a downward pull. As he read the letters of St Paul, he began to think his condition wholly understood by the apostle.[62]

He became more aware of his wretched state and wished to be liberated from this. Amidst the struggles that Augustine was experiencing, he would often burst into tears and would want to be alone in the garden. Once, he left the company of his close friend, Alypius, and moved to the farthest part of the garden, sobbing, and praying. There in the garden he heard a child's voice, singing from his neighbouring home: "*tolle, lege*" (pick up and read). It was St Paul's letter to the Romans 13:13-14. The call from this text was "put on Christ". Augustine saw this as an invitation from God to give up his worldly attachments and his sexual wantonness and embrace Christ fully. Augustine's experience in the garden and his meeting with Simplicianus – the future successor of Ambrose – prepared the way for him to make the grand decision to be baptised.

[62] Chadwick, *Augustine*, 25.

In September 386, Augustine was thirty-three when he made the decision to embrace a life of chastity, gave up his secular ambition and be baptised. He resigned from his city teaching post in Milan. According to Chadwick, Augustine's conversion "was no sudden flash, but the culminating point of many months of painful gestation. He himself was later to compare the process of conversion to pregnancy."[63]

Not long after this decisive turn in Augustine's life, he became ill. He took advantage of the autumn holiday, having given up his professorship, to go with Monica, Adeodatus, his friend Alypius, and his other friends to a country estate of Verecundus near Milan, at Cassiciacum (the estate was lent to Augustine by a friend). While in this estate, Augustine devoted himself to philosophy. He saw philosophy this time as inseparable from Christianity, as a proper understanding and application of philosophy is capable of enhancing one's beliefs in Christ in whom he already had acknowledged as the true way that leads to God. During this period and the years immediately following, Augustine wrote his philosophical dialogues, and started a project to write a series of books on the liberal arts, of which he completed the works *On Grammar* (extinct) and *On Music* (surviving).[64] During the lent of 387, Augustine prepared for Baptism, which he received at Easter at the hands of Ambrose.

2. Augustine's return to Africa and his Priestly Ordination

Soon after his baptism, Augustine became assiduous about his Christian faith. With the fresh zeal of someone newly baptised, Augustine wished to live the rest of his days as a hermit. But before his return to Africa, he remained in Milan until the autumn of the year, during which he continued his works "*On the Immortality of the Soul*" and "*On Music*." It was while he was waiting to pass Ostia that Monica died. After the death of his mother Monica, Augustine

[63] Chadwick, *Augustine,* 26.
[64] Robert A. Markus, "Life, Culture, and Controversies of Augustine," in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 499.

remained at Rome several months, busy with his refutation of the Manicheans. Augustine's refutation of the Manicheans sharpened his intellectual conviction about the Manichean's false view of evil. Finally, he returned to Africa in August 388 to his native town Thagaste.

> Scarcely had Augustine arrived when he wished to bring into being his plan for a perfect life. He sold all his goods and gave the proceeds to the poor. Then he retired with his friends onto his property, which was already sold, to live a life of poverty, prayer, and study of sacred literature.[65]

This period was surely a time of spiritual renewal and growth for the neophyte Augustine. He became more aware of the place of the Divine in his life. His period of being a recluse in this estate bore fruits in these works: "*Eighty-three Questions*," "*De Genesi contra Manichaeos*," "*De Magistro*," and "*De Vera Religione*." His choice of friends – company of like-minded friends – during the period must have aided the form of life he wanted for himself at the time.

Despite Augustine's love for the ascetic life, he did not consider becoming a priest. For fear that he might be chosen as a bishop, Augustine would flee from towns where episcopal ordination was taken place. One day he was on a visit to a friend in Hippo, a coastal town of approximately 150 miles from Thagaste. There in Hippo the local populace mounted pressure on Augustine to be ordained to assist the aged bishop Valerius. Initially, Augustine was obstinate in accepting. Later, however, acceded to the request on condition that he be given leave to study the Scriptures in preparation for his ministry. Augustine was ordained a priest at the beginning of 391.[66]

There at Hippo, Augustine organised a monastic community. This community he organised is the second monastery to be founded by Augustine, the first being the small community of friends which he formed soon after his return to Thagaste, following his conversion. Valerius assisted him to achieve his dream by granting him the use of the property

[65] Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 19.
[66] This date is probable as some historians record 390.

from the dependencies of the Church. Apart from being devoted to the life in the community, Augustine's gift of eloquence was recognised, and he was soon charged with the office of preaching, despite the fact that, in Africa, at the time, this special office was reserved for the bishop. Augustine also advanced in his fight against the Manichean heresies. He proved himself a true defender of the Catholic faith against heretical teaching. As often as he was challenged by notable heretical figures, Augustine displayed his understanding of the faith coupled with his eloquence. According to Portalié, Fortunatus, one of the great doctors of the Manicheans, whom Augustine had challenged in public conference, was so humiliated by his defeat that he left Hippo.[67]

3. Augustine becomes Bishop of Hippo

Valerius, the Bishop of Hippo became weak as a result of old age, and he sought authorisation for Augustine to be made coadjutor. On Valerius' death, Augustine succeeded him as bishop of Hippo in 395 or 396. He was 42 years when he was consecrated and was in charge of Hippo for 34 years.

The zealous bishop of Hippo showed himself a true shepherd and the defender of the truth. In keeping with his episcopal duties, Augustine left the monastery building to reside in the home meant for the bishop; but his palace residence was turned to a monastery, where clerics could live, while observing poverty and religious discipline. Part of the cleric's regular life was self-denial. Augustine, therefore, had the responsibilities of forming his clerics and carrying out the pastoral activities of the diocese. Augustine often preached in Carthage and in other smaller towns and took part in doctrinal debate and responded to controversies and heretical teachings. He also devoted most of his time to writing.[68] Augustine remained the

[67] Eugène Portalié, "The Life of St Augustine of Hippo," 87.
[68] Before Augustine died, he had a catalogue of his writings, using the opportunity to correct some errors he detected, as well as stating the occasions of his writings. Possidius (Augustine's biographer) made a compiled list of these works.

bishop of Hippo until his death in 430. He worked on his *City of God* until his seventies, just few years before his death. He died when Hippo was under siege from the Vandal invaders. During these troubled times Augustine comforted himself with the admonition to detach from earthly goods.

AUGUSTINE'S APOLOGETICS AND POLEMICAL WORKS

The period Augustine became bishop witnessed the emergence and proliferation of controversies and its offshoot, which is heresy. Augustine was involved with most of the major controversies that were present in the African church at the time, namely: Manicheanism, Arianism, Donatism, and Pelagianism. Possidius, in his composition of Augustine's biography, had made a chronological outline of Augustine's involvement with the controversies according to their apologetic or polemical emphases. Markus recounts that even most of Augustine's major works, the *Confessions*, *De Doctrina Christiana*, the *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, *On the Trinity*, and the *Enchiridion*, though not essentially controversial in intent, nevertheless refer to some of the controversies of the day.

Concerning the Jews, Augustine did not have real controversy with the Jews. The presence of the Jews was accepted as part of the plan of God. Augustine would later talk about the primordial presence of the Jewish people in the *City of God* as intrinsically part of the progression of the *Civitate Dei.* However, he did write a sermon, *adversus Iudaeos* against the Jews, in which he corrected some of the errors he conceived as emerging from the Jews' understanding of Christians. Augustine, in this sermon, shows his understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and Christianity's respect for the Jews; though he also recognises the Jews' inability to see Jesus as both light and salvation.

> Certainly, if they understood what the Prophet, whom they read, is foretelling: 'I have given you to be the light of the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth'

> they would not be so blind and so sick as not to recognize in Jesus Christ both light and salvation.[69]

Augustine affirm that the error of the Jews that the Books of the Old Testament do not concern Christians must be refuted. According to Augustine, the Jews believe that because we observe the new sacraments, we no longer preserve the old. In his response, Augustine argues that the coming of Christ has fulfilled the precepts of the law.

> If there are any other events over which there is no need for delay at this time, events which have been represented by those ancient signs, they have come to an end in Him whose kingdom will be without end. It was necessary, indeed, that all things be fulfilled in Him, who came to fulfil, not to destroy, the Law or the Prophets.[70]

There is, however, an older consensus that there is an element of anti-Jewish sentiments in Augustine's sermon. But this accusation has been challenged by Paula Fredriksen. According to Fredriksen, Augustine interpretation of psalm 59 in the *City of God* shows that he argue that the Jews alone of all religious minorities within the Christian state should not be impeded in practising their religion; and they merit this exemption because their religious practice is from God the Father.[71]

> The same God whom Christians worshiped was himself the source of Jewish scripture, Jewish tradition, and Jewish practice. Thus God himself, Augustine insisted, wanted the Jews to remain Jews. Let them preserve their ancient books, he urged; let them live openly according to their ancestral practices while scattered among the Christian majority.[72]

Augustine believes that the presence of the Jews does great value and service of testimony to the church. According to Fredriksen, Augustine's teaching on the Jews' special status and service remains an important aspect of his theological legacy, and this legacy passed into the

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[69] Augustine, *Tractatus Adversus Iudaeos* (Ch. 1), trans. Roger Pearse, https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2015/06/11/augustines-treatise-against-the-jews [accessed February 20th, 2020].
[70] Augustine, *Tractatus Adversus Iudaeos*, Ch 2.
[71] Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian defense of Jews and Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xii.
[72] Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, xii.

traditions of medieval Christian Europe.[73] The misinterpretation of the nature of Christian-Jewish rhetoric at the time of Augustine would have led to Augustine being accused of being anti-Jewish. Fredriksen proposes a proper understanding of the history and role of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric in Augustine's culture in order to see how Augustine challenged hostile *contra Iudaeos rhetoric*.[74]

Augustine's first direct confrontation was with the pagans. The empire was a mixture of predominantly Christians and many non-Christians. He often aimed at pagan practices through his sermons, since sometimes, part of his congregation would be people with certain attachments to pagan beliefs and practices. When Augustine began his famous work, *De Civitate Dei*, he was already acquainted with paganism; it would not be as a neophyte in this area that he responded to the "louder voices" of those who blamed Christianity for the calamities that befell Rome in 410.

1. Manicheanism

Augustine's involvement with the Manicheanism as a bishop could be seen as a continuation of his response to this sect which he had begun already soon after his dissolution with them while in Rome. Though Manicheanism had been banned since the time of Diocletian, there still exist sympathisers of the belief who often times debated with Christians in open places. The bulk of Manichean teaching, as shown earlier, was the problem of evil: that a person cannot be held responsible for evil done. Augustine response to this Manichean teaching is that the human person is a complete whole and therefore takes responsibility for every action done. Apart from this, his idea of *privation boni* is that God is the one and only principle of being (and goodness). All that exists is good; and evil is a lack of this good. There is no 'evil' principle. The devil is

[73] Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, xii.
[74] Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews,* xviii.

a creature, subject to God. Augustine's position had earlier been influenced by the preaching of Ambrose.

2. Arianism[75]

With the outcome of the council of Constantinople in 380, Arianism should have been long gone, having been suppressed by the council and the emperor (Theodosius I). However, Arianism had spread, especially among the Germanic tribe and continued into the 5th century. Against the adherents and promoters of Arianism, Augustine defended the faith in a public conference with Maximinus (An Arian Bishop who came to Hippo with the imperial army sent by empress Placidia to fight against Boniface) in 428. Both sides had presented their views; and Maximinus had a long speech prepared for his defence, lasting through the rest of the day. Surprising, the next day he announced his departure to Carthage, abandoning what he had begun. Augustine sent to him a written report, "*Against Maximinus"*, in which he demonstrated the consubstantiality and equality of the three persons.

3. Donatism

Donatism was the result of the schism caused in the African church from the Diocletian persecution in 305. During the period, some church clergy surrendered copies of the Scriptures to the authorities. This act was considered as apostacy; and as such, those who were involved in the surrendering were treated with scorn and regarded not rigorous enough to be among the "obstinate" Christian community. The Donatists assert that sacramental validity was dependent upon the faith and moral standing of the minister. Therefore, according to the Donatists, priests who submitted to the demands of the state authority during the persecution cannot offer valid sacraments. This sect was particularly united in their hatred for the Catholics. The schism lasted

[75] Arianism is a nontrinitarian Christological teaching which asserts that Jesus was begotten by God (the Father) at a point in time, a creature and therefore, subordinate to the Father. He is not of equal substance and not co-eternal with the Father.

for a long time. Augustine was confronted with this situation not long after his priestly ordination. As a bishop he became more involved with the issue because Hippo was within an area where Donatists were in the majority. At the Council of Carthage in 393, Augustine proposed a change in attitude with respect to the severity with which those who succumbed to the persecution were treated. In 411, Augustine played a leading role in the conference called by the authority with the hope of healing the division between the Donatists and the Catholics. In all, Augustine expounded and defended the Catholic position: The Church, as a community on earth, can tolerate sinners (but not heretics) in her bosom for the purpose of leading them back to the truth, without losing her sanctity.[76]

4. Pelagianism

Not long after the suppression of the Donatist in 411, Pelagianism[77] caught the attention of Augustine. The Pelagian controversy raged predominantly in the Western part of the Roman Empire, generally regarded as the first theological controversy in the Latin Christian church. Pelagius asserted that original sin did not affect human nature, and that humans have the free will to achieve perfection without divine grace. Pelagius took the fact of human freedom and responsibility seriously that he insisted that the human person, who had received the *posse* from God, had a duty to live a life free from sin.[78] Pelagius believed that human nature has been created for achieving perfection, and with that he encouraged his followers to pursue after holy life. "…the idea of an 'original sin', that could make men incapable of not sinning even more, struck him as quite absurd."[79] Pelagians believed it is left to the will in the human struggle for perfection. Pelagianism had appealed to a universal theme that there is a need for

[76] Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, 28.
[77] Pelagianism originated from Pelagius, a monk. Influenced by Rufinus, Pelagius attacked the dogma of grace. Pelagianism asserts that original sin did not affect human nature, and that humans have the free will to achieve perfection without divine grace.
[78] Mathijs Lamberigts, "Recent Research into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the role of Julian of Aeclanum," *Augustiniana* 52, no. 2/4 (2002): 181.
[79] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 343.

every individual to define himself, and to feel free to create one's own values amidst the conventional life of any given society.[80]

> For the Pelagians, man had no excuse for his own sins, nor for the evils around him. If human nature was essentially free and well-created, and not dogged by some mysterious inner weakness, the reason for the general misery of men must be somehow external to their true selves; it must lie, in part, in the constricting force of the social habits of a pagan past.[81]

Initially, Augustine regarded Pelagius' preaching as emphasising the responsibility of the human will against the determinism of Manicheanism, but he later noticed a lacuna in Pelagius' position for the latter had neglected the place of divine grace in the exercise of human freedom in reaching human perfection. In 415, Augustine refuted one of Pelagius' books on nature in his *On Nature and Grace (De Natura et Gratia)*, in which Augustine affirmed the supremacy of God's grace. According to Peter Brown, for Augustine, Pelagianism was a body of ideas filled with arguments, and the intellectual quality of these argument was in no doubt.[82]

According to Mathijs Lamberigts, Augustine earned the honorary title, *doctor gratiae* for his many interventions as the defender of grace against the Pelagians whom he accused of being the *inimici gratiae*.[83] Pelagianism was regarded as opposed to dogmatic teachings on the role of grace in human salvation. Augustine argument was that salvation is only achieved through Christ, wherein he also based his argument for the importance of infant baptism because every human person is born with original sin.

> As a consequence, Pelagians were accused of affirming only a *gratia adiuvans*. In addition, such grace was considered to be an "external" form of assistance, whereby the Law, the Gospels and the example of Christ were 'offered' to the human person who were free to accept their assistance or reject it without restraint or hindrance.[84]

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[80] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 346.
[81] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 349.
[82] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* 345.
[83] Lamberigts, "Recent Research into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the role of Julian of Aeclanum," 175.
[84] Lamberigts, "Recent Research into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the role of Julian of Aeclanum," 177.

Apart from these, it was argued that Pelagianism denied the dogma of original sin and its consequences on human nature; but Lamberigts proposed that it should be noted that prior to the time of Augustine and his colleagues, ancient literatures make no reference to such dogma.[85]

Notable figures involved in promoting Pelagianism would be Caelestius and Julian of Aeclanum. Julian's concept of God shows a detailed presentation of the divinity of the creator who stands as guarantor for the goodness of creation; therefore, the human person is created with a good soul at new-born infant and that makes it unthinkable that newborn infants would inherit sin. Such would imply that God himself is responsible for the sin present in the soul of the infant.[86] Everyone is responsible for his or her ethical life.

Augustine attended to these controversies with diligence. He understood the kind of task that was before him, being a bishop and have already begun to gain popularity and reverence from neighbouring regions for his responses to heretical teachings. Apart from his unique style in responding to the aforementioned controversies/heresies, Augustine was often called upon by bishops to respond to certain doctrinal issues. There are also some of his personal replies to some persons; for instance, his published work, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* (*De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*) in response to Julian.

The examples above constitute a survey of Augustine's controversial works. As such a brief survey indicates, Augustine was often engaged in controversy, defending the Christian faith ad extra against pagan attacks and ad intra against Christian error. Such an engagement in controversial defence qualifies Augustine as not only a theologian, bishop, and preacher, but also an apologist.

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[85] Lamberigts, "Recent Research into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the role of Julian of Aeclanum," 177.
[86] Lamberigts, "Recent Research into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the role of Julian of Aeclanum," 192.

This chapter surveyed the life of Augustine. It highlighted notable figures who played key roles in the intellectual and religious formation of Augustine; especially the influence of Monica (mother) and Ambrose. The various places where he lived and studied also had some influence on Augustine at some points in his life. His encounter with the Manicheans led to his belief in dualism though he later renounced this when he became aware of the errors in their teachings, which were far from helping him in his search for the truth. Augustine's conversion was a turn-around in his life, that moment when he wished to give up everything for the sake of Christ (whom he had come to know as the Truth). Augustine's responses to heretical sects, like of Manicheans, Arians, Donatists, and Pelagians, showed how much of a passionate and intelligent theologian and apologist he was. His *City of God* would be considered his most comprehensive and detailed defence of Christianity against their pagan detractors of Rome in the 5th century.

Before exploring Augustine's apologetics in the *City of God* (this will be done in chapter 3), the next chapter will look at the meaning, history, and the relevance of Christian apologetics generally, which will better prepare us to appreciate Augustine's apologetics in the *City of God.*

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?

Amidst the various understandings of the word 'apologetics', this study understands apologetics as an act of proving the reasonableness or credibility of a particular claim. For our purposes, Christian apologetics pertains to demonstrating the reasonableness or credibility of Christianity.

Apologetics is derived from the Greek word, "*apologia*", meaning to offer a formal defence or justification for a particular theory or doctrine. The word was originally used in the legal context, as a defendant's reply to matters that he or she has been accused of. In the ancient Greek use of apologetics, the apologist often makes a meaningful attempt to show that the accusations brought before him or her have no foundations and therefore, cannot stand. A classic example of this is Socrates' own defense before the Athenian court.[1] The task of the apologist is to present to the listeners or the enquirer the reasonableness of one's position. The apologist does this by presenting arguments – by reasoning and examples – to demonstrate to the enquirer that what is proposed is meaningful and reasonable, with the expectation that whatever objections are levelled against the position can be surmounted. The goal is not primarily to persuade the enquirer of one's position, but, to show the feasibility, possibility, and, in some cases, likelihood or suitability of a particular position. There are necessarily opinions and counter-opinions, and these often call for clarification and defence. Each party desires to make his or her stand as reasonably as possible.

There is no single style or method of doing apologetics. While some apologetics rely heavily on providing objective or historical evidence, other apologetics are more experiential

[1] James Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 1. Socrates was being accused of corrupting the youth and refusing to worship the gods and created new deities.

in that they appeal to the interlocutor's dispositions and desires. While the successful rebutting of certain objections may affect the ultimate position of one's interlocutor, a successful apologetics does not necessarily terminate in another's adopting the defended position. There is always opportunity for further discussion. Apologetics takes place in every area of human life, and this is because humans are by nature social and intellectual beings and interact with each other. We want to engage in meaningful argumentation in conveying and evaluating our positions.[2]

This chapter explores the foundations, modes, and purposes of Christian apologetics. It will highlight some of the biblical foundations for apologetics before considering some objections to the practice of apologetics. The chapter will conclude with a catalogue of historical examples of Christians engaging in apologetics from the New Testament to the present day. This survey of Christian apologetics will prepare us for delving into Augustine's *City of God* in the next chapter. But before all that, I will make a brief exploration of what apologetics is generally.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Christian apologetics is the defence of Christian religion. It seeks to defend and commend the Christian faith, or its truth claims through systematic argumentation against objections. In other words, Christian apologetics is understood to mean the vindication of the faith. Just like the general understanding of apologetics, Christian apologetics is geared towards bringing to light the reasonableness of Christian faith.

> To demonstrate the reasonableness of faith does not mean proving every article of faith. Rather, it means being able to demonstrate that there are good grounds for believing these articles are trustworthy and reliable – for example, by showing that the Christian faith makes sense of what we observe and experience.[3]

[2] This fact of human experience as being social and intellectual is an anthropological justification for apologetics. Now, the main focus of every apologetic is not so much about converting the inquirer or questioner, but to respond to objections and thereby persuade him or her to consider the reasonableness of what is being defended.
[3] Alister McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2012), 79.

And because Christianity is endowed with a unique way of life which is founded on the life and teachings of Christ, Christ is the nexus of every Christian apologetics: knowledge of Christ is the beginning and the pivotal focus in every Christian apologetical task.

Christian apologetics deals with core Christian issues, the essentials of the faith. In other words, what apologetics defends are the notions that if removed from a system of beliefs would eliminate the sense in which that system could be called Christian.[4] Christian apologetics brings to the fore the spiritual richness of the Christian faith. According to McGrath, doing Christian apologetics well is about how we faithfully and effectively communicate the Christian faith to a culture that may not understand traditional Christian terms. Therefore, there is need to set out and explain the deep attraction of the Christian gospel for our culture making out of the languages and images that are accessible.[5]

It is the intention of every Christian apologist that his or her audience comes to a better appreciation of what has been defended. McGrath put its beautifully thus:

> The task of the apologist is not to make the Christian faith attractive or relevant to the world. Rather, we are called on to help people appreciate and discover its power, relevance, and persuasiveness. The apologist is called on to work out how to allow the intrinsic truth, beauty, and goodness of the Christian faith to be discerned.[6]

McGrath's assertion indicates that apologetics points out what is already present in the subject of discourse, but for some reasons, the detractor does not recognise it. The apologist knows the matter being considered, and his or her manner of defence invites others to appreciate what before now was not clear to them, what might have been present but not yet discerned. McGrath posits that,

> Apologetics can be likened to drawing curtains to one side so people can catch a glimpse of what lies beyond, or holding a diamond up to the light and allowing its facets to scintillate and

[4] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 19.
[5] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 20.
[6] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 47.

> sparkle in the sunlight. It's about establishing *gateways* for faith…The key themes are those of allowing people to see things clearly, perhaps for the first time; to discover insights that had previously eluded them; and to suddenly realise why people might find the Christian faith so intellectually persuasive and imaginatively compelling.[7]

Christian apologetics is generally the defence of the Christian faith against objections levelled against it, and this is achieved through various explanations of the contents of faith. The apologist devotes attention to revealing authentic Christianity in order to correct misconceptions and prejudices. A typical example of one who benefited from Christian apologetics will be the theologian Augustine, who for sometimes was preoccupied by philosophy, falling in love with Manichean ideology, but had a turn around after encountering Ambrose. After listening to Ambrose speak about Christianity he saw in the preaching of Ambrose, answers to some of his questions. and scales of doubts began to fall from his eyes, leading to his conversion to Christianity.

Christian apologetics defends essential beliefs of the Christianity faith, and does that by (i) explaining some themes that are evident in the experience of the human persons in relation to Christian faith, for instance, the presence of human suffering, death, creation, the existence of God, etc., and (ii) highlighting the possibility and rational coherence of – while not presuming to prove – those truths which we come to know through faith. This truth known through faith is what in Christianity is referred to as revealed truth. Reason cannot prove revealed truth, but it can persuade someone that Christians, in believing it, are not acting unreasonably. Apologetics, then, is a particular dialogue between faith and reason. In theology faith uses reason to understand itself; in apologetics, faith uses reason, neither to prove faith or understand faith, but to show its possibility, its intelligibility, and perhaps even its beauty. The use of reason for the defence of Christianity was largely influenced by rationalist culture that

[7] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 127.

was dominant in the 17th-18th century during the enlightenment, which regarded truth as that which is in conformity with reason.[8]

Though apologetics and evangelism may be closely related, there are differences between them. According to Beilby, both Christian apologetics and evangelism have a common general goal: encouraging commitment to Jesus Christ; for apologetics clears the ground for evangelism; makes evangelism more effective by addressing obstacles that might hinder the preaching of the gospel.[9] The difference is that while Christian apologetics involves engagement with the questions raised by interlocutors or raised by a culture with the aim of showing how Christian faith is able to provide meaningful answers to these questions, evangelism moves beyond this to demonstrate the cultural plausibility of the faith. Whereas Christian apologetics is concerned with conversation, commending and defence, evangelism is about inviting people to the faith.

Kinds of Christian Apologetics

Beilby made a categorisation of Christian apologetics into two major parts, namely, "responsive and proactive apologetics." This categorisation derives from the very functions of Christian apologetics itself, which is defending and commending the faith.

Responsive and Proactive Apologetics

This categorisation is made according to the nature and context of apologetics. Responsive apologetics is when the apologist intends to demonstrate that objections to Christian beliefs are not successful. The task of responsive apologetics can show either that there is something false in the objection itself, or that the objection does not apply to the Christian faith because the Christian faith is different than what the objection supposes it to be.

[8] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 27.
[9] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 32.

An example of responsive apologetics is the attempt to respond to the claim that the presence of evil in the world negates the fact of God's existence. In a bid to respond to such claims, responsive apologetics will demonstrate that such a proposition cannot stand. It does this by presenting a counter position, which will demonstrate that evil in the world is the result of humanity's use of freedom in making choices since God, in fact, created all things good, and his goodness cannot be undermined. Augustine's response to the Manicheans about the principal cause of evil is an apt demonstration of responsive apologetics.

Proactive apologetics, as the designation suggests, is "acting before", meaning that Christian apologetics does not wait for objections to be developed; rather, it takes it on to present systematic arguments to show that Christian belief is rational and commendable. This aspect of Christian apologetics is also referred to as positive apologetics. According to Beilby, proactive apologetics fits well into the slogan "the best defence is a good offence"; and an appropriate instance for proactive apologetics is an argument for the existence of God or argument for the reliability of the Bible.[10]

Essentially, the two aspects of Christian apologetics delineated by Beilby describes the overall activities of Christian apologists both in the past and present. The Christian faith was, and continues to be interrogated by critics and curious Christians alike. In antiquity, issues of debate sprang more from pagans who taunted the Christian religion and also from despairing believers of the Christian faith. Christian apologists did their best in presenting Christianity as reasonable, dispelling mischaracterizations, and encouraging others to consider the reasonableness of being a Christian or refuting the errors of non-Christian religion or philosophy. In this long tradition of apologetics, there emerged arguments for the existence of God, the goodness of material creation, the rational coherence of a Trinitarian God, the relevance of the body of Christ and its communal life, and other such issues.

[10] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 15.

There is a specific, quintessential apologetics which is answering objections to the faith levelled at it by a critic or questioner, but there is the looser apologetics whereby one is seeking to answer questions raised by one self: the moment a person who is a Christian asks questions about his or her faith, and desires to come up with answers, apologetics is already taking place. By focusing on the self, the apologist is continually and consciously thinking about what he or she believes; examining the contents of what is believed. This process of self-examination and questioning helps one's faith to mature, so that even though faith is a gift bestowed upon the human person by God, it grows through conscious reflections and self-examination.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IN THE BIBLE

Concretely, there is no formal system in the Bible that talks about apologetics, but the Bible has instances that commends the task of Christian apologetics. Christian defence is done on the basis of the New Testament mandate in 1 Peter 3:14-15, on the need to repel false accusations whenever they come. This biblical exhortation makes defence of Christian faith mandatory for adherents of the faith. Many in the past, as well as in the present have heeded to this command. The same biblical injunction also directs: "*Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame*" (1 Pet 3:16).

We will focus on Jesus' command in the Gospel of Mark 16:16, "Go out to the whole world and preach the good news" and Peter's exhortation to the young Christian community to always be prepared to give answers to anyone who asks them for a reason for their faith (1 Pet 3:14-16). These texts, in themselves, are not apologetical texts but appeal to justify Christian apologetics as having its origin in the Bible.

1. Mark 16:16

This account comes at the concluding part of the Gospel of Mark. Mark recounts Jesus' encounter with his disciples before his ascension, giving them the instruction to go out and

preach the good news everywhere, to those who have not heard it. Jesus' instruction is a command that his followers are to continue in his mission. This task of preaching has been passed on to the church. Jesus' commission is to preach and not for apologetics per se; but the challenges the church encounters while preaching the good news call for apologetics. Therefore, Jesus commission does contain the call to doing apologetics.

2. I Peter 3:16

Here Peter speaks about the Christian hope upon which the Christian community based their presence and activities among their neighbours, which at the time were drawn mostly from Judaism and paganism. Peter's recommendation was needed for a community who had to endure a lot of ridicule and even ostracised because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Apart from offering the Christian community comfort in their trying time by referring to the Christian hope, Peter also declares it as a duty upon every believer to be on the alert, and always ready to give answers to those who inquire from them about their faith. Their apologetics is to be focused on vindicating the new form of life they have embraced which is summed up in the person and life of Jesus of Nazareth. With this exhortation of Peter, it is clear what his intention for apologetics is: to give reasonable answer to those who constantly revile Christians for their faith in Jesus Christ. According to Beilby, the last verse, 1 Peter 3;15, is probably the best-known biblical verse on apologetics since it contains not only a clear reference to, but a command to engage in apologetics.[11]

Beilby further recounts the various passages in the New Testament where the word apologetics is used. The word is either used to signify an answer given to a charge or a vindication. Here are examples of Beilby's itemisation of the various passages in the New Testament where the noun form of *apologia* was used: Philippians 1:7, Philippians 1: 16, and

[11] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 13.

1 Peter 3;15 (in these three instances, it is gospel of Jesus Christ that is being defended); Acts 22:1, Acts 25: 16, 1 Corinthians 9:3, 2 Timothy 4:16 (these passages is about Paul himself being defended).[12]

3. Acts 22:1

This is part of Paul's apologia, in defence of himself, and his appeal to Roman Law. In this passage, Paul speaks to a group of Jews in Jerusalem about his encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus. He answers questions concerning his identity as a Jew, and with that he establishes himself as of same stock with his accusers. Paul's affirmation is, "I am a Jewish man". Paul affirms his full membership in the sacra community of the chosen people.[13] Paul is questioned by his Jewish community about his new way of life, and he used the opportunity to speak to them of his encounter on the road to Damascus. He makes a defence of himself before people who are of his age group, and his argument is that the experience of Damascus would have brought many of them to the same conclusion as his. Paul notion about Jesus and his followers had changed following his experience on the road. The situation Paul was in at the time required that he offered answers to their questions concerning his decision to be a preacher and defender of the good news of Jesus.

4. Philippians 1:16

Paul began his letter to the Philippians in thanksgiving to God for them, for granting to them a share in the spreading of the gospel through their conversion and in their support to him while in prison. When Paul is brought before the authorities, he sees this as an opportunity to make a defence of his faith in Jesus Christ; his apologetics before the Roman authorities where he had been imprisoned. Apart from supporting him while in prison, the Philippi community had

[12] The list here relies on the work of Beilby.
[13] Richard Dillon, "Acts of the Apostle," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond Brown et al (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), 759.

taken on the task of evangelisation when he was away. Unfortunately, some of the preachers had done so in envy and rivalry, they seem to have taken advantage of Paul's imprisonment, perhaps regarding it as a disgrace.[14] Paul's appeal is that they should speak about the gospel in love, preaching the good news for the sake of good will.

From the above biblical examples, we see that Christian apologetics for the early believers was about the defence of the Gospel of Jesus, and to state that Christianity is true. If true, it is filled with hope; the kind that encourages believers to endure the hardship that they experience. Paul, himself gave an example of how to endure every hardship that comes as a result of one's witnessing to the good news.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS: DEFENDING CHRISTIAN FAITH

Christian apologetics is about defending and commending the reasonableness of the Christian faith. Generally speaking, Christian apologetics does not necessarily have to defend every aspect of the faith; however, it does not mean that the aspects of the faith not within the focus of apologetics are not significant.[15] As Beilby posits, apologetics does not focus on questions that might be considered intramural (within bounds) debates between Christians though theologically important, but what apologetics defends are the core aspects of the faith that when they are absent, the sense of being Christian might be lost.[16] Beilby's opinion is that generally speaking, Christian apologetics should pay attention more to the systems of beliefs, the core issues of Christianity. His position might be a useful tool for dialogue among the various Christian communities.

The focus of Christian apologetics revolves round the keys aspects of Christian faith; namely, the existence of God, the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the possibility of

[14] Brendan Byrne, "The Letter to the Philippians," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary,* 793.
[15] Specifically, aspect of the Catholic Christian faith that comes under attack is worthy of being defended, especially by Catholics.
[16] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 19.

Divine revelation. These aspects of Christian belief have been and continue to be some of the most prominent issues which apologetics seek to uphold. Beilby comments:

> There are undoubtedly theological beliefs on some Christian's essential list that are not on others. Nevertheless, there is a common core of beliefs that are expressed in the ecumenical councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon), affirmed by the ecumenical Christian creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed), sustained by the major denominational divisions of the Christian church (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox), and central to the basic teachings of the great theologians of the Faith. Items on this list include the existence of God, the deity of Jesus Christ, the affirmation of God as Trinity, the claim that God created all that exists outside himself, the assertion of human sinfulness, the atonement of Jesus Christ and undoubtedly more.[17]

They are also what could be referred to as the truth claims of Christianity. These claims are held by all Christians, regardless of their tradition, denomination, or ecclesial community to which they belong.

According to C. S. Lewis (An Anglican Christian Apologist), we are to defend Christianity which is the faith preached by the Apostles, attested to by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, and explained by the Church Fathers; and this task of defending what makes for Christianity must be thoroughly distinguished from what an individual person may think about God or the human person.[18] To what extent does apologetics depend – if at all – on one's personal conviction? It is a fact that all Christian apologists do have personal opinions about particular areas of the faith, however apologetics is most effective when it seeks to defend, not one's personal opinions or value-judgements, but an objective collection of data (Christianity) which one believes to be true. For Lewis, "we are defending Christianity; not 'my religion'."

> This distinction, which is demanded by honesty, also gives the apologist a great tactical advantage. The great difficulty is to get modern audiences to realise that you are preaching Christianity solely and simply because you happen to think it *true*; they always suppose you are preaching it because you like it or think

[17] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 19.
[18] C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 87.

> it good for society or something of that sort. Now a clearly maintained distinction between what the Faith actually says and what you will like it to have said or what you understand or what you personally find helpful or think probable, forces your audience to realise that you are tied to your data just as the scientist is tied by the results of the experiments; that you are not just saying what you like. This immediately helps them to realise that what is being discussed is a question about objective fact – not gas about ideals and points of view.[19]

The effectiveness of apologetics is connected to how much knowledge the apologist knows about his or her faith, and the style of presentation, taking into account the nature of the audience (single person or a large group of persons). The style of presentation brings forth the beauty of the Christian faith. According to McGrath, "the gospel does not need to be made relevant to these audiences. The question is how we help the audience grasp this relevance – for example, by using helpful illustrations, analogies, or stories that allow them to connect with it."[20] This means that the apologist does not add anything new to the truth of the Gospel, but the manner with which the message is communicated has effect on how it is received, appreciated and makes meaning to the audience. McGrath acknowledges that proper Christian apologetics has a strong positive dimension. According to him, apologetics sets out the full attractiveness of Jesus Christ in a way that those outside the faith can begin to understand why he merits such important consideration.[21]

Both Lewis and Beilby agree that when it comes to defending Christianity, personal opinions about certain beliefs, though important, are not what the apologists put forward. Now, it is not supposed that the apologist is not allowed to have his personal opinions, else he or she may come across as disingenuous, insincere, hypocritical, and 'inauthentic'. Lewis acknowledges that when the apologist scrupulously endeavours to preserve the Christian message as distinct from personal ideas or opinions, it forces him or her to consider those core

[19] Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 88.
[20] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 19.
[21] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 19.

elements in original Christianity which he or she finds obscure or may not agree with totally.[22] The fact that these doctrines appear obscure encourages one to want to investigate more in order to come to a more accurate knowledge about a particular doctrine. Continuous assessment of one's belief is further enhanced by studious study of the various tenets that might have given rise to the different idea that one possesses. In the long run, Christianity itself grows and Christian apologetics is strengthened. In all these, the fundamental ambition of Christian apologetics is to defend Christianity against oppositions. There might be different ways, according to different Christian denominations, of explaining the various core aspects of the Christian faith, but there remains fundamental truth claims of Christianity and these are what Christian apologetics seeks to defend.

Through these major contents of the faith, Christian apologetics strives to show that the Christian faith is not based on mere demonstration of the mind's power to transcend beyond the physical, but on faith well deposited and preserved from antiquity. Proper apologetics aids in nurturing this faith in those who chose to follow the way of life demonstrated through the life, death and resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Bible and in the church's tradition (the place of tradition is a significant aspect in the Catholic's understanding of how one grows in the faith that he or she has received). Above all, Christian belief asserts that one grows in the faith as long as he or she is opened to the workings of God in his or her heart. According to Sproul, "though apologetics is a task given to us as Christians, and we are to be responsible in the handling of the truth claims of Christianity, apologetics may aid in the planting and watering of the seed, but only God can bring forth the "increase" of faith."[23]

[22] Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 88.
[23] R. C. Sproul, *Defending your Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 22.

1. The Existence of God: A Key Point in Christian Apologetics

At the heart of Christian religion is belief in God, who is self-existent and who created the world. These and other attributes, such as good and perfect, make God the all-powerful being that every Christian believes. Christianity, as a religion, is focused on leading adherents to God and instilling in their hearts the belief of being united with God forever in the hereafter following the example set by Jesus Christ. According to Sproul, "when orthodox believers asserts the existence of God, they are claiming that a supreme being exists outside of themselves, who is not a part of their thoughts or feelings and who is not created or changed by any actions wrought by human hands."[24]

Over the years, Christianity has been called upon to account for the existence of God. This call has become even more common today as many increasingly are demanding proof to demonstrate the presence of this Divine Being. Such questions as: Does God exist? And if he does, what proofs are there to show that he exists? On what grounds are we to accept the claims that God is responsible for the creation of the world? The focus of this study is not to render up-to-date analysis of the various responses for the proof of the existence of God, but to state that responding to, and defending Christian belief in the existence of God is one of the central focuses of the task of Christian apologetics.

How does Christian apologetics carry out its defence of the existence of God? It may be argued that these questions concerning the existence of God are better off left to theology as a special science. However, theology and apologetics are not mutually exclusive. Theology is the science or act of discourse about God and other aspects of Christian belief, while apologetics would be considered as setting out the opportunity for, and devise the best methods for the defence of Christianity. Therefore, apologetics is recognised as the tool employed by

[24] Sproul, *Defending your Faith*, 63.

theology to convey the fruits of its systematic reasoning and discourse. Theology develops and explains the doctrines, while the tasks of apologetics seeks to demonstrate the truth and reasonableness of these doctrine and commend Christian faith: the truths of Christian faith revealed by Christ, preached by the Apostles and always further explained by theologians and Church authorities. Therefore, defending the existence of God in Christian apologetics will necessarily require a blend of sound theology (*explicavit fidei*) and proper apologetics (*demonstratio Christiana*).

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Majority of Christians would agree that apologetics is important. In one way or in another, a Christian would have been confronted with the task to show the credibility of his or her faith. Christians do not necessarily go searching for opportunities in order to prove the credibility of Christian faith; one is faced with it, challenged to do it, especially in contemporary world that is fast growing into secularism. The Christian man or woman intrinsically makes choices between what he or she believes and what a "secularised" society expects. The task is about to "prove" the relevance of his or her faith. However, there are objections to Christian apologetics both from within and without the Christian faith. Critics have argued that engaging in Christian apologetics is not necessary. It is understandable when non-Christians would object to the usefulness of apologetics. But why are some Christians opposed to apologetics? Here are some of the reasons they give for objecting the importance of Christian apologetics.

The most obvious objection to Christian apologetics is that apologetics is triumphalistic and arrogant because it presumes a certain rational credibility that the Christian faith has lost in modernity; the idea that apologists tend to pursue the case that Christianity presents a better option for the human person than what is experience in the secular world. Christian apologetics is also accused of been combative with the secular world rather than cooperative; that focuses on the differences, by taking out what is uniquely Christian and defending it, rather than what

is common with the world. There is the tendency to imagine that apologetics promotes dualistic view of the world: the Christian world versus the secular world. Because of these notions about doing apologetics, some people would argue that we abandon apologetics completely. However, it is not the case that apologetics is not open to dialogue. Defending Christianity does not mean dismissal of the positions of the questioners but presenting why one's accusations of Christianity do not stand. Apologetics gives room for others to presents their views, and never forces its ideas on others but invite them to consider what is being defended. Defence does not always mean attack or condemnation. According to Alan Richardson, "Apologetics deals with the relationship of the Christian faith to the wider sphere of man's "secular" knowledge – philosophy, science, history, sociology, and so on – with a view to showing that faith is not at variance with the truth that these enquiries have uncovered."[25]

1. Biblical Objections

A major component of biblical objections to Christian apologetics states that Scripture itself is the supreme word of God, and therefore, does not require defence. Beilby identifies two main classifications of biblical objections, namely, aggressive, and modest objections. The former claims that there are clear and specific repudiations of apologetics, while the latter claims that the Bible does not directly address the task of apologetics and so cannot be used to promote Christian apologetics.[26]

Those who aggressively object to apologetics appeal especially to Luke 21:14-15, "*keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict."* Proponents of the aggressive objection to apologetics would reiterate that after Jesus had told his disciples of their persecution, he admonished them not to prepare themselves for any form

[25] Alan Richardson, *Christian Apologetics* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1947), 19.
[26] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 133.

of defence since the Holy Spirit will give them utterance. Therefore, by making preparation for the defence of the faith, apologists act contrary to Christ's command. Responding to this biblical objection is first, to challenge critics to consider a proper understanding of what exactly Jesus was referring to when he talked about persecution. Rather, defenders of apologetics, however, interpret Luke 22 differently, claiming that Jesus was speaking about their imminent persecution while majority of the works of apologetics today would involve different instances. The attention of critics should also be drawn to the meaning of the biblical terms to their context.

Modest biblical objections to apologetics do not necessary claim that Scripture prohibits apologetics, but simply argue that Scripture does not give call for or permit apologetics. The argument for this objection is summarised below. Various Christian responses to these objections are presented alongside the objections.

No-details Argument

The Bible does not provide specific instructions on how apologetics should be done; therefore, it is unnecessary to engage in apologetics. In response to this argument, it is argued that it is not the case that Scripture says nothing about apologetics. 1 Peter 3:15 and Philippians 1:2 are scriptural passages that encourage believers to defend their faith and how they should interact with others as they interact and share the Gospel. Moreover, that there might not be a formal system of apologetics in Scripture does not mean it should not be done.[27]

No-clear example Argument

This objection posits that the Bible does not give clear example of apologetics. In contrast to this position, Beilby points to Paul's apologetical argument in Act 17:16-34.[28] Apart from this,

[27] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 138.
[28] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 138.

Peter's mandate in 1 Peter 3: 15 is an example of what believers should do when their faith is questioned. Peter's admonition is that they should always be prepared. There are also other instances in the Bible when responses were given to prove the authority of God's word. For instance, Elijah when he defeated the prophets of Baal spoke fearlessly and convincingly about the power of the almighty God; Jesus often gave answers to Jewish authorities who questioned the authenticity of his message and works. With these examples, Coulter also agrees that "the Bible, therefore, provides clear precedents for the task of apologetics even if it does not contain the kind of detailed arguments necessary in modern apologetics since it was written in a pre-modern world primarily to believers."[29]

No-need Argument

According to this objection, the Bible does not need to be defended since it is the living Word of God. It is capable of defending itself. It is true that apologetics does not add to the authority of the Bible; but clarifications through apologetics become necessary when people have objections that might prevent them from accepting the authority of the Scripture.

2. Theological Objections

Proponents of theological objections propose that apologists should consider going beyond just biblical evidence of apologetics to theological argumentations to understand why Christian apologetics is not necessary for the faith.

Christian Apologetics is not Necessary

Many of those who object to Christian apologetics argue that Christians do not need to prove the truth claims of Christianity since faith and proof are incompatible. They argue that as humans, hindered by corrupt nature, we are not able to respond positively to the Gospel. The

[29] Paul Coulter, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, http://www.bethinking.org/apologetics/an-introduction-to-christian-apologetics [accessed 19th June 2020].

argument is: since it is the work of the Holy Spirit to move a person to respond to the Christian gospel, why would apologetics be getting involved in arguments in order to persuade one to believe? A quick response to this objection is that there are devoted Christians today whose faith journeys have been influenced by apologetics. C. S. Lewis also affirms, "nearly everyone I know who has embraced Christianity in adult life has been influenced by what seemed to him to be at least probable arguments for theism."[30] Lewis's assertion buttresses the affirmation that there is a connection between the intellectual persuasion and the transformation that happens in the life of one who is embracing the Christian faith.

The argument for the objection that Christian apologetic is not necessary is heavily rested on the role of Faith. They argue that if Christianity is a matter of faith, Christian belief should not require knowledge based on reason, argumentation, and evidence.[31] According to this position, the moment one begins to engage in rational arguments to prove the truth of Christian faith, it is no longer faith but rational knowledge, and rational knowledge does not offer credence to the role of faith. If Christian apologetics involves arguments, then it leaves faith out of the question. This position seems to hold critically the understanding that faith simply has to do with the assent of the mind to belief whatever that is put before it as matters pertaining to religion. Taylor affirms that this objection brings forth the age-long philosophical argument about the relationship between faith and reason. The Christian tradition has witnessed several approaches to relating the two together. Those approaches which privilege one over the other are dubbed by the familiar terms, *fideism* and *rationalism*, but other approaches seek to integrate them in a more nuanced way.[32]

There is the famous "fideism versus rationalism" as a way of understanding faith in relation to reason; and vice versa. "Fideism about religious belief puts a priority on faith over

[30] Lewis, *God in the Duck*, 187.
[31] James Taylor, *Introducing Apologetics: Cultivating Christian Commitment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 31.
[32] Taylor, *Introducing Apologetics: Cultivating Christian Commitment*, 31.

reason, whereas rationalism about religious belief emphasises reason over faith."[33] However, Catholic Christian theology supports the interdependency of both faith and reason.[34] Rational argument are necessary and distinguishable from the grounds of faith but prepare one for faith. Faith believes on the authority of God, not on the authority of evidence provided by reason or from evidence from experience; but that does not mean that the evidence reason provides has no role to play in one's journey to accepting God's world in faith. Thomas Aquinas is known to have strongly proposed that both faith and reason are needed for the assent of faith, and more recently this interaction has been promoted by Vatican I's *Dei Filius* and John Paul II's *Fides et ratio*. *Dei Filius* acknowledges that the Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that there is a twofold order of knowledge, not only in principle, but also distinct in object. The object of reason are those things which natural reason can attain while that of faith concerns the mysteries hidden in God and set before us for our belief, which cannot be known unless revealed by God.[35] So far as revealed truth is concerned, reason relies on the enlightenment of faith.

> But, although faith is above reason, nevertheless, between faith and reason no true dissension can ever exist, since the same God, who reveals mysteries and infuses faith, has bestowed on the human soul the light of reason; moreover, God cannot deny Himself, nor ever contradict truth with truth.
>
> And, not only can faith and reason never be at variance with one another, but they also bring mutual help to each other, since right reasoning demonstrates the basis of faith and, illumined by its light, perfects the knowledge of divine things, while faith frees and protects reason from errors and provides it with manifold knowledge.[36]

[33] Taylor, *Introducing Apologetics: Cultivating Christian Commitment*, 31.
[34] There is a Christian theology that is quiet *Fideistic* and there is a Christian theology that is quiet rationalistic. For example, Liberal Protestantism tends towards rationalism; certain forms of Protestantism (e.g., Barth) tend towards fideism.
[35] Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*, (1980), 4.
[36] Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*, (1980), 4.

In the same vein, Pope John Paul II, in *Fides et Ratio,* affirms that faith and reason are two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.[37] He is particularly impressed by the contribution of the sciences and philosophy in aiding human knowledge. He acknowledges that the Church cannot but set great value upon reason's drive to attain goals which render people's lives ever more worthy; yet underlying all the Church's thinking is the awareness that she bears a message which has its beginning in God himself. The Church offers to human beings that knowledge which has its origin not in any speculation of her own but in the word of God she has received in faith. Reason does it bit in knowing but our true vision of God is impaired by the limits our understanding. It is true faith that we penetrate the mystery in order to understand coherently.[38] Faith assists reason in its effort to understand the mystery.

> What is distinctive in the biblical text is the conviction that there is a profound and indissoluble unity between the knowledge of reason and the knowledge of faith. The world and all that happens within it, including history and the fate of peoples, are realities to be observed, analysed and assessed with all the resources of reason, but without faith ever being foreign to the process. Faith intervenes not to abolish reason's autonomy nor to reduce its scope for action, but solely to bring the human being to understand that in these events it is the God of Israel who acts.[39]

The Church's position on the interaction between faith and reason shows that doing apologetics does not interfere with the role of faith. In Christian apologetics the emphasis is not to emphasise rational argument as the only ground for belief. Rational arguments are important, but not sufficiently enough to prove the credibility of fundamental truth claims of Christianity, but it is helpful. Human nature includes intellectual, volitional, and affective elements, and these elements are part and parcel of what interact with faith in forming one's belief. In bringing people to faith, God works through their rational minds and free wills. Therefore, doing apologetic is necessary, though apologists believe that the Holy Spirit leads

[37] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, (1998).
[38] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*,13.
[39] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, 16.

one completely to the faith. Christian apologetics is never about winning argument but winning hearts and encouraging oppositions to consider the reasonableness of Christian faith.

Human Sinfulness

One of the theological objections to apologetics concerns the sinfulness of humanity. Scripture depicts human nature as damaged and wounded as a result of sin. The effects of sin bring with it humanity's limitedness and weakness, which significantly affects his/her overall pursuit for what is considered good. It is asserted that sin hinders human will, emotions and intellect; apologist's capacity to effectively communicate grounds of belief is impaired and therefore, not able to render good defence to Christian faith, since the ability to do it properly has been hindered (noetic effects of sin).[40] According to this objection, sin prevents proper understanding of what true belief entails. "In this view, apologetic arguments are problematic because they are presumptive; they involve humans trying to come to knowledge of God on their own terms rather than submitting to God's means of making his nature and plans known."[41]

In response to this objection, Beilby posits that the noetic effects of sin are undeniable, but it is important not to misunderstand this. The effects of sin do not entail that humanity lacks the ability to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.[42] Sin does not deny human being the ability to think and produce rational defence of Christian belief.

The Transcendence of God

This objection is focused on the nature of God. By appealing to the transcendence of God, critics argue that God is beyond what the human mind can comprehend. Orthodox faith holds that God is greater than his creation both in quality and quantity. That God is transcendent, the

[40] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 141.
[41] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 141.
[42] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 142.

creator and cause of all that is, is constitutive of the Judeo-Christian understanding of God's nature. The theme of God's transcendence has even gained greater attention through the works of some Christian theologians, stating that God is strictly unknowable and incomprehensible. The fact of his transcendence is the reason why humans cannot refer to God using finite human language. Therefore, the argument is that apologetics lack the ability to speak correctly about him; at best the work of apologetic is considerably irrelevant.

It is true that the human mind, left on its own without grace, cannot fully grasp God's nature. but aided by grace, human beings can refer to God or be able to speak reasonably about God. According to Beilby, this special gift of grace is similar to salvation, which though unmerited, is given for the good of humans. Therefore, we can know God, because he has instilled in us the capacity to know him, and because he has revealed himself all through our history, and most importantly, through his Spirit.[43] Apologetics does not add any extra information about who God is. Rather, it opens it more to those who are lacking in the awareness of who God is, of which his transcendence is an important aspect. If the fact of God's transcendence is not addressed to those who are uninformed of it, it is likely they may never become aware that being transcendent is particular to God's nature.

Active works more useful than Apologetics

This objection claims that there are more important social works to do than paying attention to sceptics. Why spend time preparing arguments for the defence of Christianity when one can engage in social works? Proponents of this objection believe that social works among people will speak more for the reasonableness of Christianity than apologetical arguments. Here is the argument: "Jesus did not say that the unbelieving world would know him by the quality of

[43]Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 143.
"John Calvin talked about the *sensus divinitatis* that gives all people an awareness of God's character of God's character. And C. S. Lewis talked about a God-shaped hole in every human heart which produces a longing for God." See Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 143.

arguments they gave; he said that believers would reveal him by the way they demonstrated Christlike love to their neighbours."[44]

In his response to this objection, Beilby asserts that addressing social needs and doing apologetics are not mutually exclusive; the two can go hand-in-hand. The objection is therefore extraneous.[45] Beilby is positive that both social works and apologetics, when well-coordinated, is capable of yielding positive results. Moreover, when Christians carry out social works, it is always done in the name of Christ. Christian actions are motivated by scriptural injunction to do good. The scripture enumerates charitable works that believers can engage in; for example, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting prisoners. These are opportunities to preach the gospel through actions, and these actions do not hinder apologetics. Moreover, it is an act of charity to educate non-believers who are either lacking in information or misinformed about the Christian faith.

Despite the objections levelled against Christian apologetics, it is still relevant to argue for the importance of doing apologetics. Aside from being a scriptural command, it is required as Christian faith is constantly being lived in the same environment alongside other religions and schools of thought. There is need to find out the best ways (the kind of arguments needed, the style of apologetics required, the training) to prove the reasonableness of Christianity. Creativity, on the part of apologists, plays enormous and positive effects in achieving the set goals of Christian apologetics.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Notwithstanding the objections of apologetics, there are examples in Christian history where the Church employed apologetics to respond to questions concerning the faith as well as doctrinal challenges. The history of apologetics in the Church shows that there is a long

[44] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*,150.
[45] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*,150.

tradition in the history of Christianity to justify reasons while Christian apologetics is still relevant today. A study on the history of Christian apologetics tells about the scope and methods of apologetics that were operational in the early Christian environment, and that Christianity is consistently confronted by intellectual challenges to the faith. This history informs us about what each Christian community at a given period had to defend concerning their faith, and the various apologetical skills that probably aided the apologetical task.

Before the emergence of Christian apologetics, Christian faith was accepted as a message based on the conviction of Jesus as the Messiah. "As the message concerning Jesus as risen Lord was proclaimed, it gave rise to certain questions and objections from inquirers, from believers, and from adversaries."[46] With these experiences, there was need to have the means of responding to questions arising from these circles. Christianity emerged in a world that was already religious. Somehow, we get the clue that early Christianity would have had to face attacks from a culture which already had religious influence proliferated. Just like what should be expected when something new is emerging, Christianity was faced with suspicion. The Jews frightened and attacked converts to Christianity, by taunting them with accusations of idolatry and apostasy by forfeiting the religious practices of their ancestors. According to Paul Schanz, Justin gives an account of how Jews sent emissaries for the express purpose of creating a prejudice against the preaching of Christ's crucifixion, and of epitomising Christian doctrine as a mixture of lawlessness and godlessness. Lawless because they were considered not keeping to the Jewish laws, and godless because they deviate away from the worship of God according to the instructions of ancient Jewish patriarchs.[47]

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[46] Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 1.

[47] Paul Schanz, *A Christian Apology* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Sons, 1897), 22.
The derogatory ways in which Christians were addressed by their Jewish counterpart often led to frequent discussions between the two parties, although Jews were forbidden to dispute with Christians. For this reason, why the apologetics at those earliest times were often in dialogues. (Examples: dialogue between a Jewish Christian, Jason and an Alexandrine Jew, Papiscus; Justin's dialogue with the Jew, Trypho). See Schanz, *A Christian Apology,* 22.

Historical records on the early Christian life shows how the early Apostles and their followers were often scorned and chased out of public worship places, and some persecuted. It is not surprising that these early believers faced considerable opposition, expressible in philosophical and theological objections that subsequently required a response in order to defend the Christian faith. A more robust apologetics emerged as Christian beliefs were often subjected to the thoughts of the time, and cultures where it dispersed. "The more Christianity freed itself from the trammels of Judaism, and made overtures to the Gentiles, the more urgent became the duty of the apologist to plead its justification before the tribunal of right reason, and conscience."[48] Thus, Christian apologetics not only has a scriptural foundation, but also historical precedent, beginning in apostolic times and the first generations of Christians. Today, it is gradually growing and responding to various questions that attempts to undermine the importance and reasonableness of Christian belief.

Most authors, Avery Dulles for example, classify Christian apologetics in church's history into four different epochs; namely, New Testament Apologetics, the Patristic era, the Middle Ages (16th - 18th century), Modern and Contemporary Apologetics (19th and 20th century). Each era had its main focus at the time, depending on issues that were of concern but the aim was to demonstrate that amidst the challenges of ideology or ideologies, the Christian faith is not to be undermined. It is noteworthy that according to this division made by Dulles, Christian apologetics started as far back as the period of the early apostles. The main focus at the earliest period of apostolic apologetics was preaching about the life and teachings of Jesus; mainly centred on telling the people about the message of Jesus as the promised and fulfilled messiah. Jesus as the messiah was the prevalent message for the early believers. The new religious community was often under attack chiefly from Jews and Pagans. The early Christian were more into preaching of the gospel, but some Christian preaching had apologetical

[48] Schanz, *A Christian Apology*, 23.

elements in it; Christian preaching/proclamation sometimes anticipates the objections and answers them.

1. Apologetics in the New Testament Era

The focus of the New Testament era was on the life and works of Jesus. New Testament authors aimed at telling the story of Jesus (centred around the message of Jesus as the risen Christ), to inspire faith among believers, and find reasons for this particular faith when confronted by non-believers. When these New Testament writers wrote about the story of Jesus, it was never to present a photographic account of Jesus' life and activities, but as much as possible to write about Jesus to an audience that needed to be strengthened in their faith and find reason for their worship. These early beleivers were already convinced about their belief. The person and mission of Christ was at the heart of the faith of the believing community; therefore, it was convincing enough for Christians to be part of the Christian community.

Dulles asserts that New Testament authors were not involved in direct arguments with unbelievers or to prove the veracity of their faith; however, there is indirect evidence on how the early Christians carried out apologetics within their Judeo-Pagan environment, and in dealing with variant tendencies that became prevalent among believers themselves.[49]

The resurrection became an important event upon which the infant Christian community would rest its credibility. It needed to demonstrate to its neighbours that Jesus, the man who was crucified publicly, had indeed risen, and therefore, fulfils the prophecies of old. In the course of proclaiming the truth claim of the resurrection there arose questions, objections and inquiries. Most of these came from and around the Jewish believers and Gentiles. It is not surprising that Jews questioned the truth about the resurrection of Jesus since a majority of them did not believe that Jesus is the promised messiah (some of them did not believe in the

[49] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 1.

resurrection at all. The Pharisees believed, but not the Sadducees); that Jesus could never have been the messiah promised in prophetic writings.

> In answer to such objections, and possibly also in anticipation of foreseen objections, the Christian preachers spoke about the signs and evidences they had found convincing. They insisted, for instance, that Jesus spoke with unique power, that He performed wondrous deeds, that He fulfilled the Old Testament messianic prophecies, and that He had undoubtedly risen from the dead.[50]

The earliest Christian apologetics was to show that Christ's resurrection fulfilled the Old Testament expectation of the messiah and that all of Christ's life was according to divine plans. Christian believed that some passages of the Psalm and that of the prophet Isaiah were speaking about the coming of Christ, his passion, death and resurrection. These events in the life of Jesus were of paramount importance to the apologetical mindset of the early Christian community. According to Dulles, "the positive redemptive value of the Passion and death would presumably have been an ingredient in the primitive preaching itself and cannot therefore be written off as an afterthought introduced for apologetical reasons."[51]

The Christian apologetics of the New Testament era developed around the interpretation of the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ as fulfilling the Old Testament. Paul is known for his famous proclamation of Christ as the promised Messiah to his Jewish neighbours. The Gospels are particularly focused on presenting an account of Christ as fulfilling the biblical prophecy of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Redeemer.[52] Other letters and books of the New Testament also focused on reaffirming the belief in Jesus as the sent Messiah. Though none of the books of the New Testament would be classified as an apologetic text in a systematic sense, they contain an apologetic dimension; they show an awareness of the controversial claims that are made and the objections to the Gospel that are

[50] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 2.
[51] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics,* 4.
[52] Dulles affirms that each Gospel evangelist had his own distinctive slant on the way Jesus manifests Himself as the divine Redeemer. See Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 24.

likely held by many. These writings were done so that the Christian message will be protected from distortions, both from within and outside the church.[53]

As the new community grew, it became a mixed group of persons drawn from different intellectual backgrounds, different spiritual mindsets. New forms of apologetics became necessary especially when Christianity had to mingle with cultures emerging from the Graeco-Roman environment.

2. Christian Apologetics in the Patristic Era

The patristic era witnessed an influx of apologetical writings as it became necessary at the time for Christian writers to address the world about the veracity and credibility of Christianity. This diverse audience ranged from converts, philosophers, and Jews to Emperors. Notable Christian apologists at the time include Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, Tertullian, Ambrose, etc; and of course, Augustine.

The patristic period was concerned with establishing the faith and enforcing discipline in the Christian community. Once the Christian faith had spread to other places, Christians needed to elaborate and explain the content of their faith within the context of a culture that seem suspicious of the way of life of the new emerging religious sect; as well as explain the faith to new converts. Major challenges against the Christian faith surfaced from these key groups, namely, Judaism, Gnosticism, Paganism and Roman Philosophy. These groups' ideology were specifically directed against the Gospel, in that they made attacks on the Gospel accounts of Christ, with the accusation that these Gospel accounts may not have been true as Christian were made to believe they were.

The works of Christian apologetics in the patristic era was focused on defending Christian faith against the political and religious attitude at the time. Both Dulles and Beilby

[53] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 38.

agree that there are two main classes of Christian apologetics at the patristic: political apologies and religious apologies; and religious apologetics further classified into those aimed at Paganism and those aimed at Judaism. But Beilby posits another category that religious apologetics was directed to: those who claim to be Christians but hold theological opinions different from the scripture teaches. The main aim of political apologetics was to win civil toleration of Christianity at the time of persecution during the reign of Nero and Diocletian; while that of religious apologetics was an attempt to show the superiority of Christianity over other religions or philosophical schools of thought (the main targets were Judaism and various schools of Greek philosophy).[54] According to Dulles, few of the apologetical writings fall into one or another of these classifications, but many would fall under all classifications/divisions.[55] "From a literary point of view the controversial literature of the Christians naturally followed the patterns previously worked out on Hellenistic soil in encounters between Platonists and Aristotelians, between Stoics and Epicureans, and between Jews and Pagans."[56]

Christianity was initially overlooked by the Romans as a form of Judaism; and Christians were convinced that their religion was superior to other religions. According to D. H. Williams, "it took time for Christians and their churches to become sufficiently distinguished from Judaism and noticeable in the religion and social hubbub of the Roman Empire such that opposition arose and apologetic literature was required."[57] Because Christians were often regarded as a form of Judaism, Christianity did not initially experience any form of disturbance from the authority until some Christian practices prove it clear that it was different from what they had known about Judaism. Christians were recognised as a

[54] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 40.
[55] Dulles, *A History of Christian Apologetics*, 28.
[56] Dulles, *A History of Christian Apologetics*, 28.
[57] D. H. Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith: An Introduction to Early Christian Apologetic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 111.

different group during the period when Trajan came to the throne in 98-117 AD. Consequently, the Romans began to see Christianity/Christians as threat to political stability in the empire.[58]

Christian apologetics on the other hand, wanted to show that Christians could not be threat to political stability. At first, most of Christian apologetics were modelled on the apologetical technique of Paul, which was primarily to expose to his audience the workings of God in his life, and in that way, explain to his enquiry audience the tenets of the new way of life he has embraced. As the task of apologia became more necessary, due to the increasing questions both from the Jews and those intending to become Christians, Christian apologists carried out defence of Christianity by stating that Christian faith stems from ancient times, that it fulfils the ancient promised found in Judaism. Those who converted to Christianity were often zealous to talk about the reason for their decisions. These converts would often be involved in arguments with oppositions. They trusted in their capability to counter whatever questions that arose from those who were bent on undermining Christian beliefs.[59] Another aspect of Christian apologetics in the patristics era was aimed at correcting theological errors. These errors gave rise to heretical positions such as syncretism, Docetism, Gnosticism, and the popular Arianism.

In the second century, there were two early Christian apologetic materials; the apocryphal *Preaching of Peter*, and the apology addressed by Quadratus. These are now only available in fragments. The former talked about and defended the Biblical monotheism against idolatry; the latter was addressed to the Emperor Hadrian in A. D. 125, and was concerned about the miracles worked by Jesus. Quadratus asserts the authenticity of Jesus' miracles

[58] During the reign of Trajan, Ignatius of Antioch was arrested and sent to Rome for trial where he was martyred. He was accused of having incited a public disturbance, since he held a leadership role in a Christian community. See Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 114.

[59] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics* 41. Beilby recounts that many patristic were converts and therefore had adequate knowledge of their former belief system.

(claiming that some of the persons cured or raised from the dead by Jesus are still alive).[60] Surely, the patristic era had several other apologetics works, some of which have become extant and others still available.

Justin Martyr (100-165)

Justin's *apology* were primarily concerned about winning civil toleration for Christians. In his first apology, Justin argues that civil authority should look into considering whether Christian faith is destructive to civil loyalty. He argues that the charges brought against Christians lacked truth, and so Christians do not deserve the death penalty. In his second apology, Justin constructed a link between Christianity and pagan philosophy, arguing that many philosophers became enlightened through the *divine logos*, that which Christians also believe to be the source of their insights. However, because the philosophers had partial knowledge, they fell into error and contradictions. Justin's extant second century, *Dialogue with Trypho*, is addressed to the Jews. In this dialogue, Justine first attributed his conversion to Christianity to his study of Old Testament prophets. Using scriptural prophecies, Justin demonstrated that Jesus is divine and the messiah. He responded to various objections against Christianity from the Jews; and affirmed that the Church has become the new Israel, urging the Jews to repent from their obstinacy.[61]

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 214)

Clement succeeded Athenagoras in the Alexandrian catechetical school.[62] He was born in Athens, converted to Christianity and travelled to several places searching for Christian instruction. His apology is contained in his *Protrepticus* (part of his trilogy), where he wrote

[60] Dulles, *A History of Christian Apologetics*, 30. According to Dulles, the reason for emphasising the miracle of Jesus was because these miracles occupy a very subordinate place in the first three centuries' apologetics.
[61] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 32.
[62] School of Christian theologians and priests in Alexandria. It is considered as where Christian theology achieved its maturity due to its encounter with the heritages of Greek philosophy. Many of its students were influential in many of the early Christian controversies. It is believed to have been founded by Mark the Apostle.

about his conversion to Christianity. "Having himself experienced the appeal of Greek mythology, philosophy, and mystery cults, Clement is able to show how all these values are surpassingly fulfilled in Christ, the true mystagogue and the supreme master of wisdom."[63] In his analysis of the mystery cults, Clement demonstrated that Christians are not the atheist, as accused, but the pagans, who are known for worshipping object, all in the name of God. According to Dulles, Clement is a prominent figure in early Christian apologetics. His style and works are well ordered, combining variety with symmetry. His ingenuity is such that he elaborates more on concrete issues, rather than aimless artificiality. He is able to navigate easily amid the arts and letters of classical civilisation, combining his Christian piety with the highest value of ancient culture.[64]

> Clement contributes a new and better technique of persuasion. By means of a clearer presentation of the Christian fact, viewed in relation to the Hellenistic and Hebrew background he illustrates how Christianity is able to fulfil and at the same time correct the religious aspirations and insights at work in human history.[65]

The focus of Clement's apologetical teachings was on Jesus as the incarnate Word, who he considers as working in the depth of human souls, making them to moment of encounter of His presence and thereby bestowing on each and all His divinising impact.[66]

Origen (184-254)

Origen succeeded Clement in the Alexandrian catechetical school. His most significant apologetic work is *Contra Celsum*; which was a response to philosophical, historical and ethical criticism of Christianity by Celsus (a pagan). Celsus was not a deep thinker, but only an admirer of Hellenistic culture as an ideal. Celsus believes that there is a supreme god with multiple deities. He therefore accepted all the rituals of all national religions. According to

[63] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 39.
[64] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 41.
[65] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 41.
[66] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 41.

Celsus, Jews, and worse still, Christians were corrupting traditions and undermining the structures of society. He accused Christian of having made up most of the stories they hold about Christ. In his response, Origen traced the historicity of the Scripture, and the deity of Jesus Christ. In defending the historicity of the Bible, Origen noted that Celsus' demand for historical proof cannot be met by historical events; and in defends for Christ's divinity, Origen responded by arguing from Old Testament prophecies on the messiah, the miracles of Jesus, and finally the power to work miracles still found among Christians. Beilby asserts that Origen's work represents a significant step forward in the development of Christian apologetics.[67]

Aurelius Augustine (354-430)

Augustine occupies a special place in the history of patristic apologetics, thanks to his special gifts of speculative thinking, eloquence, and his wide learning, coupled with his life experiences with different persons and in some important places. He is revered in both catholic and protestant theology.

> He is the first Western apologist to achieve true eminence as a theologian. Whereas others were content to achieve tactical victories or to negotiate profitable alliances. Augustine was able to situate the approach to Christian faith within the framework of a highly developed metaphysic of religious knowledge.[68]

Augustine did present an outstanding philosophical rationale for the Christian faith against his opponents. He defended Christianity from heretical teachings, such as those of Donatists and Pelagians arising within the Church. He also responded to pagans, Jews and Manicheans. Augustine was able to combine his Christian faith and classical learning to develop systematic works that continue to shape Christian theology and apologetics today.

[67] Beilby, *Thinking about Apologetics*, 45.
[68] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 73.

Dulles remarked that Augustine is the first Western apologist to attain eminence as a theologian, because of his ability "to situate the approach to Christian faith within the framework of a highly developed metaphysics of religious knowledge."[69] While he borrowed some of his theological ideas from thinkers before him, he is known to have also formulated highly developed skills in responding to the threat of Neoplatonic philosophy to Christianity, though he is also indebted to Neoplatonism for some of his theological ideas, as well as the continuous criticisms from the pagan environment of the Roman Empire. Augustine's *City of God* is the most detailed and exhaustive work in Christian apologetics. The extent of scholarly research done so far on the *City of God* shows how important this work is.[70] Undoubtedly, the *City of God* is Augustine's greatest work in Christian apologetics.

3. Christian Apologetics in the Middle Ages

Christian apologetics attained a much advanced stage in the Middle Ages. It was the period that Christianity dominated Western civilisation, politics, and life in general. Pagan worship had almost been forced into oblivion, with their holidays and festivals co-opted into Christianity. To everyone, especially for the barbarians who invaded the Empire, the influence of the church could be felt in almost all spheres of life. Dulles recounted that the apostolic struggle for Christianity in the Middle Ages was not with the old pagans or the young barbarians but with other races that had rich cultural heritage.[71] Life in the Roman empire was a mixture of people from every race, each with their ways of life.

Apologetics in the middle ages is categorised into East and West. The West had Jews who observed the Law of Moses and the Talmud; while in the East there was the growing

[69] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 74.
[70] For example, Edward Hardy recounted the influence of the *City of God* on Emperor Charlemagne: "The Emperor Charlemagne was accustomed to have serious books read to him at dinner. His biographer tells us that he enjoyed listening to the writings of St. Augustine, especially the books entitled *De Civitate Dei.*"[70] See Edward Hardy, "The City of God," in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, ed. Roy W. Battenhouse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 257.
[71] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 91.

influence of Islam . Christian apologetics at this time was directed to the unconverted Jews in the West and the Arabs in the East. Another type of apologetics was directed to the inner life of Christians themselves, with a bid to understanding the meaning of what they believe; to ascertain a rational grounds for Christianity's commitment. Undoubtedly, the rational inquiry into the content of Christian faith aided in developing apologetical materials that became useful in the encounters with later sceptics, heresies, and freethinkers.[72] Key figure apologists in the Middle Ages are John Damascene (East), Isidore of Seville (West), Anselm of Canterbury, Peter the Venerable, Thomas Aquinas (named Angelic Doctor). The reformation period had the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin. Each of these theologians had a particular theological questions which they had to respond to. Anselm, for instance, is famous for having posited that the incarnation was necessary for salvation; which he initially used as an apologetics argument against Jews.

In sum, Christian apologetics in the medieval ages was aimed at providing rational grounds for the Christian faith. The various challenges with people of other faith and the prevalence of Greek philosophy roused many of these theologians to seek for answers to questions targeted against the Christian faith.[73]

4. Modern and Contemporary Apologetics

Soon after the period of the reformation, Christian apologetic experienced a significant change. The reformation brought about a shift in certain Christian teachings and doctrine, especially with the rise of Protestantism. The reformation in the modern period brought along with it the rise in the quest for reducing religion to rational verifications, making use of the sophisticated

[72] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 91.

[73] "During the Protestant Reformation apologetics was substantially replaced by polemics, in which many churches sought to defend their particular beliefs rather than Christianity as a whole. In the 18th century, Joseph Butler, an English bishop, met the rising challenge of Deism in the wake of advancing science by arguing that a supernatural Christianity was as reasonable and probable as the insights of science. A later Englishman, William Paley, argued that a universe exhibiting design must have a Designer, much as a watch implies a watchmaker." See "Apologetics" http://www.britannica.com/topic/apologetics. [accessed 15th June 2020].

and scientific methods of arriving at truth. Revelation was rejected entirely as means of knowledge, and so was the possibility of knowing that God exists.

> For the first time in history, orthodox Christians felt constrained to prove the existence of God and the possibility and fact of revelation. In so doing they sometimes conceded too much to their deist adversaries, making it appear that unaided reason could erect a satisfactory natural religion that in many respects repudiated Christianity itself.[74]

Dulles recounts that the modern period did not produce any substantial apologetical synthesis compared to the likes of Augustine and Thomas in the patristic era and Middle Ages respectively. The authors of the modern era had no deep philosophy to take them to the height as attained by their earlier counterparts. There was really not much success in their apologetical drive; no systematic rendering of some theological terms that would have aided in understanding the mystery of the church, the importance of revelation, and their approach in combating the new currents of thoughts (modernism and rationalism).[75] However, the seemingly minor progress made in Christian apologetics in this era became an eye opener on how apologetic should be done, considering the ever-increasing rational mindset of people in subsequent centuries and eras.

With the enlightenment, the growing influence of deism,[76] and immerse rise in scepticism, the orthodox Christianity were subjected to debates. Beilby recounts that these debates were partially heightened as Catholics and Protestants were constantly opposing each other in some areas of Christian teachings.[77] Christian apologetics had to be redirected significantly to respond to both internal and external matters.

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[74] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 206.
[75] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 206.
[76] Some of the deist actually regarded themselves as apologists for Christianity. Their goal was to defend religion against atheism.
[77] Protestantism had begun to grow speedily; and one of its emphases was on the priesthood of every believer, coupled with the belief that the Bible should be made accessible to everyone in their own language. Being able to read and translate the Bible in one's own language was a breeding ground for different interpretation. Therefore, Christianity lost its hold on the reliability of the Scripture against sceptics. See Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 62.

Soon after Vatican I, the difference in theological views between Catholics and Protestants had deepened. This chasm resulted in the birth of all sorts of fundamentalism, a critique of liberal theology from conservative Christians in the early stages of the 20th century. There was also an attempt to build religion on purely rational principles. As a result many who had professed the faith were turning towards atheism. According to Beilby, "consequently, at the advent of the twentieth century, apologetic battle lines were being drawn between Catholics and Protestants, liberals and fundamentalists, Christians and sceptics, and, of course, Christians and members of the other world religions."[78] There were also debates on the nature and goal of apologetics: the relationship between theology and apologetics. Karl Barth, was sceptical about the whole task of the apologetical system, insisting that it is better that Christianity be exclusively rooted in faith.[79] Also, Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich did not agree with the attempt to preserve the historical truth of the Gospels, rather, they focused on presenting Christianity as the best answer to humanity's existential needs and questions.[80] In other words, there emerged an existential theology that sought to respond in a different way to the liberal rationalism.

As a response to the offshoot of the chasm between Catholics and Protestant, as well as the increasing secular mindset, contemporary apologetics focused more on building the faith of believers, whose faith are undergoing challenges because of numerous worldviews that are contrary to the values of Christianity. Contemporary Christian apologetics wished to demonstrate to detractors that Christian faith is commendable amidst the various challenges that befall humanity as a whole.

From our study of apologetics in the history of the church, we see that every era had its issues and style of doing apologetics. We also learned that apologetics involves, from a Catholic

[78] Beilby, *Thinking about Christian Apologetics*, 75.
[79] For other Protestant theologians, the emphasis was to make the ancient stories and symbols of Christianity meaningful in an era that was dominated by materialism.
[80] "Apologetics" http://www.britannica.com/topic/apologetics. [accessed on 15th June 2020].

point of view, many different dialogue partners: non Catholic Christians, non-Catholic religious, non-Catholic areligious; and the task of apologetics has transformed throughout history in terms of its strategies, its priorities, depending on the epoch and its circumstances. Subsequently, the kind of oppositions that Christianity experienced determined the scope and nature of apologetics. Learning about the history of apologetics in church's history gives the apologist the desire to continue in the footsteps of people in the past who were involved in the defence of Christianity. Though the various attacks and challenges where targeted on the credibility of Christian faith, the responses was positive too for the faith, in that they served in enhancing theological understanding of the faith, as well as stating the uniqueness of Christianity among other religions.

CONTEMPORARY AGE AND "CREATIVE APOLOGETICS"

Christians are called as ever to the vindication of their belief amidst the copious social, cultural, and technological developments in the contemporary age. Concretely, Christian apologetics must engage with a culture that is considerably analytic, argumentative, empiricist, and very often pragmatic.[81] There is a rapid cultural shift happening at every place and time. Does that require that Christian belief may have to be "revised" to meet the needs of the society?

Such a question raises questions about development in the life of the church. For our purposes, it is enough to affirm, with Catholic tradition, that Christian faith is fundamentally one and the same from generation to generation, but how it expresses itself and responds to ever-evolving circumstances may be what is dynamic. As John XIII famously stated when he opened the Second Vatican Council, "for the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our

[81] McGrath affirms that this mindset was influenced by a belief in a universal human reason, with which all human persons can gain access to the deeper structures of the world. "Reason was the key that unlocked the mysteries of life, and argument was its tool of persuasion." See McGrath, *Mere Christianity*, 27.

venerable doctrine, are one thing; the fashion in which they are expressed, but with the same meaning and the same judgement, is another thing."[82]

According to McGrath, "there is no need for Christian apologists to be alarmed by the rise of postmodernity. The Christian faith possesses ample resources to meet this challenge. It's just that we haven't used some of them for generations, as they seemed inappropriate in a modernist worldview."[83] Christian apologetics therefore needs to devise a working tool for defending the message of the gospel, and upholding the reasonableness of Christianity in the 21st century. McGrath remarks that, "we are forced to think about how we can best communicate the Christian faith in terms that will resonate with the experience and knowledge of our audience."[84]

In the past, apologetics was at its strongest when it responded to various challenges by developing new approaches. What might be the conundrum for apologists will be to determine the best approach for a particular situation. Apologetics will have to be more creative and innovative by designing those means through which the gospel can be best communicated to the rational and pragmatic mindset of the modern world. Coupled with the challenges that some people experience (hunger, poverty, health problems, etc), there will be a need to be more proactive, in order to be a beacon of hope to those experiencing such difficulties. With this understanding of being inventive in our style of doing Christian apologetics, this study introduces a working maxim – creative apologetics – as already initiated by Pope Francis in *Evangelli Gaudium*.[85]

Later in this study, the relationship between "creative apologetics" and Augustine's apologetics in the two-cities doctrine, vis-à-vis contemporary Christian apologetics will be

[82] John XXIII, "Gaudet Mater Ecclesiae," (1962), no. 15, trans. Joseph Komonchak. https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf [accessed 2 Feb. 2023].
[83] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 31.
[84] McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 36.
[85] Pope Francis' call for "creative apologetics" makes a case that Christian apologetics is not aggressive and triumphalistic. He envisions something different than what people imagine apologetics to be.

explored. For now it suffices to affirm and state that for the effectiveness of contemporary apologetics, there has to be robust creative apologetics, in order to better defend the values of Christian faith against a fast growing secular society.

In this chapter, I have presented the general purpose of Christian apologetics and the kinds of apologetics Christians have practiced in the past. I have also considered certain objections to Christian apologetics. In the next chapter, we will begin to look at Augustine's classic work of apologetics, the *City of God*, with the aim of noting how his apologetics in this work can contribute to a contemporary, creative, Christian apologetics.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENCE OF AUGUSTINE'S *CITY OF GOD*

Of the many apologetical works by Augustine, perhaps the greatest is the *City of God*. To have a better appreciation of Augustine's apologetics in this work, it is necessary that a proper study be made concerning the context and content of the *City of God.*

This chapter will first explore the circumstances under which Augustine wrote the work, including the troubling times in Rome, the influence of Rome on neighbouring cities, and the attack on Rome by the Goths. I will then examine the two-part structure of the *City of God,* identifying some of his apologetical arguments in Part I, and summarizing his two-cities doctrine on which he elaborates in Part II. Although the subject of the next chapter, it is helpful to point out now that Augustine's doctrine of the two cities – which is ultimately a theological one reflecting on the beginning, progress, and end of both the heavenly city and the earthly city – also serves an apologetical purpose, as we see it deployed in Part I of the *City of God.* In essence, what is given a theological exposition in Part II is put to apologetical use in Part I.

AUGUSTINE'S *CITY OF GOD* AND ROME IN CONTEXT

An insight into the situation of Rome, the place of Christianity in the 4th century Roman empire is important for a better understanding of the nature of Augustine's work. The original title of Augustine's masterpiece goes: *The City of God against the Pagans*. By choosing this title, Augustine introduced his readers to the fact that his work is a response to pagan accusations. At the time, Christians and their beliefs had been subject to vigorous attacks from their pagan neighbours after the attack of Rome by the Goths. In response, Augustine committed considerable years of his episcopate to write his apologetics in the *City of God*.

Historians believe that the eventual sack of Rome in 410 was not a sudden event. Before the sack, Rome was already gradually losing its strong force as an influential Empire in the West around the late part of the 3rd century. First, it was replaced by Mediolanum in 286 as the capital of the Western Roman Empire; and then by Ravenna in 402. Despite these occurrences, Rome remained an important city in Europe as it was still referred to as the "eternal city", and the spiritual centre of the Roman Empire. Rome had a notable connection with Christianity because of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul there. Among Christians, Rome was regarded as the city with one of the great Apostolic sees. The social life present in Rome at the time, coupled with its military prowess also contributed to making Rome an influential city to other neighbouring cities. When Rome was besieged by the Goths, many questioned how the supposed "golden city" was defeated. How were the Goths able to plunder the city?

It is not surprising that both pagan and Christian writers up to the 4th century expressed a feeling of conviction that Rome would remain eternally invincible. The notion of the "eternal city" was often present in the works of most pagan writers and poets of the early centuries, whether from Latin, Greek or Oriental backgrounds and the same notion was noticeable among certain Christian writers. Ammianus Marcellinus (Pagan General and historian) had declared that so long that there are human beings on the face of the earth, Rome will not be conquered and will continue in its growth. Claudianus (Christian poet) had written in one of his poems, that there will never be an end to the power of Rome, for luxury and pride resulting in vices and enmities have destroyed all other kingdoms.[1] With these, one can imagine the kind of consternation that the people of Rome in general felt when the city fell into the hands of Visigoths. More also, it would not be surprising to note that to many the fall of Rome signalled that the end of the world was imminent.

[1] Edward Hardy, "The City of God," 257.

The Goths were one of the Germanic tribes. They lived in the Eastern part of the empire and have lived there since 401. Since the 3rd century, the Goths invaded the Roman empire several times, though with little or no harm done. The Goths felt maltreated and marginalised by the Romans and the government. Because of their discontent, they began to rebel against the authorities of the empire; looting and pillaging started in the Eastern region. When Alaric became King of the Goths, the rebellion against Rome took a more severe turn and, for several years, Rome became nervous of these rebelling neighbours. Between 408 and 409, Alaric and his army laid siege to the city of Rome chiefly for economic reasons:

> In pursuit of his claims for massive payments, first for withdrawing from Italy to Pannonia, then for military operations carried out in Epirus on behalf of the imperial government, and finally for releasing the corn supply, which he had seized, to the city.[2]

These may be counted as good reasons why Alaric was rebelling against the empire; but as O'Daly accounts, Alaric was attracted to the city of Rome because of its wealth and its status as the visible symbol of the empire's historical identity.[3] Given the stature of Rome, Alaric's attack was something momentous.

Rome was attacked by the Visigoth army on 24 August 410. At this time, Rome was no longer the capital of the Western Roman Empire having been replaced by Ravenna. Alaric had requested acceptance within the empire, and land on which his people could settle. His demand to acquire land was refused by the authorities of Ravenna and in his fury, Alaric planned to attack Rome. Alaric was ingenious in planning this siege, in which he held the city of Rome for three days. The Visigoths were of Arian background and so most of the Christian icons and buildings were respectfully preserved. Richard Cavendish recounted an incidence during the siege of Rome that a group of Visigoths refused to steal rich gold and silver vessels

[2] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 28.
[3] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 28.

when they heard that they belonged to St Peter; and as ordered by Alaric, the sacred objects were carried safely through the streets of St. Peter's church accompanied by certain Christian citizens.[4] Although the sacking of Rome involved relatively little external damage, it remains, historically speaking, of great importance, not least because it occasioned Augustine's *The City of God*.

1. The Aftermath of the Attack of Rome

The sack of Rome left many dumbfounded both in the Roman empire and other parts of the world where the news was heard. Historians talked about the extent to which this attack on the city of Rome affected how some persons began to feel about Rome. This incidence opened up questions concerning the special place that Rome had and why it was often designated as the "*eternal city*". Both Christians and Pagans were forced into re-thinking the religious significance of the city itself. Before now, Rome was prominent for having been the heart of pagan civilisation and traditions until the Theodosian edict in the 4th century, on 27th February 380, that prohibited pagan festivals in the empire, removing the altar of victory, establishing the Catholic religion in the empire. This edict only succeeded in diminishing the acceptance of pagan worship since there were fragments of its adherents scattered over the empire. Rome became a new religious city soon after Christianity was made the religion of the empire. It was to be referred to as the burial place of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, the seat of the Bishop of Rome, and the ancient centre of the Christian empire.[5]

Among notable figures at the time, the attack of Rome caused a feeling of being perplexed and confused. For instance, Jerome bemoans the sack of Rome by comparing it with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. When Jerome received the news of the sack

[4] Richard Cavendish, "The Visigoths sack Rome," *History Today* 60, no. 8 (August 2010).
[5] Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 194.

of Rome by the Goths, he was in Bethlehem, writing his commentary on the book Ezekiel. He expressed his feelings in this commentary:

> But when the bright light of all the world was put out, or, rather, when the Roman Empire was decapitated, and, to speak more correctly, the whole world perished in one city, "I became dumb and humbled myself, and kept silence from good words, but my grief broke out afresh, my heart glowed within me, and while I meditated the fire was kindled;" …Who would believe that Rome, built up by the conquest of the whole world, had collapsed, that the mother of nations had become also their tomb?[6]

Johannes van Oort recounts Pelagius's expression of distress when he wrote to a Roman Lady, recounting that Rome, the mistress of the world had fallen to the sound of the blaring trumpets and howling.[7] The reactions of Jerome and Pelagius show that they were not spared of the despair they and some of their contemporaries felt concerning the city of Rome. Apparently, they and some others believed that the fall of Rome was an indication of the end of the world. The sadness felt by Jerome and others shows how important the fate of Rome meant, "for many deeply rooted ideas and beliefs, and numerous superstitions, were connected with the very name and existence of that city."[8]

The siege of Rome was a major concern for both pagans and Christians alike. The fall of Rome called into question whether adopting Christianity was reasonable. This questioning was based on the idea of divine protection which Christians adopted from paganism. Accordingly, the gods had interests in the cities where they are revered; and in some ways, Roman pagans believed that they had enjoyed prosperity and protection because the gods were on their sides. But with the Christianisation of the empire, paganism was to a great extent suppressed.

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[6] Jerome, "Commentary on Ezekiel," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 6, trans. W. H Fremantle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), 500.
[7] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 57.
[8] Theodor Mommsen, "St Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," 347.

The suppression of paganism naturally led to the hypothesis that Rome had been attacked because it had been robbed of its pagan cults. Rome had fallen, so went the argument, because Romans abandoned the worship of the gods of Rome for the Christian religion. As a consequence, the Roman gods retaliated by withdrawing their protection from those with whom they have lost allegiance and reverence.[9] The Christianisation of the empire was seen as bringing disaster upon the people instead of any good. This, at least, was the accusation. Not only pagans, but Christians could have wondered: "Had Peter, Paul, and other martyrs failed to protect their city where Rome's pagan gods had, in the past succeeded?"[10] And concerning the pillaging which the citizens of Rome experienced, questions were centred around why God would allow such disaster to happen in the first place? Why make the church laughable at the moment when the worship of the heathen gods had been suppressed? With these concerns, many of the Christians were quick to question God's divine protection since some Christians who lived in Rome lost their property, were raped, and even killed.[11]

Before the attack of Alaric on Rome, pagans had disdain for the Christian religion. The majority of these pagans believed that they had been deprived of their pagan cults and festivities because of the Christianization of the empire. It was difficult for them to accept how things had changed from having cults for Roman gods and elaborate pagan festivals to being a Christian empire. To them, the Christian religion lacked an intellectual basis, and, in fact, it is a religion with no historical precedent. They held that the likes of Plotinus and Porphyry were able to provide a world view with a natural link with the religious traditions of their ancestors. They believed that Christian religion lacked any intellectual basis and because of this and other views about Christianity and Christians, they continued to taunt Christians, referring to them as the

[9] Gervase Charmley, "Augustine and 'The City of God'*," Peace and Truth 3* (August 2015) https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/articles/2015/augustine-and-the-city-of-god/.[accessed 12th December 2018]
[10] O'Daly, Augustine's *City of God*, 28
[11] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 407.

uncivilised group in the Roman empire.[12] As would be expected, Christians were blamed for misfortune. The mishaps experienced by Rome were attributed by the adherents of pagan worship to the Christian refusal to worship the traditional gods of Rome, that their refusal to worship these gods angered the deities to send misfortunes to human beings.

Apart from the experiences already mentioned, some Christians who had been celebrating the triumph of Christianity in the empire started asking whether it was too early to have done so in the first place. The majority of Christians were filled with despair that Rome, the city famous for its religious history could experience such a tragedy. The natural reasoning for many of them was that the end of the world was near since Rome had fallen.

Mommsen recounts that many Christians had wished for the continuation of the reign of the Roman empire. This attitude is an offshoot of a certain historical-eschatological idea which emerged in both pagan and Jewish traditions. The belief was that history takes its course in a sequence of universal monarchies. These empires were held to follow one after the other, and the fifth in the series was believed to signal the end of the world; the disintegration of the last of the four empires was assumed to introduce the end of the world. Rome was taken to be the fifth in this sequence, and so the attack and, consequently, the fall of Rome indicated that the world was coming to an end.[13] Based on the eschatological belief, which went back to both pagan and Jewish traditions, some Christians considered it a noble duty to pray for the emperor and the whole of the Roman empire. These pagan and Jewish traditions believed that the continued existence of the Roman empire would sway the powers that threatened the world

[12] Oart, *Babylon and Jerusalem*, 61.
Reports of accusation are contained in a letter sent to Augustine by Volusianus, who was one of the refugees living in Hippo at the time.

[13] Theodor Mommsen, *St Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress,* 348. "In the latter part of the second century and in the first part of the third century Christian theologians like Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian and Hippolytus adopted these pagan and Jewish traditions and expressed their opinions that the Roman empire "which now rules", should be considered to be the fourth monarchy. All these Christian authors shared the belief that the fall of the last empire would be a most ominous event." See Mommsen, *St Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress,* 348.

and postpone the end of the world; and even though other cities were to crumble, for as long as the city of Rome stood, no one would need to fear that the end of the world was imminent.

Now, with these conceptions and ideas about the invincibility of Rome, one understands how devastating the event of 410 would have been for the inhabitants of Rome, and all those who held the eschatological ideas of the reigning monarchies. Rome, the once eternal city, had now been besieged and plundered. Could it be that Romans were overly ambitious to have expected Rome to remain invincible and be able to repel its enemies for that long? Apparently, the confidence demonstrated by some Roman orators concerning the self-protection of Rome might have attracted the malevolent attention of the enemies. According to Ryan, "whether Rome could really expect to be the eternal city, when so many previous empires had risen and fallen, many of them destroyed by Roman expansion, was a question often asked sotto voce."[14]

Though both pagans and Christians were affected by the attack of Rome, the bulk of the blame was rather one-sided. Christianity was singled out as responsible for the attack because it happened at the time when Christianity had become the official religion of the empire, an era which was commonly referred to as the Christian times (*tempora christiana*). Markus recounted that Augustine's *City of God* is full of talks about *tempora christiana*, with arguments against those who will not acknowledge the evils they did long before the sack of Rome in 410. The phrase "*Christian times*" was attributed to every mishap and the attack on Rome made pagan hostility towards Christians even worse.[15] The various components of this accusation are what Augustine will be responding to in Part I of the *City of God.*

The concerns that were occasioned by the sack of Rome were not only found among Christians in Rome, but also among those in the community residing in Hippo, including those

[14] Ryan, *On Augustine*, 29.
[15] Markus, *Saeculum*, 37.
These complaints against Christianity must have been influenced by the polemical writings of the philosophers, especially that of Porphyry, as Augustine himself asserts in his reports about the attitudes of pagans towards Christians. See Markus, *Saeculum,* 37

joining the community as Roman refugees. Such were to the circumstances in which Augustine found himself:

> At this time questions reached the bishop of Hippo concerning the how and why of the catastrophe, from his congregation, from Africa where he occupied a prominent position, and from everywhere. As far as we know Augustine was the only one to react immediately, in sermons and letters, from a well thought-out Christian point of view.[16]

Augustine did not succumb to a reaction of despair which one found among certain Christian faithful. His response was different: He believed that Rome, like any other empire, will pass away. Augustine wanted his Christian audience to know that there are spiritual lessons which they could learn from the incidence in Rome: His concern is more to show the true meaning of history, and what that means for Christian life. Moreover, human life on earth is only a preparation to our eternal home in heaven. Augustine's notion of *peregrinatio* is prominent in his understanding of Christian life. This idea forms part of his understanding of what comprises the life of citizens of the heavenly city living in the world. We shall examine this idea of *peregrinatio* in relation to the church in the fifth chapter of this study.

Augustine argued that Rome could not have been spared by pagan religion either. According to O'Daly, Augustine's overriding aim is to disassociate Rome's historical destiny from that of Christianity, or any religion. He attacks Christian as well as pagan versions of the Rome myth. In so doing he secularises Roman history and institutions, reacting to some extent against his own tendency to Christian triumphalism in the Theodosian 390's.[17] Before now, Augustine had been optimistic about the triumph of Christianity over pagan religion. R. A.

[16] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 58.
[17] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 30.
Just like some other Christians, Augustine understood the abolition of pagan religion in the Roman Empire as success for the spread of the faith. Christian triumphalism had some fascination for Augustine, as he regarded this progress as God's way of putting the enemies of Christian to shame. He saw this as fulfilment of ancient prophecies.

Markus cites passages by Augustine which show the latter's satisfaction with the situation in the Roman empire after the Theodosian edict:

> The few pagans that remain fail to realise the wonder of what is happening…Now the God of Israel himself is destroying the idols of the heathen… Through Christ the king he has subjugated the Roman Empire to the worship of his name; and he has converted it to the defence and service of the Christian faith, so that the idols, on account of whose cult his sacred mysteries had previously been rejected, should now be destroyed. The idols have gone or are going; Christianity has spread to the four corners of the world: 'the whole world has become a choir praising Christ'.[18]

The establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire was understood as part of God's saving work. Augustine celebrated the establishment of what he called the *tempora christiana*.

Augustine maintained his conviction that the triumph of Christianity in the Empire is part of God's plan and held on to this for about ten or fifteen years. However, his attitude towards the Christianisation of the empire began to change when he started a reinterpretation of Psalm 72:11,[19] which before now, in the late 390s he had interpreted to refer to the Christianisation of the Empire. In a later commentary on Psalm 72:10-11 Augustine interprets the psalm differently as if almost making a correction of what he had written earlier.[20] His later commentary on the psalm goes thus:

> This no longer requires an expounder but a thinker; yea it does thrust itself upon the sight not only of rejoicing believers, but also of groaning unbelievers – except perchance we must inquire why there has been said, "shall lead present." For there are wont to be led those things which can walk. For could it by any means have been spoken with reference to the sacrifice of victims? Far be it that such "righteousness" should arise in His days. But those gifts which have been foretold as to be led, seem to me to signify men, whom into the fellowship of the Church of Christ the authority of kings does lead: although even the persecuting kings have led

[18] Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum*, Bk 1, Ch 14: 22. See R. A. Markus, *Saeculum*, 30.
[19] "the kings of Tarshish and of the islands will pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts; all kings will do him homage, all nations become his servants." Psalm 72:10-11. *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[20] According to Markus, "Augustine does not reject the reference he had seen in these verses to his own time; this had become too much of an exegetical *topos* under his pen. See Markus, *Saeculum*, 34.

> gifts, knowing not what they did, in sacrificing the holy Martyrs.[21]

Augustine's reinterpretation did attest to his intention to disassociate the connection between the prophecies and their fulfilments in the Christianisation of the Empire. He was more inclined to regard the Theodosian edict as one of the many historical events indicating the last days; and contemporary history (the history of Rome) needs to be understood separately from sacred history.[22] By removing contemporary history from sacred history, Augustine sees no reason why the progress and then the attack of Rome should be attached to any religion. Any city, be it Constantinople or Rome survives as a Christian city as long as God wills it.[23] Augustine's understanding of both contemporary history and sacred history is his main reason for advocating that the disaster caused in Rome by Alaric and his army is not because of the Christianisation of the Empire.

2. The Writing of Augustine's *City of God.*

Augustine wrote the *City of God* in his late 50s, probably around late 412, when he was already 16 years into his episcopate.[24] The title of the work is taken from psalm 86:5: "*Glorious things are said of you, O city of God*." In this psalm, the phrase 'city of God' refers to the beautiful, heavenly Jerusalem which is taken to be the opposite of the city of Babylon, which refers to that city occupied by the devil and his followers. According to Chadwick, this title "was chosen to offer a conscious contrast to the Republics of Plato and Cicero, with whom parts of the work were a running combat."[25] As Jerusalem is contrasted with Babylon, so Augustine contrasts the city of God [*civitas Dei*] with the earthly city [*civitas terrena*]. He points out to his readers,

[21] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 72:13. English Translation, www.newadvent.org [accessed 18 May 2022]
[22] Markus, *Saeculum*, 34.
[23] O' Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 29.
[24] There is a debate as to whether the work started in 412 or in 413. The first three books were finished in 413, and that could pass for the reason why some authors prefer to refer to that year as when Augustine began writing the *City of God.*
[25] Chadwick, *Augustine,* 97.

that what differentiates the heavenly from the earthly city is the object towards which their citizens direct their love: the citizens of the heavenly city direct their love to God while the citizens of the earthly city direct their love towards self.

The span of his writing lasted from 412 to about 426/427. The number of years already shows Augustine's intent to make significant contribution to Christian apologetics at the time. Augustine himself refers to this work as 'long and difficult work' (*magnum opus et arduum*).[26]

> Testimonies from various sides, most of all from Augustine himself, provides an outline of the progress of its composition: in 413 Books I-III were completed, in 415 Books IV-V, in 417 Books VI-XI, in the next year Books XII-XIII, in 420 Books XIV-XVI, in 425 Books XVII-XVIII and, finally, the entire work was complete when in 427 the *Retractions* were edited. Augustine was then an old man of seventy-two; his friend Marcellinus had died long before.[27]

When Augustine started the *City of God*, he had become a prominent figure, visiting churches and preaching sermons (some parts of his sermons are present in the *City of God*). His visits to these churches, coupled with the sermons endeared him to his flock and he earned the respect of many as a leading churchman.[28] He exchanged correspondence with some of the members of the Roman elite, and several of these elites were now residing in Carthage having taken refuge during the Gothic invasion of Italy around the 2nd century. These persons included his Christian friend, Marcellinus and the pagan aristocrat Volusianus. Augustine wrote series of letters, responding to their questions arising from the adoption of Christianity by the Empire. Volusianus, for instance, felt that the religion and culture of the Roman people had been undermined since the adoption of Christianity. He would always send letters to Augustine stating his displeasure and doubts about Christianity. Marcellinus, on the other hand, being a

[26] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 1, Preface.
[27] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 62.
[28] Markus remarked that Augustine enjoyed the approbation of lay officials of the Empire, and so was treated with the respect that was granted to members of their class, the educated Roman elite; Augustine reciprocated this attitude in his dealings with these elites. See Robert Markus, "The City of God," *Saint Augustine*, ed., Tarsicus J. van Bavel (Brussels: Mercatorfonds 2007), 83.

Christian, asked Augustine to clarify some of the issues raised by Volusianus. Augustine's letters (137 and 138) with both Marcellinus and Volusianus respectively, seem to anticipate the arguments of the *City of God*, both in general outline and in details.[29]

What eventually turned out to become a written work, was suggested by Marcellinus, urging Augustine to write a formal and expansive response to Volusianus's concerns in his letters. In Augustine's reply to Marcellinus' letter, he stated that if Volusianus still wanted to hear more from him, he, Augustine, will be pleased to write a letter or a book.[30] In the preface of the *City of God*, Augustine referred to his main reason for writing: "The glorious city of God is the theme in this work, which you, my dearest son Marcellinus, suggested, and which is due to you by my promise."[31]

Within Augustine studies, there is basic unanimity on the point that Augustine was motivated to write the *City of God* after the attack of Rome by Alaric and his Gothic army in 410. With this attack, the idea of Rome as the *eternal city* had lost its meaning for both Christians and pagans since the great city could not be spared of its enemies. The allegation was, however, that Christianity's displacement of paganism and its discouragement of worship of the Roman gods, was the cause of the siege. From the foregoing we see that there was a long-standing complaint about the Christianisation of the empire. The fall of Rome aggravated these ill-feelings, pagans raised a strong voice against the new religion that the empire had adopted. The gods had lost interest in the affairs of Rome. For these worshippers of the Roman gods, Christian worship did not profit the empire as much as when sacrifices were offered to the gods of Rome. One can only imagine the different sorts of accusations Christians had to endure concerning the veracity of the Christian faith especially with the recent calamities in the empire.

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[29] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 196.
[30] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 196.
[31] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 1, Preface.

Augustine began sending letters and sermons to console Christians who were living in Rome with the intention of answering their concerns (that the fall of Rome meant that the end of the world was imminent) and give response to the accusation by the pagans. When Augustine began to write Part I of the *City of God*, he had more information concerning the sack of Rome than what he had when he was writing his sermons.[32] His correspondence with some Christians in Rome at the time of the event would have been beneficial to him in this regard. According to Harrison, unlike Jerome, Augustine reacted practically, rather than dramatically, and did not attach undue importance to Rome itself, or to its attack. The latter was a bit detached; he saw it more as yet another military coup, a temporal disaster, a sign that earthly kingdom is not eternal, and insignificant when compared to the eternal reward which Christians are promised to inherit.[33] Augustine believed that the view of Rome as an eternal city had no concrete foundation and, hence, like with every other prominent empire in the past, the sack of Rome should not have come as a surprise.

Augustine was well informed about the belief in Rome as an eternal city and the Christian notion of the imminence of the end of the world because of the attack of the city; as well as the disappointment felt by some Christians that the centre of that imperial power which established Christianity is crumbling. Augustine rejected these ideas from both Christians and pagans. He acknowledged his discontent with these ideas and his positions were later emphasised in the *City of God*. Mommsen summarizes:

> As to the pagan notion, he pointed out that "earthly kingdoms have their changes" and that only of the Kingdom of Christ it can be said: There shall be no end" …Those things shall pass away, which God Himself has made. How much more rapidly shall that pass away which Romulus founded?...In reply to those Christian thinkers who attempted to figure out the exact date of the end of the world and connected the coming of that event with concrete developments and with definite historical incidents like "the fall of Rome," Augustine declared that such a question is entirely

[32] O' Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 30.
[33] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 196.

> improper. For he pointed out that Christ himself told his disciples: "it is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power".[34]

In essence, Augustine's comments on the fall of Rome and the various responses that this event incurred, was centred on denouncing the pagan belief in *roma aeterna* and rejecting any Christian idea of connecting the end of world to any specific historical event, like the fall of Rome. According to Mommsen,

> the denial of the pagan belief in the eternity of Rome and the rejection of any connection between Christian eschatology and specific historical events occupy, however, only a rather minor place in the whole context of *The City of God*. Augustine felt justified in making short shrift of these ideas because he regarded them as either mere superstitions or futile conjectures.[35]

Apart from Augustine's concern about the interpretation that emerge from the incidence of the attack of Rome, he felt pity for the citizens of Rome in general and the amount of dissipation that the happenings in Rome may have caused. He was especially concerned about his fellow Christians who not only had to take the blame for the disaster but who were also part of those grieving the loss of a city.[36]

Overall, Augustine's interest in the *City of God* was to emphasise the perpetual credibility of Christianity, despite the accusations levelled against Christians.[37] Augustine's arguments would have been influenced by his knowledge of some political theories, especially that of Plato, but when he was working on the *City of God* it was not with the intention of constructing a political theory akin to Plato, Aristotle, or Cicero. According to Ryan, the idea that the *City of God* is Augustine's political treatise is an interpretive construction of a later

[34] Mommsen, *St Augustine and the Idea of Progress*, 350.
[35] Mommsen, *St Augustine and the Idea of Progress*, 351.
[36] "Augustine confessed that he himself was "entreating the Lord for Rome," not because he believed the duration of that one would guarantee the duration of the whole world, but simply because there many fellow-Christians in Rome, dear to him as all other Christians were." See Mommsen, 351. These sentiments are contained in three of Augustine's sermons between the years 410 and 411.
[37] Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire with the conversion of Constantine in the 4th century; and with the abolition of pagan rituals and temples subsequently under the emperor Theodosius, Christian religion gained more prominence and freedom. Uniformity in doctrine was regarded as a key to establishing peace in the empire.

age, and not what Augustine intended; rather, the *City of God* is significantly concerned with controversies and philosophical issues, which form the bulk of his defence of Christianity.[38]

Augustine's prime focus in the *City of God* was to respond to accusations levelled against Christians as the cause for the sack of Rome. He bemoans the fact that Christians in Rome have been singled out by the worshippers of the Roman gods as the cause for the calamities in Rome. For most of these Roman pagans, there were no two ways about it; Rome fell because the worship of the Roman gods has been prohibited in the empire. In the opening pages of Part I, Augustine refers to these accusations against Christians as blaspheming of the true God. Augustine considers that pagan accusation of Christians has been bitter and acrimonious.

Though when he began to write the *City of God*, Augustine had stated that he is writing in defence against "those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of this city," it was in his *Retractions*, (426) which he wrote after he had completed the *City of God*, that he elaborated more on why he committed to writing a response to pagan accusers:

> In the meantime, Rome had been overthrown by the invasion of the Goths under the king Alaric and by the vehemence of a great defeat. The worshippers of the many and false gods, whom we commonly call pagans, attempted to attribute that overthrow to the Christian religion, and they began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their customary acrimony and bitterness. It is for that reason that I, kindled by zeal for the house of God, undertook to write the books on *The City of God* against their blasphemies and errors.[39]

When Augustine reiterated his objectives in the *City of God* in the Retractions, he was reminiscing how extensive he was in responding to the claims made by pagans against the Christian religion.

[38] Ryan, *On Augustine: The Two Cities*, 61.
[39] Augustine, *Retraction*. Bk 2, Ch 1. English translation by Mary Inez Bogan (Baltimore: CUA Press, 1999).

Before Augustine's *City of God*, some Christian writers had responded to these prevalent accusations. For instance, Tertullian in his apology, challenged pagans to think about the cause of calamities in the world even before the coming of Christ.

> Pray, tell me how many calamities befell the world and particular cities before Tiberius reigned — before the coming, that is, of Christ? We read of the islands of Hiera, and Anaphe, and Delos, and Rhodes, and Cos, with many thousands of human beings, having been swallowed up. Plato informs us that a region larger than Asia or Africa was seized by the Atlantic Ocean. An earthquake, too, drank up the Corinthian sea; and the force of the waves cut off a part of Lucania, whence it obtained the name of Sicily. These things surely could not have taken place without the inhabitants suffering by them. But where — I do not say were Christians, those despisers of your gods — but where were your gods themselves in those days, when the flood poured its destroying waters over all the world, or, as Plato thought, merely the level portion of it? For that they are of later date than that calamity, the very cities in which they were born and died, nay, which they founded, bear ample testimony; for the cities could have no existence at this day unless as belonging to post diluvian times.[40]

As for the accusations stemming from Alaric's attack on Rome, Augustine was at hand to render his defence on behalf of Christians. According to Mommsen, Augustine used the kind of argument as found in the earlier apologies of Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius and other 3rd century apologists, but Augustine's argumentation in the *City of God* was more elaborate than that of his predecessors.[41]

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[40] Tertullian, "Apology*,"* trans. S. Thelwall, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 3, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), no. 40, www.newadvent.org. [accessed 12th March 2022].

[41] Mommsen, *St Augustine and the Idea of Progress*, 352. When Augustine wrote his treatise on the two cities it was with the mindset of one wishing to contribute to the defence of Christianity during the declining days of the Roman empire.

In his earlier writings, such as the *On the True Religion,*[42] *On Free Choice of the Will*,[43] and *On Teaching the Uninstructed*,[44] Augustine divided the human race into two classes: the one consisted of the impious, those who are submissive to their passions and seeking after their own will; the other of those who are submissive to God and are devoted to the worship of the true God. Augustine believes that this division has been carried on from the beginning of the human race and will last till the end of time. Markus is of the opinion that the two classes of persons made by Augustine, with their divergent loyalties and opposed values, were a part of his earliest interpretation of history. "Quite soon the two categories are seen transposed into a social key and represented in the image of two societies or cities, in their turn typified by the biblical images of Babylon and Jerusalem."[45] These biblical cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, represented godly and rebellious cities respectively.

Undoubtedly, Augustine had other official duties to attend to at the time and was working on several other writings. But despite these, this classic would later be referred to as a compendium of Augustine's theology, a systematic work in which his previous thoughts became fully developed, as well as a work of Christian apology.[46] According to Marcus Dods, in his preface to the *City of God*, "if it were asked to what this popularity is due, we should be disposed to attribute it mainly to the great variety of ideas, opinions, and facts that are here brought before the reader's mind."[47]

[42] Augustine, "On the True Religion," *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, trans. John Burleigh (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1953), no. 50.
[43] Augustine, "*On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice and Other Writings*, trans. Peter King (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Bk 1.
[44] Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, trans. S. D. F. Salmond (Savage: Light House Publishing, 2017), Ch 19.
[45] Markus, *Saeculum*, 46
[46] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 88.
[47] Marcus Dods, "Preface," *The City of God*, xvii.

According to Avery Dulles, in Part I of the *City of God*, Augustine produced the most brilliant of all the Christian refutations of pagan religion, and in Part II, no less brilliantly laid the groundwork of a total theology of history,[48] from the moment of creation to the final restoration of all things in Christ.[49] Part II, he affirms, was more of a systematic theology than apologetics. Without denying the truism of the latter statement, it is reasonable to affirm that though Part II contained systematic theological thoughts, it is part of the defence which Augustine intended when he began to write the *City of God*. Considering how the fall of Rome affected both Christians and pagans, one would be sure to say that Augustine wrote with the intention of it being read by both Christians and pagans, as well as others who might have been concerned about the Gothic invasion of Rome. Augustine exhorted his listeners/readers to understand that the present situation in Rome at the time as part of the sufferings that humans in general cannot escape from. Rome does not find itself in its present sorry state because of the "*tempora christiana*" (referring to the period when Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire as promulgated by the Theodosian edict).

According to D. H. Williams, Augustine's intended audience is as mixed as the two cities of God; for though the *City of God* was addressed to the pagans as a response to their accusations, the actual readership was composed of Christians as much as pagans.[50] He knew he was addressing a community composed of diverse Christians and pagans. His detailed analysis shows that he intended it for both the pagans accusing Christians of the happenings in Rome at the time, and the Christians who had become disturbed that the calamities took place after the abolition of pagan religion in the empire. According to Markus,

> Augustine's sermons preached in the aftermath of the sacking of Rome bear ample witness to consternation, to widespread ideological confusion, even amounting to despair. Now, in the *De*

[48] When Augustine began his Christian notion of history in the City of God, his intention was to draw his audience to consider the plan of God in human history, and not as some human author or sages would want to present about the world. History, for him, is as God design it from the beginning to the end.
[49] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 85.
[50] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 409.

> *civitate dei,* he would undertake to outline an answer at a deeper level and on a grand scale. It was intended to meet both pagan and Christian anxieties.[51]

The work itself clearly shows that Augustine had the pagans in mind especially when he wrote the first 10 Books, since a major part of these books were devoted to responding directly to pagan criticisms of Christianity. But the work as a whole show that Augustine did more than engage in anti-pagan apologetics: his elaborate reflection on the two cities shows his intention to present a properly theological reflection on the city of God that went beyond his immediate apologetical concerns. This is part of what this study intends to highlight: namely, that the subsequent theological elaboration of the two cities doctrine in Part II nevertheless serves the apologetics in Part 1. Overall, as Williams affirms,

> Augustine's intention was hortatory, to produce an apologetic protreptic, by which he sought to convince readers whether they were on the religious spectrum. While we may rightly construe *City* as a refutation of pagan objections, it is more in keeping with what Augustine actually says about his aims in addressing Christian readers or those sympathetic to it, who benefit from his rebuttal of pagan views.[52]

Carol Harrison affirms that Augustine probably used the occasion of the fall of Rome to articulate and bring to fruition ideas on which he had long reflected and written upon; and these ideas became increasingly relevant to a pressing event that happened in Rome at the time.[53]

Augustine refers to readers like Marcellinus and Volusianus when he writes that some readers found his refutation satisfactory, while others most likely did not. Those who did not expected a more traditional approach of persuasion; but as one notices, the style of language for Augustine for pagan critics is not to persuade them of the folly of their views, but rather to criticise such views.[54] The depth of Augustine's *City of God* suggests that he had for a long-

[51] Markus, "The City of God," *Saint Augustine*, 84.
[52] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 197.
[53] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 197. Harrison also agrees that the fall was not the only inspiration for the *City of God* since the Christian ideas had been products of Augustine's reflection even before the fall. See Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 197.
[54] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 37.

time kept silence over the virulence of the views of the attackers of Christianity, and the opportunity to write eventually showed itself when Christians were blamed for the sack of Rome.

Before Augustine's *City of God*, Christians were already be accused by the pagans of the weakness of the *tempora Christiana* (Christian era). The intense accusation of Christians after the fall of Rome was an opportunity for Augustine to write a response to the pagans, as well as his reflection on some theological themes. As a leading figure in the church's episcopate, there is no doubt that he had had to weigh up his thoughts on certain themes and beliefs. The nature of Augustine's work in Part II of the *City of God* suggests that he had for some time been reflecting on some theological themes as part of his Christian reflections and developed these when he was writing about the two-cities doctrine. Augustine, in this second part, presents a Christian study of history, dwelling on the narrative of Scripture to demonstrate that human history is governed by the Christian God who is the origin of all things, human beings as well as angels. According to Karla Pollmann, Augustine in Books 11-22,

> uses *narratio* as *confirmation* of his argument, as a positive Christian illustration of the issues that pagan systems of belief or philosophy were not able to handle satisfactorily. Augustine tackles the pagan accusation that the Christian God proves to be ineffective, or even disastrous in human history by choosing a universal historical approach.[55]

With this style of argument, Augustine not only was able to incorporate all major apologetic arguments used before him, but also to illustrate that the incarnation gives sense to history, God shapes and validates human history with a linear purpose, forming a single human community across time and space.[56]

[55]Karla Pollmann, "Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius cogitaverit esse credendum: Augustine as Apologist*,"* in *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity*, ed., Jacobsen, Anders-Christian, Jörg Ulrich, and David Brakke (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2009), 316.
[56] Pollmann, "Augustine as Apologist," 316.

It is interesting to note that some scholars have inquired whether it was deliberate that the *City of God* contains 22 Books. The rationale behind the number of books, i.e., twenty-two is disputed.[57] Oort recounted the position of Arthur Darby Nock, that Augustine generally conformed to the principles that were common in the schools of rhetoric for works which were deemed extensive. It was a common practice in Augustine's time that in works of rhetoric writers usually dwelt little more on other themes apart from their original plan. According to Oort, it is not clear whether Augustine deliberately chose to write twenty-two books. Furthermore, when Augustine was working on the fourteenth book, he reported that he did not know how many books the whole work will eventually turn out to be.[58]

1. Part I: A Polemical Critique of Roman religion and philosophy

Part I is Augustine's direct response to pagans after the Gothic attack on Rome. In this part, Augustine writes apologetical arguments defending the accusations against Christians and to commend Christianity as reasonable. Augustine's polemic in Part I is structured into two parts. Books I-V are directed at those to who believe that the gods must be worshipped for the sake of this temporal life and, therefore, that the gods were protecting the temporal interests of Rome. Books VI-X are directed at those who believe that the gods must be worshipped for the purpose of life hereafter, in order to attain happiness in eternity. In the first five books, Augustine regards these gods as mere deified men. For Augustine, the Romans have by every means accorded to these gods an authority which they could never have. Here are some of his apologetical arguments against Roman culture and certain pagan authors in Part I of the *City of God*.

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[57] Alfred Adam is of the opinion that Augustine was influenced by Mani's Living Gospel, which consists of 22 books, according to the letters of the Syriac alphabet. See Alfred Adam, "Das Fortwirken des Manichäismus bei Augustin," (1958). See Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 78. And according to Joseph A. McCallin, human perfection is symbolised by the number 10, and the universal church is sybolised by the number 12. Therefore, 22 represents both the church and human perfection.
See Joseph McCallin, "The Christological Unity of Saint Augustine's De Civitate Dei," *REA* 12 (1966): 85-109.
[58] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 86.

Argument about the failure of the Roman gods

Augustine argued that in no way had the Roman gods contributed to making the life of Romans better. The gods offered nothing to prevent the calamities. Rome suffered the greatest calamity, which is moral decadence. According to Augustine, the Roman heathens had always dreaded the disasters of famine, pestilence, war, pillaging, captivity, and massacre. And yet the gods never prevented these from happening, even before the coming of Christ. In Bk 3, Ch 2, Augustine recounts that Troy or Ilium, the cradle of the Roman people was destroyed by the Greeks even though both the Greeks and Romans worshipped the same gods. Does this mean that these gods favoured one particular people over against another? For Augustine, the case shows that these gods cannot be trusted to be able to prevent their worshippers from experiencing calamities.

Augustine invites his interlocutors to think about the inconsistency in the myths about the gods of Rome, and how these same gods are reported to be inconsistent in condemning the wrongful acts of Paris, by withdrawing their protection from Troy, but sparing the mother of Romulus. To further support his argument for the failure of Roman gods, Augustine questioned why these gods exacted no penalty for the fratricide of Romulus but were quick to abandon Troy to fire and the swords because of the crime of Paris: "fratricide in a newly born city should have provoked them more than adultery in a city already flourishing."[59] Augustine considers it pointless why Rome, in the first place, should be entrusted to the Trojan gods when the inconsistencies and failures of these gods are proofs of their inability to protect Rome. Augustine is aware that his opponents may ask, what about the peace that Rome enjoyed during the reign of Numa Pompilius (successor of Romulus)? According to Augustine, many supposed that Rome enjoyed peace at that time because Numa had approved many religious observances

[59] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 3, Ch 6.

for the gods. But Augustine objects, observing that the gods cannot bequeath peace, rather, real peace is a great benefit which only the true God bestows on both the good, the ungrateful and the wicked.[60]

If these gods are incompetent, as Augustine intends to show, the Roman pagans had no reason to blame Christians for the attack of Rome since even before the Christianisation of the Roman empire, the roman gods had never protected the empire. This shows that one's religious worship generally ought not to be rooted in, or motivated by, the desire for temporal benefits in the first place; and even if the pagans of Rome did, the gods they have chosen had not delivered those goods. Augustine asserts, "let those who have no gratitude to Christ for His great benefits blame their own gods for these heavy disasters."[61]From the point of argumentation, Augustine might hypothetically grant the existence of these roman gods, but in doing so, he challenges the Romans to accept the failure of the gods to deliver that which the pagans have come to expect a god to deliver.

Argument about History

Augustine contends that Romans are ignorant of their own history in holding that the havoc that happened in Rome had no parallel in history; they imagine, therefore, that these calamities were not wont to happen. Their ignorance is one of the reasons why they blame Christians for being the reason why Rome was attacked by the Goths. Augustine therefore invites the pagans of Rome to analyse their history prudently, recall all the calamities experienced by Rome, and notice that the city had these troubles even before the sacrifices to their gods were prohibited. Even their own authors recorded how men have been inhuman to themselves. An accurate account of history shows that the earthly world has experienced calamities of all kinds.

> If I had wished to collect from history wherever I could, these and similar instances, where should I have finished what

[60] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 3.
[61] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 3, Ch 31.

> happened even in those times before the name of Christ had put down those of their idols, so vain and hurtful to true salvation?[62]

Augustine believes that God favoured the Romans by enlarging their empires, but their gods, whom they worshipped had brought to them many evils; however, through the name of Christ, God brought succour to both good and bad but to this saving work the Romans are quick to attribute it to their pagan gods. That, again, constitutes an inaccurate judgment of their own history. Ultimately, Augustine's apologetics here appeals to a consistent interpretation of historical events and shows how the Roman interpretation is inconsistent.

The pagans of Rome had argued that Rome had always been successful because they worshipped the Roman gods.[63] However, for Augustine, this success cannot be ascribed to the gods of Rome. Augustine argued that they have been mistaken to think that the success of the Roman empire can be noticed in the success and happiness of human beings, whereas genuine happiness can only be attributed to the worship of the true God and accepting Christ as the mediator between God and human beings is the means to attaining genuine (i.e., eternal) happiness. "Wherefore if the true God is worshipped, and if He is served with genuine rites and true virtue, it is advantageous that good men should long reign both far and wide."[64] Their knowledge of history should have revealed this to them, but on the contrary their hearts have been swayed by the gods they worshipped.

According to Augustine, the pagans of Romans have failed to understand from their own history that every sovereign power vanished away, and kingdoms have been lost even before the name of Christ had been proclaimed; for instance, Ninus overcame nations; Assyrians lost their kingdom to the Medes, and the Medes in turn lost their kingdom to the

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[62] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 4, Ch 2..

[63] Roman religion had the traditional idea that the historical success of Rome, its economic growth, and the growth in the Roman empire in general over the years, would not have been possible if the Romans had not been on good terms with their gods. See Christian Tornau, "Rome's Woes before Christ: History and Rhetoric in The City of God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's City of God*, ed. David Vincent Meconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 53.

[64] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 4, Ch 3.

Persians.[65] Augustine's deeper point in this argument about history is that religion (whether true or false) does not guarantee worldly flourishing. Evil befalls both saints and sinners.

Argument about Eternal Life

Augustine also responded to those who held that the Roman gods are able to guarantee eternal life to those who offer them worship. Against this belief, in Bk 6 of the *City of God*, he posits that only the true God is able to bestow eternal life to human beings. Augustine accused Roman pagans of observing several rituals for their gods with the belief that these make eternal life possible; this explains why they were aggrieved when the cults of these gods were removed. These pagans accused Christianity of denying them the opportunity of eternal life with the introduction of Christian religion in the empire. However, Augustine upholds that never was it possible that these gods will grant the blessings of the afterlife, for, as his critique of polytheism will show (see below), these so-called 'gods' are not the true God. He appeals to Psalm 40 – "Blessed is the man whose hope is the Lord God, and respect not vanities and lying follies."[66] For Augustine, only the true God can eternal life.

Augustine noted that Roman pagans have been misguided by the teachings of some philosophers. One such teaching is that the One God created other gods who are each responsible for delivering some temporal good, whether it be water, bread, or wine. Augustine observes that, according to Roman pagan writers, it is a grave error to seek wine from Ceres, bread from Liber, water from Vulcan and the rest of them (i.e., that it is a grave error to seek an object from a god who is not responsible for providing it). In this case, a god tasked with delivering wine cannot deliver bread. But if such a god cannot deliver a temporal object which he is ostensibly not meant to provide, how much more absurd is it to ask that same god for eternal life? In other words, for Augustine, the Roman religious system seems to impose

[65] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 4, Ch 7.
[66] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 6, Ch 1.

limitations on the gods, and yet, Roman religious praxis seems to demand of these same gods a limitless good. And while some Romans might even admit that the gods cannot be relied upon to deliver these temporal goods, it is human foolishness to expect eternal life from the gods than cannot even bestow earthly gifts that are temporal in themselves. While it is true that Christians also suffer temporal hardships, the key difference, for Augustine, is that Christians do not believe in God on account of temporal goods.

Furthermore, none of those who worship these gods can ascertain that they are capable of bestowing eternal life. Augustine even asserts that those who have come up with these minute divisions among the gods have not affirmed their ability to offer eternal life. In other words, Augustine is questioning the foundations of pagan belief: in the absence of a divine revelation whose credibility is supported by, for example, miracles, the pagans' only ground for believing in the efficaciousness of the roman gods concerning eternal things is the efficaciousness of the roman gods concerning temporal things. But as history has shown, the gods are *not* efficacious in delivering temporal things. Hence, the grounds for believing in their efficaciousness concerning eternal things is undercut.

Argument against Roman Polytheism

Augustine had the opportunity of studying about the polytheistic religion of Rome, by making use of an archaic study of Roman religion by the famous scholar Marcus Varro, where he discovered an exhausting treatment of the aspects of pagan practices.[67] Augustine's intends to demonstrate that there is only one true God, that which is proclaimed and worshipped by Christians. He already argued that the worship of Janus, Jupiter, Saturn, and other gods of Rome cannot offer human beings perpetual happiness in the afterlife. Therefore, it is absurd, on the part of Romans, to worship these gods apart from the true God. Augustine recommends

[67] Chadwick, *Augustine*, 97.

that every human being should seek after and worship the true God on the account of eternal life.

Augustine criticizes Varro's idea of deity or divinity. Varro selected 20 gods according to their roles and established that they be worshipped. In the first place, Augustine questions the grounds on which these gods are selected by Varro. He points out that it makes no sense to multiply gods for the sake of what we expect them to perform, just like we select good onions from bad ones, or because these gods have been known by the people over time. Augustine wishes to show by his analysis of Varro that the one true God is God alone and should be worshipped for the sake of his goodness (and not any goodness that can be provided) and that He offers to humanity the blessedness of the eternal happiness. In his argument, Augustine affirms that Varro, by virtue of his claim that God is the soul of the world, acknowledged in some fashion the one true God; however, Varro made further divisions of the world which he refers to as gods, therefore, supposing polytheism.[68] And these gods have acquired their names because the Roman worshippers have given them such names.

Augustine argued that the pagans of Rome have been mistaken to make themselves many gods by claiming that the One God has distributed authorities to these false gods. According to Augustine, the One true God makes and does all things as one same God.

> He who is wholly everywhere, included in no space, bound by no chains, mutable in no part of His being, filling heaven and earth with omnipresent power, not with a needy nature. Therefore, He governs all things in such a manner as to allow them to perform and exercise their own proper movements. For although they can be nothing without Him, they are not what He is.[69]

Augustine is upholding that there is no good reason why we ought to increase the number of gods based on their activities (as the pagans of Rome thought) when it can be explained how

[68] For more on Augustine's critique of Varro, see Mary Keys, "Nature, Convention, Civil Religion, and Politics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's City of God*, ed. David Vincent Meconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[69] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 7, Ch 30.

that same activity can be caused by one God (whose existence, according to Augustine, Varro tacitly acknowledges). In other words, it is unnecessary to posit multiple gods.

In Bk 7, Ch 33, Augustine goes beyond a critique of Varro's polytheistic argumentation and attacks the gods themselves. He argues that only the true religion (Christianity) has been able to manifest that the multiple gods worshipped by pagans of Rome are demons who are themselves proud in impurity and rejoicing in things most base and infamous and preventing human souls from turning to the true God.[70] In other words, Augustine is criticizing Roman religion, not on the grounds that these 'gods' do not exist, but on the grounds that these 'gods' are not God (but rather demons).

Argument against Porphyry concerning Purification of Soul in Christ

This last argument of Augustine's is slightly different from the others in that, here, Augustine is not so much critiquing roman religion, but defending the incarnation. The coming of Christ as the saviour of the world is an important theme for Augustine's apologetics in the *City of God*. Augustine posited that through the Incarnate Word, the abundant grace of God reached humanity:

> The only Son of God, remaining unchangeable in Himself, should assume humanity, and should give us the hope of His love, by means of the mediation of a human nature, through which we, from the condition of men, might come to Him who was so far off – the immortal from the mortal; the unchangeable from the changeable; the just from the unjust; the blessed from the wretched.[71]

The incarnation makes it possible that, having been purified in Christ, that for which we long might be bestowed upon us. Augustine argues that Porphyry leads people into error for not recognising Christ as the virtue and wisdom of God. According to Augustine, Porphyry fails to

[70] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 7.
[71] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 10, Ch 29.

recognise Christ as the true wisdom because he is not actually seeking true wisdom at all but instead relying on the knowledge he has acquired through the arts and sciences.

Augustine noted that Porphyry acknowledged that the spiritual part of the soul can be purified by the virtue of chastity without the aid of theurgic arts and mysteries which he learnt, yet he recurs on every opportunity to these arts, for the purpose of appearing before his contemporaries as an accomplished theurgist. In other words, Porphyry demonstrated that the theurgic arts are not in any way relevant for the soul. Porphyry also acknowledged that ignorance and numberless vices resulting from these arts cannot be removed by any mysteries, but only by the Father's mind or intellect conscious of the Father's will. However, Porphyry does not believe that Christ is this mind on the account of the claim that he took on of human flesh and the shameful death on the cross. For Porphyry, such humility is incompatible with the divine mind. Augustine argues that the lowliness of Christ is despised by the worldly learned and wise because of their a priori presuppositions that God cannot be humiliated, yet it is through the grace issuing from Christ, as the Son of the Father, that the world is healed; it is this saving act of Christ that Porphyry and the Platonist have refused to recognise.[72] Augustine's defense of the incarnation vis-à-vis Porphyry amounts not so much to a detailing of evidence in its favour, but to clarifying that Porphyry's grounds for objecting to it (i.e., that God cannot be so humiliated) is precisely what the incarnation itself overturns.

Summary of Argumentation in Part I

In his apologetics in Part I Augustine presents what he considers to be inconsistencies in the Roman approach to religion, especially with respect to their arguments for why the worship of the gods should not have been abolished. Augustine criticizes their religious history, the teachings of their religious scholars (e.g., Varro) who, through their teachings, had influenced the ways Romans practiced their religion. Augustine, in his argument, is multi-faceted; he

[72] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 10, Ch 29.

argued that the gods of Rome did not deserve the attention that Romans gave to them; he disputes their understanding of their own history; he attacks what he considers as inconsistencies in their approach to religion vis-à-vis their expectations from the gods of Rome; he engages their reasons for believing in multiple gods; and to reiterate the importance of incarnation, he argued against Porphyry, showing that the death of Christ on the cross is part of the redemptive plan of God. According to D. H. Williams, Augustine's analysis of the situation in Rome at the time was not to make a compilation of the successes and failures of the gods of Rome, but to confront the entire religious, cultural, and political traditions of Rome with its ability to attain human happiness.[73] The relationship of his arguments to the two-cities doctrine will be investigated in the next chapter (Ch 4). But now we simply turn to consider the doctrine of the two cities more generally.

2. Part II: The Doctrine of the Two Cities

Augustine's reflection on the two cities elaborates the apologetics he began already in Part I of the *City of God*. In his concluding remarks in Book 10 Augustine is convinced that he has responded to the accusation of the pagans:

> And therefore, in these 10 books, though not meeting, I dare say, the expectation of some, yet I have, as the true God and Lord has vouchsafed to aid me, satisfied the desire of certain persons, by refuting the objections of the ungodly, who prefer their own gods to the Founder of the holy city, about which we undertook to speak.[74]

Augustine is satisfied that he had successfully responded to his detractors. Now, his subsequent attention would be focused on the doctrine of the two cities:

> And now, in fulfilment of the promise I made in the first book, I shall go on to say, as God shall aid me, what I think needs to be said regarding the origin, history, and deserved ends of the two

[73] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 412-414.
[74] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 10, Ch 32.

> cities, which, as already remarked, are in this world commingled and implicated with one another.[75]

Concretely, Augustine wrote about the two cities in 12 Books contained in Part II: namely, on the origin of the two cities (Bks 11-14); on the history or progress of the two cities (Bks 15-18); and on the destinies of the two cities (Bks 19-22). Part of our research is to show that Augustine's elaborate exposition of the two cities is a continuation and a more detailed response to the pagans of Rome after the attack of the city in 410, even if the exposition is a theological one whose presuppositions (e.g., concerning divine revelation, scripture, etc.) are not shared by his Roman detractors.

In what follows, we will explore the doctrine of the two cities more generally, and then briefly consider Augustine's sources to which his doctrine is indebted.

The Doctrine of the Two Cities in General

Augustine's two-cities doctrine was his anchor for the defence of Christianity against his pagan detractors. As an apologetical piece, Augustine showed in Part I, that the features that marked the city of Rome before its fall is common with what is obtainable in the earthly city where its citizens are constantly ruled by passion and seeking after self-praise. "In the years following 411, above all in the early books of the *City of God*, Rome becomes the concrete historical representative of Babylon, the embodiment of the earthly city. The new emphasis is revealing: Rome itself has now moved to the centre of the stage."[76] Augustine had himself stated in the opening of Part II that he has responded to the ungodly in the previous part. He is undeniably referring to those who had questioned the reasonableness of Christianity amidst the uncertainties and troubles in fifth-century Rome. His next focus was on the two cities.

[75] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 10, Ch 32.
[76] Markus, *Saeculum*, 46.

Augustine's use of the term 'city' refers to a particular set of people who are ruled by a certain kind of passion. In his further reflections on the two cities, he emphasises that one of these cities is comprised of the ungodly, and the other of the holy, and the reason for this difference resides in the will. At present members of these cities are commingled with regard to their existence in bodily form, but with regard to their wills, they are separated. The separation is complete when on the day of judgement when members of each city will be rewarded in accordance with where and to whom the use of their will has been directed. Overall, the city of the godly has within it all those who have responded positively to the love of God. O'Daly believes that Augustine, in his reflection on the two cities, accomplishes more than his initial scheme suggests; some of the themes already talked about (Bks 8-10) are re-emphasised in Part II.[77]

Though Augustine's plan had been to write about the genesis, growth, and end of the two cities in Part II, readers of this work will agree that Augustine also touched on some fundamental theological issues, apparently in his bid to offer a thorough understanding of what the doctrine of the two cities is about. Our analysis of the beginning, progress, and destinies of the two cities will be done in chapter 4.

Augustine's Sources of the theme of Two Cities

Augustine's idea of the title of his work, *City of God*, comes from Scripture, particularly the psalm where the psalmist speaks of Jerusalem as the heavenly city, the city of God. This city is referred to as God's dwelling place, the lasting city where all holy men and women gather to sing the praise of the true God. It is an everlasting city. While the notion of a divine city or the 'city of God' is Scriptural, the source for the idea of the two rival cities is less clear.[78] While

[77] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 135.
[78] The book of Revelation contains passages where there is contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon; but Augustine seldom referred to this book when he wrote about the city of God.

some scholars maintain one (non-Scriptural) source for Augustine's idea of the two cities, other scholars, such as van Oort hold that it would be a mistake to affirm one source at the exclusion of others.[79] Arriving at the sources of Augustine's doctrine is not as easy as it might appear, but the theme of two opposing cities features in some writings in the Christian tradition.

One prevailing feature of the Christian tradition is a particular kind of dualism, unique but nonetheless related to the dualisms found in Platonism, Stoicism, and in the writings of the Gnostics. Undoubtedly, Augustine would have been influenced by the dualism present in this sect when he was construing in his mind the idea of the two cities. According to Harrison, the Manichean's doctrine of the two kingdoms, of the exile of the soul in this world, the kingdom of darkness, and its return to the heavenly kingdom of light, at first looks like the idea of the two opposed cites, of the righteous elect and the sinful damned. However, with Augustine, the two cities are not ontologically dualistic so as to imagine that there are two essences of the human person; rather the division we find is determined by how each person – essentially the same as all other humans – uses his or her freedom, either to the praise of God or to the praise of self.[80] These two cities are inseparable in this present life, they co-exist alongside one another.

In a similar vein, the good and evil of the two cities cannot be understood for Augustine in a co-equal way. In contrast to the Manichean's understanding of two clear and distinct modes of existence, Augustine holds that there is no ontological equality between good and evil principles; all that is, is from God and is therefore good. Evil, by contrast, has no ontological status as it does for Manichean dualism. It is rather, for Augustine, a privation of some good. The city of man, therefore, is a city deprived of the highest good.

[79] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 351.
[80] Harrison, *Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 200.

The idea of the two separate cities is also contained in the "*Book of Rules*" of the Donatist Tyconius. Tyconius talks about the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture in relation to nature of the church. He proposed "seven mystical rules" of interpreting the Scripture that with the grace of the Holy Spirit reveal the true meaning of prophecy, and if interpreters follow the logic of these rules, the nature of the church as regards its membership is revealed. Tyconius was concerned about schism in the church, which he was against – though Augustine had wondered why he did not choose to join the Catholic party. Rule II of the "Book of Rules" is specifically about the two parts of the Lord's body. Tyconius claims that the church is "bipartite" with good and evil membership throughout the world.[81] However, Augustine is wary of the expression 'bipartite' being used in reference to Christ, since it cannot be that Christ's body includes the impious in heaven. Rather, it should be called 'of the true and mixed body of the Lord' because hypocrites cannot be said to be with him either in eternity or even now, though they are present in His Church.[82] In this sense, Augustine borrows but simultaneously adjusts Tyconius's idea.

The fact that Augustine may have derived some of these ideas from his reading of Tyconius's work does not diminish his originality in the idea of the two cities; for Augustine always expounds more on whatever idea he may have derived from the works of others, and in that way appropriates the idea in a way unique to him. For instance, according to O'Daly, there is no trace in Tyconius of a history of the world from creation as a history of two cities. [83]

Augustine would have also been influenced by Early Christian-Jewish traditions on the theme of two kinds of cities or the two ways.[84] In the early Latin church, there was the

[81] Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purposes and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), Introduction.
[82] Harrison, *Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 201.
[83] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 58.
[84] For the different presentations of the two ways in both Judaism and Christianity across the centuries, and the context around the development of the themes, see Alistair Stewart, *On the Two Ways: Life or Death, Light or Darkness: Foundational Texts in the Tradition*. Popular Patristics Series 41 (Yonkers: St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary Press, 2011).

conception of the church as community of the elect, especially during the periods of the persecution. And contrary to this community of the elect is the state, in whose name and authority Christians were being persecuted. The tradition was such that the Church represented the heavenly elect, while the state represented all that has to do with the world. Harrison believes that this idea of the community of the elect influenced the Donatists' strict perfectionism, separatism, and exclusivism in relation to those who were not part of their sect; and that this idea must have also influenced Augustine in his less dualistic, less realised, and more eschatological conception of two antithetical groups, with their different allegiances and ends.[85] Before the emergence of the New Testament, Jewish apocalyptic tradition also had dualistic elements that would influence Christianity. These elements include the antithesis between this present world and the one yet to come.[86] These apocalyptic texts stress the demonization of the present world and contrast it with a heavenly world or city. "The antithesis Babylon-Jerusalem is used. It is also found in the so-called New Testament Apocrypha, which speak of the kingdom of God, Satan's reign, the city of Christ, and two 'mētropoleis'."[87] These Jewish apocalyptic elements are found in the writings of the early Christian communities. In the first half of the second century, works such as *The Shepherd of Hermas* were already being circulated in the early Christian communities. This particular work develops an antithesis between two cities; though no name is given to them, they represent antithetical values. The Christian church is designated as the heavenly city or a mountain.[88] The idea of the church being a mountain is to state how it stands out, being the Body of Christ, as the shining city in contrast to the saeculum. This same image Jesus also used in speaking to his listeners soon after his teaching on the beatitudes in Matthew 5:14.

[85] Harrison, *Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 201.
[86] Examples are some Old Testament Apocrypha, Baruch, and 4 Esdras.
[87] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 54.
[88] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 54.

Other Jewish-Christian works which contained the idea of the two cities include the *Didache, Doctrina Apostolorum* and *Barnabas*. According to Oort, the elaborate doctrine of two ways in the Jewish tradition has prominent place in these writings; for around the beginning of the Christian era ethical instruction was given in Jewish circles following the schemes of the two ways. The two ways in Jewish tradition refer differing ways of living, the way of light and the way of darkness. The two ways ultimately terminate in two different societies. The righteous walk in the ways of light and are ruled by the prince of light; the angel of darkness rules over the evil ones and they walk in the ways of darkness.[89] Both the *Didache* and *Barnabas*[90] are Christian versions of the doctrine of the two ways, as are later works, such as *Apostolic Church Order*, the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.[91]

Concerning the eschatological ends to which every human is destined, Augustine was more influenced by the spiritual writings of Origen and Ambrose in which Jerusalem stands for the city of God, always in struggle with Babylon, which symbolised the forces of evil. "The antithesis of the kingdoms of God and sin, and the equation of the 'saeculum' with the kingdom of sin (the earthly domain of the devil), are frequent themes in Ambrose."[92] Ambrose believes that the Church is the heavenly city that psalm 118 refers to. According to Ambrose, the antithesis of Jerusalem and Babylon are allegories for an inner conflict within the individual, so that the soul can be called a city, and the soul of the believer called Jerusalem.[93] Though the

[89] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon,* 330.
[90] The *Didache* refers to the two ways as those of life and death. The way of life is that of love of God and love of neighbour, while the way of death is the way of evil and it is full of curse. See Didache (Chs 1-6), trans: M. B. Riddle, in Ante-Nicene Fathers 7, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donalson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886). *Epistle of Barnabas* calls them the way of light and the way of darkness. Over the way of light is the light-bringing angels of God and over the way of darkness is the angel of Satan. See *Epistle of Barnabas* (Ch 18), trans: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, in Ante-Nicene Fathers 1, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donalson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885).
[91] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon,* 329.
[92] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 56.
[93] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 56.

theme of the two cities is present in the other writers such as Ambrose, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria, Augustine is unique in his use of the theme to interpret the course of history.[94]

The theme of the antithesis between the two cities was, therefore, not new to Augustine. He was influenced by these traditions which were already prevalent at the time, but he developed the doctrine into a key for interpreting history, emphasizing the mixed status of the two cities here on earth, moving towards the eschatological separation between the elect of the city of God and the reprobate who are solely of the earthly city.

In this chapter we have examined the context in which Augustine felt the need to respond, and even looked at some of his particular argumentation in Part I. We then surveyed his doctrine of the two cities with reference to some of his sources. In the next chapter I will focus on the theological analysis of the two-cities doctrine – their origin, progress, and destiny – and highlight the apologetical import that this theological doctrine has.

[94] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 57.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEOLOGICAL/APOLOGETICAL IMPORT OF THE "TWO-CITIES" DOCTRINE IN AUGUSTINE'S *CITY OF GOD*

From the foregoing we have seen that the idea of two cities was not new to Augustine since some writers before him had already conceived of two categories of persons. This idea anticipated what Augustine developed in the *City of God*. Therein, he offers a fuller elaboration of what constitutes the two cities. He explains that humans are not intrinsically divided into two categories but are, rather, distinguished by the difference in the act of the will: those whose love is directed towards God and those whose love is directed towards the self.

Against the temptation to set aside Part II when considering the apologetics of Augustine in the *City of God*, this chapter will elucidate how the two-cities doctrine in Part II is essential to a full appreciation of the apologetic effort of Augustine in Part I. To that end, this chapter contains two main sections. The first and longest section will examine Augustine's theological elaboration of the two cities, following his own schema of their origin, progress, and destiny. The last section revisits concretely some of the specific arguments made by Augustine in Part I (which we examined in Ch 3), and shows the relevance to them to his two-cities doctrine.

THEOLOGICAL/APOLOGETICAL SURVEY OF THE TWO-CITIES DOCTRINE

The *City of God* is not only apologetical in nature but a detailed theological elucidation of the Christian life. The *City of God* is more than Christian apologetics in the sense that Augustine did more than give a mere response to the accusations of pagans. Hence, the work contains not only defense but also theological elaboration.

The immediate idea that comes to any reader of Augustine's *City of God* is that there are two aspects to the whole work: an apologetical discourse against pagan accusations and

religion more generally, and a theological treatise on the two cities. Augustine's apologetical arguments in the *City of God* were geared towards stating that Rome was only a human city in which everything in it is either mutable or perishable; for God did not promise that earthly things or temporal goods would remain, but promised eternal life, and this is not present in this present life. The apologetics in the *City of God* is supplemented by multiple kinds of discourse: theological, doctrinal, moral, political, historical, philosophical, and even cosmological.[1] Hence, any adequate understanding of Augustine's apologetics cannot be reduced to piecemeal or schematic responses to particular pagan objections; his apologetics is bound up with multiple other kinds of discourse. Anyone reading Augustine's *City of God* should be prepared, then, to go beyond his direct or focused refutations in Part I, and attend to how Part II's theological elaboration expands the apologetical framework of Part I.

Augustine's primary focus is on the "most glorious city" (*gloriosissima civitas*). He wishes to write about the heavenly city, whose citizens are inclined to love and worship the true God. On the other hand, there is the earthly city (*terrena civitas*) whose citizens rebel in their love for God by subordinating it to other (earthly) goods. Augustine shows that the city of God (*civitas Dei*) is the city of those whose will are directed towards pleasing God alone; and the earthly city (*terrena civitas*) is the antithesis of the city of God in its preoccupation with all things earthly.

In Part I of the *City of God*, as we discussed already in the previous chapter, Augustine showed how pagan Rome had turned itself against the *civitas Dei*. Through its spurious condemnation of Christianity, Rome has become the new symbol of the earthly city. We get the

[1] Robert Barr is convinced that Augustine left to western culture one of the most influential pieces of literature, philosophy, and theology. For more on Barr's article on Augustine's *City of God,* see Robert Barr, "The Two Cities in Saint Augustine," *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 18, no.2 (1962): 211–229, https://doi.org/10.7202/1020026ar

impression that Augustine's detailed theological treatise on the two cities is directed towards pagan Rome on one hand and Christian Rome on the other. However, nowhere in the *City of God* did Augustine make the claim that the two cities, earthly and heavenly, represent pagans and Christians respectively, but it is not surprising that from the style of his treatise, one can infer that he had these two communities in mind when he was writing. Moreover, his intention of writing was to defend the 'glorious city of God'. Like other Augustinian scholars, Wetzel opines that "in *City of God*, pagan Rome and the earthly city keep close company, but for the most part Augustine keeps them conceptually distinct. Analogously, Christian Rome and the heavenly city on pilgrimage have close ties, but they are not identical."[2] Though Augustine's two-cities doctrine speaks about the heavenly city and the earthly city, judging from the close connection between these cities and the pagan Rome and Christian Rome, his polemics were geared towards the vindication of Christian religion as superior to the pagan belief of Rome.

1. The Origins of the Two Cities

Basing his teaching on the Scriptures, Augustine offers a thoroughly biblically-based account of creation especially with reference to Genesis.[3] He showed how the two cities were formed originally, by the separation of the good and bad angels, and the consequences of this separation, which led to the heavenly city of God and the earthly city. The two cities, furthermore, are embodied in history with the creation of the first parents.

God as Creator of the World

Augustine begins Part II of the *City of God* with the creation of the world. The progression of his writing shows that he is keen on establishing the greatness of God, the all-powerful and creator of all that exists. God is the paramount originator of all creatures in the world. Augustine

[2] James Wetzel, "Introduction," *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: University Press, 2012), 2.
[3] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 9.

had always marvelled at the beauty of the world. In his *Confessions*, he narrated how he fell in love with the lovely creature of the world.[4] In the *City of God*, however, Augustine articulates the reason for the gravity of his past mistake: namely, that "of all visible things, the world is the greatest; of all invisible, the greatest is God."[5]

Augustine asserts that God created the universe out of nothing, *ex-nihilo*. His conviction concerning the creation of the universe – whatever other philosophical knowledge he might have brought to bear on his understanding of creation – is predominantly dependent on what he reads in the Old Testament concerning the beginning of the world. Scripture is the means through which the invisible world becomes accessible to human beings: "Nowhere more distinctly than in the Holy Scriptures, where His prophet said, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'."[6] For Augustine, Scripture's teaching on creation is clear: everything that exists is caused by God. According to O' Daly, "presumably, Augustine means that, considered in itself, the universe exhibits its changeable nature (and so it is secondary, and so caused in some way), and it also exhibits its greatness and order and beauty (and so points towards a maker whose qualities it reflects)."[7]

For Augustine, God created freely. That is, without any external force, God created the world out of love and wished to share his goodness with his creation. God desires to share his love with His creatures not for his own sake, but that his creatures might be drawn to what makes for true happiness. For as long as creatures allow this Divine love to take root in them, they remain close to the very source of their being. Augustine traces the beginning of the human persons to God to show humanity's original and special closeness to God. Thus, by doing the will of the creator, we give what we have already received from the Divine Creator. "Creatures owe their being to a super-abundance of divine joy which is identical with the divine power

[4] Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 10, Ch 27.
[5] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 4.
[6] Genesis 1:1. Quoted by Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 11, Ch 9.
[7] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 137.

and goodness."[8] According to Versfeld, the idea of one Creator God liberated Augustine from the dualism remaining from his Manichean and Platonist periods.[9] For Augustine, all that is, is from God, and all that is, is good.

Of all God's creation, human beings occupy a significant place, because God created man and woman in his image and likeness and bestowed on them intelligence and authority over other creatures of the earth. Through intelligence human beings can know their creator, render him fitting worship, and have dominion over all creatures of the earth.[10] Among God's fundamental gifts to humanity is freedom of will, in order that they might worship God not of any slavish necessity but with proper disposition to give glory to their creator. The presence of free will made it possible that human beings decide to either act in accordance with God's will or in accordance with one's selfish ends. The theme of free will in relation to sin will be explored more when dealing with Bk 12 of the *City of God* where Augustine writes about the fallen Angels, sin, and Man in relation to the citizens of the two cities.

To avoid succumbing to the idea that time pre-exists creation such that the world is 'inserted' as it were into an infinite span of time, Augustine holds, to the contrary, that the world and time had one beginning; one did not anticipate the other. Time only comes about by virtue of other creatures because it is precisely the motion, and hence, change in creatures that accounts for time.

> Since then, God, in whose eternity is no change at all, is the Creator and Ordainer of time, I do not see how He can be said to have created the world after spaces of time had elapsed, unless it be said that prior to the world there are some creatures by whose movement time could pass.[11]

[8] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 16.
[9] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 15.
[10] This idea re-echoes what Augustine had already said about creation of man and woman in his "On the Catechising of the Uninstructed", that God, the omnipotent God, who is also good and just and merciful, made all things…made also man after His own image, and man by virtue of his intelligence presides over universal creation. See Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, Ch 18.
[11] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 6.

Here Augustine is agreeing with Aristotle (or perhaps other Greek philosophers) who always held that 'time' is the measure of motion/change. If there is no change, there is no 'before' or after and, hence, no 'time'. Hence, Augustine uses a Greek philosophical understanding of time to defend a more sophisticated understanding of creation that does not render God idle before creation. The significance of Augustine's teaching that time itself is created is, firstly, that it reinforces his doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* because there was no-thing (not even time) before creation. Secondly, in rejecting the existence of time before creation, Augustine precludes any idea of an idle God who, out of boredom in the passing of time, creates the world.

Augustine's understanding of creation is also different from the likes of Porphyry and the Neo-Platonists who argued, concerning creatures, that the immortal part of man (the soul) was taken from God Himself and that the minor creators added the mortal parts (the body). This argument proposes a dichotomy in the human person and maintains that for the soul to be purified, it must free itself from the entanglement of the body. "It follows that those whom they would have us worship as our parents and authors, that they may plausibly call them gods, are, after all, but the forgers of our fetters and chains – not our creators, but our jailers and turnkeys, who lock us up in the most bitter and melancholy house of correction."[12] Towards the end of Bk 12, Augustine rejects two falsehoods: that souls return to life to be punished; that there are other creators besides He who made all things in heaven and the earth.[13] If it is true that some parts of the human were created by some beings other than God, it is not surprising that some persons have ended up worshiping these beings as gods. This could be why the pagans of Rome have resorted to worshipping Roman gods. However, they are mistaken to have attributed any part of creation to other gods other than the true God of whom Scriptures speaks.

[12] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 26.
[13] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 26.

In his treatise on the Christian Creator God, Augustine's rejection of any sort of necessity in creation serves to highlight the freedom and, hence, love out of which God creates the world. The universe is, hence, a recipient of God's gratuitous love. The universe reflects, significantly, the glory of God in a most unique way; and to fully reveal himself to His creatures, the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, mediator between God and human beings.

While it is God's love behind his creation that serves as the foundation for the existence of all that is, it is specifically with the creation of the angels that we perceive a demarcation between the two cities, each motivated by a different love.

The Creation and Presence of the Angels

There is, for Augustine, a connection between the angels and the emergence of the two cities. Gradually, we see how and why he recognises the obedient angels as the founding members of the city of God and the disobedient angels, likewise, as the founders of the earthly city. Augustine addresses the creation of the angels first because, for him, the good angels form a significant part of the city of God.[14]

The angels are illumined by the Light that created them and participate in the Light. The angels become light not in themselves, but in God. Just as there is the separation between light and darkness, there is a distinction between bad and good angels. Once an angel turns away from the pure light, which is God, he becomes impure, becomes darkness in himself since he has been deprived of the eternal Light. They still have the light of reason, though in a deformed way.[15] But, for the angel of light, theirs is an enjoyment of eternal blessedness.

> From all this, it will readily occur to anyone that the blessedness which an intelligent being desires as its legitimate object results from a combination of these two things, namely, that it uninterruptedly enjoy the unchangeable good, which is God; and

[14] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 11, Ch 9.
[15] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 9.

> that it be delivered from all dubiety and know certainly that it shall eternally abide in this enjoyment.[16]

Augustine's explanation of the relationship between the pure Light and the angels' participation in the eternal Light shows how an angel created good becomes bad. An impure angel becomes bad because he has lost his place with the eternal light, because evil is the loss of good. Augustine's point is that the devil was not created defective in his nature, for God created everything good. Ontologically, good, the devil is morally defective.[17] The devil lost his blessedness when, through pride, he chose a good lesser than the greatest Good, thereby contradicting the will of God. To assume that the devil was created initially defective in some way is to undermine the Scriptural affirmation that God created all things good. To deny the good inherent in all creation (without exception) is to concede the Manichean teaching that a substantial part of reality is attributable to an evil force. For Augustine, however, evil is simply the absence of good.

Augustine's treatise on creation and the angels is significant for his two-cities doctrine. The bad angels serve as a 'type' for the rebellious pagan worshippers of Rome, who for the sake of their selfish pride, had separated themselves from the Light and sought after pagan gods. This separation can only bring about their own destruction and perpetual unhappiness. On the other hand, the obedient believers, so long as they remain under the illumination of the true Light, enjoy eternal blessedness both on earth and in eternity.

Two Communities of Angels and the Two Cities

From the foregoing, Augustine has made a distinction between two communities of angels: the good angels and the bad angels. Just as light is separated from darkness, so the angels are separated according to how they enjoy the blessedness bestowed on them at creation. The

[16] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 13.
[17] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 19. The devil was created good being an angel of light until he fell into wrong through the misuse of freedom.

distinguishing mark in these categories of angels resides in their wills. The will is the seat of love, which one could regard as the force in human actions and decisions. According to Ryan, when Augustine was denouncing the positions of the Manicheans that evil is an active force in the world, he nonetheless affirms that we cannot completely empty the world of forces that would, if misdirected, lead humanity into trouble. Love is the most important of them.[18]

The good angels direct their wills to loving God and seeking God's praise, whereas, the bad angels are drawn to themselves, in pride seeking their own will and self-aggrandisements. The good angels are in continuous enjoyment of God, while the bad angels, swollen in pride, cannot enjoy God. "The one blazing with the holy love of God, the other recking with the unclean lust of self-advancement."[19] The result of this is that,

> we may say, the one dwelling in the heavens, the other cast thence, and raging through the lower regions of the air; the one tranquil in the brightness of piety, the other temper-tossed with beclouding desires; the one, at God's pleasure, tenderly succouring, justly avenging – the other, set on by its own pride, boiling with the lust of subduing and hurting; the one the minister of God's goodness to the utmost of their good pleasure, the other held in by God's power from doing the harm it would; the former laughing at the latter when it does good unwillingly by its persecutions, the latter envying the former when it gathers in its pilgrims.[20]

The good angels are constantly seeking out for the common good of all because they are steadfastly rooted in God, while the bad angels are passionately seeking after their selfish ends. The blessedness of the good angels is rooted in their adherence to God, while the plight of the bad angels will be founded in their non-adherence to the will of God.

If all the angels were created good, the question arises: How did some turn out to be bad? Augustine's response is "that there is no unchangeable good but the one, true, blessed God; that the things which He made are indeed good because from Him, yet mutable because

[18] Ryan, *On Augustine: The Two Cities*, 67.
[19] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 33.
[20] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 33.

made not out of Him, but out of nothing."[21] And natures made of nothing can be defective. They are made of nothing, but still can be blessed so long as they adhere to the immutable good, the supreme God. On the contrary, those who do not adhere to the immutable good, are by their wills made enemies of God since they oppose His rule. "For they are His enemies, not through their power to hurt, but by their will to oppose Him. For God is unchangeable, and wholly proof against injury. Therefore, the vice which makes those who are called His enemies resist Him, as an evil not to God, but to themselves." [22] Wilfully excluding themselves from God harms them and deprives them of their nature's goodness – they are deprived of integrity, beauty, welfare; they increasingly diminish in these by being continually rebellious to the divine Good.

The two angelic communities, therefore, share the same angelic nature but not the propensity of their wills. When Augustine wrote about the emergence of the two cities in the human communities, the use of the will comes to play as well, for how close the human person is to his Creator is determined by the free use of his or her free will. The will is either directed to God and brings with it happiness; or directed to one's self and brings with it misery and further inclinations towards evils.[23] The highest good for any creature is to adhere to God, and to persist in doing this in love. This love for God is further extended to other creatures by loving in them the intentions of God. In relation to the angelic creatures, Versfeld echoes Augustine when he writes that,

> The good angels were those who "persisted in God, their common good". The evil angels were those who "delighting more in their own power, as though it were from themselves, fell from that common all-blessing good to dote upon their own and…became proud, deceitful and envious." The source of the

[21] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 1.
[22] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 3.
[23] "And if we ask the cause of the misery of the bad, it occurs to us, and not unreasonably, that they are miserable because they have forsaken Him who supremely is and have turned to themselves who have no such essence." See Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 6.

> angelic evil, then, is a will freely misdirected, a rebellion against due authority[24]

Having traced the source of the division among angelic beings, Augustine upholds the existence of two cities among angelic creatures, namely, the heavenly city (*civitas Dei)* and the earthly city *(civitas terrena*). They are constituted by the same natures (i.e., angels), but are contrary in wills and inclinations. Versfeld considers it necessary to clarify that Augustine does not use *terrena* to mean "of this earth", but rather, it means the fallen or low city.[25] *Terrena* is used to describe the state of those (whether angel or human) who have made themselves enemies of God by deviating from – i.e., rebelling against – His will, to pursue their selfish ends.

The Emergence of the Two Cities in Human History

Having written about the origin of the two communities among the angelic beings, Augustine turns to how the two cities became present in human history. Augustine conceives of the city of God as having descended to earth with the creation and fall of humans.[26] Man is created in the image and likeness of the God. This accounts for their gifts of an intellect and, hence, a free will: "God, then made man in His own Image. For he created for him a soul endowed with reason and intelligence, so that he might excel all the creatures of earth, air, and sea, which were not so gifted."[27] Human creatures, then, are able to choose, good or bad for themselves. The presence of the will is responsible for whether they belong to the city of the good angels or that of the bad angels.

Augustine's account on the human being as created with free will affirms that, despite being created in God's image, human beings still possess the potential for falling into error since he or she is blessed with freedom to make choices. God, in his Divine wisdom, foresaw

[24] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 35
[25] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 19.
[26] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.
[27] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 23.

from the beginning that humanity would make wrong choices, for God is omniscient. "When God made man He was not ignorant of the evil which men would work, fighting among themselves more fiercely than the naturally wild creatures."[28] God eternally knows that two cities will emerge also in human history: "for from that man all men were to be derived – some of them to be associated with the good angels in their reward, others with the wicked in punishment; a being ordered by the secret yet just judgment of God."[29]

If he or she falls into evil, that is because an evil will has gained prominence. Just as in the case of the angels, human beings are originally created by God to possess good will, since God cannot be the source of evil will; what determines a will is the end(s) towards which it is directed. Everything created by God must be accounted as good, but the pursuit of created ends over the eternal is a great evil because it constitutes a lack of the highest good. In directing their wills towards created goods over God, creatures become rebellious and exhibit evil inclinations. Hence, there is the categorisation of human beings into good and rebellious beings.

It is important to always keep in mind that, according to Augustine, these two cities are intermingled together in the same world. The entire human family that makes up the two cities shares the one same human nature. What dualistic separation exists between the two cities is rooted in the will, not in geography, nationality, or race, etc, nor in one group being created by God, and another group created by some other power, (co-equal or not with God). The love with which God creates *all* is what serves as the foundation for any potential loving relationship with God. For Augustine, *some* have refused this divine love that is directed towards *all.*

[28] Edward Hardy, "The City of God," in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, ed. Roy Battenhouse (New York: Oxford University Press), 268.
[29] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 27.

Considered as an apologetical treatise, Augustine's emphasis on the direction of one's will is central. The division of human persons into the two allegorical cities is Augustine's deliberate apologetical stand against the pagans, who by desiring the will of the flesh place themselves in the earthly city (*terrena civitas*).[30] Roman pagans, for Augustine, have directed their wills away from God, and so, like the rebellious angels have deprived themselves of His blessedness. In their case, they have made themselves enemies of those who plundered them. If the Romans, out of their freedom, directed their wills towards the self, Augustine is certain – as his elucidation of the two cities shows – that Christianity could not have been the reason for the calamities of Rome. By being overly interested in their selfish interests, Rome had longed to dominate her neighbours, and these in turn have acted in self-defence; the result is violence and wars which Rome experienced. The fall of Rome, in the first place, is the result of Rome's desire to dominate and seek after self-glory: Rome lost her glory largely out of her sheer quest for worldly glories. Rome, the one-time master of the Mediterranean lost its glory, as would be expected from any human society where there is struggle for power and dominance; in such a state, it is inevitable that Rome will fall.

In the wake of the social-moral decadence that has fallen upon Rome, Augustine shares his disappointment with Romans who are not able to recognise that even before Christianity became a state religion in 380 AD, Rome was already at the verge of collapse, while the gods of Rome, taking after the fallen angels, they have lured Rome towards her calamities. At the heart of the collapse of Rome is the fact that she had lost her spiritual and moral foundations. Christianity only became a scapegoat amid the ills that befell the City of Rome, because there have been growing accusations from the pagans of Rome on the Christianisation of the empire.

[30] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 93.

Augustine's argument is that the pride of the empire was at the heart of the fall of Rome. Rome brought upon itself its own disasters by seeking after earthly glories. Augustine would refrain from making a crass application of divine punishment for Rome's decadence because suffering, political turmoil and wars also happens to Christians; neither is he saying that temporal peace would have been achieved if everyone in Rome were Christian. Rather, he conceives that Romans, like the bad angels, directed their will towards self-glory and seeking their own selfish ends, desiring to be more powerful and dominate other cities. If Rome had been humble and not desire to be revered as a powerful empire, there is the possibility that she would not be having enemies in the first place.

2. The Progress of the Two Cities on Earth

So far, I have explored Augustine's reflection on the origin of the two cities, the emergence of the two cities in human history and its implication for his apologetics in the *City of God*. Having established the existence of the heavenly city and the earthly city, Augustine explains how these cities make their growth and progress in human history, he seeks to demonstrate how different human beings in history have shaped and contributed to the progress of each of the two cities. This history runs through the entire human race right from the fall, the moment when humanity, having lost its innocence, was susceptible to falling away from the supreme Good. [31] Again, Augustine relies on Scripture in his narration of the two cities' progress in history.

The Progress of the Two Cities in Cain and Abel

For Augustine, the two cities concretely take shape in their first begotten members. Based on scriptural accounts, Augustine believes that, after the fall, the human first parents began to propagate, and from that time the two cities began to grow by increasing in their number of citizens. "Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the firstborn, and he

[31] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 160.

belonged to the city of men; after him was born Abel, who belong to the city of God."[32] Harrison comments, "The characteristics of the two cities are evident in two of their first members, Cain and Abel. Though they both belonged to the same condemned 'lump' of fallen men, God chose one for dishonour and the other for honour."[33] According to Barr, Cain and Abel, apart from belonging physically to their respective cities at their beginning, they also prefigured these cities in their entirely.[34]

For Augustine, there is a spiritual meaning to Cain's being the firstborn. According to him, it is expected that after humanity had been tainted by original sin, that which is natural comes first, and only afterwards does a created being become spiritual through grace, when he is grafted into Christ by regeneration. Both Cain and Abel symbolise the carnal and the spiritual inherent in human nature.[35]

> When these two cities began to run their course by a series of deaths and births, the citizen of this world was the firstborn, and after him the stranger in this, the citizen of the city of God, predestined by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a citizen above.[36]

The citizens of the city of God avail themselves of God's grace and are made into vessels of honour. Cain and Abel, because they are born of Adam and Eve, inherited sin, but Abel was docile to God's grace, his gaze was set more on the promised kingdom in heaven. This explains the acceptability and superiority of his sacrifice. The docile attitude of Abel is a model for the citizens of the heavenly city.

The typology of Cain and Abel is applicable to each individual. Every individual, for Augustine, is inclined towards rebellion; but equally, by grace, no individual must remain so.[37] The transition from rebellion to docility takes place when the human person originally born

[32] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.
[33] Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 205.
[34] Robert Barr, "The Two Cities in Saint Augustine," 218.
[35] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.
[36] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.
[37] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 2.

with his or her carnal instinct, by coopering with God's grace, abolishes the old self. Each individual can develop from carnal Cain to spiritual Abel.

Since Augustine's elaboration of the two cities is both theological and apologetical, one would infer that, apparently, Augustine leaves it to the judgement of his opponents to determine for themselves whether Rome could rightly be referred to as the city of God or an earthly city. If it is appropriate to designate Rome as a type of the earthly city, of which Cain, is the founder, it is no surprise that she experienced casualties just as Cain's life did not improve even after he killed his brother. With Gen 4, Augustine links the murder of Abel to the fact that the sacrifice of Cain was not accepted by God.[38] Filled with pride, envy, and greed, Cain, in his quest for power and fame, sees his own innocent brother as an obstacle and slays him, a citizen of the eternal city, and a sojourner on earth. Cain, the prototype of the earthly city was more concerned about his immediate needs and what he considered would secure for him peace here on earth. That Cain killed his brother, Abel, shows the violence on which the earthly city is established. As for the blood of Abel, shed by his brother, Augustine recognises a prefiguration in the death of Christ; for just as Cain murdered Abel, the Jews also asked for the death of Christ the Shepherd of the flock of persons, prefigured by the blood of Abel the shepherd of sheep.[39]

The Progress of the Earthly city in Rome

Augustine pictures pagan Rome as a perfect demonstration of the *terrena civitas*. This understanding is crucial for his apologetics with his pagan opponents. Augustine believes that as a city, Rome is swollen with pride and love for itself and her achievements.

The character of a society is shaped by what it loves. Most humans desire to acquire earthly goods to feel secure, whether physically or psychologically. This attitude of acquisition is often accompanied by greed and envy. For many years, Rome was a dominant force in the

[38] O' Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 163.
[39] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 7.

western world. It had conquered cities all around and became a strong empire. Rome would well be described as a meeting point of all cultures since it was influential and attracted the influx of foreigners. From the early periods, most of Rome's dwellers were agrarians, because the majority of its lands were fertile enough to encourage agriculture. Later, with the influence of Etruscans, Rome became more of an industrial and commercial city, but agriculture was still vital. Trade was conducted with others, especially the Greeks.

In terms of religion, the agrarian nature of ancient Rome geared more towards paganism.

> Each household worshipped the protectors of its home and its livelihood: the Lares, who kept general guard over house and land; the Penates who watched over the grain-store; Vesta, who fanned the glow in the Hearth-fire; Janus, who guarded the door; Jupiter, the arbiter of sun and rain; Mars who stirred the plants to life in spring; and a host of other powers that aided or hindered the work of herdsman or husbandman, or guided the members of the family through the critical stages of birth and childhood, wedlock and death.[40]

Augustine was aware of this religious mindset of the Romans. He was wary of the character of the gods whom the Romans were quick to worship. Hardy recounts that in Book 2, Augustine argues that a religion which was utterly absurd could not have been a blessing to the Romans; and it is more sensible to praise the Roman heroes than their gods.[41]

As a political state, Rome possessed a strong and vibrant government. The king had imperial power, which not only gave him the power of military discipline in the field of war but had the right to punish unlawful citizens even in the time of peace. With the destruction of Carthage, Rome became master of the whole of the Mediterranean and later transformed into an organised empire, having much control over its people and neighbours.

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[40] M. Cary and H. H Scullard, *A History of Rome: Down to the reign of Constantine* (3rd edition) (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1975), 49.
[41] Hardy, "*The City of God*," 262.

Having become a prominent city among other cities in the empire at the time, Rome enjoyed prominence and its lifestyle became boisterous. Unfortunately, this kind of life could not be sustained for long because despite making progress in infrastructure, the city of Rome could not depend solely on the contributions from its agrarian citizens. The cults of the gods had to be maintained, as well as observing religious festivals which were expensive. Since the totality of this social life could not be sustained, Romans became disinterested in the social affairs of the city. Rome gradually lost its stature. For Augustine, the Romans seemed unaware of the gradual decline of Rome before the Gothic attack. Rome had built a powerful city and lived the kind of life that became a snare and led to her downfall, issuing, finally, in the sack of Rome by the Goths. Like the city built by Cain, Rome's foundation was self-gratification. This city too would have a temporal span. The fortunes that Rome experienced were signs calling them to acknowledge God, in whom is found true happiness; the signs were interpreted instead as a confirmation of Roman ambition, exalting their self-glory.[42]

Augustine is not passing judgment on all the developments and achievements of Rome (such as a relative peace, or learning, etc.). He is concerned with attitudes of the Romans towards these developments and how these attitudes have led towards false gods.

The murder of Remus by Romulus

Augustine recognises a connection between the murder of Abel by Cain and that of Remus by his brother Romulus. In Bk 15, Augustine asserts that the founder of the earthly city, Cain, committed fratricide; and there is a corresponding crime with the founder of Rome, Romulus:

> We cannot be surprised that this first specimen, or, as the Greek says, archetype of crime, should, long afterward, find a corresponding crime at the foundation of that city which was destined to reign over so many nations, and be the head of this

[42] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 2. "Only let it remain undefeated, they say, only let it flourish and abound in resources; let it be glorious by its victories, or still better, secure in peace; and what matters it to us? This is our concern, that every man be able to increase his wealth so as to supply his daily prodigalities, and so that the powerful may subject the weak for their own purposes." See *City of God,* Bk 2, Ch 20.

> earthly city of which we speak. So, in a way, Rome's beginnings are enshrined in fratricide.[43]

The difference, however, between the two foundings is that, whereas Cain killed a citizen of the eternal city, and a sojourner on earth, Romulus killed a citizen of the earthly city.

Both Remus and Romulus had the desire of founding the Roman republic in order to seek self-glory. "In order, therefore, that the whole glory might be enjoyed by one, his consort was removed; and by this crime the empire was made larger indeed, but inferior, while otherwise it would have been less, but better."[44] According to Augustine both Remus and Romulus failed to understand that the possession of goodness does not diminish even when it is shared with one's partner; rather the possession of goodness is increased in proportion to the concord and love of each of those who share it. The charity of each sharing the goodness increases it in abundance.[45] Romulus, however, cuts the life of another short for the sake of recognition (e.g., in city being named after him).

Augustine's Apologetics in the story of Cain and Abel

Augustine's detailed narration of the story of Cain and Abel serves Augustine's apologetics because, for conscientious readers, Augustine is clearly drawing parallels between the biblical narrative and his knowledge of the history of Rome. He identifies Cain as the founder and promoter of the earthly city, and from his reflections, one easily recognises that Augustine invites his opposition to find in the history of Rome features that correspond to the life of Cain, such as violence and ambition. The major vice that Rome had plunged itself into was pride of empire, the inordinate desire to dominate and conquer (*cupido dominandi*). The pride of the empire turned out to be the catalyst for the fall of Rome. According to Versfeld, Rome has idolised a created good, universal sovereignty, and has both reaped the reward and paid the

[43] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 5.
[44] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 5.
[45] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 5.

penalty and what follows is the sack of Rome, a necessary nemesis of the Roman *cupido dominandi*.[46] Cain is the personification of the Roman empire, and the fall of Rome can be likened to Cain's punishment and exile (Gen 3:10–12).

By reflecting on the development of Rome into a powerful city, Augustine's intention is to demonstrate that the sack of Rome was caused by Rome itself. A city is founded on what it loves; Rome is no exception. Rome is founded on self-glory to the exclusion of the true God. To his pagan critics, Augustine responds that the kind of life lived by Romans resulted in the ill that Rome experienced. As in the case of Cain, the city was already heading to its ruins, but Augustine insists that the truly Eternal City – the home of the righteous – remains, and its citizens dwell on earth only as pilgrims.[47]

The lives of Christians – those for whom he writes his defence – correspond easily to Abel. Cain built a city on earth according to the pattern of those who seek after their self-glory whereas Abel founded a city of saints.

> Accordingly, is it recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather together all in the day of the resurrection; and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their Prince, the king of the ages, time without end.[48]

By referring to the building of a city by citizens of the earthly city, Augustine is not making literal refence to physical erection of structures, nor is Rome *the* exclusive earthly city. Augustine is working with types and symbols. Augustine does not say that the city of Rome represents the earthly city *per se*. From his elucidation of the progress and nature of the two cities, however, we can say that the city of Rome contributes to the establishment of the earthly city on earth in the same way that, with holy and just among the Hebrews, the city of God is

[46] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 63.
[47] Hardy, "*The City of God*," 261.
[48] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.

established on earth.[49] Those building earthly cities are those concerned about their earthly abodes, treasures, and progress. The members of the heavenly city, by contrast, are concerned more about building the kingdom of the saints in heaven. The latter live their life on earth as pilgrims (*peregrini*) and what attachment they have to worldly security is provisional and relativized by their desire for heaven, the locus of true and eternal blessedness. (To the extent that this attachment ceases to be relative and provisional, they are leaving the heavenly, and becoming earthly.) Their actions are summed up in seeking to do the will of God.

By referring to the fratricidal act of Romulus, Augustine reminds his interlocutors of the foundations of the city of Rome. The city's beginning shows how it is a type of the earthly city where there is always division, tyranny, and the zest for dominance. "The quarrel, then, between Romulus and Remus shows how the earthly city is divided against itself; that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men."[50] And because this earthly city lacked a genuine beginning, it could not have been expected to last long; hence, the sack of Rome by the Goths is part of the consequences of a wrong beginning, and an indication that Rome cannot escape the dynamics of the earthly city: divisions, war, and overthrow of kingdoms. According to O' Daly, Augustine's understands the secular history – of any secular city – to contain conflict and competition for power wherever there are traces of human fellowship;[51] that in a bid to sustain peace, the conquered people accept to be ruled by others; and the strongest oppress the others, because everyone is following his own interest and lusts. Unfortunately, what is longed for either suffices for none, or not for all because it is far from what determines true peace. These are the results of fallen, sinful world. Augustine's argument against the pagans of Rome is thus: their own history and their ways of life embodies the principles of the earthly city.

[49] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 62.
[50] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 5.
[51] O' Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 184.

3. The Destinies of the Two Cities

Augustine's last three books constitute his eschatology, focusing on the last judgment, eternal beatitude, and eternal punishment. Central to Augustine's reflection on the destinies of the two cities (*debitis finis*) is the notion of ends.

Augustine's concern is to present a Christian teleology against diverse opinions expressed by philosophers regarding the ends of goods and of evils: "for the end of our good is that for the sake of which other things are to be desired, while it is to be desired for its own sake; and the end of evil is that on account of which other things are to be shunned, while it is avoided on its own account."[52] The Christian notion regarding the supreme good and evil is, according to Augustine is that eternal life is the supreme good, and eternal death is the supreme evil, and to attain eternal life and escape eternal death involves living rightly.[53] For Augustine, the supreme good and evil are not found in this life.[54] Therefore, it is what the human person receives at the end or the consummation of human life. According to Hardy, Augustine is dealing with two senses of end or *finis*: as the goal aimed at and as the terminus finally attained.[55]

As part of Augustine's understanding of history as linear, he believes that history too has an end, not only regarding a goal, but of a consummation which is not the destruction of everything that has happened in time but a transformation into a new form.[56] Hence, the two cities are progressing towards their ends. Since Augustine is writing for the defence of Christianity against pagan oppositions, he concludes his treatise on the destinies of the two cities on what ultimately is the end of the citizens the two cities. This will take place at the last

[52] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 19, Ch 1.
[53] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 19, Ch 4
[54] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 19, Ch 4
[55] Hardy, *The City of God*, 270. Barr also conceives that for Augustine, end, in this context means the city's *terminus*, *stopping place*, *final stage*. See Robert Barr, "The Two Cities in Saint Augustine," 219.
[56] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 71.

judgment. At the last judgment, the two cities will be separated, with members of each allocated their eternal reward (or punishment). Augustine believes that true members of God's household, which by inference could mean members of the church, strive to use earthly goods as pilgrims on earth, rather than enjoy them.

Augustine's reflection on the Last Day of Judgment

Books 21-22 of the *City of God* are particularly about the final judgment, the separation of the two cities, and the consequences of God's judgement.[57] These themes are important in Augustine's apologetics because, in describing them, he is able to show what is ultimately at stake in these two different cities with different loves. As an extension of his argument which he began in Part I of the *City of God*, concerning the kind of life that the pagans of Rome lived, Augustine reflects on the final consequences for those who refuse to acknowledge the true God. Augustine had already stated how the pagan gods lead their followers away from the truth.

Augustine's account of the last judgment is based on the Scriptures. In Book 20, Augustine states that he will turn first to the New Testament before engaging with the Old Testament. His reason for this is: "although the Old Testament is prior in point of time, the New has the precedence in intrinsic value, for the Old acts as part of herald to the New."[58] In the New Testament, Jesus refers to the day of judgement when he reproves those places where he had worked miracles for their lack of faith. Jesus says of them, that "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgement than in these cities" (Matt 11:22) and "the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it." (Matt 12:41). On the

[57] According to Isabel Moreira, Augustine's reflection in Bk 20 of the *City of God,* on judgment day addresses the questions around the Christian affirmation that Christ will come from heaven to judge the living and the dead. These questions are, when would this judgment occur? How would the events of the last day unfold? What would be divine justice? How did the experience of human death relate to the biblical event in Revelation? And what kind of community would there be? See Isabel Moreira, "Book 20. The Last Day: Judgment, Purification, and Transformation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's City of God*, ed. David Vincent Meconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 251.
[58] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 20, Ch 4.

separation of the good from the wicked, which shall take place on the day of judgment, Augustine cites Mathew 25:31-32: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as shepherd separates sheep from goats." From the Old Testament, Augustine relies on some passages in Isaiah concerning the resurrection of the dead: all those in the grave rising again, and all living creatures rejoicing (Is 26:19). For Augustine, the scriptural data on the final judgment clearly supports Christian teaching. "That, therefore, which the whole church of the true God holds and professes as its creed, that Christ shall come from heaven to judge quick and dead, this we call the last day, or last time, of the divine judgement."[59]

At that judgment, each human person will receive his or her due. Those who are obedient to God's will shall be crowned with beatitude in heaven, but for those who do not belong to this city of God they shall inherit eternal misery, which is called the second death, because the soul shall then be separated from God, and therefore cannot be said to live; and the body shall be subjected to eternal pains. What the citizens of the two cities receive is part of the justice of God where rational creatures are judged according to how they have shared in God's blessedness. "If they want God and long to love God they attain to God's love, which is heaven; if their desires are proud and selfish, they are abandoned to the lord of pride and find themselves in hell."[60]

It is certain that for Augustine, the day judgement will come, for "just as all the prophecies have been fulfilled, so will the prophecies concerning the Day of Judgement, the resurrection, eternal punishment and eternal blessedness."[61] Augustine believes that since God did not spare the angels who sinned, neither will the life of men or demons who rebel be spared

[59] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 20, Ch 1.
[60] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 271.
[61] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 187.

of eternal damnation. But for the present time citizens of the heavenly city will have to endure every persecution which they are subjected to, awaiting the justice of God. About the day of judgment, Augustine believes that each person shall be convicted directly by the thoughts of his or her consciences. Therefore, though all are summoned to judgement by God, each one is judged by his own conscience and the thoughts of his or her actions.[62] This assertion that humans being are accused by their own conscience is important because it addresses concerns about the nature of God's judgement as something extrinsically imposed; the wicked are judged by their own conscience, calling to mind their actions.

Augustine's narration of the history of mankind vis-à-vis salvation in Christ comes to its climax in the day of rewards for both the good and the bad. For Christian, that there is a day judgment invites them to live good life even while still engaged in human activities here on earth. Augustine imagines that his pagan opponents have little or no clue of what God's judgement entails. Consequently, they have neither regard for pleasing the true God nor the worshippers of the true God.

Separation of the Two Cities

One of the key features in Augustine's doctrine on the two cities is that citizens of the two cities are mingled together here on earth, to be separated on the day of judgement.[63] After the just judgement, the two cities are separated.[64] In Bk 21, Augustine uses the titles *city of God* and

[62] "Thus, then, shall the Lord be a swift witness, when He shall suddenly bring back into the memory that which shall convince and punish the conscience". See Augustine, City *of God*, Bk 20, Ch.26.
Most Christians believe on the Day of Judgement, all nations and individual will appear before the Creator to account for their actions. In his commentary on the *Creed*, Marthaler remarked that the theme of judgement runs through the Old Testament. Judgement meant that justice was done, the righteous are given their reward and the wicked are made to face their punishment. See Berard Marthaler, *The Creed: The Apostolic Faith in Contemporary* Theology (New London: Twenty Third Publications, 2007), 207.

[63] Concerning the nature of God's judgement, Thomas Aquinas agrees with Augustine that it will not take place by word of mouth, but rather, there will be a kind of Divine energy enabling each one to remember all good or evil works, and to discern them with the gaze of the mind, without delay, his knowledge accusing or defending his conscience. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Supp, q. 88, a. 2.

[64] The righteous are called to enjoy eternal life as reward for their worthy life, and the damned into everlasting banishment as punishment for their rebellious ways.

city of the Devil to refer to the final place of the citizens of the heavenly city and the earthly city respectively.[65] It is assumed that Augustine intends to highlight the eternal punishment of the damned since after judgement all those who have lived rebelliously share in the eternal punishment reserved for the devil and his angels. The day of judgement and separation will be the culmination of everything to its end. The ends of each member of the city are vital in Augustine's apologetical task in the two cities doctrine because it does say exactly what becomes of the two cities when the end shall have come and the destinies of each is fully manifested.

The Consequences of God's Judgement

Augustine believes that the torment reserved for the city of the devil will be experienced in both body and soul, and is never-ending. Augustine had already stated that citizens of the earthly city are ruled by love of self; now, at judgement, they are tormented by the very object of their love – their rebellious nature is in itself tormented by what it craves for. The severity of the torment experienced by the damned is caused by the absence of God from the will, an absence which has been caused by consistent choices for desires contrary to the divine will. The fact that they are, at the end, excluded from the city of God is the gravest punishment for both the rebellious angels and human beings. But for the citizens of the heavenly city, as their reward for the life of faith in the true God, they perpetually enjoy blessedness and peace (*beautitudo et pax*) in heaven; but while on earth, as pilgrim they experienced ridicule, condemnation, and even persecution. Just as the damned experience eternal torment, the blessed are blessed with eternal happiness.

Concerning the aftermath of God's judgement, Augustine wrote first on eternal punishment before eternal bliss in books 21 and 22 respectively. According to O'Daly,

[65] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 21, Ch 1.

Augustine justifies this approach by observing that it is harder to believe in the concept of eternal torment than in painless eternal happiness.[66] It is common-sense to expect that any moments of torment does have an end when that which is experiencing it is wholly consumed, but that is not the same with eternal torment, for in this kind of torment, the anguish never stops, therefore it is referred to as eternal.

> The common-sense objection that there is no body that can endure unending pain without dying may be countered by speculating that demonic bodies do so, and that one can envisage an afterlife human body that is so united to the soul that the shock of extreme pain does not cause the body and soul to separate, as is now the case.[67]

The reason while the punishment does not cease is because in the afterlife, the body takes on a new form of eternity, such that whatever it receives as its reward at the end is eternal; therefore, eternal punishment is possible without any release from it. In this perpetual state of torment, the experience is severe and painful. Augustine intends to show to his readers/audience the nature of the torment for the rebellious beings.

Though God wishes that all turn from evil and be part of the heavenly city, He still respects human freedom, for if anyone is to turn from his sins to God it must be by a free movement of the will towards God or one's wilful desire to return to God's love.[68] As always, will they who do evil be humble enough to accept God's love? Will they be willing to let go of pride? (Pride was the cause of the fall of the bad angels). According to Versfeld, if man or woman is unyielding to God's invitation of love, hell is the last compliment which God can pay to His own free creation.[69]

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[66] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 217.
[67] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 218.
[68] Even when God foreknew that certain angels would turn to be rebellious in their pride and forsake their good, he did not deprive them of intelligence and the capacity of enjoying Him in heaven. In the same vein, God did not deprive human beings of the power of free-will, and the reason He did this, was because He foreknew what good it would bring out of the evil. He would by His grace collect, as now He does, as a people so numerous, that He thus fills up and repairs the blank made by the fallen angels, and that thus that beloved and heavenly is not defrauded of the full number of its citizens, but perhaps may even rejoice in a still more overflowing population. See Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 1
[69] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 120.

As an apologetical piece, Augustine's teaching on the separation of the two cities shows the need to choose good against evil; seek after what is true and right for there is reward, from the just God, for every good decision that human beings make while on earth. Augustine presents Christianity as providing to human beings the opportunity of knowing how to make the right decisions that are geared towards pleasing the true God. And Augustine's reflections on the punishment of the damned implies that citizens of the earthly city, so long as they never put an end to satisfying their desires, will be tormented by what they have set their hearts on. This teaching also appeals to our desires for justice. Even pagans who do not accept Scripture can find Augustine's teaching attractive because it reassures one who desires ultimate justice, especially when one experiences so much injustice in the world.

Augustine's belief in the resurrection of the citizens of the Heavenly City

Augustine's conviction about the blessed life of the faithful citizens of the heavenly city is linked to his belief in the resurrection. His teaching on the resurrection comes in response to the Platonists' objection to bodily resurrection. He refers to the Platonists as philosophers who are versed in secular learning and so they argue that bodily resurrection is impossible. Augustine considers it vain for Platonist to argue, as taught by their master,

> Plato, that the two greatest elements of the world, and the furthest removed from one another, are coupled and united by the two intermediate, air and water. And consequently they say, since the earth is the first of the elements, beginning from the base of the series, the second the water above the earth, the third the air above the water, the fourth the heaven above the air, it follows that a body of earth cannot live in the heavens; for each element is poised by its own weight so as to preserve its own place and rank.[70]

Augustine asked, what so many earthly bodies do in the air since the air is the third element from the earth. And if He who granted to the birds the ability to be carried through the air by

[70] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 11.

its feathers, will He not be able to confer upon the bodies of men made immortal the power to abide in the highest heaven?[71] Augustine's affirmation on bodily resurrection has its foundation in Christ's redemption of the entire universe; for in Christ all are risen.

Apart from the arguments already posited by Augustine for bodily resurrection, he proposes the presence of miracles as one reason to accept that it is possible for earthly bodies to dwell in heaven. Augustine mentions that though Roman pagans have attributed these miracles to their god, it nevertheless serves to support the Christian argument for bodily resurrection. According to Augustine, if they hold that the miracles worked by their gods are great, will any of these gods be greater than God who created the world?

> If then, a lesser god, angel, or demon could so sustain the weight of this liquid element that the water might seem to have changed its nature, shall not almighty God, who Himself created all the elements, be able to eliminate from the earthly body its heaviness, so that the quickened body shall dwell in whatever element the quickening spirit pleases?[72]

In other words, while Augustine believes pagan attributions of miracles to Roman gods to be wrong-headed, he is still able to accept the thesis for the sake of his argument: if miracles are granted (even if at the hands of 'gods'), it is all the more credible that the Almighty can raise the dead. Augustine's belief in the bodily resurrection of the blessed is one from which not even the teachings of both Plato and Porphyry could sway his mind, for Augustine takes to heart the Scriptural data concerning the incorruptibility of the human body at resurrection (e.g., 1 Cor 15:52). And this is part of what he wants his interlocutor to note about the faith of the worshippers of the true God: though they may suffer bodily torment, just as the non-believers did during the siege of the Goths, they shall be blessed with the resurrection as a reward for their love of God.

[71] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 11.
[72] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 11.

To elucidate further the meritorious experience of the blessed in the afterlife, Augustine states that, as part of their reward, the saints shall be transformed from the old self into the newness of the spiritual body and be clothed in incorruptibility and immortality.[73] Thus, it shall become a spiritual body. This transforming effect is made possible because God desires to incorporate the blessed beings to share in the excellent life of the heavenly city. Augustine is convinced that what makes this possible is the obedience of the will, in allegiance to the will of its Creator, seeking after all that pleases God. The beatific vision which the blessed enjoy is the same as that of the holy angels; and together, they shall dwell and enjoy eternally the delightful city of God. Augustine describes this angelic experience thus: "how great shall be that felicity, which shall be tainted with no evil, which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all!"[74]

In the final state of blessedness, both the soul and body will operate in harmony. "One thing is certain, the body shall forthwith be wherever the spirit wills, and the spirit shall will nothing which is unbecoming either to the spirit or to the body."[75] In this state where the blessed experience beatific vision of God, human happiness is consummated, and the presence of God is enjoyed eternally.

As part of his apologetics, Augustine's reflection on the destinies of the two cities shows that he does believe in the realities of heaven and hell. Perhaps, there is element of fear that Augustine is trying to elicit in his pagan readers which might inspire them to the worship of the true God not necessarily out of fear for God but to escape eternal damnation. To the believing Christians, Augustine's reflection confirms their faith in the afterlife and of the justice of God. About the resurrection which citizens of the city of God will experience on the last day, Augustine took a step further not just to state his belief in the immortality of the soul, as many

[73] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 21.
[74] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 30.
[75] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 22, Ch 30.

pagans also believed in this, but to emphasise belief in the resurrection as central to Christianity.[76] Belief in the resurrection gives concrete evidence to the blessed life experience in the afterlife, compared to pagan conception of happiness in the transitory life. Therefore, Augustine demonstrates that Christianity provides the opportunity for every human person towards eternal happiness.

The Relationship between Augustine's refutations (part I) and his Theological Treatises on the Two-Cities (Part II)

As already observed, Augustine's work is not only apologetical but theological. He defends the heavenly city in Part I with his focused criticism of Roman religion and morals. Then in Part II he offers an elaborate theological discourse on the two cities. Parts I and II, therefore, read like apologetical and theological-dogmatic treatises, respectively. Having made his refutations in Books 1-10, Augustine recounts in Book 11 (the beginning of Part II) his reply to accusers of Christians, and optimistic that he has so defended the holy city:

> But to the enemies of this city we have replied in the ten preceding books, according to our ability and the help afforded by our Lord and King. Now, recognising what is expected of me, and not unmindful of my promise, and relying too on the same succour, I will endeavour to treat of the origin, and progress, and deserved destinies of the two cities (the earthly and the heavenly, to wit), which, as we said, are in this present world commingled and, as it were, entangle together.[77]

The amount of time Augustine devoted to writing part II of the *City of God* shows how much he wished to elaborate the content of his Christian belief. He was aware of the impact his contribution would make in establishing the credibility of Christianity amid the troubled times of Rome. Van Oort believes that Augustine made his writing extensive, both in structure and content, because he intended it to be both an apology and examination of theological theme; and the reason is that perhaps, he deems instruction the best defence.[78] In other words,

[76] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God,* 114.
[77] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 11, Ch 1.
[78] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 197.

while apologetics and theological reflection might be conceptually distinct, Augustine's theological reflection is an integral part of his apologetics.

When we consider the scenario that led to the writing of the *City of God*, the necessity of Augustine's detailed work becomes clearer. Part II of the *City of God* carries out two major tasks: to defend Christian belief against pagans by way of positive exposition (*apologia*) and to instruct Christians themselves or those with the intention of becoming one (*catechesis*). In Part I he is engaged in the traditional mode of defence, which was prevalent at the time, and in Part II he further demonstrated the genuineness of what Christians believe by way of a detailed exposition of key Christian themes, juxtaposing the heavenly and earthly cities.

Having written Part I, Augustine was not satisfied with merely deflecting pagan attacks on Christianity. Part of his defense consisted of articulating an alternative vision of the human world and of human history. Augustine recounts in his *Retractions* (2, 68, 2): "In order that no one might raise the charge against me that I have merely refuted the opinions of other men but not stated my own, I devoted to this objective the second part of the work."[79]

Hence, we propose that there is a close connection between what Augustine started in Part I of the City of God and his theological elaboration of the two cities. Therefore, this study upholds and proposes to any reader of Augustine's *City of God* that though Part I contains the polemics of Augustine in his refutation of the pagans, Part II is also part of his apologetics inasmuch as it not only gives a thorough account of the Christian alternative to paganism, but also continues what he began in Part I by shoring up those arguments. Let us recall some of the apologetical arguments of Augustine in Part I and how these are related to his reflection on the two cities.

[79] Augustine, *Retraction*s, trans: Mary Inez Bogan (CUA Press, 1968), 119-272.

1. Failure of Roman gods

At the beginning of his writing of Part II, Augustine dwelt briefly on where he left off in Part I speaking about the impious nature of the pagan gods and how they have failed to improve the lives of their worshippers. Augustine argued in Part I that the Roman gods are incompetent and have never been of any benefit to those who worshipped them and that these gods have swayed the minds of their worshippers from acknowledging the true God. Augustine argued that these gods hardly deserved to be worshipped in the first place.

In Part II, Augustine traces the origin of the two cities to the separation of the good and the bad angels. The bad angels are rebellious beings. These rebellious beings see themselves as worthy of worship and those whose hearts are swayed towards self-praise, just like them, worship them. God, however, the unchangeable Creator, keeps these angels in existence and empowers them, even if these beings are not supremely like Himself.[80] The failure of the pagan gods is inherent in their nature as created begins who, in their pride, belonging to the community of rebellious beings, make of themselves gods, but are incapable of offering any good to those who worship them. Augustine argued that those who take these rebellious beings as models fall into the categories of the bad angels, and therefore, make themselves enemies of the true God.

These gods, belonging to the community of the bad angels, have separated themselves from the true light. Though they may appear to those who offer them worship as angels of good, they are far from making their life any better. They are acclaimed as gods because the worshippers expect to receive blessings from them. Augustine, however, demonstrated to the pagans of Rome that never in the history of the empire have these gods made the lives of their worshippers better. Why would Romans expect any good from beings who belong to the

[80] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 33.

angelic community that has always been rebellious to the true God? Augustine posits that only the true God is able to grant blessings to human beings. These gods cannot lead their worshippers to a moral life; hence their first failure is not being able to instil in their worshippers how to act morally. With the kind of life that the pagans lived, Augustine believed that there is more to the physical decline of the city of Rome; their wills have been drawn after their own lust, just like the bad angels. By taking these gods for their models, the pagans of Rome have taken from the city the worship of the true God and the city became vulnerable to disasters. According to Ryan,

> No society can give a man his due if it takes him away from the worship of the one true God. A godless republic is no *res publica*. Since the only *res populi* that matters is the worship of the one true God, a polity devoted to the worship of demons has no *res populi*, and the multitude of whom it is composed is no true *populus*.[81]

Hence, that the gods were given such prominent place in Rome already signalled that the city lost a fundamental aspect of its foundation and worse still, that these gods have never been known to be competent in their dealings with their worshippers.

2. About History

Augustine concludes Bk 14 of the *City of God*, that two communities of angels had emerged from two loves. Likewise, he divided the human race into two categories of persons and from these were formed two societies of human beings. In his analysis of these cities, Augustine posited that the founder of the earthly city is traced to Cain, who murdered his brother Abel. In Book 15, Ch 5, Augustine conceives that the features he analysed about the earthly city can be applied to the city of Rome. According to Versfeld, the Roman vice par excellence in Augustine's eyes was pride of empire, the *cupido dominandi*, and the sack of Rome, then, is

[81] Ryan, *On Augustine: The Two Cities*, 80.

the consequence of this.[82] Again, there is emphasis that the very foundation of Rome bears resemblance to the act of murder by Cain, the founder of the earthly city; Remus was slain by his brother Romulus whose name the city is named after. "And thus, there is no difference between the foundation of this city and of the earthly city, unless it be that both Romulus and Remus were both citizens of the earthly city."[83]

Augustine showed in Part I of the *City of God*, that a thorough understanding of history should have revealed to the Romans that calamities and sieges are part of the happenings in the earthly city. In Bk 15, he posited that the earthly city, despite its temporal goods, shall not be everlasting.[84] Apart from this, the earthly city is often at war against itself; it is concerned about how to conquer territories and fears that disasters may subdue it, yet it is never satisfied. The pagans of Rome fail to understand these aspects about the earthly city; hence, they envisage that Rome did not deserve to be attacked by the Goths. However, Augustine's argument indicates that because Rome is an earthly city, there will always be calamities, wars, and rivalries. By implication, Augustine infers that the sack of Rome had nothing to do with the removal of the worship of the gods, but rather was due to Rome's desire to dominate and conquer, a desire shared with the earthly city.

Rome, as a city, was influential in the Roman empire and Romans had the idea of Rome as the 'eternal city'. However, Augustine's rehearsal of historical events shows that the idea of Rome – or any city – being an eternal city, as understand by the Romans, cannot hold up since history proves otherwise: no earthly city stands forever and sovereignties in the past have been overthrown. Therefore, if those who accused Christians are knowledgeable enough about their own history, they would know that Rome was not attacked because the worship of the gods was removed from the city, but because such events are inevitable in history.

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[82] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 62-63.
[83] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 5.
[84] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 4.

3. Roman Polytheism

Augustine's exploration of the doctrine of the two cities began with the theme of creation, in which he explained the origin and end of the two cities. The idea of one true God is prevalent in this teaching. God is, for Augustine, the sole creator of the world, in contrast to Roman polytheism according to which multiple gods are responsible for creation. Augustine emphasised that the true and sole creator God was never in need of assistance from other beings. The true God is the founder of the city of God. But the pagans of Rome have revered their multiple gods because they have refused to acknowledge the true God.

In Bk 7, Ch 3, of the *City of God*, Augustine had argued that there is no ground for the pagans of Rome to select gods, among several of these gods, to be worshipped. His argument for the creator God in Bk 11 shows that to believe in the existence of these beings and regard them as gods is an act of rebellion to God's will and thereby, makes oneself a citizen of the false city and that is not the intention of the all-benevolent, Creator. Hence, to hold that there are other gods apart from the one true God is not only wrong but false.

Such an error has, for Augustine, soteriological consequences. For those who desire true salvation, it is necessary to seek the true God and not the gods worshipped by the pagans. Salvation is only possible through the one true God. Augustine reiterated the role of Christ as the Mediator between God and human beings. And it is precisely Christ – God's Son, assuming humanity without destroying His divinity – who leads those who err to the truth and spares them from eternal punishment. The Romans who promote polytheism, and established friendship with these gods would have done so either as a result of ignorance or, like the bad angels, as a result of disobedience and, being drawn towards the worship of their false gods, are drawn into a counterfeit fellowship with the rebellious angels. And in Bk 19, Augustine has this to say about those who have befriended the pagan gods of Rome: "and it is very certain that the philosophers of the godless city, who have maintained that the gods were their friends,

had fallen prey to the malignant demons who rule that city, and whose eternal punishment is to be shared by it."[85]

As to the question of who this God is and the proofs that He alone is worthy to receive sacrifice from the Romans, Augustine replied in Bk 19, that He is the God whose prophets predicted the things we see accomplished; the same God who made a promise to Abraham, and this promise, ultimately was fulfilled in Christ, who, according to the flesh, sprang from that same seed. Further, the one God had spoken through the prophets, whose prophecies are fulfilled in the church. Unfortunately, the most learned of the Romans, Varro and Porphyry, have supposed this God to be their gods. To accord the greatness of the true God to false gods (i.e., fallen angels), is a grave error.[86]

4. The idea of Eternal life and Christian notion of Human Happiness

Against those who believe that the gods of Rome are able to guarantee eternal life, Augustine argues that humanity's true peace and happiness is only attained in heaven from the true God. Augustine believes that the ultimate good for every human being is eternal life, and the ultimate evil is eternal death and to live rightly means that one has to be aided by grace. When compared to heavenly bliss that the citizens of the heavenly city enjoy in heaven, happiness on earth is nothing but misery. His argument about the failures of the gods already shows that Augustine never expects that the Roman gods are capable of bestowing happiness to human beings. Citizens of the earthly city are unaware of this, which is why they worship the false gods in a bid to secure their eternal life and happiness.

To continue what he began in Bk I as to what constitutes true happiness, Augustine criticized Varro's classification on the variety of opinions regarding the ends of goods and of evils, which is contained in Varro's *De Philosophia*. In Bk 19, Augustine discusses objects of

[85] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 9.
[86] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 22.

natural desire. He writes that, according to Varro, "there are four things which men desire, as it were by nature without a master, without the help of any instruction, without industry or the art of living which is called virtue, and which is certainly learned."[87] These four things are: pleasure, repose, the combination of both pleasure and repose, and the first things according to nature (*prima naturae*), which are both bodily and mental. All of these things "exit in us in such sort that we must either desire virtue on their account, or them for the sake of virtue, or both for their own sake."[88] According to Varro's analysis, the supreme or ultimate good is necessarily related to virtue; so, having virtue and the first goods of nature makes one happy. However, Augustine adopted a different approach in his understanding for what makes for happiness.

> If, then, we be asked what the city of God has to say upon these points, and, in the first place, what its opinion regarding the supreme good and evil is, it will reply that life eternal is the supreme good, death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape the other we must live rightly…as for those who have supposed that the sovereign good and evil are to be found in this life, and have placed it either in the soul or in the body, or in both, or, to speak more explicitly, either in pleasure or in virtue, or in both; in repose or in virtue, or in both; in pleasure and repose, or in virtue, or in all combined; in the primary objects of nature, or in virtue, or in both – all these have, with a marvellous shallowness, sought to their blessedness in this life and in themselves.[89]

Augustine foresees a situation where the human person seeks after the supreme good by turning towards himself or herself; it becomes more of what the human person can attain by virtue of one's everyday struggle, industry, and learning. But for Augustine, it is only by seeking God – or by God's grace – that one attains true happiness.[90] Furthermore, everyday experience

[87] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 1.
[88] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 1.
[89] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 4.
[90] Oort confirms Augustine's view that the Christian attitude towards the supreme good and the greatest evil is contrary to that of the philosophers. See Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 146.

confirms for us man's inability to find happiness in this world, especially when we consider how imperfect and inconstant or temporary the first gifts of nature and virtue are.[91]

Augustine certainly sees a misjudgement on the part of his Roman interlocutors of what constitutes true happiness. His insistence on eternal life as the supreme end for every human person forms part of his arguments for the credibility of Christianity. Whereas the pagans seek happiness in the things of this temporal life, believers look towards eternal life; Christians are called to avoid becoming engrossed in these temporal things or allowing themselves to be ensnared by them. The Roman pagans who understood true happiness as it has been bequeathed to them through their philosophers end up seeking after earthly virtues. The quest for virtue is not in itself bad, but Augustine would rather say that Rome's virtues have been turned into vice because they seek after these undermining the role of divine grace, therefore, rebelling against God, just like the bad angels. Again, being able to acknowledge the role of divine grace in the attainment of virtue requires the desire to align one's will to that of God. Citizens of the earthly city fail in this aspect and the result is uncontrolled lust for dominance and quest for power – believing that these guarantees happiness – but the end is misery since no earthly possession can fulfil the inner yearning of the human spirit. To live on earth without the hope of eternal life would count for Augustine a great misery. Augustine's concern is that human beings should be more concerned about the last things (eschatology): the return to God. Humanity's love for eternal happiness is made possible for as long as the human heart is set on remaining a citizen in the heavenly city.

5. On the Purification of Soul in Christ

In Bk 10, Augustine argued against Porphyry for not recognising Christ as the wisdom of God. By not acknowledging Christ as the wisdom of God, the pagans of Rome have been influenced

[91] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 10.

to seek after false gods and worshipped them. Augustine's position is that only in Christ is humanity saved from condemnation. In Bk 14, he elaborated more why it is necessary that humanity relied on God's grace to be saved; this grace reached its summit in the incarnation of Christ.

Augustine argued that God desired that the human race should not experience death, but through the disobedience of our first parents, human nature was altered for the worse, and this transmitted to their posterity, yet undeserved grace from God saved humanity from death.[92] This act of redemption was accomplished in Jesus Christ. For those who by being submissive to God's will are citizens of the heavenly city, they are purified and made beneficiaries of Divine grace while for those who are citizens of the earthly city by virtue of their constant disobedience to God's will, they do not acknowledge Christ, deprive themselves of Divine grace.

From our analysis of the relationship between Part I and Part II of Augustine's *City of God*, we see that the task of defending Christianity was imminent in his mind, even when in Part II of his work the attention had shifted from making a direct confrontation with the pagans to making an exposé on the origin, progress, and destinies of the two cities. What makes the two-cities doctrine significant in relation to the whole work is that it not only elaborates Augustine's apologetics, rather, as O'Daly posits, that Augustine is providing a review of fundamental theological issues, to instruct and inform Christian or potentially Christian readers.[93] Therefore, the elaboration of the two cities in Part II of *The City of God* is both apologetical and catechetical.

Obviously, Augustine spent more time composing Part II than he did in the Part I (Augustine wrote Part I from 413-417, and Part II from 417-426). The two parts are both

[92] Augustine, *City of God,* Bk 14, Ch 11.
[93] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 136.

important, but just like any work that is detailed, Augustine spent more years writing Part II because it focused on an elaborate presentation of what he had begun in Part I. Augustine's work was about making a defence for the church, which he believed has both heavenly and earthly aspects.

In this chapter, I have explored the theological/apological imports in Augustine's two-cities doctrine. I made theological analysis of Augustine's model of the origins, progress, and the destinies of the two cities, and how these form part of his defence of Christianity. Then I revisited some of Augustine's direct responses to the pagan of Rome in Part I; and how these are relevant to his teachings on the two cities. The intention was to show that Augustine's elaboration of the two cities in Part II is an integral component of his apologetic in the *City of God*. The next chapter will investigate how Augustine's two-cities doctrine is related to his understanding of the church, and how this doctrine sheds light on the understanding of the church as 'People of God,' 'Body of Christ,' and 'Pilgrim people.'

CHAPTER FIVE

ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS IN AUGUSTINE'S TWO-CITIES DOCTRINE

It is not uncommon for Augustine scholars to investigate Augustine's conception of the church, especially as it is contained in the two-cities doctrine. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, from its inception, was written in response to accusations from the pagans of Rome who accused Christianity of being the reason why the city of Rome was attacked by the Goths. As we have tried to show, Part II of this work was devoted to the doctrine of the two-cities, which not only is a continuation of his apologetic effort, but also an in-dept reflection on Christian themes. This chapter will show how Augustine's reflection on the heavenly city is related to the theology of the church.

The two-cities doctrine involves ideas from a range of discourses, from philosophy, religion, politics, and theological studies. Moreover, the two-cities doctrine has been interpreted in various ways. Johannes van Oort recounts that the political understanding of the *City of God*, according to which the church was considered to be the city of God, prevailed from the period of Charlemagne until well into the 16th century. With Luther, however, there emerged an idealistic interpretation, according to which the two cities represented two spiritual entities. In the 20th century, when German liberal theology was at its peak, this idealistic interpretation was reiterated by Heinrich Scholz (pupil to Adolf von Harnack), who, in his *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte,* argued that the *civitas Dei* and the *terrena civitas* were spiritual entities. However, Roman Catholic theologians such as Bruno Seidel, Otto Schilling, Joseph Mausbach, Karl Holl, had argued that Augustine's *civitas Dei* was identical

with the *ecclesia catholica*.[1] These authors understood the church on earth as a heavenly entity that represents to a certain extent the eschatological heavenly church.

The various and divergent interpretations of the two-cities does not undermine the relevance of Augustine's *City of God* in relationship to the theology of the church. This chapter is not going to re-enter this debate in Augustine's exegesis; however, will go the way of agreeing with the Roman Catholic theologians that there is a connection between the *civitas Dei* and the church; the church in this case is not limited to the Roman Catholic church since there might be members of the *civitas Dei* who, through no fault of theirs, are raised in other Christian denominations. Hence, we can speak of Augustine's ecclesial dimensions in the two cities doctrine. The target is to show how Augustine's reflection on the *Civitas Dei* is identical with his theological understanding of the church as a mystery (understanding the church as mystery specifies what kind of institution the church is), especially, the understanding of the church as people of God, on a journey and whose hope looks towards the heavenly city. Maintaining the two aspects of the church (the invisible church and the visible church) is particularly necessary for the task of Christian apologetics since the apologist engages in his or her defence not as an individual but as a member of a body of believers: as part of both the invisible body and the visible body.

In this chapter, I will look at Augustine's understanding of the church as mystery and its relation to the two-cities doctrine. Using some theological images/themes I will show that the church equates with the city of God. Finally, I will reiterate the position that the task of Christian apologetics belongs to the whole church, the body of Christ, the city of God on earth. But before then, it is worth rehearsing some of the reasons why scholars see a connection between the two-cities doctrine and ecclesiology. According to James Lee, the image of the church as a city is one of Augustine's favourite images for the church; that the church is the

[1] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 123-124.

city of God on pilgrimage in the present age.[2] By referring to the church as a city, Augustine first and foremost recognises it as a community, a society of persons; and as a society of human persons, still on pilgrimage in this life, it is a mixed body of both good and evil. Further, Augustine used the virtue of hope displayed by Abel, Seth and Enos to show the same hope with which the church gives testimony to the truth and continually lives in hope of the resurrection for as long as it sojourns in this world.[3] Of these three generations, Enos is specifically mentioned as one who hoped to call on the name of the Lord God, and for Augustine there is a reason for this:

> Why then is this which is found to be common to all the godly specially attributed to Enos, unless because it was fit that in him, who is mentioned as the firstborn of the father of those generations which were separated to the better part of the heavenly city, there should be a type of the man, or society of men, who live not according to man in contentment with earthly felicity, but according to God in hope of everlasting felicity?[4]

Augustine recognises in Enos a type of the church in the hope displayed by him, for just as Enos hoped to call on the name of the Lord God, the visible church looks forward in hope in the immortality of perpetual blessedness.

What is fundamental in Augustine's doctrine of the two cities is that the citizens of the city of God are people who live in allegiance to God's will, are motivated by their love for God, contrary to citizens of the earthly city who are motivated by self-love and seek after the glory of self. When Augustine wrote about the advent of the two cities in human society, he used Cain and Abel as symbols. "Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the firstborn, and he belonged to the city of men; and after him was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God."[5] The person of Abel, then, symbolises the foundational beginning of the

[2] This idea is contained in Augustine's explanation on Psalm 62. See James Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 75.
[3] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 18.
[4] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 18.
[5] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 1.

church. Even the fact that Abel was hated by his brother and later killed represents the way in which the church is subject to persecutions by those who represent the earthly city. "In differing but complementary ways Abel and Isaac symbolise the city of God, and Cain and Ishmael its contrary."[6]

There is a good reason to think that when Augustine was reflecting on the heavenly city, he wanted to inform his readers about the features expected of the earthly church. For instance, Lee posits that in Augustine's reflection on the two cities, there is the idea that the visible church forms the fellowship of charity that is the heavenly city when she celebrates the sacraments as pilgrims, and in that way the church is necessary in God's plan for the union of humanity.[7] The ecclesial dimension in Augustine's two-cities doctrine becomes evident in his understanding of the church as mystery and the images with which he explains what it means for the church to be mystery. Apart from this, Augustine's use of the themes of "*Peregrinatio* (journey) and *Peregrini (*pilgrims)" in describing the life of the heavenly city has ecclesiastical undertones since he understood the church as the body of Christ being on a pilgrimage here on earth, awaiting her final home in heaven. The idea that the visible church is on pilgrimage on earth awaiting her eternal home in heaven accounts for why Augustine understands the church to comprise citizens of both the heavenly city and the earthly city. Just as these citizens are intermingled in secular society, so are they intermingled in the church.

AUGUSTINE'S ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE TWO-CITIES DOCTRINE

Augustine's notion of the church as well as his two-cities doctrine have been interpreted in different ways. However, this study focuses on Augustine's understanding of the church as mystery and the Roman Catholic theologians' interpretation of the doctrine of the two-cities. Despite Augustine's influence in the development of ecclesiology in the Western theological

[6] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 162.
[7] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 92.

tradition, he never wrote a specific treatise on ecclesiology, though one finds the theme of church present in most of Augustine's works. His understanding of the church underwent continuous adjustments, especially when he had to respond to teachings from the Donatists and Manicheans, who also presented themselves as ways of salvation.

> At times he referred to the community of Christians that was built upon the foundation of the Apostles, at others to the community of the righteous engaged in their pilgrimage, and then again to the community of those who already enjoy eternal life.[8]

Because of Augustine's various ideas concerning what the church is, Maria Mara believes it is difficult to reach the core of so many aspects on offer in Augustine's ecclesiology; and if one fails to take into consideration the context in which he used the term 'church', most of his propositions will appear to contradict one another.[9]

Part of the reason why it is seemingly difficult to grasp Augustine's thoughts on the church is that his views have been interpreted by some scholars from the lens of his earlier encounter with Platonism. According to Lee, "a selective reading of Augustine neglects the complex development of his thought and leads to reductive accounts of ecclesiology."[10] According to the reductive account of Augustine's ecclesiology, the church is seen as a purely spiritual invisible reality over against the visible community of believers celebrating the sacraments; or to render it more directly, that the true church consists of an inner, invisible reality over against the visible body that appeared in history.[11] This idea of the church suggests that, the sacraments celebrated by the visible church aid in purifying the visible Christian community and thus render it fit to be part of the invisible church in heaven. Famous among scholars who have thus interpreted Augustine's ecclesiology are Hermann Reuter, Adolf von

[8] Maria Mara, "Augustine and the Church," *Saint Augustine*, ed. Tarsicius J. van Bavel (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2007), 205.
[9] Mara, "Augustine and the Church," *Saint Augustine*, 205.
[10] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xvi.
[11] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xvi.

Harnack, Reinhold Seeberg, J. N. D. Kelly, Denis Faul and Phillip Cary.[12] These authors believe that Augustine constructed an idea of a church whose true essence lies within her internal being wherein Christ is properly in communion with the saints. The likes of Cary takes this even deeper, claiming that in the ecclesiology of Augustine, there is a kind of dualism in which the invisible has no relationship to the visible church, that the visible and invisible operate on entirely different spheres.[13] The exaggerated or Platonic interpretation of Augustine's idea of the church seems to have resulted in the belief that, to a great extent, Augustine undermines the importance of the visible church; the visible church is conceived as that which must be liberated from its imperfections before it can share in the essence of the invisible church. Thus, there is a dichotomy between the visible and invisible church(es).

In response to the Platonic interpretation of Augustine's thoughts on the church some modern theologians have proposed what they consider to be a more accurate understanding of Augustine's ecclesiology. The point of their research was to remove beyond any form of ecclesiological dualism and put forward instead a single idea of the church. For instance, Lee argues that Augustine did not create a chasm between two churches, visible and invisible. Rather, the sacramental community is intrinsic for Augustine because the *one* church is a mystery with both visible and invisible aspects; and though these aspects are distinct they are not separate.[14] "Far from discarding the visible body, Augustine places greater emphasis upon the empirical community as essential to the church in his mature works. In the end, Augustine offers a coherent albeit highly sophisticated theology of the church as one mystery."[15] According to Lee, Joseph Ratzinger, in his *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*, argued that after Augustine's conversion to Christianity in 386, his understanding of

[12] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xvi.
[13] Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 163. Culled from James Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xvii.
[14] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xviii.
[15] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xviii.

the church shifted from a more metaphysical, speculative standpoint to an understanding of its mediatory role in history. Ratzinger believes that after Augustine's conversion, he

> began to see the divine world no longer as the world of eternal *Urgestalten*, the primordial and timeless Forms, but as the holy community of God's angels, the "intelligible world" (*mundus intelligibilis*), distinct though not entirely separate from the "sensible world" (*mundus sensibilis*). The church, as the house and people of God, is at the locus of the union of these two orders or levels of reality without being reduced to either, possessing a "revelation-character" as the "appearing of the invisible in this world." [16]

Ratzinger's approach suggests that the church encompasses the life of both the intelligible and sensible realities; she carries within her the union of both the invisible and visible aspects of herself. Therefore, the church on earth, because it possesses within her the character of the invisible church, is able to reveal the true identity of the church as one body of God's household, the whole church comprised of both the saints in heaven and the people of God on earth.

According to Lee, Augustine lays the foundation for the church as one body whose visible actions have invisible effects, and he united the invisible and visible aspects of the church as one mystery.[17] In Augustine's ecclesiology, the church is co-constituted by both visible and invisible aspects. These aspects are not opposed to each other. Rather, they bring to light the idea of the church as one complex mystery. The visible church which celebrates the sacraments here on earth is instrumental in incorporating her members into the communal body of Christ. In the end, we see that Augustine does not consider a dichotomy between the visible and invisible aspects of the church. Augustine later used the words, *mysterium* and *sacramentum* to distinguish between the visible and invisible aspects of the one church, which in his earlier works, these two terms were used to mean the same thing. As far as the church is

[16] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xxvii.
[17] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, xxix.

concerned, in Augustine's thought, the distinction between the visible and invisible aspects is without separation since there is one mystery. According to Lee,

> Augustine applies the distinction between *mysterium* and *sacramentum* to the church. In works from the late 390s on, *mysterium* most often indicates the transcendent mystery while *sacramentum* refers to the visible, historical community celebrating the sacraments, as evident in his exegesis of biblical images. Thus, the visible body is intrinsic to the mystery of the whole Christ.[18]

This idea of the 'whole Christ', common in Augustine's writings, refers to Jesus Christ in union with his members, the church.

Augustine's reflection on the church in *Enchiridion* shows that he conceives of the church as being constituted by two aspects, that the one mystery of the church is both heavenly and earthly in its aspects, which constitute the visible and invisible church.

> And we are here to understand the whole Church, not that part of it only which wanders as a stranger on the earth, praising the name of God from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and singing a new song of deliverance from its old captivity; but that part also which has always from its creation remained steadfast to God in heaven, and has never experienced the misery consequent upon a fall.[19]

For Augustine, the connection between the visible and invisible aspects of the one church is related to the intimate relationship between Christ the Head and his members. As his body, he church on earth awaits in hope the time when she will be united with Christ, her Head. It is no less important to posit a conception of the visible church in which she is not merely seen as a reflection of the heavenly church or the most profound aspect of the church (a Platonic approach). Rather, the visible church is the city of God living its life on earth, not separate from the invisible church in heaven. Henri De Lubac affirms this conception and acknowledged that Augustine emphasised this understanding of the church in his *Sermon* (105) and *De Civitate*

[18] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 21.
[19] Augustine, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 1961), 66-67.

Dei (20): It is indeed the same city which is built on earth and yet has its foundations in heaven. St Augustine, who has taught us most of the foregoing distinctions, could exclaim with justice: "The Church of today is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven."[20] Concerning the church, according to the two-aspect concept, it is reasonable to hold that we are dealing with one body in two states: two states – pilgrim and victorious – yet only one body because united in its common love. But the church in her earthly state also have both visible and invisible aspects; that is, its visibility includes the means by which the life of grace and divine love (invisible realities) are made present here and now, though they are fully fulfilled in heaven. While the heavenly church no longer uses visible signs to communicate invisible grace, the earthly church does. The heavenly is invisible, while the earthly church is both visible and invisible.

Having examined the interconnectedness that is present in Augustine's thoughts on the church, it is therefore, according to van Oort, not surprising that Roman Catholic authors have objected to the doctrine that there are two churches, one visible and the other invisible, the latter of which is the 'real' church, proposed mainly by Protestant theologians.[21] For these Roman Catholic theologians, there is one *ecclesia*. It is important to state that the encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, of Pius XII, which teaches that the church is both visible and invisible was a magisterial benchmark that informed the interpretation of Augustine's ecclesiology by Catholic theologians. How is this idea of the two aspects of the church related to the church as the city of God?

[20] Henri De Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 72.

[21] These include Heinrich Scholz, *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte: Ein Kommentar zu Augustins de Civitate Dei* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1911); Ernst Troeltsch, *Augustin, die christliche antike und das Mittelalter: Im anschluss an die schrift, De civitate Dei, Vol. 36.* (München: Oldenbourg, 1915); Edgar Salin, Civitas Dei (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926); Robert Frick, *Die Geschichte des Reich-Gottes-Gedankens in der alten Kirche bis zu Origenes und Augustin.* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1928). See Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 123.

According to van Oort, there are few passages in Augustine's writings that show the extent to which he identifies the city of God with the church.[22] In the *City of God*, Book VIII, '…the city of God is the holy Church…;' Book XIII, '…the city of God, which is His Church…;' Book XV, '…of the city of God, which is of the Church…;' Book XVI, …Christ and His Church, the city of God ….' Apart from these passages in the *City of God*, there are other examples where Augustine identifies the Church as the city of God, for example, in his commentary on the psalms: '… about the city of God, which is about the Church…' (*En. Ps*. 71,18); '… what is the city of God but the holy Church?' (*En. Ps*. 98, 4).[23]

The "One-Mystery" Church in 'Two Aspects' in relation to the Two Cities

Augustine offers an understanding of the church as a mystery, and in time this "mystery" became visibly present on earth. It is the gathering of God's people and ultimately becomes the city of God on earth for as long as she celebrates the sacraments in the name of its head. In Book 15 of the *City of God* Augustine deals with the appearing of the two cities in human history. From his description of the life of Adam and Eve, and running through Cain and Abel, he demonstrated how the city of God appeared on earth.[24] Thus with Cain and Abel, the two cities appeared in human history; and Augustine's description of the kind of life that Abel lived already suggests that he meant that Abel symbolised the church and shows the temporal beginning of the church. Congar also reflected on this theme of 'Abel and Cain' in his famous article that traced patristic appeals to Abel as the church's beginning.[25]

[22] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 127.
[23] These examples are as cited by Johannes Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 128.
[24] "When these two cities began to run their course by a series of deaths and births, the citizen of this world was the firstborn, and after him the stranger in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestined by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a citizen above". Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15. Versfeld acknowledges that Augustine sees in Hebrew history a progressive building of the Civitas Dei on earth, and in the history of Rome the rooting on earth of the civitas terrena. Cf. Marthinus Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God,* 62.
[25] Yves Congar, "Ecclesia ab Abel," *Festschrift für Karl Adam: Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche*, ed. M. Reding (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1952): 79-108.

According to Versfeld, in Augustine's *Enchiridion*, we find a conception of the church which makes it co-terminous with the *Civitas Dei*.[26] But it could be said, that, while the city of God in heaven is free of evil or reprobates, the pilgrim church as an institution in a human society has within it not only those who seek after God's will but also members seeking self-glory. Therefore, the visible church is fully integrated into the *Civitas Dei* only after the resurrection of the body, when it shall experience perfection. This is the eschatological dimension of the visible church in relation to the invisible church.[27]

When Augustine speaks of the church as the city of God, it is first in its perfect state as the church in heaven and only secondarily as the pilgrim church on earth awaiting perfection at the resurrection of the body. Van Oort affirms that the work of Émilien Lamirande sheds more light on how Augustine conceives of the church as the city of God: "The Church on earth appears as a heavenly entity and represents to a certain extent the eschatological city. The heavenly Church (*ecclesia caelestis*) is without doubt absolutely identical with the city of God."[28] This means that the extent to which the visible and invisible churches are equivalent to the *civitas Dei* differs because the former still has within her members those who are not entirely free from such passions as exhibited by the bad angels and citizens of the earthly city. However, if citizens of the earthly city on earth are within the church and co-operate with Divine grace, by refraining from being rebellious, they can partake of the blessing accruing to the heavenly city. In *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (86), Augustine uses the imagery of Babylon and Jerusalem, suggesting that the earthly city of Babylon is capable of being transformed into the heavenly Jerusalem through the salvific work of Christ.[29]

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[26] Versfeld, *A Guide to the City of God*, 61.
[27] Augustine conceives of the church in heaven as where no wickedness is found, and that no one has fallen from it or will ever fall from it since the time that God did not spare the angel that sinned but cast them to hell to be reserved for judgement. See *Enchiridion*, LVII
[28] Oort, *Babylon and Jerusalem*, 128.
[29] "quomodo una civitas sancta, Jerusalem; una civitas iniqua, Babylon; omnes iniqui ad Babyloniam pertinent, quomodo omnes sancti ad Jerusalem. Sed delabitur de Babylone in Jerusalem. Unde, nisi per eum qui justificat impium? See Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 85.

Augustine also recognised that the visible church is a church on a journey towards becoming united with the perfect heavenly city, the *ecclesia sanctorum*. Despite being a pilgrim church, she is the eschatological city of God though still on earth. At present, the visible church, which is a stranger now, still being pruned and purified, will be united with the heavenly assembly and there will be one city of God.

IMAGES OF THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH AS THE CITY OF GOD

Augustine used images to describe the intrinsic relationship between the visible community which celebrates the sacraments and the invisible church, often referred to as the community of saints (*communio sanctorum*). For our study, we shall explore the images of the church as the body of Christ and the church as the "people of God". We will investigate how these images relate to the church as the city of God in Augustine's two cities doctrine.

1. The Body of Christ and Augustine's Two Cities

On the image of the church as the body of Christ, Augustine relies on Pauline theology of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27; Rom 12:4-5).[30] Augustine's argument follows Paul: if Christ is the Head, as Paul teaches, then he must have a body. His body is the holy church. In Augustine's exegesis on the Psalm (*En Ps*. 138.2), he stated that the church being the body of Christ is built up through the grace of the sacraments, symbolised by the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side on the cross. These sacramental signs help in the proper functioning of the body and thus, aid the intrinsic growth of the body. According to Lee, in Augustine's early works, the scriptural theme of the church as the body of Christ is used sparingly; and for

[30] The church as the body of Christ takes its root from Pauline allusion to the church as Christ's mystical body. Paul used the theme 'body' to speak to the Corinthian and Roman churches of the union which each member who participates in the Eucharistic meal (One loaf of bread is broken and shared by all as a visible sign of communion) shares with Christ as Head and other members as fellow believers. We find evidence of Paul's use of the theme, Body of Christ, in his letter to the Romans (Rom 12:3-6) and first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:13) to emphasise that the gathering of Christ's followers entail solidarity with one another. "Paul indicates in these texts that each person discovers his or her singularity in communion with the whole membership (1 Cor 12:21-27) and that this reality comes from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). See J.-M.R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 23.

the first time, Augustine speaks of the church as body of Christ in *De Genesi adversus Manicheos*, his attempt to explain the initial chapters of Genesis.[31]

The gathering of the church in the name of Christ indicates that all are members of one body, irrespective of the diverse functions that are carried out by each person. According to St Paul, the diversity of gifts enhances the beauty of the whole body, each working to bring about the proper functioning of the whole body (cf. 1 Cor 12). The whole body strives to be connected to its source and lynchpin, who is Christ, the Head. In Ephesians 2:19-22, St Paul identifies Christ as the cornerstone upon which the ecclesial community is founded. Paul admonished the Christian community, that irrespective of their various backgrounds, members of the community are fellow-citizens and are all part of God's household. Biologically, the head is always connected to the rest of the body; neither the head nor the body can survive without each other. When the church is referred to as the body of Christ, it means that together with the head, it forms one body of Jesus Christ. Therefore, wherever the church is, Christ is intrinsically and invisibly bonded to it. *Lumen Gentium* quotes Colossians 1:15-18 to refer to the spiritual connection between Christ and the church, and Christ as Head of the body: "He is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignties, Powers – all things were created though him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the church is his body, he is its head."[32]

Augustine used the Pauline imagery to develop his theology of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ. His doctrine was developed in the course of his responses to the Donatists (schismatics) and the Pelagians (heretics). The Donatists had questioned the validity of an ordination celebrated by a bishop suspected of unworthy conduct. Augustine responded

[31] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 32.
[32] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, ed. Austin Flannery (Ireland: Dominican Publications, 1975), no. 7.

that the true minister of the sacrament is Christ himself; Christ is the one Head of the Mystical Body, and he is the unique source of all grace, whereas the minister is only the transmitter of such graces. Also, the members of Christ are joined with one another by the unity of charity, and with that they are attached to Christ Jesus, the Head.

Against the Pelagians, Augustine elaborated the doctrine of original sin and grace. Pelagius had taught that man could begin to lead an upright life without grace. In response, Augustine, relying on the teaching of Paul, argued that all have sinned and in Christ, all those who make up his body are saved. From Christ, who is the Head and fountain, grace is communicated or flows to all members of the Body through baptism and the Eucharist. Then the Head and members make up the 'whole Christ'.[33] For Augustine, the idea of the 'whole Christ' is not because the Head is not complete in himself, being the Word and the only equal Son to the Father, but because he has deigned to form one whole with human beings.[34] This has to do with his assumption of human nature and, by virtue of his nature, being the new head of humanity (the new Adam).

Christian theology has always portrayed the church as having an intrinsic relationship with Christ, whom she believes is the founder of the holy assembly. To this fact, Christian writers in the first century persist in affirming that the church has a unique relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and according to Tillard, this supports the reality of the *Ekklesia tou Theou*.[35] All Christians spread throughout the end of the earth, not excluding those who have died, all form the one body of Jesus Christ, and they are, each of them, members of Jesus Christ. And this church on earth is united to the church in heaven, where we have the angels for fellow citizens. Christ is therefore head of the whole church, both those still on their journey (*viatores*) and those who are now with God (*comprehensores*). Christ is the head of both the

[33] Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, trans. Michael Miller (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 92-95.
[34] Augustine, *Sermo* 341. See Tillard, *Church of Churches* 21.
[35] Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 20.

church on earth and that in heaven by virtue of shared end of humanity and the angels, which is the glory of God.[36] Christ, the Divine Word, and the Son of the Father is first to be numbered among the citizens of the *civitas Dei*; and also, Scripture attests to Christ as being made "superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs" (Heb 1:4).

Let us now consider the relationship between these images of 'body' and 'Head' with the church as the city of God. Concerning the focus of one's love, the church, though is the city of God on earth, has members within her who still fail to direct their love solely to God. There are still traces of Babylon in Jerusalem. For this reason, the church on earth, the visible church, continues the acts of purifying through the sacraments which are always celebrated in the name of Christ, the Head. The city of God in its earthly state thereby constantly renews its hope for union with the heavenly city towards which it journeys. As Christ's body, the church can mediate Christ's holiness to her members, thereby transforming the community from sin to a life of grace. The visible church's worship leads to its union with the heavenly city as the one body of Christ, the redeemed city.[37] This task of the church towards the purification of its members was reiterated by Vatican II,

> Henceforward the church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that kingdom. While she slowly grows to maturity, the church longs for the completed kingdom and, with all her strength, hopes and desires to be united in glory with her king.[38]

Thus, transformed members of the church can direct their love towards God. As a 'city' all members seek after the praise of the true God.

Collectively, the pilgrim members of the church, inasmuch as they are united with Christ, the Head, are drawn into communion with themselves and with Christ. By reason of this

[36] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 8, a. 4.
[37] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 93.
[38] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 5.

communion, they form one body. The Head leads its members. Where the Heads goes the members follow. If Christ, the Head, who suffered, died, is raised, and glorified and ascends to heaven, the members too, who are his members follow. Christ is in heaven from where he intercedes for his members. The Head is without sin and without death and now propitiates God for our sins.[39] So, the eschatological union between the city of God in its earthly state with the city of God in its heavenly state is brought home to us through Christ's headship as leader, as pioneer. In relation to the city of God, they are in union with the heavenly city through grace and the celebration of the sacraments that mediate it. This body involves both a social unity, that is visible, and a spiritual unity, that is invisible. The Christian in a state of grace, therefore, is both a member of Christ's body and a citizen of his city.[40]

2. The Church as the 'People Of God'

The ecclesiological image of the church as the 'People of God' is one that is more closely approximate to the image of a 'city'. The concept of 'a people' already means that they share a common goal, everyone working for what makes for the good of the collective people, 'a city', the kind that is expected of any organised society. This image reiterates the communal dimension which the church possesses. Drawing on the salvation history of the Israelite people, *Lumen Gentium* presented an understanding of the church as consisting of persons who have been chosen by God, formed to be a people through a succession of covenants (with Christ's eternal covenant as the last) in order to fulfil the promise of salvation, not only of individuals, but of a people, collectively.[41] The understanding of the church as 'people' echoes what Paul

[39] Augustine, "Sermon 87: On the New Testament," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956)
[40] Recently, Benedict XVI reiterated the connection between *Civitas Dei* and the church. He considers it a fatal error for Medieval Augustinians to claim that the *Civitas Dei* is not identical with the institution of the church. He holds that the church of the world today makes it identical with the *Civitas Dei*. See Benedict XVI's letter to Dave Pivonka, President, Franciscan University of Steubenville, 7th October 2022. https://franciscan.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Benedict-XVI-Letter-to-Fr-Dave-Pivonka-TOR.pdf
[41] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.

expressed in his letter to the Ephesians: "*So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the saints, and part of God's household. You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone. As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit*."[42]

Lumen Gentium acknowledges the divine will in forming a people. It states that persons who already fear God are acceptable to him, but God saves them not as individuals with no bond between them but rather as a people. This act began when God chose the Israelite nation and established a covenant with them. With Christ this invitation was extended to all nations of the world that they might share in the life that God gives to his people.[43] The destiny of this new people, their new promised land, is the kingdom of God, open to all those who courageously walk in the ways established by Christ. This 'people' is the community of those who are made citizens of the heavenly city by virtue of their love of God. *Lumen Gentium* refers to this community as the Church of Christ: "As Israel according to the flesh which wandered in the desert was already called the Church of God, so too, the new Israel which advances in this present era in search of a future and a permanent city, is called also the Church of Christ."[44] The role of Christ in the formation of this people is important and highlighted by the Council Fathers in *Lumen Gentium*, just as Augustine stresses the appearing of Christ in human flesh as important for the establishing of the *civitas Dei* in human history.

Vatican II's ecclesiology of the People of God shares homogenous features with Augustine's description of the heavenly city. The Council Fathers in *Lumen Gentium* understood the Church as having its origin from God and consisting of all those who are united

[42] Ephesians 2:19-22 (The Jerusalem Bible)
[43] "Christ instituted this new covenant, namely the new covenant of his blood; he called a race made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit, and this race would be the new People of God." See *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.
[44] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.

to Jesus, as the author of salvation and principle of unity and peace; these have been gathered together by God. Likewise, Augustine had also described the heavenly city as originating from God and the citizens of this city are those whose will are directed to pleasing God their Creator. Both *Lumen Gentium* and Augustine's *City of God* trace the origin and development of God's people. Both the 'People of God' and the 'heavenly city' are dynamic in the sense that they involve pilgrims (or citizens) on a journey through a strange land (i.e., the desert of this world) towards their eternal home that is heaven. Augustine's own doctrine of God's city as a city 'on the move', as it were, is explicitly echoed by the Council Fathers, who cite *City of God* (Bk 18, Ch 51) in *Lumen Gentium* no. 8: "The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God'."[45]

As the city of God on earth, the church advancing through trials and tribulations is strengthened by God's grace, that she may be faithful and remain a worthy bride to her Spouse as she renews herself through the action of the Holy Spirit.[46] *Lumen Gentium* also affirms that the one People of God, the church, is present in all nations of the earth. This shows the universality which the church attests to, that the kingdom of God is spread in every nation of the earth. All those who are attentive to God's call in their heart belong to this assembly and all help in building up the city of God on earth. Though the church sojourns on earth, she is bonded to members of the *civitas Dei* in heaven as she continually awaits her union with this city in heaven.

Augustine's eschatological view of the church is echoed in *Lumen Gentium*, especially where it concludes by highlighting the church's hope of encompassing all in the heavenly home.

> Thus, the Church prays and likewise labours so that into the People of God, the Body of the Lord and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, may pass the fullness of the whole world, and that in

[45] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8.
[46] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.

> Christ, the head of all things, all honour and glory may be rendered to the Creator, the Father of the universe.[47]

In chapter 1 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers stated, that God determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ, for to carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth. In the world while the Church grows to maturity, it longs for the completed kingdom, with all her strength she hopes and desires to be united in glory with her king.[48]

3. The Church as "Peregrinari and Peregrinus"

Peregrinari and *Peregrinus* are two key terms used by Christian theologians in describing the life of the visible church on earth: *peregrinari* a verb which means to sojourn, and *peregrinus*, the one who makes the journey. An intrinsic part of Christianity is the idea of being on a journey towards one's final home in heaven.

For Augustine, the idea of being on pilgrimage is linked to the city of God. On earth, the faithful Christian is not only a citizen but also a pilgrim in history. "For Augustine, *peregrina* is the appropriate description of the city of God on earth, and its members are *peregrini* – 'pilgrims' – of that city."[49] The city of God sojourns as an alien in this world, and that suffices to show that Augustine recognises the city of God as *civitas peregrinans*.[50] From the foregoing, we see that the city of God which Augustine refers to is identified with the church on earth. The church is a group of pilgrims whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20) and who are, therefore, members of that city, but aliens in this world, journeying 'home' where they belong. The city of God, then, whose home is heaven, extends its citizenry to those who are still sojourning on earth.

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[47] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 17.
[48] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 2-5.
[49] M. A. Clausen, 'Peregrinatio' and 'Peregrini' in Augustine's "City of God," *Traditi*o 46 (1991): 33-75.
[50] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 131.

Christian hope assures the church that all her members are on the way to the native city, where they will be in perfect communion with the angels, saints and all the citizens of the heavenly city. But before arriving at this, the church undergoes the struggles of the world, human failures, and weaknesses. "That is why the citizen of the city of God is in this world a *peregrinus*"[51] living together with the citizens of the earthly city. As pilgrim on earth, the city of God must deal and indeed participate in the affairs of the world, during which she is misunderstood and even persecuted. The time citizens of God's city spend on earth is temporary, and so earthly goods are used, but not enjoyed.[52] Augustine admits that good things are equally bestowed on everyone.

> Thus, the things necessary for this mortal life are used by both kinds of men and families alike, but each has its own peculiar and widely different aim in using them. The earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and the end it proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule, is the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life. The heavenly city, or rather the part of it which sojourns on earth and lives by faith, makes use of this peace only because it must, until this mortal condition which necessitates it shall pass away.[53]

The city of God while on earth diligently obeys the rules that govern earthly existence for the sake of maintaining earthly peace but not forgetting the true freedom that has already been given through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even when she is persecuted and ridiculed, she believes that when true peace is reached finally in the heavenly city, there shall be fullness of blessedness. Augustine's interest is to let his fellow Christian know that though we care about the welfare of the earthly state, it remains earthly, even if it is governed by a Christian emperor. Earthly or temporal affairs have only a relative value and are not of ultimate concern. A Christian should be more concerned about his or her eternal home.[54]

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[51] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 139.
[52] The themes of 'use' and 'enjoy' are key concept in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, Bk 1.
[53] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19.
[54] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Unity of the Nations: A Vision of the Church Fathers*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 101.

Augustine had used the sojourning life of the people of God in the Old Testament to demonstrate that being a pilgrim is part of the experiences of God's elect and the same accrues to the church, the sign of the new covenant.[55] For instance, the people of Israel were always journeying until they reached the promised land; the desert experience and moment of uncertainties were times when they believed or lost faith. Like Augustine, the Council Fathers teach that, "The Church sees herself as an exile. She seeks and is concerned about those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, where the life of the Church is hidden with Christ in God until she appears in glory with her spouse."[56] The perfection of the church on earth will be received in heaven. As a pilgrim church, the church on earth has a sanctity though imperfect; she carries the mark of this world, and she groans and travails among the creatures, awaiting the revelation of the Son of God. She journeys towards the eternal communion of the whole Body of Christ in heaven.[57] Therefore, the pilgrim church honours with great respect the memory of her dead members. According to the Council Fathers, the church looks with reverence on the life of those who have faithfully followed Christ and she is inspired anew for seeking the same city which is to come.[58]

The idea of the church being on a journey is also reflected in the understanding that the church, being the Body of Christ is holy, and yet sinful. According to Jeanmarie Gribaudo, the council fathers in *Lumen Gentium* had explained that the church is on pilgrimage in this world and has not reached perfection in holiness and it is therefore, sinful. Living in this world, the church is subject to sin, and concurrently, the church is not of this world, and therefore its holiness is eschatological.[59] Since the church is on pilgrimage, it means that she does not conceive herself as the perfect city of God. For as long as she sojourns here on earth, members

[55] Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 141.
[56] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 6.
[57] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium,* 48-51.
[58] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 50.
[59] Jeanmarie Gribaudo, *A Holy Yet Sinful Church* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 107.

of the city of God encounter the thorns and thistles on the way; but the church is aware that these experiences of weaknesses are not the complete expression of what the church is. Augustine affirms the relationship between the church's sojourn in this world and the hope of reaching the everlasting city: "It is in hope, therefore, that man, son of the resurrection, lives; it is in hope that the city of God lives, so long as it sojourns here as an alien."[60] For the period that the city of God sojourns in the world, its citizens make acts of purification and sometimes atone for their shortcomings through the graces of the sacraments. The source of renewal for the city of God here on earth is founded on Christ who is the Head of the city as its body.

So far, I have looked at Augustine's understanding of the church as first a mystery and this mystery is visible in the community of God's people. Hence, we can speak of two aspects of the church, the invisible and the visible aspects of the church. Also, the church equates with the city of God, more fully in its invisible form, and as an earthly reality, she sojourns in hope towards her heavenly city. The images of the church as the 'Body of Christ' and 'People of God' further demonstrated how the church is the city of God on earth. As 'body', all the members of the church form one body and are formed into communion with Christ, the Head of this body; and 'people', speaks of the communal dimension of the church, which in this case, is their communal love for God. Above all, as a pilgrim on earth and always interacting with the earthly city, she is faced with questions and challenges, which means there is before her, the task of apologetics.

The Church as the City of God and Christian Apologetics

Augustine's two-cities doctrine postulates a rivalry between the heavenly city and the earthly city. If the church is the city of God on earth, she is to respond to the challenges and questions that inevitably arise from the earthly city, and also from those even of the city of God who find themselves in the tumults of history. The church is aware of her pilgrim state here on

[60] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 18.

earth, and as she journeys along in history, she is called upon to respond to different questions and challenges resulting from the rivalries that she encounters while on earth, and the new questions that inevitably emerge in a human history replete with developments, discoveries, and novelties. The church does apologetics as a community of faith. What apologists seek to defend is the faith of the community of believers, and though Christian apologetics may be done by individuals, according to their circumstances, these persons are part of the church. When Augustine showed in Bk 1 that he is defending the glorious city of God, he surely had the community of believers in mind, for though Augustine wrote his defence as an individual, he wrote in defence of the Christian community.

The individual apologist employs his or her knowledge in apologetics, and throughout the task, it is supposed that she carries in her heart the faith, not of individual believers, but of the church, the *fides ecclesiae.* For this reason, it is necessary that the apologist understands this ecclesial dimension and is mindful of the faith that is beings defended. C. S. Lewis reiterated that Christian apologetics is about Christianity itself; it properly belongs to, and is done in the name of, the faith community:

> we are to defend Christianity itself – the faith preached by the Apostles, attested by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, expounded by the Fathers. This must be clearly distinguished from the whole of what any one of us may think about God and Man.[61]

The diverse gifts that members of the church possess serve in the tasks of Christian apologetics, and the church on her part provide opportunities for the apologists to equip themselves with the recourses needed in order to be able to respond to new challenges and questions arising from a fast-growing scientific society. Highlighting the ecclesial dimension of the apologist is important in order to prevent personal opinions from being confused with the faith of the church. The apologist is responsible to the church and her faith. According to C. S. Lewis, "we

[61] Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 87.

are defending Christianity; not 'my religion'. When we mention our personal opinions, we must always make quite clear the difference between them and the Faith itself."[62] In other words, Christian apologetics is not simply an individual promoting or defending his or her personal opinions; that which one is defending is something *received* and to be guarded and promoted precisely because it belongs first and foremost to the church before it is appropriated personally by the Christian apologist. In order that Christian apologetics keeps to its purpose, the apologist must remain focused on the faith of a people, a community of believers. The communal aspect of apologetics also means that the apologist can benefit from what he or she learns from the church, the church's doctrinal traditions; the same too from the sacramental life from which the apologist gains spiritual nourishments.

The church as a 'body' is an organised institution and operates on a 'rule of life' derived from scripture and early traditions, and over time, this has been transmitted from one generation to another. Since after the reformation and the renaissance period in the 16th century, this rule of life or the faith content of the Christian religion is constantly undergoing interaction with the fast advancing scientific and humanist worldviews. Individual apologists can make use of the products of these interactions in defending the reasonableness of Christian faith against its detractors emerging from a more secular worldview. From the foregoing, we see that Christian apologetics is primally a task undertaken by Christians for Christianity, and so it is appropriate to imagine that the whole *ecclesial* body is involved in this task, whether through individual apologists or through a group of apologists.

Though the approaches to Christian apologetics in different periods are different, the task is always to defend the faith, and apologists carry this out aware that, as Christ's disciples, they are to love those who may not share this faith. In this way, Christian apologetics is called to create an atmosphere of dialogue with other worldviews. Therefore, Augustine's two-cities

[62] Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 87.

doctrine which refers to the church as the city of God and on a pilgrim journey implies a development of Christian apologetics that, carried out in time, is flexible and adaptable to the needs of the moment. The nature of the church as a mystery, whose social visibility veils its invisible grace, is a reminder that the apologist is always in contact with a deeper reality to which a potential interlocutor might not have access. In order words, the mysteriousness of the church is another reminder that, while the apologist can challenge the detractor's presuppositions, he cannot impose presuppositions that the detractor does not accept (e.g., that God has spoken in revelation). For the apologist, the church is a divinely instituted visible sign of the invisible kingdom of God; for the detractor, however, the church might simply be a social construct. If the apologist has any ecclesial sensitivity, he or she will recognise the greater reality in which he participates but which is inaccessible to one without faith.

Having explored how the two parts of Augustine's *City of God* together make up his apologetics, this chapter showed how the church could well be regarded as the city of God. Augustine's understanding of the church as a mystery which appeared on earth in time, and his assertions concerning the two aspects of the church demonstrated that the church is journeying towards her perfect homeland in heaven. In the meantime, however, while she is a pilgrim on earth, she does apologetics. To this, Pope Francis has called for a contemporary Christian apologetic that is responsive to today's context. He labels it a 'creative' apologetics in *Evangelii Gaudium.* The next chapter will explore the relevance Augustine for contemporary apologetics, with special attention to Francis's proposal in *Evangelii Gaudium.*

CHAPTER SIX

LESSONS FOR TODAY: AUGUSTINE'S TWO-CITIES DOCTRINE, POPE FRANCIS'S "CREATIVE APOLOGETICS," AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

The contemporary relevance of Augustine's thought stems from similarities between his and our own context. Daniel Williams, for example, observes:

> His thought was hammered out amid the shattering of a great civilisation. Ours, too, is a time of world-shaking struggle, of revolutionary forces let loose. The values that have informed Western civilisation are threatened and hope for neat solutions has crumpled. With the weapons created by science, destruction is possible on a scale never before imagined. The militant faith of communism proposes to build a new City of Man without benefit of faith in God or humility before Him.[1]

Unlike the era when Augustine lived and wrote, few today directly accuse Christianity of being the reason for any mishap in the world, but the relevance of the Christian faith today is undoubtedly questioned in the West. The evolution of the sciences, as well as a more empirical approach to reality, have often been seen by some as incompatible with faith. Relative to Augustine's, our similar – and yet unique – context suggests that there are still apologetic lessons from Augustine's two-cities doctrine that can be helpful today.

This chapter has two sections. The first section will discuss some challenges that the church faces today with a view towards seeing how Augustine's reflections can help address them. The second section examines Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium* and its plea for a creative apologetics. There, I will argue that Augustine's analysis of the two cities can enhance Pope Francis's proposal.

[1] Daniel Williams, "The Significance of St. Augustine Today," *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine, ed. Roy Battenhouse* (New York: Oxford University Press), 4.

There are diverse reasons for why contemporary men and women disengage from religion. Religious faith has, in a way, become disturbing and upsetting to some persons because of the belief that it misleads people towards a false hope. For others, religion generally, and Christianity specifically, with its moral norms and religious obligations, pose a constraint on human freedom and ambition. Still for others, the church has done more harm to human life than good.

Given these different perspectives, the task of Christian apologetics is immense.[2] It is important to keep in mind, however, the limits of what an apologist can do, and the necessity of God's aid in evangelization. Thomas Norris, in his comments on Augustine's *City of God*, states that Augustine believed that the struggle between love of God and love of self has been part of the history of humankind and that,

> St Augustine was particularly aware, however, that the movement of conversion from love of self to the love of God and of the neighbour is a struggle, a struggle in fact that cannot be won without the energy of grace as the free gift of God, changing the heart of stone into a heart of flesh.[3]

Augustine teaches not only that God's grace is primary in the church's mission to evangelize, but he also offers lessons for the apologist today.[4] We shall look at some key

[2] Philip Kenneson observed that some contemporary Christian apologists, such as Stanley Hauerwas, argue that the contemporary church, rather than bemoan the collapse of Christendom, should see in such collapse a providential opportunity to regain a sense of its own calling and identity in the modern world; the church needs to show its existence as a people set apart to witness to the relevance of Christianity in the modern world. See Philip D. Kenneson, "There's no Such Thing as Objective Truth, and it's a Good Thing, Too," in *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 168. Stanley Hauerwas argument is contained in his *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) and *After Christendom?* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991). This idea of the church been set apart synchronises with Augustine's idea of the city of God as occupying a unique place in the world even when it is present in the earthly city.

[3] Thomas Norris, , *A Fractured Relationship: Faith and the Crisis of Culture* (Dublin: Veritas Publication, 2007), 6.

[4] The major contribution of Augustine, as this chapter will show, is the two-cities doctrine itself and the diversity of applications it has. But just in terms of method, Augustine has something to show us. For example, in Part I of the *City of God*, Augustine goes on offense, pointing out the failures of the roman gods, the pride of romans, etc. In other words, he not only defends the Christian religion against pagan accusation that is responsible for the sack of Rome, but he points out the shortcomings of roman religion.

challenges faced by the church today and see how Augustine's reflection on the two cities can help Christian apologetics in addressing these challenges. The task will be to use Augustine's notion of the focus of one's love, as discussed in the two-cities, to argue for how Christian faith can help in forming the consciences of human beings towards making the choice for love of God.

In what follows, I will consider three contemporary challenges that the church faces: (1) theoretical and practical atheism; (2) disunity among Christians; and (3) clerical abuse. For each of these three challenges, I will highlight the ways in which Augustine's two-cities doctrine might prove helpful.

1. Theoretical and Practical Atheism

The contemporary world is becoming increasingly secular in most, if not in all aspects. Though a highly complex phenomenon, by secular, we mean the decline in adherence to religious beliefs and, further, the idea that humanity can succeed without religion; a stronger, more militant secularism includes the deliberate attempt to shut from the world any form of belief in God in the modern world.[5] Taylor notes that, "whereas the political organisation of all pre-modern societies was in some way connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality, the modern Western state is free of this connection."[6] It is not uncommon for many to find it either more comfortable or more advantageous to relinquish any religious affiliations. For the modern and post-modern person, the question arises: of what use is an apparently archaic religion such as Christianity when the

[5] One of the features of the secular age is the emphasis on the use of human reason without any religious inclinations: an attempt to promote humanism as an alternative to Christian faith. Subsequently, there is an attitude which tends to promote expressive individualism, that every human person is at complete liberty to decide whatever he or she recognises as good or evil. Human freedom has been pushed to the point where what comes first in any decision is the self, a sense of anthropocentrism, in a way, to the detriment of what is of benefit to the entire community. The lynchpin to this attitude is not unconnected to the tendency that what constitutes truth is subjective and therefore, one chooses what works for him or her.

[6] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 1.

human person can employ his or her scientific intelligence to achieve whatever he or she so desires? In such a context in which God becomes, for all practical purposes, superfluous, the question arises, whether God exists, or whether one, on a functional level, even needs God?

Atheism is a total denial of the existence of God or a denial that the belief in the presence of the Divine in relation to human life and operation is plausible. The denial of the existence of God is either theoretical or practical. Theoretical atheism is a complete denial that there is no such being as God. An example of theoretical atheism is the "New Atheism" which is a term used to describe the position by some atheists of the twenty-first century. Theirs is a conscious and direct denial of God. They argue that religion, because it proposes the existence of God, should be countered, and challenged by rational arguments. Major proponents of "New Atheism" include Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett.

On the other hand, practical atheism is not concerned with the theoretical question of whether God exists or not; it is the view or perhaps the lifestyle, according to which one lives as if God does not exist. Practical atheists do not necessarily reject the existence of God *per se*, but they advocate that human beings ought to live as though God does not exist and not to be influenced by the belief in the existence of God.

Christianity believes in the existence of a Divine being responsible for all of creation, whereas atheism denies the existence of any being responsible for existence. According to the atheistic worldview, then, human beings are left to themselves. Today, it is not uncommon to encounter people who not only profess being atheist but practically show their disapproval of anything connected with the idea of the existence of God. To explain the world and its events, they tend to rely on natural causes exclusively; the motor of progress is the work of the natural sciences. Within an atheistic worldview, Christian belief and practice is not only seen as false, but can also be seen as irrelevant, or even simply meaningless. Hence there continues to exist in the West a significant decline in belief and religious affiliation. If there is no God, or if God

is irrelevant, or if the existence of God has no meaning, then religious disaffiliation quite naturally follows.[7]

There are multiple and complex reasons that explain the rise of modern atheism. One reason is the rise of science, and another is the existence of evil in the world. In the wake of the eighteenth century, for example, with the success of Newtonian science, the idea of a living and immanent God responsible for creation was losing its value up to the nineteenth century, and became heightened after Darwin's theory of evolution, which proposed the evolving nature of the biological world. With Darwin's theory, it was thought by some that God was no longer needed to account for the creation of the world.[8] Arguably, the discoveries of Newton and Darwin gave a boost to modern atheism as people began to rely on these discoveries for their claims in the non-existence of God.

The existence of evil in the world, and the inability to eliminate evil suffice for some modern atheists to eliminate God's existence. And if God were capable of eliminating it, the state of the world shows that God does not care. The conclusion, therefore, according to this variant of the classic "problem of evil," is that God is either not powerful as Christianity teaches (for otherwise, he would eliminate evil) or God is not good (for otherwise, a good omnipotent God would surely eliminate evil). So long as there is evil that has not been eliminated, the Christian conception of the existence of good and omnipotent God lacks credibility.

This moral argument against God's existence was first stated by Pierre Bayle (1647-1706); some twentieth-century atheists, the likes of Bertrand Russell and Albert Camus, still appeal to his arguments. They argue that since God cannot remove evil, which is always a threat to human life, it makes no sense to speak about the need of worshipping such a Being or be part of a church that advocates the worship of God. Consequently, since God does not

[7] For more insights on the spread of modern Atheism, see Michael Buckley, *Denying and Declosing God: The Ambiguous Progress of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
[8] Arthur Peacocke, *Evolution: The disguised Friend of Faith* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004), 235.

eliminate evil in the world, human beings are left to themselves to minimise the damages that accrue from the presence of evil in the world. While some might concede the legitimacy of *some* explanation for the existence of *some* evil in the world (e.g., evil suffered by beings at the hands of others in order that a life cycle and eco system function), such thinkers still cannot reconcile the existence of a good God with innocent suffering. "That is, unless theists can supply some plausible explanation for innocent suffering, it is practically impossible that there is a God. For all practical purposes, why should anyone believe in a God for whose existence one has no plausible reason?"[9] A variation of this argument is famously articulated by the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov.* In this fictional story, the author presents a scene where Ivan (the character) justifies his atheism on the grounds of evil in the world, particularly as it relates to the suffering of children. He feels that God cannot be that loving, as Christian faith holds, to allow the innocent to suffer.

These arguments against the existence of God lead many to live 'independently', as it were, as though God does not exist. And if he does not exist, it is left for humanity to struggle alone against the evil in the world and do everything humanly possible to alleviate human suffering. Prevalent today is the heavy reliance on solutions stemming from the natural sciences. However, despite the advancement in scientific results, there remain sources of human suffering left unresolved: natural disasters causing havoc in some parts of the world, national conflicts, social and economic inequality, etc. Based on these outstanding problems, it would seem that the human predicament is deeper than what scientific progress can address.

Using Augustine's Two-Cities Doctrine to respond to the challenges of Atheism.

When we propose that contemporary Christian apologetics can fruitfully appeal to Augustine in responding to contemporary atheism, we are not claiming that Augustine's two-cities

[9] Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 247.

doctrine solves the problem of atheism, or that the two-cities doctrine answers all the questions about atheism. Rather, we are arguing that, by using Augustine's reflections on the two cities, contemporary Christian apologetics can address certain objections to the existence of God, especially as the source of every being.

From the foregoing, we acknowledged that Augustine's *City of God* was not only to respond to the accusations of Roman pagans, but to also present philosophical and theological insights into Christian themes. Before his elucidation on the doctrine of the two cities, Augustine established the place of God as the origin of life.[10] For apologetic purposes, Augustine's affirmation that both the good and bad angels (from which emerged the heavenly city and the earthly city respectively) are originally from the same source, which is God, shows that the two-cities doctrine contains an affirmation of the existence of God.[11] In this sense, Augustine supposes what the atheist disputes. However, Augustine's teaching on the nature of goodness and evil advances the discussion.

In Bks 11 and 12, Augustine reflected on God's goodness which he believed is presented in the works of creation; hence, no nature at all is evil, for evil is the absence of good.[12] Evil is a product of vice, and virtue or vice derive from the choices human beings make freely. Therefore, Augustine affirms that it is the human will acting contrary to the good that is

[10] "There is, accordingly, a good which is alone simple, and therefore alone unchangeable, and this is God. By this Good have all others been created, but not simple and therefore not unchangeable." See Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk 1, Ch 10.

[11] Augustine's direct affirmation of the existence of God is contained in his *De Libero Arbitrio*. He discussed the existence of God with reference to the problem of evil. Scholars usually examine Augustine's *De Lib* for his thoughts on the existence of God. Augustine's intention was not to *prove that there is God*, but to lead his readers to *what sort of God there is*, namely, one who is nonbodily and nontemporal. For more analysis of Augustine on the existence of God, see Roland Teske, *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the thought of Augustine* (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 2008).

[12] Since all nature is good, the absence of this good will be nothingness. Therefore, in the ontological and moral sense, Augustine conceives evil as nothingness; for he understands or identifies evil with the corruption of any existing thing. See Judith Stark, "The Problem of Evil: Augustine and Ricœur," *Augustinian Studies* 13, (1982): 111-121, https://doi.org/10.5840/augstudies19821310. G. Evans stated that Augustine understands evil as absence of light; Augustine believes that when light shines, there cannot be darkness, darkness becomes the absence of good. Where there is good, evil is driven out. See Gillian Evans, *Augustine On Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

the cause of evil, not God.[13] The cause of evil in the world is the result of humanity's misdirection of the will to act against the design of God as in the case of the fallen angels. In the light of Augustine's thought, Christian apologetics can argue that evil, in the first place, is not found in the nature of things created by God or that God did not create human beings with evil inclinations. Rather, evil is the result of the wrong choices that human beings make and for as long as some person continues to act contrary to the will of God, it is impossible to expect that evil will be eliminated. Since nothing contrary to God can come from Him, evil which is contrary to the nature of God cannot be from Him. Evil is a manifestation of the rebellion caused by humanity's disobedience to God's will; and Augustine believes that the earthly city, which is a result of this rebellion is often divided against itself by litigations, wars, quarrels. In the long run, humanity's quest for aggrandisement, coupled with the lust for power, further promotes the evil in the human society. Already, by becoming enemies of God, through the love of self to the contempt of God, citizens of the earthly city lost the will power to seek after good. Moreover, God respects human freedom wherein the human person chooses to do good or to do evil. The reality of evil, then, does not deny God's goodness and infinite power.

On the presence of innocent suffering in the world, we acknowledge the difficulties in understanding and addressing these especially as the world today remains a cruel place for human beings. Recently, there the is war in Ukraine, lives have been lost, people displaced from their homes; some countries are struggling with curbing starvation, insecurities, and financial crises. In the midst of these and several others, how will contemporary Christian apologetics argue that a good God created the world? In the attempt to respond to the questions around innocent suffering, Christian apologetics is not "solving" the problem of evil or even offering an adequate explanation; rather, Christian apologetics merely aims to give possible reasons why God could allow suffering. For example, with Augustine, one could argue that

[13] Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk 12, Ch 3.

suffering here on earth can be viewed as God's ways of constantly purifying human beings of their selfish desires, and a reminder that life here is never the ultimate or lasting reality. Whatever one may think of such explanations, the point is that the existence of a good and omnipotent God and suffering are not incompatible. Therefore, the mere presence of suffering, however grave and tragic it might be, is not enough to show that God does not exist.

Moreover, Augustine made a division of the human race into two sets according to their values and destinies and argued that not even the worshippers of the true God are safe from these natural sufferings,

> For in his abode of weakness, and in these wicked days, this state of anxiety has also its use, stimulating us to seek with keener longing for that security where peace is complete and unassailable. There we shall enjoy the gifts of nature, that is to say, all that God the Creator of all natures has bestowed upon – ours gift not only good, but eternal – not only of the spirit, healed now by wisdom, but also of the body renewed by the resurrection.[14]

Here, Augustine is not so much responding directly to the problem of evil as he is making a subtle appeal to one's desire for justice and goodness, and the transcendent horizon that this opens up. Augustine wants us to pay attention to how the sufferings we experience in the world can help us in anticipating our communion with God in heaven, where he believes there is no suffering. Augustine's reflection on the final destination of the two cities also supplies the background to the observation that, the citizens of the heavenly city, who though are mingled with those of the earthly city, look forward to the consolation in heaven, the final blessedness. Furthermore, the presence of some natural disasters and the inability of human intelligence to escape or prevent these disasters are an indication that certain occurrences and their meaning are beyond what the human mind can understand; any solution to these occurrences is beyond the sciences; for Augustine, this points to the need to rely more on God's assistance (not less).

[14] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 10.

2. Proliferation of Christian Communities

While the problem of ecclesial unity has been a challenge faced by the earliest Christians, the proliferation of several Christian communities has only increased prominently in the 21st century. The 16th century reformation in the church gave rise to different Christian denominations, each based on their interpretations of the Bible. For instance, the protestants of the reformation laid more emphasis on the Bible, a breakaway from Catholics which not only relied on the teachings in the Bible but the traditions of the early Christian community as transmitted through the centuries.[15]

Traditionally, the Christians are categorised into three main groups, namely, Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox. Among Protestant Christians there are many other denominations. If these communities all preach about the one faith in Jesus, of what use is it to have several Christian communities? How does that witness to our being one with Christ? Indeed, one of the foundational motivations that spurred the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century was the obstruction to mission and evangelization that disunity caused. It would seem that Christian faith has no unified understanding of itself. How effective is Christian apologetics if we are operating with different sets of goals and values?

Today, different Christian communities continue to emerge; the message of Jesus as the Son of God and the saviour of the world is still a key element but how this is translated into the daily lives of people in the 21st century has given rise to multiple Christian communities. Recently, in Nigeria for example, reformation-era denominations are giving way to particular Christian communities stemming from individual founders and owners. Undoubtedly, the rise in the number of churches and Christian communities in our societies prompts a fundamental

[15] Thomas Groome acknowledged that Catholic's rationale for appreciating Tradition was straightforward and reflected a holistic sense of Jesus. Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled and since then the Spirit has guided the Christians to reflect on their historical experience in the light of faith and to understand God's revelation as contained in the Bible. See Thomas H. Groome, *What Makes Us Catholic* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc; 2002), 147.

question around the church as a community of one body of Christ. While the number of different Christian communities continues to increase, one is not sure if the faith is really taking root in people's lives. Despite fundamental relationship between Christian denominations, there remains irreconcilable differences.

Unfortunately, the fact that ecclesial unity, based on a unified view of the Gospel, seems unattainable calls into question the necessity and relevance of belonging to a particular Christian community or church. Herein lies the scandal of a divided body of Christians: the continual existence of Christians practicing their faith without communion between them seems to suggest a certain normality to this state of affairs. In short, it does not seem to matter what Christian community one belongs to and this can easily lead to a certain kind of religious indifferentism more broadly.

According to the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio,* the Catholic Church works in various ways towards Christian unity. In addition to spiritual ecumenism (i.e., seeking holiness) and the ecumenism of charity (i.e., common action), Catholics, according to their expertise, are called to engage in dialogical ecumenism, whereby doctrinal differences are discussed in an honest way so as to foster mutual understanding and, ultimately, work towards some doctrinal convergence.[16] It seems, *prima facie*, that apologetics has no place in ecumenism (or that apologetics has been replaced by ecumenical dialogue), for they are, formally speaking, two different activities. For one, ecumenism demands that Catholics seek to better understand the position of their dialogue partner, whereas apologetics is properly concerned with defending one's own position. A significant overlap, however, exists in that any dialogical ecumenism that avoids a "false irenicism"[17] must also do what apologetics does, rightly understood: namely, to present the

[16] Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio,* 19.
[17] Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio,* 11.

Catholic faith "more profoundly and precisely," to use the phraseology of *Unitatis Redintegratio.* In other words, honest ecumenical dialogue will involve, among other activities, scrutinizing theological positions, and this scrutiny requires subjecting them to objections and assessing the strength of those objections. This is, in a word, a part of the apologetical task.

The apologist also has the further task of defending Christianity in the face of precisely these manifestations of disunity. The more pervasive the doctrinal and ecclesial disagreements, the less credible the Christian message. In other words, a unified Christian message is more persuasive than one that is full of contradictions. While, in the long run, the ecumenical movement comes to the aid of the Christian apologist, the apologist here and now still has the challenge to show the credibility of the Christian faith, despite these real so-called 'internal' disagreements.[18] Augustine's two-cities doctrine serves this ecumenical and apologetical purpose because it is the foundation for Christian unity. Christians, as members of the city of God, are united in their single desire to direct their will towards love of God. Christians ought to remember this and seek out what binds everyone together.

Furthermore, Augustine's two-cities doctrine beckons the ecumenical movement to continue its work towards Christian unity because of both its dynamic and its visible character. With respect to its dynamism, Augustine's understanding of the members of the heavenly city as pilgrims on the same journey is crucial. Together, the whole Christian assembly are on a journey towards the heavenly city, Jerusalem, where all the citizens of the heavenly city on earth will be united with the angels and saints in heaven. But Augustine also holds that this unity should first of all be visible here on earth as the people of God. Hence, the ecumenical imperative to work towards visible Christian unity. In the two-cities doctrine, Augustine makes this declaration:

> This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of pilgrims of all

[18] Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio,* 11.

> languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognising that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace. It therefore is so far from rescinding and abolishing these diversities, that it even preserves and adopts them, so long only as no hindrance to the worship of the one supreme and true God is thus introduced.[19]

Here, Augustine is arguing that differences in politics or culture (i.e., "manners, laws, and institutions," etc) ought not be seen, in themselves, as obstacles to the unity of the heavenly city. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, citing Augustine, teaches that, while not in perfect communion, all who have been justified by faith in baptism are Christians by virtue of their being incorporated in Christ's body; they are to be accepted as brethren.[20] The reason this is important for ecumenism is because it narrows the field of controversy. While properly theological disagreements cannot be overlooked or simply made to disappear, other sources of disunity seem to be politically inspired, and this, Augustine reminds us, inhibits catholicity (or the gathering together of all the nations).

The council Fathers in, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, had reiterated the Church's commitment to Christian unity, by stating that the division among Christian community does not represent the will of Christ, scandalises the world, and inhibits the proper preaching of the Gospel to everyone.[21] The cause for Christian unity is for everyone since together, every Christian is on a journey towards the fatherland; therefore, all Christians are responsible, albeit, in different ways. We cannot underestimate the need for unity among the different Christian communities if contemporary Christian apologetics will have any realistic success; a more unified Christian message is crucial for the credibility of Christianity. Ecumenism has an impact on apologetics.

[19] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 19, Ch 17.
[20] Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio,* 3
[21] Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1.

3. Clerical Abuse

Among the many issues that have affected the church in recent years is the problem of abuses, especially that of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults, committed by clergy. Tragically, the Catholic church and, indeed, all Christians, have had to battle with reports of abuse, both contemporary and historic. In addition to the practical responses necessary to protect children and vulnerable adults today, and to attempt, in some imperfect way, to rectify past injustices on behalf of victims, the church faces the additional challenge of its rapidly depreciating credibility.

Some people still live in great shock as to how some of these abuses went unnoticed for so long in the church. Many today accuse church leaders of not having done enough in the areas of protecting children and vulnerable adults from being abused. "In the last decade, in particular, we have seen a rise in the reporting of sexual abuse, current and historical, linked to institutions, clubs, charities, colleges, and the church, as well as an increased media profile of sexual violence."[22] These several crimes have led to the decline in church attendance because many people have become aggrieved with the church as a whole and questioned the relevance of the church to human beings if the institution cannot be trusted. Most of the church's activities, even in areas where she has been instrumental in promoting the welfare of people, have been beclouded by these reports of abuse and negligence on the part of the church's leaders. Apart from this, some persons have argued that the church has had a long history of abuse, especially sexual abuse of children, and that there has been an aberration on the part of

[22] Kieran McCarton and Jon Brown, "The Prevention of Sexual Abuse: Issues, Challenges and Resolutions," *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 25, no. 1, (January 2019): 1.
The literature on clergy sexual abuse is vast. For a holistic treatment of the issue with respect to its causes and aftermath, see for example, Robert McMackin, Terence M. Keane, and Paul M. Kline, eds., *Understanding the Impacts of Clergy Sexual Abuse* (London: Routledge, 2009).

the church not firm enough in handling such issues. Such a negligence has not helped in the appreciation of Christian faith in the contemporary age.

The problem of evil is, no doubt, exacerbated by the abuse crisis. It can add to the litany of innocent suffering articulated by the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov.* If God truly exists, why was he not able to stop these abuses? Or even if God exists, how could he allow such acts to happen for so long, especially when it involved children and vulnerable persons? Such a God is distant from his worshippers. This last point will be more like the accusations that the Christians in Rome experienced when the city was besieged: how come the Christian God could not prevent the city from been attacked and plundered by the Goths?

The world wants to see adequate steps taken by church authorities to handle already reported cases and prevent future occurrences. In the last number of years, various local churches (or bishops' conferences) have attempted to address the different aspects of the abuse crisis. Churches have become aware of the need to implement workable means to ensure the safety of those involved in ecclesial activities; clerics and other lay adults (e.g., teachers) are made to undergo different kinds of training in caring for children and vulnerable adults in order to maintain adequate protection of them. In terms of prevention, then, it is increasingly common to find practical procedures and precautions with respect to safeguarding.[23] In terms of justice, the increasingly standard policy is to notify civil authorities and let the civil justice system prosecute the case.[24] On a pastoral level, it is necessary for church leaders to accompany victims and listen to their grievances.

[23] As just one example, the Irish Bishops' Conference established in 2006 a juridically independent "National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland." In 2022 this same Board published a 136-page document on *Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments,* available at https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%201.pdf (accessed 14 December 2022).
[24] As another Irish example, see the *Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse against Priests of the Diocese* by the Archdiocese of Dublin, available: http://csps.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2012/03/Procedural-Guide.pdf (accessed 14 December 2022). This echoes the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's guidelines: "Civil law concerning reporting of crimes to the appropriate authorities should always be followed," in *Guide to Understanding Basic CDF Procedures concerning Sexual Abuse Allegations,* available: https://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_guide-CDF-procedures_en.html (accessed 14 December 2022).

While these considerations might contribute in the long term to rectifying a deficit of trust in the church, these steps have little impact on rectifying the deficit of credibility that the church suffers from on the whole. The abuse crisis seems to be yet another reason that renders irrelevant the church's existence and mission as a whole. The impact of these abuses on the church is enormous. The criticisms, accusations, and condemnations, and ultimately dismissals of the church are based on people's experiences of ecclesial life. Such ultimate repudiation of the church is tragic and based on an expectation of what the church *ought to be.* If the church is the body of Christ, it ought to act in some way Christ-like. If it is the people of God, it ought to act in some way divine. But abuse is the opposite of all that.

Given the history of abuse, can one still consider the church to be the body of Christ, the people and city of God on earth? The Catholic faith commits one to an affirmative answer here, but the task of apologetics is to show how such a claim, despite the tragedy of abuse, is still credible. While addressing the abuse crisis is far more than an intellectual challenge, the latter is still necessary to the extent that intellectual judgments or inferences about the church are made on the basis of the experiences and reports of abuse. In other words, in addition to the practical, legal, and pastoral initiatives taken by the church to address the crisis, some apologetical task remains, however humbly conducted, in order to argue for an enduring relevance of the church's existence and mission amidst the crisis. Therefore, we propose Augustine's ecclesial dimension (twofold dimensions of the church) in the two-cites doctrine, alongside Jacques Maritain's thoughts on the essential differentiation between the church and her personnel, as the foundation for a possible response.

Lessons from Augustine's Two-Cities Doctrine on Clerical Abuse

Augustine's categorisation of the human race into two different cities, each according to the object of love, offers lessons for how to contend for the continued relevance of the church despite abuse. The church, insofar as it contains human beings, has within it the two categories

of persons. The Church as the body of Christ is composed of both true and false Christians just as every human society is composed of citizens of the heavenly city and the earthly city. Augustine stated that it is difficult to ascertain who belongs to which city since all are intermingled together in the same community, but only to be separated at the appropriate time. Therefore, the city of God on earth, the church, has within it, enemies of the city seeking their own will like the bad angels who, though having had their beginning from a good source, turned to evil as a result of a disordered choice for self-glory. Augustine offers an important admonition about the church, concerning false Christians within the church, the redeemed family of the Lord Christ:

> So, too, as long as she is a stranger in the world, the city of God has in her communion, and bound to her by the sacraments, some who shall not eternally dwell in the lot of the saints. Of these, some are not now recognised; others declare themselves, and do not hesitate to make common cause with our enemies in murmuring against God, whose sacramental badge they wear.[25]

For Augustine, the city of God's current enemies might still convert and become fellow citizens. Conversely, however, – and this is the key point here – the city's fellow citizens, or those who are "in communion" with her, and "bound to her by the sacraments" might still become her enemies, since it is possible for someone to fall from grace. In such a case, they are no longer citizens of heaven despite their sacramental character and outward unity to Christ's body. Ecclesiologically, this means that sinners exist in the church, but they are, as it were, imposters who actually belong to the city of man. They may still be visibly a part of the church and, hence, appear to be a citizen of God's city, but they are, in fact, not.

[25] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 1, Ch 35.

From the foregoing we learnt that Augustine conceived of the church as existing in two states: heavenly and earthly. The latter is the church as it is now in her pilgrim state through history, and the former is the church in her eschatological, victorious state. On earth, the church has both visible and invisible dimensions. As a sacrament, the church's visibility includes, for example, visible markers or membership (e.g., baptism), but these visible signs ultimately have the purpose of engendering invisible realities (i.e., grace). It is this invisible reality which, indeed, the church on earth has in common with the church in heaven. Not all who partake of the visible signs are living a life a grace. In short, sinners can be members of the visible church.

Concerning the challenges that clerical abuse poses to the credibility of the church, contemporary apologetics can point out that the sinful acts of some members of the church does not fully represent or exhaust the reality of the church. The church is first and foremost defined in its transcendental nature, as the community of all God's elect, and it is the body of Christ. However, as it has appeared on earth, it is on pilgrimage and it is under the pastoral care of human beings who, like any, are liable to be easily swayed by their passions and drawn to sin of the flesh. "The "clean and the unclean" are the good and the wicked in the church, for during this time, the church is a mixed body of good and wicked, wheat and chaff, elect and reprobate."[26] Therefore, the shortcomings that are noticeable in the church are the fruits of those who long after their own selfish desires or have been quick to fall into the temptations of the Devil. According to Augustine, the church bears these reprobates for a time, as the threshing floor bears the chaff until the time for winnowing, when they will be separated from the church, if they fail to repent.[27] For if, as we noted earlier, it is the case that, for Augustine, the citizens of God's city are meant to patiently bear the inflictions of her enemies because

[26] Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*, 22.
[27] Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed,* Ch. 17:26.

some of those enemies are destined to become saints, so too the church does everything she can in order to bring wayward Catholics back to a life of grace. Both wheat and chaff, then, are together before the end. But before that time, they are present together within the church. Hence, the perpetrators of such abuses in the church represent the set of people who, though belonging to the worshipping community, are seeds of evil. They engage in impious and wicked acts; they have yielded to the promptings of the evil one whose aim it is to seek the ruins of the souls of the citizens of the heavenly city.

Augustine had acknowledged that the challenges that one finds in the church today are not new, they have been predicted long ago and the experience of them should help in building our faith.

> Why are you so hasty, He says, you servants full of zeal? You see tares among the wheat, you see evil Christians among the good; and you wish to root up the evil ones; be quiet, it is not the time of harvest. That time will come, may it only find you wheat! Why do ye vex yourselves? Why bear impatiently the mixture of the evil with the good? In the field they may be with you, but they will not be so in the barn.[28]

In the above sermon, Augustine illustrated the point that the church is there to support/contain saints and sinners together.

An Augustinian approach to addressing the difficulties people might have due to clerical abuse is an approach that does not diminish the gravity of sin, but situates this sin in a wider panorama of salvation history. Sin is alien to the church and Christ established a church precisely because of sin. Acting like the bad angels, some members of the church have disfigured the image of the church on earth. Apologists can encourage the modern man or woman not to despair because of these reported abuses, because these sins or abuses do not define the nature of the church. There is nothing ecclesial about them except for the fact that

[28] Augustine, "Sermon 13, On the New Testament," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956).

those who commit them are visibly united to the church. But barring any conversion, these same sinners are aliens to the church; they have a different destiny. This explains, in part, why Augustine, though he urges Christians to follow the example of the just, will nevertheless exhort us not to place our hope in human beings, but rather in God alone.[29] This admonition of Augustine is particularly apt to the task of Christian apologetics in that it tries to encourage those affected by the abuses in the church to know that Christ is the true model of the church and those who have behaved contrary to the image of Christ acted contrary to the will of God for his church, and moreover, they acted from their own free will in choosing to commit evil acts by not protecting the human dignity of children and vulnerable adults. Augustine would say that these perpetrators – both those who abuse and those who covered it up or were culpably negligent in addressing it – in one way, shape, or form, made inferior choices that stemmed, from an inordinate love of temporal things and, ultimately, of the self.

The significance of Augustine's admonition to hope in God alone has consequences for how we view the church. God alone, for Augustine, is the cause of grace, and this church is the body of the one mediator, Christ, the God-man. Because grace comes from God through Christ, the power of the church to bequeath this grace belongs to Christ, the invisible head of the visible church. And hence, any sin committed by her members – even the ordained – cannot inhibit the transmission of grace.

At this juncture, it might be asked whether, if the sin of abuse does not affect the church's power to transmit grace (which belongs to God), then what in the church *is* affected by sin? In other words, in defending the efficaciousness of the sacraments despite sin, one cannot simply deny the harm caused by sin. To this, it is helpful to distinguish between something's being and something's *well-being,* or between the essence of something and its integrity, wholeness, or ability to flourish. While sin might not affect the efficaciousness of

[29] Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed,* 27:55

sacraments, it does indeed harm the integrity or the well-being of the church. That is, it inhibits the church from acting fully according to its mission. For example, a priest who sins might celebrate valid sacraments, but his preaching or communication of the gospel message will be gravely compromised. But this *well-being* or integrity of the church is to be distinguished from the church's capacity to transmit grace.

A look at Jacques Maritain's understanding of the holiness of the church will buttress the argument that the actions of the members of the church – in particular her leaders – does not exhaust the overall understanding of what the church stands for in the world.

Dialogue with Jacques Maritain on the Holiness of The Church

Jacques Maritain is Augustinian in his understanding of the church for he, following the way of Augustine, considers the two states of the church: the earthly church and the heavenly church. Maritain is also heavily indebted to Charles Journet, whose ecclesiological works contains key references to Augustine's *City of God*.[30] For example, it is ultimately Journet's Augustine-inspired definition of the church that Maritain is indebted to:

> The Church is the supernatural community, destined to the life of heaven, which God gathers together after the Fall…St. Augustine writes: 'The entire Church, spread out everywhere, is the Body of which Christ is the Head. It is not only the faithful living now, but also those who were before us and those who will come after us, to the end of the world, who together form his Body He who has mounted to the heavens is its head.[31]

Augustine expresses here a way at looking at the church that is ultimate and essential. When all is said and done, the church must be considered, as Maritain writes, "The *Catholica*, as St Augustine liked to say, the Church considered in her universality and her unity as to her

[30]"The church is also called the city insofar as she is a living community, in the bosom of which lives the Lord." "St Augustine himself said: This city is said to come down from heaven because the grace by which God created it is heavenly." See Charles Cardinal Journet, *Theology of the Church* (San Franciso: Ignatius Press, 2004), 5 and 6 respectively.
[31] Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 357.

invisible soul and her visible body."[32] It is this view of the church that lies at basis of what will later become, as we shall see, important for Maritain's argument: namely, the church's so-called 'personality' is a personality distinct from her members.

For Maritain as for Augustine, the church is the visible city of God here on earth on its pilgrimage journey to her heavenly homeland. Part of Maritain's reflection was to acknowledge that members of the church on earth are sinners, while the church herself is without sin. On this understanding, Maritain distinguishes between the church and her members as distinct realities. He calls the church a 'person' and the particular ordained members who are pastorally responsible for the members, the 'personnel' of the church. He develops his argument for the holiness of the person of the church despite the fact that her personnel, as pilgrims on earth, are not without sin. All members of the church are liable to sin, even if the church herself is a means of grace.

> Sons of Adam, they are all born deprived of grace, and it is in a human nature inclined to evil that at Baptism they have received the latter; they all bear in them the wounds of the first sin. They sin very frequently in a more or less slight manner, in many cases in a manner more or less grave, often without being aware of it themselves because they have neglected to purify their heart.[33]

Maritain creates an avenue for a contemporary apologetics which should be focused on highlighting the sanctity of the church against the shortcomings of some members of the visible church. The visible church is made up of people who are broken; the more they draw closer to the grace of God, that inner reality that is the invisible church, the more they are capacitated to act in accordance with Christ's design for his body. Following the division made by Augustine concerning the two cities present in human society, this body, the church, as it appears on earth, also contains citizens of both the heavenly city and earthly city. For Maritain, the sins of the

[32] Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and Her Personnel*, trans. Joseph Evans (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), 14.
[33] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 6.

church's members truly soil the church insofar as these members are members of this visible body.

Concerning the challenges of the church, Christian apologetics can learn from Maritain, that the church is composed of members who are all sinners and bear in themselves the wounds of original sin, but the church herself is holy and immaculate, without stain and free from all trace of sin. According to Maritain, "to state such a paradox is to say that the Church is essentially different from all the great human families or communities, temporal or spiritual, which we know, and that she possesses in comparison with them a privilege absolutely unique."[34]

What makes the church "essentially different"? For Maritain, what makes the church unique is its divine – more precisely, supernatural – foundation and mission. And it is this supernatural aspect of the church that is the foundation for his key argument: namely, that the church has a 'personality' that transcends her members. Human institutions – societies, nations, clubs, etc. – enjoy what Maritain calls a "natural subsistence." That is, they subsist solely in their members. For example, a nation's customs, history, common desires and ends, "are those of its citizens, or of the great mass of them. And it has no divine mission, nor any promise of lasting always and of being constantly assisted by God."[35] For Maritain, the church is altogether different precisely because of its divine foundation and mission; the church has a supernatural subsistence stemming from its being the body of Christ, understood not merely as a loose sociological metaphor or image, but as real, mystical, extension of Christ.

With other human institutions, the church shares a "natural subsistence" in that the church subsists in her members, just like other societies, groups, institutions, etc. Without these members, the church would not exist on earth. But the church also has a "supernatural

[34] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ,* 9–10.
[35] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 18.

subsistence" and, hence, "personality," which presupposes the natural, but transcends it; the church is more than the sum-total of her members precisely because "she is the whole, one and universal, of the organized multitude of those who live with her life," that is, with her life of grace.[36] She is, as Augustine says, the *Catholica.*

For Maritain, this theological affirmation of the church's personality that transcends her members is necessary in order to explain the perdurance of the church despite the existence of sin. For if the church simply were to have a natural subsistence, all of her characteristics would depend on her members in the same way that a nation's customs depend on its citizens. But the church's holiness, for example, is not derived from her members, but from Christ, whose grace fills his body. Hence, Maritain argues, the sinfulness of the members of the church does not affect the intrinsic holiness of the church because this holiness is not derived from her members, but from Christ. "Any member of the Church can lose grace and incur eternal death. This is impossible for the Church one and universal, who is for [sic] always the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ."[37] In other words, the church does not become less holy the more its members sin (in the same way that the church does not become less one because her members are divided). Accordingly, the church in her fullness of grace, lives her life on earth like that of the good angels and saints in the city of God. And to the extent that one sins, one is not participating in the life of the church.

While acknowledging that the sin of its members obscures the church's holiness, Maritain argues that this holiness is still real (and made visible in the saints). With respect to the co-existence of sin and holiness, Christian apologetics today can argue with Maritain that the church in her person is without sin because of her life of grace and charity and, on the other

[36] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ,* 18.
[37] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 19.

hand, her members are sinners, each according to the measure in which he or she slips from the life of grace of the church.

> As soon as one has understood that, by a unique privilege, the Church possesses, by virtue of the image of Christ present in her, a subsistence and personality of grace which in its supernatural unity transcends the natural personality of her members, – that which seemed an enigma becomes decipherable to the mind. That the Church has sin in her members and that she is wholly mingled in sin, – this does not make her to be herself sinful, because personality transcends that of her members, and because they are invested with her personality only to the extent that they live by her life of grace and of charity.[38]

At the outset, it might seem that Maritain's thesis is simply an example of a defensive posture on a speculative question: namely, whether or not the church retains, despite the existence of sinners in its midst, the holiness ascribed to it by the creeds. But although Maritain's argument does indeed include this speculative question, it also serves as a response to practical objections. For the real issue at hand is not whether the church is holy or not, but whether the church can, despite the presence of sin, still be a vehicle of God's grace. In other words, do the sins of Catholics inhibit the church from being an instrument of salvation in the world? This is the objection, and Maritain's Augustinian answer to it is a resounding, No.

If the church's holiness depended on her members, it would, indeed be diminished. But then what holiness has the church to bestow? If the church's mission is to purify and elevate humanity's life here on earth, to transform what is sinful in humanity into what is good and holy, then this mission presupposes her having the means to accomplish this. She does this through her sacraments, walking with the weak and sinful in order to fulfil her mission of salvation given her by Christ her head.[39] But if her holiness were diminished with the sin of its members, this mission could not be carried out. Hence, we must understand the church's

[38] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 42. Maritain believes that the Church wishes to see all her members free from sin, the reason why she suffers and prays for all, for her members, and particularly for those of them who have withdrawn themselves from her soul and dead to the life of grace. See Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 44.

[39] Gribaudo, *A Holy Yet Sinful Church*, 25.

mission as involving a "supernatural subsistence" and "personality" that transcends its members. It is because of this soteriological question – not simply a speculative one – that Maritain argues for the continued holiness of the church in the way that he does.

Jacques Maritain's close look at the Personnel of the Church

Much of what the world knows and says about the church derives from what they see or hear about particular members of the church, especially leaders (i.e., priests and bishops), whom Maritain refers to as the "personnel" of the church.[40] But because the church is a supernatural reality that transcends the sum total of her particular members, Maritain distinguishes between the "personnel" and the so-called "person" of the church.[41] The personhood of anyone is, in itself as a metaphysical entity, invisible but can be made manifest or visible to others through its body and to the intellect of others through the signs (e.g., speech) which communicates it. Similarly, the personhood of the church is, in itself, an invisible reality that is made manifest in the body and activity of the visible church.[42] Considered as a human multitude, the church is all the baptised, whether they live in grace or sin. Such is the visible church, but not the person of the church. The church when considered in its formal or supernatural personality, includes only those "who live by grace and by charity."[43] This visible manifestation of the person of the church in those who are in grace is, admittedly, a limited manifestation *in confuso* on account of the fact that it is impossible to be absolutely certain where to draw the line between those in a state of grace and those who are not, and – importantly – those who might be living with Christ's grace but belong only invisibly to the church (i.e., outside the visible boundaries of it).[44]

[40] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ,* 140–151.
[41] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 15–23; 135–151.
[42] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 139.
[43] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 139.
[44] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 100–109.

But the person of the church is made manifest in less confused and more distinctive ways in, for example, her saints, in her infallible teaching, and in her sacraments. In these activities, one can be sure that the person of the church is being communicated.[45] Maritain argues that the sins of the personnel of the church does not exhaust what the person of church stands for. He argues thus in order to sustain the Catholic belief that the church in her supernatural person is always without sin, and therefore, capable of bestowing grace.

Also involved in Maritain's argument is a key distinction between proper causality and instrumental causality.[46] As proper cause, human beings act with full mastery of their actions and with freedom. Their full personalities enter into their activity. As an instrumental cause, by contrast, they act under the motion which comes properly from God; therefore, the human person who performs the act is only an instrument or a vessel whose own proper personality does *not* enter into the action. In the former case, their actions are liable to error, while for the latter, the act which is accomplished through the instrument is free from error because the sinful personality of the individual does not come into play. When the ordained personnel of the church perform actions according to the divine promise made to the assembly – for example, perform sacraments and teach authoritatively under certain conditions (e.g., a council or *ex cathedra*) – they do so as instruments of God's grace. When personnel act as instrumental causes, the assistance of the Holy Spirit as a divine motion pass through to produce its effects.[47] In the case of the sacraments, for example, Aquinas teaches that "it is God alone Who is the cause of the efficacy of the sacramental words, as principal agent using them instrumentally."[48]

In a way that accords with the ecclesiological principles laid out in the Second Vatican Council (and subsequently in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's *Dominus Iesus*), Maritain affirms the ecclesial role of everyone's salvation, even of the non-baptized. For Maritain, all non-Christians who have Christ's grace belong to the visible church, albeit invisibly.

[45] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 140.

[46] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ,* 142.

[47] Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 143.

[48] Aquinas, *Summa Theologea*, III, 64, 1. Cited by Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 143.
"The man in question is a free agent, and it is upon his liberty itself, as conjoined instrument of the person of the Church, that the all-powerful motion of Christ, Head of the person of the Church, exercises itself, without even

In those activities, however, in which a pastor is acting as a proper cause (e.g., preaching a homily, leading a retreat, etc.), even with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, he can sway into error and commit sin as a result of human limitations. When church personnel act as proper causes, they act like every human creature capable of choosing to seek self-glorification to the neglect of God's will, though it is expected of them to cooperate with the grace of God by virtue of both their baptism and office.

This distinction between proper and instrumental cause is key, for example, in the church's ancient teaching on *ex opere operato* (from the work performed). Sacraments derive their efficacy not from the minister or recipient but from the sacraments themselves. The Church believes that these sacraments are gifts from God and their efficacy derives from their source, Christ himself, who is the author of each sacrament. The causality of the human who administers the sacrament is merely instrumental. God's bestowal of blessing from the sacrament of the church supersedes the instrument through which they are administered. Christian apologetics can argue that the church, believed to be the city of God and God's gift to the world, is an avenue of grace even though she may have been wounded by the failings her personnel.

Amidst the criticisms that some church personnel have acted wrongly, Christian apologetics must concede this. They have sinned and continue to. But one task of apologetics is to make the distinctions necessary for upholding belief in the efficaciousness of the church to complete her mission. To that end, with the distinction between the person and the personnel of the church, and between the personnel acting as proper causes versus only as instruments, one can show that the sins of the personnel do not deprive the church of its efficaciousness. God's grace and truth can still be communicated through her personnel when they act as

being conscious of it (for it is freely, as in his ordinary conduct, that he decides and acts); he is then acted upon in order to act; it is the person herself of the Church who speaks or acts through his instrumentality when he speaks and acts." See Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, 144.

instruments, as ministers of God's grace in the Christian community. The person of the church is the dispenser of such graces, for the supernatural personality of the church transcends that of her human members, particularly when they act as a free agent (i.e., as proper causes).

POPE FRANCIS'S ADVOCACY FOR "CREATIVE APOLOGETICS"

This second section of this chapter will focus on Pope Francis's call for a "creative apologetics" which he mentions in his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Soon after he became Pope in 2013, Pope Francis, at a meeting with the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council on 14th October 2013, had shown his concern for preaching the gospel in the 21st century. In referring to this task, he used a term which had assumed a particular meaning under recent pontificates: *the New Evangelisation*.[49] The aim of the New Evangelisation is to consider how the Gospel can be transmitted to the contemporary age, especially in those cultures which, historically, were already evangelised but have largely secularised since.[50] At the 2013 Plenary Assembly, Pope Francis emphasised three important aspects to preaching the Christian message in the contemporary world: (i) the primacy of

[49] This idea was already alluded to by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html [accessed 4th October 2021]. Pope Paul VI, refer to as a visionary of the new evangelisation, was the first pope to invite people to new evangelisation, and his document remains vital for the work of evangelisation in the church today. Pope Francis referes to this document as the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written. See Christopher Klofft, "*Paul VI-Saint for the New Evangelization*," https://www.catechist.com/paul-vi-saint-new-evangelization/ [accessed 10th March 2023]. On the spirit of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, with regard to 'New Evangelisation,' see Thomas Jodziewicz, *Reflections on Evangelii Numtiandi*, https://www.theway.org.uk/back/532Jodziewicz.pdf [accessed 13th March 2023]

[50] Fifteen years after Paul VI's *Evangelli Nuntiandi*, John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* called on the Church to renew her missionary commitment. He stated that it is time for the church to commit all her energies to a new evangelisation and to the mission *ad gentes*; it is the task of the church to proclaim Christ to all peoples. See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 3, www.vatican.va. Peter McGregor observed that John Paul II identified new evangelisation with re-evangelisation of nations which, to a large extent, have lost their faith; it is a response to the spread of religious indifference, secularisation and atheism. See Peter McGregor, "New World, New Pentecost, New Church: Pope John Paul's II's understanding of 'New Evangelisation'," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 17 (Dec 2010):79. Carole Brown and Kevin O'Reilly, observed that the purpose of John Paul II emphasis on new evangelisation is to bring about a missionary spirit in the Church that is capable of bringing people to share in the communion which exist between the Father and the Son; and that involves bringing people together to hear the Gospel. And if new evangelisation is to bear fruit, it must be effected by believers who have entrusted themselves to Christ, living according to his teaching and example. See Carole Brown and Kevin O'Reilly, "John Paul II and the New Evangelization," *Heythrop Journal* 58 (2017): 926.

witness; (ii) the urgency of going out to meet others; and (iii) forming a pastoral program that will focus on what is essential to the faith.[51]

In *Evangelii Gaudium,* Pope Francis goes deeper into the New Evangelisation. The Pope offers strategic principles and sometime quite detailed ways by which the church can preach the Gospel, responding to the challenges from the different worldviews (e.g., secular, empirical-scientific, materialist, etc.) today. Pope Francis's insistence on a renewed attitude towards the proclamation of the Gospel contains what will be required for engaging with the experiences of men and women in the 21st century.[52]

Pope Francis's "creative apologetics" in *Evangelii Gaudium* is based on a conviction that the good news itself has power, but needs to be communicated in a new way. "In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come."[53] This creativity in apologetics is rooted, ultimately, in the creativity of God. It involves a re-examination of the Gospel as good *news*, as something new, novel, and fresh: "Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths to creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world."[54]

In what follows below, we will treat select themes from this document: namely, the joy of the Gospel, preaching the Gospel amidst contemporary challenges, the message of the Gospel in relation to the "New idolatry of money," fostering an encounter between faith and reason, and doing Christian apologetics with love. All this will be considered with a view towards unpacking the meaning of a "creative apologetics" using Augustine's thought.

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[51] Pope Francis, address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. See Gill K. Goulding, *A Church of Passion and Hope* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016), 281.
[52] As an Apostolic Exhortation, it was intended for every member of the church, again, to reemphasise that the task of commending the message of Christ belongs to the entire body of Christ.
[53] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1.
[54] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 10.

1. The Gospel brings Joy

The title of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation indicates the main intention behind the document: namely, to highlight that the Gospel brings joy. Pope Francis invites all peoples of the world today to embrace the joy that the Gospel brings amidst the cruel experiences of the world.[55] *Evangelii Gaudium* acknowledges that today's world is influenced by consumerism and an almost unquenchable desire for whatever gives pleasure; with these comes a blunted conscience. The consequence of these facets to contemporary culture is that the interior life of people has become caught up in self-interest, making no room for others. "God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades."[56] Pope Francis believes that Christians are not immune to the prevailing consumerism and its consequences in culture, since Christians, subject to, and a part of, that same culture, are also easily entrapped by what is in vogue in the modern world. Unfortunately, far from making them happy, it has often brought about disappointment, resentment, and even anger. There is, however, an alternative to this consumerism: it is the Gospel, which Pope Francis exhorts all to learn more about and discover anew so that it might come alive in the hearts of the faithful.

The exclusive pursuit of material goods means that human beings have been building their city independent of God, seeking after their own happiness, and finding none (although many believe, or are deceived into thinking that, they have found their happiness in created things). This tendency lies at the heart of Augustine's city of man: it directs its love to that which is not of God (or to everything *other than* God, or to God but only in a way subordinate to other goods). In a manner not unlike Augustine, Pope Francis presents the Gospel as the

[55] "The unified and complete sense of human life that the Gospel proposes is the best remedy for the ills of our cities, even though we have to realise that a uniform and rigid programme of evangelisation is not suited to this complex reality." *Evangelii Gaudium*, 75.
[56] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1.2.

dependable answer to life's disappointments. In humanity's search for a fulfilled life, the Pope's letter invites everyone to an experience of true joy.

Reading *Evangelli Gaudium*, one major impression is the joy that comes from getting accustomed to the Word of God in the Scriptures. For instance, there are a great many texts from the Gospels that emphasize the call to rejoice.[57] The Gospel, is, as it were, an invitation to rejoice. The source of this true joy is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and participating in God's unfailing love. The joy that stems from this saving encounter with Christ is what can transform the world at large. It is only with the joy of the Gospel that one can effectively evangelize further:

> We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelisation. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?[58]

We see that Pope Francis's starting point for his "creative apologetics" for contemporary society is a renewed joy in the Gospel of salvation, first on the part of the evangelizers (including those who are called to a ministry as an apologist) and – subsequently and potentially – on the part of those with whom they in dialogue. This supposes that the apologist has a role to play in evangelisation, and that apologetics itself is part of evangelisation. Francis, in other words, is optimistic that true joy in Christ is able to engender joy in the hearts of all. Christian joy, then, has a certain power of attraction for Francis. Like a magnet, its power becomes manifest in movements toward it.

This joy, for Francis, is an authentic joy; it is different from the occasional kick that a technological society tends to offer modern men and women. Pope Francis does not reject

[57] 'Rejoice!' is the angel's greeting to Mary (Lk 1:28). Mary's visit to Elizabeth makes John leap for joy in his mother's womb (Lk 1:14). In her song od praise, Mary proclaims: 'My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour' (Lk 1:47). When Jesus begins his ministry, John cries out: 'For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled' (Jn 3:29) … See *Evangelli Gaudium*, 5.
[58] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 8

modern technology, scientific progress, and their benefits, but exhorts us to look beyond the goods that they offer in order to pursue a truer, lasting joy that comes from one's proper alignment with the message of salvation. According to Pope Francis, "when the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelisation, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment."[59] In this, evangelization, when done with the right motives, is a kind of service; the Christian engages in it in order to help others achieve their true end.

Ultimately, what sustains the joy of the Gospel in both the preacher and all the faithful is the knowledge that God takes the initiative to love us and to invite us to share in this love in our entire life amidst the various experiences we have. For the apologist *qua* evangelist to be effective, his or her faith must be rooted, fresh, and vital, nourished by a personal encounter with Christ. Any defense of the faith is strengthened by – and perhaps entirely dependent on – this personal encounter. While the substance of the faith can never grow old, as it were, our adhesion to it can weaken. The first, task, then, of the apologist who uses Francis's 'creative apologetics', is to renew his or her own joy in the Gospel.

2. Preaching the Gospel in the Contemporary World

In the previous chapter, this study acknowledged that the whole church is involved in Christian apologetics. Pope Francis understands that the entire church acts in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The missionary mandate is an ecclesial one: the church is the subject transmitting this message. This command to preach the Gospel received by the church implies a responsibility on the part of the church to be both faithful (to what has been given) and proactive (in proclaiming it and, if necessary, defending it). In preaching the Gospel, the church expects to encounter people with different worldviews

[59] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 9.

and to be challenged on the coherence and credibility of the Christian faith. In this regard, 1 Peter 3:13 is an inspiration to be ready to give answers to those who ask. Such a readiness is important when the church finds herself in a context characterized by a radical plurality of worldviews. It is all the more important when such plurality is exacerbated by contemporary individualism, modern technology, and science.

Pope Francis affirms that Scripture shows that those who believe in him are "to go forth," with examples of Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, and even Jesus' command to his disciples.[60] The act of 'going forth' belongs to the whole Christian community. The task of Christian apologetics belongs in some sense to the entire Christian community because the preaching of the Gospel is a task entrusted to the entire Christian community, and apologetics is one dimension of a larger evangelizing mission. Each member of the community responds to this call in his or her immediate environment. "In fidelity to the example of the Master, it is vitally important for the Church today to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear."[61] Overall, Pope Francis expects that the church in the modern age should be a community of missionary disciples, ready to let its missionary spirit permeate every aspect in people's lives. *Evangelii Gaudium* re-echoes what was already attested to by the Second Vatican Council in *Ad Gentes*, which stated that all humans are the subject of missionary activity:

> In the present state of things which gives rise to a new situation for mankind, the Church, the salt of the earth and light of the world, is even more urgently called upon to save and renew every creature, so that all things might be restored in Christ, and so that in him men might form one family and one people of God.[62]

[60] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 20.
[61] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 23.
[62] Vatican II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, ed. Austin Flannery (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992), no. 1.

For Francis, the mission of the church cannot be carried out without concrete pastoral outreach. He emphasized the importance of having the 'smell of the sheep'[63] as an evangelising community, in other words, being close to the people, and through that closeness, acquiring an awareness of people's everyday experiences; this means, naturally, knowing one's context and the worldviews and questions of one's culture. And Pope Francis believes that this is what the world needs if the Gospel message is to remain relevant in contemporary age. Pope Francis believes that the evangelising community should go out to others, seek out those who are fallen and be ready to support those who need help. "An evangelising community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others."[64] The evangelising community becomes supportive, standing by people in every aspect, no matter how difficult it may tend to be.[65] For Pope Francis, the relevance of Christ is most convincingly manifested by allowing people to taste and see Christ himself, whether through the sacraments, charitable action, spiritual and corporal works of mercy, pastoral accompaniment, or any other form of pastoral outreach.

From the foregoing, Francis's vision for Christian apologetics is one that renews its joy in the Gospel and immerses itself in the daily lives and concerns of contemporary people. This involvement with people's concrete experiences is different from producing documents and write-ups which, in most cases, make little or no impact on people. Here is Pope Francis' plea:

> I am aware that nowadays documents do not arouse the same interest as in the past and that they are quickly forgotten. Nevertheless, I want to emphasise that what I am trying to express here has a pragmatic significance and important consequences. I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are.[66]

[63] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24.
[64] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24.
[65] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24.
[66] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 25.

The Catholic pontiff acknowledges the presence of ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelisation, yet good structures are helpful when there is a life driving, sustaining, and assessing these structures. In a bid to developing structures, the church needs to be faithful to her calling (Christ's holy and spotless bride), else, any new structure will prove ineffective with time.[67] The goal of the creative apologetics is not to change unchanging truth (i.e., the deposit of faith), but to express it in a way that highlights its abiding and radical newness.[68]

3. The Gospel and the Challenges of Today's World

The paramount intention for the missionary spirit of the church is to communicate the universal plan of God for salvation for all peoples since she is the principal communicator of this plan. While she carries out this task, she is called now and again to defend the faith amidst opposing views and a lack of zeal for the Christian faith which is present in those she ministers to. As part of the larger society, though with the vision of eternal home in heaven, the church through her teaching should be present in every aspect of social life in the society.[69]

As affirmed earlier, modern men and women have several challenges to grapple with, and if the Gospel message is to be communicated effectively, Christian apologists need to study the signs of times in light of the Gospel in order to ascertain the values and pursuits of modern persons and discern in these what might be in harmony with, or contrary to, God's plan.[70] Such

[67] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 26.
[68] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 41.
John XXIII, in his opening speech of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudet mater Eccelesia*, stated that the purpose of the council is to defend and present the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine. This speech by John XXIII distinguishes between the faith and our expression of it; faith cannot change. John XXIII, *Gaudet mater Ecclesia*, https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf. [accessed 13th March 2023]
[69] The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in teachings on the social life of the church believes that through her social teaching the Church seeks to proclaim the Gospel and make it present in the complex network of social relations. She not only focuses on human life as the recipient of the Gospel but of enriching and permeating society itself with the Gospel. See *Compendium of the Social Teachings of the Church* (Città del Vaticano: Liberia Editrice Vaticano, 2004), no.62.
[70] Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 4.

discernment, however, imperfect it might be, still supposes a distinction between what is of the heavenly city and what is of the earthly city.

Pope Francis specifically advised that, amidst the challenges from urban cultures, there is need to be aware that, the new Jerusalem, the holy city is the goal towards which all of humanity is moving.[71] According to Pope Francis, "It is curious that God's revelation tells us that the fullness of humanity and of history is realised in a city. We need to look at our cities with a contemplative gaze, a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares."[72] As people strive to find meaning and encouragement in their lives, God's presences accompanies the sincere efforts of individuals and groups. The awareness of God dwelling in these places and in their experiences must be made known to those who seek him with a sincere heart. Pope Francis acknowledged that, in cities, different from the countryside, religion is expressed by varied lifestyles, daily rhythms which are associated with places and people; there is a *deep religious sense* to the understanding of life; new cultures spring up in these places and Christianity exists alongside other interpreters of what is meaningful.[73] "What is called for is an evangelisation capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values."[74] Pope Francis believes that the Gospel can restore the dignity of human life in every context and that the Gospel proposes the complete grasp of human life which in turn is the best remedy for the ills in our human cities.

4. The Gospel Message and the "New Idolatry of Money"

Undoubtedly, the human person wants to acquire goods and services. The culture of buying and selling has become prevalent in today's world, and it is arguably the most discussed topic

[71] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 71.
[72] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 71.
[73] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 71-72.
[74] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 74

in every part of the world. There are always goods and services in the market space to be purchased and purchasing them, or at least pursuing them, is often necessary to remain 'in' the culture. That is, consumption and the competition that makes more of it possible are so deeply ingrained in the culture that resisting it becomes counter-cultural. Pope Francis observes that this is leading to the 'new idolatry of money' in which the primacy of the human person gives way to our quest for prosperity. According to Pope Francis,

> We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption.[75]

The quest for money has also caused a growing disparity between the ever-more prosperous and those with little. In certain situations, human beings are valued based on their monetary value, their labour value, or how they can influence the market of buying and selling of goods and services. This is an area where the Gospel message of the dignity of every human person must be emphasised. The church needs to set an example in which she is seen as truly concerned with the mindset that understands the human person as possessing an intrinsic value which must be always respected.

Within this hyper-consumerist culture, the Christian Gospel seems to be under attack from two different fronts. The first attack amounts to the accusation that the Gospel message has little or nothing to offer our contemporaries with respect to economic advancement. The second attack states that Christian ethics, which values self-restraint, runs counter to the indulgent habits on which a consumer culture depends. Perhaps there is a third attack, which could be stated: Christianity is oppressive because, in its proclamation of eternal life, it is passive in the face of (or indifferent to) economic injustices here and now. Pope Francis

[75] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55.

considers these attacks 'a rejection of God' because it considers Christian ethics to be a threat rather than a service to humanity in the sense that it does not allow for the manipulation and debasement of the human person. "God can only be seen as uncontrollable, unmanageable, even dangerous, since he calls human beings to their full realisation and to freedom from all forms of enslavement."[76] The Roman Pontiff is not condemning wealth creation and acquisition per se, for Francis, in keeping with traditional Catholic social teaching, the economy is at the service of humans, not vice versa. Humans, therefore, cannot be reduced to means to greater economic goals. Pope Francis makes a profound plea for all in the 21st century: "I exhort you to generous solidarity and a return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favours human beings."[77]

Christian Apologetics' response to "New Idolatry of Money"

Pope Francis acknowledge that the contemporary attitude of acquiring money has effect on how we value the human person as a whole. He is concerned that through this form of 'idolatry' the primacy of the human person is denied.[78] Not only the denial of the primacy of the human person but an attitude of being self-sufficient, especially with the belief that one's money can provide all that is needed. The result is that there is no little or no faith in God. These are the challenges that contemporary Christian apologetics can address.

Contemporary Christian apologetics, following the teaching of Pope Francis can respond to these challenges by emphasising that the human person is not reduced merely to consumption, and in our effort to make money (which is necessary for the day to day living), the value of the human person must not be compromised. In other words, the dignity of the human person should come first. Heeding to Pope Francis's advice means, that in dealing with

[76] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 57.
[77] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 58.
[78] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55.

money, we do not allow its dominion over ourselves and our societies. Against the attitude that money solves human problems, contemporary Christian apologetics should encourage people to understand that wealth is never a guarantee that all our human problems will be solved. There have been situations where wealthy countries or people still find it difficult to eliminate natural problems, disasters, and certain diseases. That money does not solve all human problems can become opportunity to re-affirm our dependence on God. Wealth should not lead us to a rejection of God. Again, it is important to emphasise that Christianity does not prevent people from working to earn money, but that it encourages that we acquire wealth in the sincerest way, the kind that does not reduce the human person only to his or her material needs.

The church is committed to building an earthly city that makes human life comprehensively better, with a spiritual mindset and a conscience that is not totally dismissive of the place of God in human life. For this to be effective, Christian apologists need have the necessary training, competence and understanding to commend the relevance of Christian faith in the contemporary age; they must be willing to engage with views of their audience even though they may be contrary to the tenets of Christian faith. There should be an awareness that apologetics is not to convert people, but rather to show the relevance of the faith in a contemporary world that sometimes regards Christian faith as non-progressive and inhibiting human freedom.

Augustine's argument against pursing happiness with created things and external goods will be useful. Augustine acknowledged that human beings are inclined to attaching importance to earthly goods as if they comprise the greatest good, whereas the greatest good is only attained in heaven. Earthly goods remain earthly and temporal and are only used for sustenance. When earthly good, for instance, money, is used as if it is the greatest good, human beings can become entangled to what is temporal, believing it to be what is most important. It is important, to note,

that Augustine does not imply a rejection of earthly goods. He emphasised that earthly goods are gifts from God, but they can be loved in a wrong way. Love of earthly goods should not come first before the love of God.[79] Hence, Christian apologetics argues that people do not spend their earthly life in ordinate pursuit of wealth; love of God is paramount. The Gospel is an opportunity for men and women to rediscover in themselves God who is love and should be the object of our love.

5. Fostering an Encounter Between Faith, Reason and Science

For the contemporary man or woman there is a crossroad between faith and reason. Norris identifies the influence of the sciences in our world today. According to Norris, our world is the fruit of enormous development in science and technology that have taken place in human history, and this development outshines every other aspect in human life. "The result is that the Church and society do not easily recognise each other. The Gospel and the men and women of today speak in different languages. The result is a serious breakdown in our dialogue."[80] The church has lost its grip on the fast changing and developing world, for more people have become indifferent with matters concerning the practice of the Christian faith. What is noticeable in this trend is the surmounting of secularisation over religious values and institutions. And this is fast happening in the world today through modernisation, rationalisation, and the use of modern technologies.

The interaction between faith and science – or reason more generally – cannot be underestimated in the preaching of the Gospel message and in conducting Christian apologetics today. Pope Francis understands that good use of the products of science and technology will enhance the preaching of the message of Christ in the modern world. Christian theologians in the past have held this connection as important, though there were some who were suspicious

[79] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 15, Ch 22.
[80] Norris, *A Fractured Relationship: Faith and the Crisis of Culture*, 25.

of philosophy and other natural sciences. For instance, Tertullian argued that Christianity is not merely incompatible with, but offensive to natural reason. It is both against and above reason. Hence, Tertullian is famous for his rhetorical question, "what has Jerusalem got to do with Athens?"[81]

By way of contrast, Augustine, in his *On Christian Doctrine*, taught that it behoves Christian teachers to use pagan thinking in service of interpreting and communicating Scripture. Augustine encourages that if philosophers have said anything that is true and in harmony with Christian faith, we are not to shrink from it, but claim it for our use, because these philosophers unlawfully possess it. He further conceives that all branches of heathen learning, not only having false and superstitious fancies, which Christians ought to avoid and abhor; but they also contain liberal instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, and some precepts of morality. Likewise, some truth are contained in these heathen learning which are useful to the worship of the one God.[82] According to his famous image, Christians ought to use pagan philosophy and scholarship for the sake of the Gospel in the same way that the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians for the glory of God's worship.[83] Augustine is concerned that if a pagan science studies what is eternal and unchanging, the outcomes of these studies can be used in clarifying the Christian faith. According to Daniel Williams,

> What makes Augustine so important for us and at the same time constitutes the perennial fascination of his thought is that he held together in his mind disparate elements of thoughts and experience which we so often tend to pull apart. Faith and reason, for example, are today often found split into warring factions. Augustine held them together.[84]

However, Augustine warns against any pagan learning, such as craft and superstition that is not targeted at unchangeable knowledge. To guard against indiscriminate use of reason, Augustine

[81] Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* (Ch. 7), in Ante-Nicene Fathers 3, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donalson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885).
[82] Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, Bk 2, Ch 40.
[83] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Bk 2, Ch 63.
[84] Williams, *The Significance of St. Augustine Today*, 5.

argued that the Church's authority, and not individuals, determines the extent to which reason is used in matters about faith. Both Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria share the same positive view about the necessary relationship between faith and reason.[85]

Today, the church follows the trail of theologians who uphold that reason is capable of contributing to the understanding of Christian faith and, likewise, that the light that comes from faith enhances the use of reason. More recently, John Paul II elaborated on the relationship between faith and reason in his encyclical letter, *Fides et Ratio*.[86] Part of Pope Francis' creative apologetics is to encourage Christian evangelisers to take seriously the dialogue between faith, reason, and the sciences. Testifying to the importance of this interaction between faith and reason for evangelisation is the fact that Francis quotes and references *Fides et Ratio* numerous times.[87] Given the Catholic affirmation of the compatibility of the two, one is not to choose one or the other. But in western culture, of these two concepts, reason seems to have the upper hand because of, among other reasons, the tangible achievements of science in the form of inventions and technological advancements from which human beings have benefitted. In this context, the Christian faith is seen by many to have been displaced by science.[88]

According to Pope Francis, to proclaim the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific, and academic circles. With this, there is an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches

[85] Richardson, *Christian Apologetics*, 229.
[86] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, (14 September 1998).
[87] "Whereas positivism and scienticism 'refuse to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences' (*Fides et Ratio*, 94), the Church proposes another path, which calls for a synthensis between the responsible use of methods proper to the empirical sciences and other areas of knowledge."
"Faith is not fearful of reason; on the contrary, it seeks and trusts reason, since 'the light of reason and the light of faith both come from God' (*Fides et Ratio*, 43)." See *Evangelii Gaudium*, 242.
[88] The Roman Pontiff acknowledged that modern man or woman has experienced massive upgrade in different fields which has also improved the quality of life. He observed that these changes have been the result of vast qualitative, quantitative, and fast growth in the areas of sciences and technology and their use in different areas in the daily life of human beings. See *Evangelii Gaudium*, 52.

and arguments which would engender openness to the Gospel for everyone.[89] The outcome of this interaction is the making of a more comprehensive way of commending the Christian message. Pope Francis acknowledged that it is not enough to focus only on the spread of the Gospel, but that there should be a theology which is concerned with dialoguing with other sciences and human experiences. "I call on theologians to carry out this service as part of the Church's saving mission. In doing so, however, they must always remember that the church and theology exist to evangelise, and not be content with a desk-bound theology."[90] The Pope here is encouraging theology to open itself up to the insights emerging from other disciplines. Such a theology would be at the service of an evangelisation that is not closed in itself but rather takes into consideration – or is in touch with – the concerns, values, and insights of the contemporary context.

Pope Francis acknowledges that we cannot evangelise without finding ways to dialogue between faith, reason, and the sciences. Apart from the continuous dialogue with the society in which the church lives and operates, she must seek to dialogue with the culture and sciences of the society. According to the Roman Pontiff,

> In this case, 'the Church speaks from the light which faith offers', contributing her two thousand year experience and keeping ever in mind the life and sufferings of human beings. This light transcends human reason, yet it can also prove meaningful and enriching to those who are not believers and it stimulates reason to broaden its perspectives.[91]

This light refers to knowledge that is acquired through divine revelation. That reason or the sciences fail to verify the truth of revelation does not make it invalid.

Christian apologetics should not be worried about the questions arising from the use of reason and the sciences, because at the end, both faith and reason shed light on each other.

[89] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 132. "When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelisation; water is changed into wine." See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 132.
[90] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 33.
[91] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 238.

There is a place for reason and the sciences in the Christian religion. Christian apologetics must take seriously the effects that these sciences and developments have on contemporary Christians and discover the appropriate means of defending and commending the reasonableness of Christian faith.

Fides et Ratio affirms that the church set great value upon reason's drive to attain goals which render people's lives more worthy;[92] and for the sake of what stands good for Christianity in the contemporary age, it is proper to reaffirm that Christian faith is not dismissive of the sciences; and this needs to be concretely demonstrated in the manner that both Christian apologists and evangelisers carry out their tasks of teaching the faith. The extent to which reason enhances human life is appreciated and on the other hand, faith makes it possible that the outcomes of reason are directed towards the praise and love of the true God. Faith does not diminish one's use of the faculty of reasoning. Avery Dulles refers to this openness to reason in Christian faith as the philosophical dimension of apologetics, which he believes has great importance in the contemporary age.[93]

Contemporary Christian apologetics should be aware that human beings, by nature, use intelligence to understand and examine life around their environment, even without recourse to faith, and that means that some of the questions arising from the experiences of our contemporaries cannot be adequately answered by the Gospel message without recourse to reason and the sciences. However, there should be an appeal to nonconformity to whatever the sciences propose to the detriment of Christian faith.[94] The limit of science is that it

[92] John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 5.

[93] There are recent Catholic philosophers whose works have apologetical aspect. Ralph McInerny and Aidan Nichols have promoted Traditional Thomism; a school of analytical Thomism is represented by John Haldane; Hugo A. Meynell has written useful books defending the truth of traditional Christianity. See Dulles, *A History of Apologetic*s, 363.

[94] In the wake of the recent recourse to contemporary Philosophy and the human and natural sciences, Ratzinger had proposed that Christian faith must be presented as countercultural, as an appeal to nonconformity. He affirmed that the church today lives in a state of intellectual and cultural crisis but amid these crises, the Gospel will save us, not philosophy, not science, and not scientific theology. See Joseph Komonchak, "The Church in

fundamentally seeks to answer questions that are different from those which theology asks and faith answers. The apparent 'conflicts' between faith and science only really arise when either theology or science begin to answer questions that are not in their purview. E.g., when sciences reduce the question of existence and its emergence to things like cosmology. Or when science purports to tell us what temporal good will make us secure and happy. Or when faith tries to say how the world began (e.g., 7-day creationists). These are examples of each side over-stepping their legitimate boundaries.

> At times some scientists have exceeded the limits of their scientific competence by making certain statements or claims. But here the problem is not with reason itself, but with the promotion of a particular ideology which blocks the path to authentic, serene and productive dialogue.[95]

> Whereas positivism and scientism 'refuse to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences', the Church proposes another path, which calls for a synthesis between the responsible use of methods proper to the empirical sciences and other areas of knowledge such as philosophy, theology, as well as faith itself, which elevates us to the mystery transcending nature and human intelligence.[96]

Faith exists alongside scientific beliefs; and how Christian faith can be reasonable in the modern era depends on how much Christian apologists can have a meaningful dialogue between faith and reason (especially science). Christian belief and contemporary experiences of human progress (i.e., especially in the advancement of the sciences and technology) must be integrated in such a way that the latter can be viewed as enhancing the overall life of the human person who is created by and for God – a human person who is operating in a human society, a society in which one makes use of science and technology in the most conscientious and humane ways. Such an approach to, and integration of, Christianity and science is but one

Crisis." *Commonweal* 132, no.11 (2005), and Pope Benedict XVI's homily on the day of his installation as pope. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050507_san-giovanni-laterano.html

[95] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 243.

[96] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 242.

example of what Pope Francis seems to be describing when he makes a plea for a "creative apologetics."[97]

Where proper dialogue between faith and science (or culture or reason more generally) is lacking, conflicts – or more accurately, apparent conflicts – emerge and are exacerbated. The world today is experiencing conflicts which are not unconnected to little or no dialogue amongst conflicting ideas, cultures, or systems. The church proposes dialogue as way to arriving at a meeting point where the needs of the modern person – spiritual, cultural, physical, etc – could be addressed. When there is dialogue, peace can be promoted. Pope Francis is optimistic that, "all of society can be enriched thanks to this dialogue, which opens up new horizons for thought and expands the possibilities of reason. This too is a path of harmony and peace."[98]

The need for such a dialogue, at least from the Christian point of view, is rooted in a holistic understanding of the human person. If we understand the human person to possess both spiritual and material dimensions, then accepting one discipline or area of knowledge at the expense of another leaves us with only a partial, and therefore, misleading, representation of the human. Naturally, it is precisely this spiritual dimension of the human person that will be disputed by some exponents of a so-called "scientific worldview." This is important for the apologist to keep in mind as he or she seeks to collaborate or dialogue with science. Without putting forward some positive argument here that might prove the spiritual dimension of the human person (or, for example, the immortality of the soul), the least an apologist can do is to defend the reasonableness of accepting this spiritual dimension and of critiquing a materialistic worldview as reductive. Whatever the concrete strategy adopted, any authentic

[97] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 132.
[98] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 242.

recommendation of Christian faith in the 21st century will require a collaborative approach between faith and the sciences.

The dialogue between faith, reason and science is already yielding positive results as more people from both sides are willing to listen to what each can offer. For instance, Avery Dulles remarked that a vibrant dialogue is currently being conducted between scientists and theologians of many ecclesial traditions; and theologians are seeking to be aware of new scientific theories and to demonstrate that the new findings in science are not incompatible with faith.[99] Apart from a growing body of literature, there is an increase in organised scholarly activity surrounding the question of faith and science; for instance, the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, the Ian Ramsey Centre, the Society of Catholic Scientists.[100] Keeping to traditions of the interplay between faith and reason, the church still holds and teaches that there are signs to make the understanding of faith justifiable, and it behoves the Christian apologist to discover what these signs are and organise them in such a way as to be persuasive enough for a given audience.[101]

We have shown that despite the challenges that accompanies the interaction between faith and reason, both are important and are of help to each other. The church cherishes the contribution of reason to human life and its ability to contribute to the understanding of Christian faith, and faith in turn helping reason in its quest for knowledge. And we have established that there is need for dialogue between faith and reason, especially in contemporary Christian apologetics.

[99] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 364.
[100] www.faraday.cam.ac.uk, www.ianramseycentre.ox.ac.uk, https://catholicscientists.org
[101] Dulles, *A History of Apologetics,* 367.

6. Doing Contemporary Christian Apologetics with Love

For many, it is not at all obvious that love and apologetics go together. Christian apologetics, undoubtedly, carries with it the notion of marshalling out arguments in defence of Christianity. Unfortunately, apologetics also often carries with it the connotation of doing this in an aggressive way, as though this aggression were intrinsic to apologetics itself. Christian apologetics has been accused of being a purely intellectual exercise, devoid of human or personal touch, or perhaps, apologetics in the past has been too cold, too personal, not appealing to people's desires. But, instead, simply to arguments. This is a legitimate critique, which, I think, Pope Francis is trying to rectify.[102] Part of Francis's "creative apologetics" is to illumine the world through actions of love. Love, in other words, should form the seed ground for every Christian apologetics in the 21st century.

The church needs to be seen at the service of people, reflecting the infinite tenderness of God. In the last chapter of *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis teaches that love is at the heart of the new evangelization's spirit: the love that one has received through Jesus and is willing to share with the world. Pope Francis encouraged that people who preached the message of the Gospel should themselves be people who have experienced the love of Jesus in their heart, from which they are able to tell others about the love of Jesus. The assumption here is that love is a vital component in the Gospel's credibility. Because one cannot communicate that which one does not possess, it is crucial that those tasked with preaching the Gospel have a keen sense of the love with which God has loved them. Thus empowered, they know God's love, know of its power to transform, and have that which they intend to share. In other words, such

[102] Perhaps that's what creative apologetics is: It's a form of apologetics that tries to *personalize* its defense. It realises that those who object to Christianity have experiences, challenges, hardships just like anyone, and that their objections (whether economic, rational/scientific, or intellectual) usually stem from legitimate aspirations (e.g., truth, economic justice, reasonableness, progress…. all good things in themselves). Perhaps a *creative* apologetics tries to appeal to *personal* needs and desires (for goodness, truth, beauty, economic and environmental justice) rather than simply appealing to philosophical arguments.

evangelizers are people who understand from their own experience the extent to which sincere love can influence others to take seriously the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, while reflecting on the contemporary experience of the Church in relation to the functions of the church, opines that,

> If the Church and the individual Christian are worthy of belief, and impress by the fact that they do not point to themselves but are suffused by and show forth Christ's love, if the Church and the Christian alone can capture the world's attention by proclaiming something other than themselves, then this self-abnegation in the service of Christ is clearly the only possible way of revealing to the world the self-abnegation of Christ.[103]

Human beings want to feel accepted and loved. Contemporary apologetics should devise means through which the world can experience true love of Jesus Christ; carrying out this task takes, virtue, character, courage and sacrifice on the part of the individual apologist and the church in general. According to Pope Francis, "Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life."[104] It is natural that one who has experienced deep friendship with Jesus is has the desire to show love to others. The preacher of the Gospel is convinced that he or she is responding to that love which has already been received through Christ. From the foregoing, Pope Francis believes that Christianity will present itself as relevant in this age if we engage in practical expressions of love to people because it is an age where people believe more in actions than arguments.

Pope Francis exhorts that when Christians give reasons for their hope, they do so with a spirit of love and generosity, not in a spirit of condemnation and criticism for those who ask for these reasons. As commended by Peter (1 Pt 3:15), it is done with gentleness and

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[103] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Church and World* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 29.
Balthasar also wrote on the importance of love in Christian relationship with the world. He understands love as the light of the world. "But if we view creation with the eyes of love, then we will understand it, despite all the evidence that seems to point to the absence of love in the world." See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 143.
[104] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 265.

reverence.[105] The admonition of Pope Francis is particularly important for Christian apologists, who may be more successful when they avoid outright condemnations of particular actions or opinions that may be contrary to church teaching and, instead, seek some opportunity for dialogue or intersection. While differences and disagreements are real and cannot be wished away, the point here is that a priority ought to be given to listening to and seeking to understand divergent views so as to better respond to them. Any kind of aggression, polemics, mudslinging, or *ad hominem* argumentation has no place in Francis's creative apologetics. Furthermore, the apologist is to keep in mind that the aim of apologetics is not to win an argument at all costs, but rather to invite others to perceive the credibility of the Christian faith. Even without the use of words or argument, sincere concern for people and their best interests, carried out in a prudent and loving way, can be a compelling way forward for people who distrust, or have grievances against, the Christian faith.

This chapter investigated the contemporary relevance of Augustine's two-cities doctrine to Christian apologetics; and how adopting Pope Francis's plea for 'creative apologetics' will enhance the arguments for demonstrating the relevance of Christianity in a contemporary secular world. I discussed some challenges facing the church today – Theoretical and Practical Atheism, Proliferation of Christian communities, and Clerical abuse – and how Augustine's reflections on the two cities can help in addressing them. On the challenge of clerical abuse, I explored how Jacques Maritain's understanding of the person of the church will help in distinguishing the holiness of the church from the acts of the personnel of the church. I also argued that Augustine's two-cities doctrine can enhance Pope Francis' creative apologetics in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

[105] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 271. Pope Francis is particularly concerned that as preachers of the Gospel of Christ, we do not become authoritative who look down on people but be men and women who are truly concerned about the people. "This is not an idea of the Pope, or one personal option among others; they are injunctions contained in the word of God which are so clear, direct and convincing that they need no interpretations which might diminish their power to challenge us." See *Evangelii Gaudium*, 271.

CONCLUSION

Inspired by the *ressourcement* movement, this study supposed that contemporary apologetics would benefit from a retrieval of St Augustine and his doctrine of the two cities. In what follows, I briefly summarize the main findings of the chapters, and consider how Augustine's two-cities doctrine can help us respond to the challenges that Pope Francis identifies in *Evangelii Gaudium*, and to which a 'creative apologetics' might respond.

Summary of the Dissertation

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I explored the life and some of the works of Augustine, situating him within the patristic era. We discovered in this chapter that Augustine stands out as a quintessential Christian theologian and apologist in his responses to several heretical groups and other works. His detailed presentation of his apologetics in the *City of God* shows his contributions to Christian apologetics at the turn of the fourth century. Chapter 2 discussed the meaning and modes of Christian apologetics. In this chapter, we saw how Christian apologetics is the defence of Christianity, and it is biblically rooted in multiple verses, such as Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:16; Acts 22:1; and Philippians 1:16. We also discovered that despite certain objections, apologetics is still important because aside being scripturally rooted, Christian faith exists alongside other religions and worldviews. The chapter also explored Christian apologetics in different eras of church history, which saw Augustine's *City of God* as a masterpiece in the patristic era.

In chapter 3, I made a study of Augustine's *City of God*, examined the structure of Augustine's work and made a summary of the two-cities doctrine. Five of Augustine's arguments – (i) on identifying the failure of roman gods; (ii) on Roman polytheism; (iii) on the correct interpretation of history; (iv) on eternal life; and (v) on the purification of the soul in Christ – which formed the bulk of his direct response to the pagans of Rome were mentioned.

Augustine's arguments are still relevant today. His critique of polytheism calls our attention to how we can easily make idols out of things, especially in our bid to achieving success or improving in different areas, to the point that they take the place of the true God. Augustine's critique of the Roman's notion of eternal life and on the failure of the roman gods shows that we ought to be sceptical of the ability of created things to guarantee human happiness or satisfy our deepest human desires. Augustine would wish that in our human choices we give first place to God because only the true God is capable of bestowing eternal life to human beings. Augustine's critique of Roman history encourages us to look critically at our culture's historical narratives. Just as he questioned the narrative of the Romans in his days, contemporary understandings and narratives of historical progress should be subjected to critique. For instance, it is not always the case that human inventions have served good purposes. Finally, Augustine argued that the soul can only be purified in Christ, manifesting the work's Christocentric character. Augustine's emphasis on the place of Jesus Christ in his apologetics should be an inspiration for modern day Christian apologetics.

In Chapter 4, I argued that the theological elaboration of the doctrine of the two-cities contained in Part II of the *City of God* was a continuation of Augustine's apologetics in Part I. I did this by first surveying Augustine's own theological elaboration of the two cities, and then revisiting Augustine's arguments we mentioned in chapter 3 to show their relevance to his doctrine of the two cities and his overall apologetic in the *City of God*. For instance, the two-cities as elaborated in Part II helps us to understand better Augustine's argument on the failure of roman gods in Part I because in Part II he showed how these gods are only created beings, and because of their pride, they belong to the community of rebellious beings, making themselves gods; therefore, becoming enemies of the true God.

Chapter 5 sought to highlight the ecclesiological dimension of Augustine's two-cities doctrine. Amidst the various interpretations of the two-cites in relation to the church, I agreed

with Roman Catholic theologians such as Bruno Seidel, Otto Schilling, Joseph Mausbach, Karl Holl, that Augustine's *civitas Dei* was identical with the church. This interpretation hinges on Augustine's understanding of the church as a mystery and this mystery is visible in the community of God's people. Hence, we can speak of two aspects of the church, the invisible and the visible aspects of the church. Also, the church equates with the city of God, more fully in its invisible form, and as an earthly reality, she sojourns in hope towards her heavenly city. The church as a city is a people, a body, and a pilgrim. (i) As 'Body,' all the members together form one body with Christ, the Head and together make the city of God; (ii) 'People' represents the communal dimension of the church whose love is directed to pleasing God; and (iii) as 'Pilgrim,' she journeys on earth, always interacting with the earthly city, faced with challenges and questions. It is especially this latter ecclesiological theme that highlights the need for apologetics and the applicability of Augustine's doctrine of the two cities. For it is a pilgrim church in time that confronts, and must respond to, the challenges it meets.

In the final Chapter, I examined a range of issues today in light of Augustine's two-cities doctrine. Concerning the challenge of atheism, Augustine's two-cities doctrine contains arguments for God as the source of every being. We discovered that one of the key arguments for atheism is the problem of evil. Augustine reflection in the two-cities doctrine showed that God's goodness is present in the works of creation; therefore, no nature is evil, but rather evil is the absence of good and moral evil is the result of the human will acting contrary to its good nature. Therefore, Augustine argued that the presence of evil does not negate the existence of God.

Augustine's two-cities doctrine can help address the challenge of clerical abuse by helping the apologist distinguish between, and frankly acknowledge the existence of, both authentic and false Christians who are both mixed together in one body that is the church. But to the extent that a visible Christian falls away from the life and grace of the church, such a

person does not represent the true identity of the church. And the church itself can still be a cause of grace, regardless of the sins and vices of her ministers.

For the challenges ensuing from the proliferation of Christian communities, a two-cities-inspired apologetics can serve the apologetical purpose for Christian unity because it will encourage members of these different communities to see themselves as belonging to God's city on earth (though their doctrines might be different, they share in the same belief in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures and baptism), united in the direction of their love towards God, and having the awareness of being on same journey towards the heavenly Jerusalem. The strength of contemporary Christian apologetics, among other things, depends on a workable unity among the different Christian communities. The unity of Christian communities will be more of a spiritual unity (because of what we share in common as Christians) than a juridical one. The call for Christian unity, from the Catholic perspective, can derive its impetus from Vatican II's teaching that, the church, constituted and organised as the body of Christ in the world, subsists in the Catholic Church, many elements (*elementa ecclesiae*) of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible body.[1]

For the consumerist culture, Christian apologetics can present a Christianity according to which human beings are called to live in the earthly city, care for the city, and participate in the affairs of this world, all because the world is created by God. But they are not to get absorbed with the earthly city to the point that God is neglected. An Augustinian apologetics need not assume a posture of perpetual conflict with the world, but appeals to the heart's ultimate dissatisfaction with material and temporal goods: the heavenly city is the true home, and for this reason, material goods, though they are gifts from God, should be taken as transitory and perishable – used and not enjoyed, to use his terminology – and, hence, they are

[1] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 8. For more insights on *elementa ecclesiae*, see Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3.

not to replace God in the hierarchy of goods. There is a connection, as it were, between the consumerist culture and human quest for ultimate happiness. We learned from Augustine's reflection on the two-cities that the happiness of the good angels is found in their cleaving to God.[2] Human beings desire happiness and the choices we make are made based on the supposed happiness that is expected at the end. Interestingly, this theme of eternal blessedness or happiness forms the concluding section in Augustine's reflections on the two cities. Augustine wished that his readers understand that everything about the human person begins from God and returns to God for eternal blessedness in the heavenly city.

Evidence of Pope Francis's engagement with contemporary culture is his recognition that the relationship today between faith and reason is strained, to say the least.[3] Having established that both faith and reason are necessary for Christian faith, Christian apologetics can argue that the world was created by the Father through Wisdom/Logos and, therefore, this world is intelligible; the success of scientific progress, for example, can, for the Christian, be explained by this intelligibility: the world is capable of being understood, and human beings, as rational beings, with intellects, possess a God-given ability to investigate it and come to a deeper understanding of it; hence both faith and reason are from God and cannot contradict each other. Pope Francis called for a responsible use of the methods proper to empirical sciences and other areas of knowledge, as well as faith which transcends nature and human intelligence.[4]Augustine, in his reflection on the two cities, emphasised that God is the source of every good. Informed by Augustine's two-cities doctrine, Christian apologetics, apart from advocating for a dialogue between faith, reason, and the sciences, can argue that God is the author and originator of both reason and faith; reason is not an obstacle to faith, nor does it

[2] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12.
[3] Pope Francis proposed that a dialogue is necessary because both faith and reason are important aspects of the human person, they are both gifts from God, and, at least for the Christian, they both assist in the task to developing new approaches and arguments to argue for the relevance of Christianity today.
[4] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 242.

harm faith, and according to Augustine, there is one, true, blessed God and the things he made are indeed good.[5]

St Augustine and Pope Francis

In the second half of Chapter 6, I also examined in more detail Pope Francis's plea for a creative apologetics and argued that Augustine's analysis can enhance Pope Francis's proposal. In line with Pope Francis's vision, I showed that a credible, attractive, and authentic Christianity does not restrict, but enhances, human freedom; it is open to, or engages with, diverse worldviews through dialogue or intellectual exchange. To draw this dissertation to a close, I offer some final reflections on both Augustine and Pope Francis.

While Augustine's *City of God* was a defence aimed primarily at his pagan opponents, Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium* is exhorting and counselling Christians on how best to bring the Gospel alive within a contemporary culture that values empirical science, production, and efficiency, and is therefore liable to oppose Christianity which it views as being hostile to, or irrelevant to, scientific and technological developments. What is common, however, in both Augustine and Francis is that they share the same passion for seeking out ways to show the relevance of Christian faith in their respective eras. Augustine's detailed exploration into Christian history in Part II of the *City of God* contained important insights into some key themes in Christianity, not only for those who questioned the reasonableness of his faith, but also for his fellow Christians; and for Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* focuses on how best to communicate the Gospel message to the modern man and woman in order to render the Gospel message meaningful and effective for the adherents of the faith and likewise create an atmosphere for dialogue between the Christian faith and those of other worldviews.

One significant common characteristic between Augustine and Pope Francis is their Christocentric approach to apologetics and evangelization. For Augustine, Christ is at the

[5] Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 12.

centre of the reality that is the city of God because its citizens love Christ. Christ is at the centre of the work, *City of God*, because the centre of history, the turning point in the progress of the two cities, is the incarnation. It is the hinge between the past and the future.

Like Augustine, Pope Francis is also very emphatic about the place of Christ in our encounter with the modern world. For instance, Christ's example of poverty and simplicity should form the bases for the church's engagement with the consumerist culture; for Christ's life of complete abandonment to the Father's will shows that he trusted in God's provision. Similarly, Christ's claim to Truth (cf. Jn 14:6) can inspire the apologist's engagement with pluralistic worldviews that can easily slip into moral and philosophical relativism. We cannot possibly talk about proving the relevance of Christian faith in the modern age without acknowledging that every Christian apologetic points to Christ as the heart of everything. Concretely, amidst the challenges facing the church today, contemporary Christian apologetics can pay particular attention to the theme of Jesus Christ as the full and definite revelation of God.

Another commonality is Augustine's and Pope Francis's sensitivity to their respective cultures. Augustine's defence of Christianity as a truth that serves the public good (and is not the cause of the disasters of which its antagonists accused it) depended on a real engagement with the worldviews of his contemporaries. In like manner, Pope Francis's "creative apologetics" is concerned with knowing about and engaging with worldviews, from which there can be proper channels of dialogue between the church and the ambient culture.

Pope Francis is particularly concerned that modern Christianity should be characterised with love for all, that the Gospel message should include everyone. In the two-cities doctrine, Augustine is emphatic about the direction of one's love, which is a distinguishing feature between the heavenly city and the earthly city. God is the highest good to be loved and every other human action, when inspired by God's love and directed towards the praise of God is true

love. True love eliminates self-interest and is geared towards God. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis teaches that making sense of the Christian message today would require getting involved in people's lives, knowing their struggles and journeying with them in love. This is the task of every Christian community as the body of Christ. "The Church, guided by the Gospel of mercy and by love for mankind, hears the cry for justice and intends to respond to it with all her might."[6] Inspired by Augustine's two-cities doctrine, Christian apologetics can argue that the church understands herself as the city of God on earth and as such all her actions are directed towards pleasing God, showing God's love to everyone she encounters as she sojourns on earth; to the extent that Christians fail at this, they are not living up to the gospel which they proclaim. The church goes forth into the world with open arms and doors open to all. On the part of the apologist, he or she should be willing to listen to others, ready to journey with them, taking Christ as model who loved and welcomed everyone, but not without the constant call to repent.

Having stated the need for a robust and creative apologetics in our world today, it is important to reiterate that the task of Christian apologetics is not necessarily to convince people about the truthfulness of Christianity per se, but rather to invite them to consider firstly the importance of the incarnation and its benefits to humanity: that is, God's self-communication to humanity for the sake of our salvation; and secondly, the reasonableness of Christianity can be unpacked depending on the difficulties, questions, or concerns of the interlocutor. In short, apologetics cannot be reduced to answering objections, but must also present the radicality of God's love as it is communicated in the Incarnation. The task of Christian apologetics is ongoing, for so long as the church is present in the world, there will always be need to evangelize and demonstrate the credibility and relevance of the Christian faith.

[6] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 188.

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