

Augustine's Teachings on Church and State

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1. General Background

By the end of the third century Christianity had become the most important single religion through the whole Roman empire, even before Constantine accepted Christianity as the religion of his empire. In the great Christian centers of Rome, the churches had developed, associating with the growing importance of their Christian communities. The Church in Carthage has grown too, as one of the important Latin communities.

Among the provincials of the Mediterranean world, the people in the countryside of North Africa and Egypt accepted Christianity eagerly. It is important to notice the character of these churches, which were different from other settled urban communities. Despite the Great Persecution by Diocletian in 303, Christianity spread. As a whole, the country people of North Africa were suffering from heavy burdens, to support the wealth and the luxury of the Roman empire. However, they were isolated from the profits of the empire.¹

It is very important for us to attend to the fact that the Roman emperor always wanted to keep the unity of the empire. It would be one of the most important reasons, why the emperor supported Catholicism. Indeed, the Roman Church has grown, with a close relationship to the Roman empire.

2. Components of Augustine's Teachings

If we want to understand what were Augustine's ideas on church and state, we first have to examine his progressive stages of thought during his whole life. In my opinion, he never tried to summarize his teachings on church and state in a book, as Calvin did in his *Institutes*. I think,

¹) W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (London, 1984), 421-38, 488-491.

when he faced various problems at each phase of his life, he developed his ideas in writing, trying to solve the given troubles. His thought can be evaluated as an open system. His idea at one stage, sometimes, even seemed contradictory to his idea at a different stage. Thus, it would not be recommendable for me to define what were Augustine's thoughts on church and state with a definite word.

2.1. North Africa

Augustine was born in 354 in the Numidian provincial town of Thagaste in North Africa. At the time of St. Augustine, Thagaste was one of the typical decaying Roman towns of fourth-century North Africa. Latin-speaking citizens inhabited a few large town houses. They were the landowners who possessed great estates outside the city. Beyond the town walls there were the peasants who lived a very different life.²

Thagaste, where Augustine was born, was one of the centers of Libyan or proto-Berber culture. The name of his mother, Monica, was a Berber name derived from the Libyan deity Mon worshipped in the neighbouring town of Thibilis. Moreover, we notice Augustine's tendency to follow Berber tradition in attaching more importance to a near relationship to a brother than to a son. In addition, when he named his own son, 'Adeodatus', we find that it is only a Berber usage to name their children in connection of the worship of Adeodatus, Iatanball.³

Augustine's mother Monica had been brought up in a Christian family.⁴ She clung to traditional practices in the African church. The inner life of Augustine is dominated by his mother Monica.⁵ Under his mother's influence he regarded the church as a strong woman. At the same time, from his father Augustine drew his Roman and African patriotism.⁶ Therefore,

²) W.H.C. Frend, "A note on the Berber Background in the Life of Augustine", in: *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries* (London, 1976), Ch. XIV. 188-191.

³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford, 1971), 230.

⁴) Augustine, *Confessions*, IX.ix.19.

⁵) P.R.A. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967), 29.

⁶) W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 659-68.

we understand that Augustine may have been of Berber extraction. Augustine was impressed by the Berber background, throughout his whole life.⁷

However, his descent would be a combination ; neither purely Roman nor purely African, because in his time Berbers, Phoenicians, and Romans had lived together for centuries. In addition, he had grown up in circumstances dominated by the Latin language.⁸ Even though Augustine himself was a son of poorer parents, he had a close relation with the Latin-speaking upper classes of Roman Africa.⁹

Therefore, I can conclude that Augustine was a civilized African in Late Rome. The environment in which he had grown up had an important influence on him. Especially, I argue that his native background permeated into much of Augustine's political and religious thought.¹⁰ From Thagaste he moved to Madaura in the North of Numidia for study, and to Carthage. We have to pay attention to his period in Carthage because he experienced two conversions. The one was to philosophy and the other was to the Manichaean interpretation of Christianity which we will examine next.

2.2. Influence of Manichaeism

Generally we can see the phenomenon that the Gnostics fade out at the time of the Great Persecution, and Manichaeism occupied their place.¹¹ Since the 4th century Manichees

⁷) J.J. O' Meara, *The Young Augustine: An introduction to the Confessions of St. Augustine* (London and New York, 1954/1980), 20-32. ; J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden, 1991), 18-21. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 230. However, we don't have any information that Monica's husband was a Berber too. See J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 19 and note 8.

⁸) J. van, Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, 20-1.

⁹) *Conf.*, VI.xiv. and VI.vii and xi. ; W.H.C. Frend, "A Note on the Berber Background in the Life of Augustine", Ch. XIV. 190. and note 2.

¹⁰) See W.H.C. Frend, *Donatist Church*, 231.

¹¹) W.H.C. Frend, "The Gnostic-Manichaean Tradition in Roman North Africa", in: *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries* (London, 1976), Ch. XII. 13-5.

appeared as the threat to Catholic Christianity both in the East and in the West. Throughout the whole Roman Empire Manichaeism grew enormously and quickly.¹² Their ascetic ideals penetrated all classes, especially in Coptic regions and in North Africa.¹³ Their missionaries gathered *hearers (auditores)*, most of all in intellectual circles. Augustine was one of them. He admired their asceticism and mysterious nature, especially occultism. However, first of all, he expected that he could find the answer to the problem of evil in Mani's teachings.¹⁴

In this section, we will examine the close relation and similarities between Manichaeism and Augustine. Moreover, at the end of this section, we will consider the fact that the origin of this gnostic religion had a Jewish-Christian background.

Indeed Augustine was under the influence of Manichaeism from his nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year. These years were certainly an important period in which he developed his thought in his life. Thus, we have to notice his period in Manichaeism from 373 to 382.¹⁵ In 382 Augustine met a famous Manichaean, Faustus, in Carthago. Although Augustine was disappointed, we can find that Augustine still made a deep contact with some Manichees in Rome in the next year.¹⁶ In 384, Manichaeans even played a role as his mediators with Rome's city-prefect Symmachus, so that Augustine could take a job at Milan as state professor of rhetoric.¹⁷ Thus, we can certainly say that even at the end of 384 Augustine still had a close relationship with Manichaeans for a number of years and these years are, of course, significant in one's development.¹⁸

¹²) P.R.A. Brown, "The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire", in: *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972), 94-118. Especially the government forced the Manichaean centers to be scattered. Thus, this religion was able to spread all over the Empire.

¹³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 554-557.

¹⁴) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 34-6.

¹⁵) *Conf.*, IV.i.1. "Per idem tempus annorum novem, ab undevicensimo anno aetatis meae usque ad duodetricesimum, seducebamur et seducebamus ..." See also J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 42-3, 199. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 659-68.

¹⁶) *Conf.*, V.vi.10. f. ; V.x.18. and 19.

¹⁷) *Conf.*, V.xiii.23.

¹⁸) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 43.

Augustine was so ardent a Manichee¹⁹ that he introduced many to that Gnostic religion ; for example, his benefactor Romanianus, a childhood friend who died young, his friends Alypius, Nebridius, Honoratus, Fortunatus, Profuturus and another Fortunatus.²⁰ It is clear that his knowledge of Manichaeism was very deep.²¹

Indeed, the African Church Father was impressed by this gnostic religion, not only negatively when he opposed it, but also positively. Augustine's theology reflects his Manichaean years in many points. One of them is his view on the communion of the saved. For him, it was a worldwide mystical body of the elect, which had no political or cultural boundary, and it was the earthly counterpart of Christ who pervaded the universe.²²

Especially, Augustine was thoroughly familiar with the Manichaean doctrine of the two kingdoms. Moreover, his writings contain many similarities with it. The Manichaeans emphasize the antithesis between the heavenly kingdom and the earthly city. The opponent of the heavenly kingdom is the internally divided kingdom of darkness which became the kingdom of this world (*kosmos*). The city is even called a city of demons.²³ In Augustine, the City of God and the City of the earth were entirely antithetic too.²⁴

The world history is the history of the two kingdoms for Manichaeism. They were divided in the beginning (*initium*), intermingled in the middle time (*medium*), and separated again in the end (*finis*).²⁵ When we read Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, it is surprising that we meet the analogy to this. For Augustine, the history of the world was also the history of the two cities (*civitates*). In addition, it is composed of an origin (*exortus*), a progress (*procursus*) and a destined end (*debiti fines*). It is, also, notable that the main part of his *De Civitate Dei* was made of three parts in four books, according to these three parts.²⁶

¹⁹) *Conf.*, III.vi.11.

²⁰) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem*, 44. ; W.H.C. Frend, "Manichaeism in the Struggle between Saint Augustine and Petilian of Constantine", in: *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries*, Ch. XIII. 861-865.

²¹) *Conf.*, V.iii.6. ; V.vii.12. ; V.vii.13.

²²) W.H.C. Frend, *The rise of Christianity*, 659-68.

²³) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 351.

²⁴) For the contrast between the two cities, see 3.3.1.1 "Antithesis" of this thesis.

²⁵) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 93-94, 224.

¹⁵⁴) Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X, 32. "Deinceps itaque, ut in primo libro polliciti sumus, *de duarum civitatum*,

Thus, as we have seen, the similarities between the thoughts of the Manichaeists and Augustine are evident. Then we have to ask if Manichaeism is fundamental to Augustine's thoughts, especially concerning the teachings on Church and State.

According to J. van Oort, however, we go to an entirely new stage through the discovery of the *Cologne Mani-Codex*. It was discovered and published in 1970.²⁷ Through this it is very certain that Mani's roots were in a Jewish-Christian baptist sect. Many typically Jewish and Christian ideas are to be found in his religion.

According to the *Mani-Codex* the Manichaeans washed themselves everyday. They also washed their food. They not only denoted their religion as the law (*nomos*), but they also emphasized the keeping of the sabbath and the ancestral traditions. These are surely of the Jewish religion. Moreover, we can find Christian elements in the codex. These Baptists referred to the commandments of the Saviour, and Mani spoke about the testimonies from the Gospel.²⁸

Augustine, however, found that Manichaeism was unsatisfactory to him on the issue of evil which was fundamental to him. Augustine, finally, felt that this religion had two basic errors. Manichaeism depicted God as a divisible, corporeal substance. Moreover, that religion regarded evil as an independent reality. For these two reasons, he rejected Manichaean philosophy.²⁹

In short, Augustine's teachings, especially his thoughts of the two cities, which contain the fundamental ideas on Church and State in Augustine, have a surprising resemblance to the Manichaean two kingdoms. However, Mani grew up in a Jewish-Christian environment. Therefore we can conclude that Mani and Augustine were ultimately influenced by the same Jewish-Christian tradition.

quas in hoc saeculo perplexas diximus invicemque permixtas, *exortu et procursu et debitis finibus quod dicendum arbitror*, quantum divinitus adiuvabor expediam." ; *DCD*, XI, 1. "Nunc vero quid a me iam expectetur agnoscens meique non inmemor debiti de *duarum civitatum, terrenae scilicet et caelestis*, quas in hoc interim saeculo perplexas quodam modo diximus invicemque permixtas, exortu et excursu et debitis finibus, quantum valuero, disputare eius ipsius domini et regis nostri ubique opitulatione fretus adgrediar, primumque dicam, quem ad modum exordia duarum istarum civitatum in angelorum diversitate praecesserint."

²⁷) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 209. According to J. van Oort, this work can be dated from the fourth or the fifth century. Even though it was written in Greek, it was originally written in East Aramaic.

²⁸) *Ibid.*, 228, 230-231.

²⁹) *Conf.*, V.x.18.

Now it is time to examine the influence of the Jewish-Christian tradition on Augustine.

2.3. Influence of Jewish-Christian Tradition

In the first century A.D. Jews were already living in several locations in North Africa, mainly along the coast. Especially after the fall of Jerusalem in 70, and certainly after the revolt of the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene under Trajan (115), their numbers in Africa increased considerably.³⁰

In Carthage, the Christian Church was born in the synagogue. Jewish influence in North Africa not only preceded Christianity, but spread and even outlasted the Christian Church there. All this explains why the character of African Christianity was dissenting in many ways. Jewish exclusiveness joined with Semitic-Punic and Berber particularism, and thus a movement like Donatism, constantly in protest against Rome and its empire, can be more clearly understood. It is also against the backdrop of this Jewish and Jewish-Christian ferment that Augustine's doctrine and imagery of the two cities can be explained.³¹

Cyprian and Tertullian were also an important source of Augustine. Cyprian held a pessimistic view of this world in general, and of the idolatrous Roman Empire with its persecutions in particular. World (*saeculum*) and devil meant for him virtually the same. On the one hand in Cyprian's negative references to the world and worldly things, and on the other hand in his emphasis on the believer's state of being an alien, we can discern much similarity with Augustine.³²

Moreover, Cyprian's thought on the Church was significant to Augustine. There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. When Cyprian taught that no one can have God for one's Father unless one has the church for one's Mother, Augustine followed him. Augustine used Cyprian's conception of the unity of the Church, believing that Cyprian was his party.³³ Thus, for Augustine those who separated from the Catholic Church committed a sacrilege against God.

³⁰) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 365-67.

³¹) *Ibid.*, 368-71.

³²) *Ibid.*, 294-5.

³³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 125-40.

Just as Cyprian shows in all this a considerable kinship with Augustine's doctrine of the two cities, so does his illustrious predecessor Tertullian.³⁴ The demons are the magistrates of this world and the pagan state - Rome - is identical with demonic power. Hence it is not surprising that he described the Christian as an alien.³⁵

Augustine received a Christian education that had a lasting influence upon him, in addition to a thorough classical schooling. He grew up in the tradition of the Church of Africa. The possible implications of this fact will certainly have to be considered in this investigation into the origins of his doctrine of the two cities.

However, Augustine was not instantly converted to the Catholic Christian belief which he later professed. He was carried away by a strongly Neoplatonic Christianity. He praised the Platonists for delivering him from the errors of Manichaeism. As he said, (Neo) Platonism set him on the path to Christianity by their teaching that God was a fully spiritual, transcendent, and inconceivable being, and that evil was only a privation of goodness without independent substance.³⁶ Platonism provided Augustine with a rational answer to many questions, and therefore it was a great source of spiritual liberation.³⁷

In the autumn of 384 Augustine arrived in Milan a disillusioned man. Once again he became a catechumen in the Catholic Church from 384 to 386. As a catechumen he heard the sermons of Ambrose and they impressed him. He also became acquainted with Neoplatonic writings in which God was pictured as a spiritual Being and evil as having non-being. According to S. Ozment, Augustine was heir to both Platonic and Christian traditions of thought and is commonly viewed as their most perfect union.³⁸ Thus, for Augustine, only the immaterial could affect the immaterial. An invisible and eternal soul could only be moved by invisible and eternal universals. This presupposition lay behind Augustine's theory of the sacraments of the church. In the autumn of 386, he came to Cassiciacum, and in 387 together with Adeodatus and his

³⁴) W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1965), 373.

³⁵) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 295-99.

³⁶) S. Ozment, *The Age of Reformation 1250-1550: An intellectual and religious history of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven and London, 1980), 45.

³⁷) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 50, 52-3.

³⁸) S. Ozment, *The Age of Reformation 1250-1550*, 44.

friend Alypius he was baptized by Ambrose.³⁹

The influence of Ambrose on Augustine was great.⁴⁰ His going to the imperial capital and his getting acquainted with its Catholic bishop had been of great consequence to him. Mainly through Simplicianus in Milan he discovered a Neoplatonism that was interpreted in a Christian manner in the circle round Ambrose.⁴¹

However, in his later years Augustine became more and more critical of that philosophy in *De Civitate Dei*. At first he praised the Platonists,⁴² but after Book X this praise gradually diminished. Augustine condemns the Neoplatonic doctrine.⁴³ Finally he described that the philosophers were inhabitants of the ungodly city,⁴⁴ and will perish with the demons. He writes,

“And it is absolutely certain that those philosophers in the impious city who have said that the gods are their friends have fallen into the power of the wicked demons to whom that whole city is subjected, and in whose company it will suffer eternal punishment.”⁴⁵

Ultimately Augustine even explains that a Christian has to be an anti-Platonist.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, it is important for us to notice that Neoplatonism indeed exerted great influence on both Augustine's conversion and his later theologizing. Especially Augustine would learn from it his conception of the universality and the unity of the Holy Church. However, while Platonists saw a distinction between two worlds, whereby the material world is a representation of the immaterial one and the two are thus related to each other in a positive

³⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, 25-31, 48.

⁴⁰⁾ *Conf.*, V.xiii.23.

⁴¹⁾ J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 50.

⁴²⁾ *De Civitate Dei* (= *DCD*), VIII.5. ; VIII.9. ; X.I. etc.

⁴³⁾ *DCD*, XII.21. ; XIII.16-18. ; XXII.25-28.

⁴⁴⁾ *DCD*, XVIII.41. ; XIX.9.

⁴⁵⁾ *DCD*, XIX.9 : “...cum illos quidem philosophos in impia civitate, qui deos sibi amicos esse dixerunt, in daemones malignos incidisse certissimum est, quibus tota ipsa civitas subditur, aeternum cum eis habitura supplicium.”

⁴⁶⁾ *DCD*, XXI.7. : “...cum quibus vel contra quos agimus...”

way, for Augustine the central issue was the absolute antithesis between two *civitates*.⁴⁷

From 391, the year in which Augustine became a presbyter at Hippo Regius, a steady increase in his knowledge of Scripture and Church doctrine can be discerned. It was in these years that he became profoundly acquainted with Donatism and with African theology in general.⁴⁸

For Augustine, especially, Ambrose's influence was great, not only during the years in Milan, but afterwards as well. The believer's state of being an alien was strongly emphasized by Ambrose. Ambrose admonished them to live in this earthly city, the world, as a sojourner, because their city was the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a close parallel with Augustine's idea of the two cities. Augustine's concept and Ambrose's reference to two *sectae* was represented by Cain and Abel : two groups of people opposing each other and engaged in a struggle. But for Ambrose they represented above all an antithesis within the soul of man.⁴⁹

Besides Ambrose, it is certain that Augustine was familiar with the main work of Lactantius, who was born in Africa. Augustine quoted his writings in *De Civitate Dei*. Moreover, from the context, it appears that he expected his readers to be acquainted with it.⁵⁰ Lactantius mentioned Cyprian, Tertullian, and Minucius Felix. His elaborate antithesis of good and evil, light and darkness, God and devil, the two ways and the two warring spirits influenced the future church father.⁵¹

As we have seen above, Augustine was able to learn a great deal from predecessors in his doctrine of the two cities from the Western Christian tradition, in particular from the Christian tradition in Africa. Therefore, Augustine's thought on the two cities echoes Christian tradition prior to Augustine.

2.4 Relation to Donatism

⁴⁷) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 352.

⁴⁸) *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁹) *Ibid.*, 76-79.

⁵⁰) *DCD*, XVIII.23.

⁵¹) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 284-290.

Since A.D. 311 the Donatist Church was established as one of the major Churches in the West. Donatism had a Bible-inspired way of life in a world threatened by what it regarded as a false Christianity and idolatry.⁵² It is notable that the Donatist and Catholic Churches remained divided in North Africa until both were swept away by Islam. They were two societies, fundamentally different in religious and social viewpoints. The two Churches represent opposite tendencies in early Christian thought. Thus, we have to consider, firstly, that they are two opposed attitudes to society rather than of ‘heresy’ versus ‘truth’. They differed not only in their distinctive dogma, but also in their relationships to the world.⁵³ Under the African tradition, the Donatists preserved the North African conception on church and state.⁵⁴

These different attitudes of the two churches can be partly explained by the geographical, socio-economic, and religious conditions of North Africa in those days. In North Africa the High Plain (including southern Numidia, Mauretania, and part of Byzacena) was isolated from Rome, in contrast to Carthage.⁵⁵ The worship of Saturn in the countryside prevailed among the lower classes of North Africans, who were mainly Berbers. They admired martyrdom. In the third century most of them converted from their traditional religion to Christianity. Then the people in Numidia were under hard pressure of high taxation to support the urban communities of North Africa. Thus, their discontent with Rome and the official religion of the empire went to the maximum.⁵⁶ It is surprising to notice that the regions of the Donatist movement coincided with it.⁵⁷ Through the fourth century, the Donatist Church expanded in the whole of North Africa.⁵⁸

⁵²) W.H.C. Frend, “Donatus ‘paene totam Africam decepit’. How?”, in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (= *JEH*) vol. 43 (Cambridge, 1997), 611, 627.

⁵³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 315, 326, 332. Cf. P.R.A. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 214. ; R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (London, 1970), 122, 131.

⁵⁴) R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 126, 131, 132.

⁵⁵) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 25-31.

⁵⁶) *Ibid.*, 60-86.

⁵⁷) P.R.A. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 220. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 76-86.

⁵⁸) W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 653-57. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 87-111.

Augustine himself was born and brought up a Berber background.⁵⁹ But he took no opportunity to contact the movement in his young period.⁶⁰ However, when we examine Augustine's teachings further, it is not hard for us to find that Augustine echoes his native elements just as the Donatists. Augustine wanted to live within his own boundaries securely, and we can find these ideas only in the Donatist viewpoint that inspired Gildo and Optatus of Thamugadi during their rebellion of 397-8.⁶¹ Augustine's ideal was *otium liberale*, which means the simple enjoyment of the fruits of a rural domain, instead of safeguarding of the city state.⁶² He rebuked Maximus of Madauros because he lacked a sympathy and understanding for his native country. Later, as a mature thinker he rejected the Roman Empire as a political ideal.⁶³ In his *De Civitate Dei*, he seems to be almost equal with the previous African Christian apologists, when he argues that Rome's rise came from injustice ; from unjust wars, aggressions and robberies.⁶⁴ Especially in Augustine's attitude towards the cult of the martyrs we can find his development of thought. As he grew older, he shows the viewpoints of the original Berber. At first, he forbade the feast for the martyrs in the church and he was a rationalist on miracles, reproaching the Donatists. However, later, in his *De Civitate Dei*, he writes many stories of the blind receiving back their sight, and other wonders.⁶⁵ When he respects martyrs such as the deacon Nabor, it is hard to distinguish him from the fringes of Roman Africa.⁶⁶ Thus, we find the fact that, throughout his life, Augustine's background as a Berber always remained an influential source on his thinking.

When we think about two great North African theologians, Tertullian and Cyprian, we can understand the possible connection between Augustine and the Donatists. According to W.H.C.

⁵⁹) See 3.2.1 "North Africa" of this thesis, and W.H.C. Frend, "A Note on the Berber Background in the Life of Augustine", in: *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries*, Ch. XIV. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 230.

⁶⁰) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 233-34. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 653-557.

⁶¹) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 231.

⁶²) *Conf.*, vi.10.

⁶³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 231.

⁶⁴) *DCD*, iv.3. Cf. J.N. Figgis, *The Political ideas of St. Augustine* (Longmans, 1921), 53. and N.H. Baynes, *The Political Ideas of the De Civitate Dei*, (London, 1936).

⁶⁵) *DCD*, xxii.8, 9.

⁶⁶) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 232-33.

Frend, Tertullian can be evaluated as the “forerunner and father of the Donatist Church,” in the fact that he emphasized the Church of the Spirit instead of the organized Church. The Donatists regarded Cyprian as a perfect bishop for his attitudes to martyrdom and asceticism. At the same time Augustine also firmly believed that Cyprian is surely on his side, especially concerning ecclesiology.⁶⁷

Augustine, especially, learned his thoughts on eschatology and the two cities from Tyconius, who was a Donatist. Tyconius understood the Church’s holiness as eschatological. The Church is in a permanent tension between what is here and now and the eschatological reality. Augustine was taught by Tyconius that in any given society on earth both ‘cities’ must have their members. The saints should stay in the world, but flee from it like monks. At the Last Day the separation would take place, and then the Church would come into her own.⁶⁸ Tyconius did not join the Catholic Church, even though he was excommunicated by Parmenian in 385, but neither did he oppose the Donatists. When Augustine criticized Donatism, he used the sociological inseparability of the two opposed societies.⁶⁹ However, we can conclude that in Augustine’s thoughts on the two cities, Augustine echoes the idea of two antithetical *civitates* in Tyconius’ commentary.⁷⁰

With Tertullian, Cyprian, and the Donatists, Augustine regarded the Church as God’s holy people.⁷¹ As we have seen, Augustine indeed shared many viewpoints with the Donatists. However, Augustine strongly criticized and opposed them. On this problem I would like to propose three reasons. Firstly, it is connected with his personal circumstances. He was isolated from the Donatist movement. Secondly, it came from Augustine’s conceptions of the Sacrament and of the Church. Thirdly, it is connected with the political situation, which I will examine in the next section.

Augustine was born in the Roman town of Thagaste in the middle of the fourth century. His friends were the latinized minority who had economic advantages. The place he worked was in

⁶⁷) *Ibid.*, 112-140.

⁶⁸) *Ibid.*, 193-217.

⁶⁹) M. Roukanen, *Theology of Social Life in Augustine’s De civitate Dei* (Göttingen, 1993), 83.

⁷⁰) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 254-74, 363.

⁷¹) R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 117-118, 120.

the center of the limited Romanized city at the sea side and the valley where the Catholic church was strong. He could speak little Punic and no Libyan. Moreover, he was deeply involved with Manichaeism. He was, in fact, isolated from the peasants who followed the Donatists, even though his thoughts echo the typical North African tradition. He regards the Donatists even as a ‘heresy’.⁷² Therefore, we can conclude that, limited by all these conditions, Augustine could not understand the religious ideas and backgrounds of the Donatists.

Augustine, moreover, believes that the Sacrament really works within the Catholic Church. There was no salvation outside the Church. Thus he could not accept the separation from the universal Church and the Sacrament. Thus he opposed Donatism.

In addition, we have to consider the political environment to grasp Augustine’s teachings and his attitude to the relationship between church and state.

2.5. Development of Politico-Religious Situation in North Africa

In the fourth century, Africa was one of the most famous export places for the olive.⁷³ Even though the villages were rich, the towns in the countryside suffered from the heavy taxation to support the declining Rome. Thus the people in the towns chose Donatism instead of Catholicism, the religion of the Roman empire.⁷⁴ It is well understandable that when the Numidians opposed the new bishop of Carthage namely Caesilian, Caesilian appealed to the emperor Constantine, and Caesilian was able to gain the support from the secular authority. The Donatists kept the African tradition of hostility against the world symbolized by Rome, while the opposite party allied itself to the secular power.⁷⁵ Through the fourth century the Donatists became the majority in North Africa, especially in Numidia and Carthage.⁷⁶ In these places the public officials, the land owners, and the Catholics were regarded as the representation of the

⁷²) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 233-34. 236-7. ; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 653-57.

⁷³) W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 571-572.

⁷⁴) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 32-47.

⁷⁵) *Ibid.*, 141-168.

⁷⁶) W.H.C. Frend, “Donatus ‘paene totam Africam decepit’ . How?”, in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (= *JEH*) vol. 43 (Cambridge, 1997), 611.

Roman empire.

A Donatist bishop of Carthage, Parmenian, led his church successfully during his time from A.D. 369 to 391. In the end of his time, the Donatist church entered a golden age. Under his episcopacy the Donatists enjoyed peace, even though a few persecutions followed after the revolt of Firmus. We see a reduction of the members of the Catholic Church in North Africa in these days.⁷⁷

In 386, Gildo was nominated as *Comes Africae* by the Emperor Theodosius. Optatus was elected as bishop of Thamugadi. It was one of the most important Donatist bishoprics of south Numidia. Gildo revolted against the Emperor Honorius, as Gildo and Optatus formed an alliance in Numidia. Under their rule from A.D. 386 to 398, we can see the possibility of the establishment of non-Roman and native power in Africa. Donatism gave a motivation to this political movement. Gildo was a real political leader of North Africa in this period. There was little hope of Imperial help for the Catholic Church. However, from A.D. 392 to 397 we cannot find any religious coercion by the Donatists upon the neighboring Catholics.⁷⁸ However, Gildo's revolt against the Roman Empire failed in 398, and the Donatists lost their power.

Augustine became bishop of Hippo in 395, when Catholicism was in the minority in Africa. He had to work and advocate among the majority Donatists. It is important to consider his position with respect to the State in this period and its change before and after the Donatists' command. He started with a request for discussion with the Donatists, calling them "brothers." However, he ended with an appeal to the Roman Emperor, even referring to them as "heresy" since the failure of Gildo's revolt and the following fourth Council of Carthage in 399.⁷⁹

After the defeat of Gildo, Catholicism increased in number in Africa. In 405 the edict of unity put the non-Catholic Christians outside of the guardianship of the law. Finally, at the Conference of Carthage in 411 the commissioner of the Roman Emperor made a decision against the Donatists. All the rights of the Donatists and their possessions were given to the Catholics. Only capital punishment was prohibited. The Catholic Church seemed to win entirely

⁷⁷) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 193-207.

⁷⁸) *Ibid.*, 208-226. According to Frend, if their alliance had succeeded, there would have been a great possibility of an allegiance of African Provinces against the Emperor Honorius.

⁷⁹) *Ibid.*, 275-289.

in North Africa.⁸⁰

Concerning Augustine's thought on church and state, it is also very necessary for us to consider the whole situation of the late Roman empire. After the emperor Theodosius' death (A.D. 395), the power of Rome became weakened. The Empire was divided into East and West. The Roman society seemed to be in serious unrest because of revolts inside and increasing invasions of the Vandals outside since AD. 406. When Augustine began to write *De Civitate Dei* in AD. 411, the Christian Rome was taken by Alaric in AD. 410. For Augustine and his contemporaries, the circumstances of the state seemed terrible. The church, at that time, was the only stable institution in the whole West. Thus, Augustine came to expect more of the church than of the state, emphasizing the unity of the church, at this later stage.

Roman Catholicism in North Africa, indeed, disappeared because of the Vandals just after the death of Augustine. Donatists, however, remained until the seventh century in Numidia,⁸¹ not converting to Catholicism. Augustinian rhetoric and imperial legislation destroyed the Donatist Church. However, it meant the ultimate destruction of Christian and Roman North Africa.⁸² Therefore, it is evident that Christianity of North Africa survived as long as the Donatist church could maintain itself.

3. Augustine's Teachings

3.1 Idea of the Two Cities : Jerusalem and Babylon

Augustine developed no detailed, systematic theory of the proper relationship between Church and State. However, his *De Civitate Dei* provides the foundation of his analysis of that relationship.⁸³ The concept *civitas* corresponds with the Greek concept *polis*. Thus, we bear in mind that both cities are ruled by a prince. While all *civitates* are linked to their particular cult

⁸⁰) *Ibid.*, 275-89.

⁸¹) *Ibid.*, 290-314.

⁸²) W.H.C. Frend, "Donatus 'paene totam Africam decepit'. How?", in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (= *JEH*) vol. 43, 627.

⁸³) H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York and London, 1963), 172, 174.

of gods, the *civitas Dei* is tied to the true God. Only the worship of this God can create the true civitas-community.⁸⁴ In this section, I would like to examine the meaning of the two cities in Augustine, especially in his *De Civitate Dei*, and this will be an essential prelude for researching Augustine's teaching on church and state.

3.1.1. Antithesis

The idea of the two opposed cities, *duae civitates*, is a central theme in Augustine's thinking throughout the whole of *De Civitate Dei*.⁸⁵ For Augustine, even though the two cities are interwoven in this *saeculum*,⁸⁶ they are radically antithetic, as shown by the analogy of the contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon.⁸⁷

In Augustine's thought the earthly city originated from the rebellion of the angels against God.⁸⁸ In addition there was, too, a beginning of the two cities among men. The one follows God's will, while the other desires to live according to the flesh.⁸⁹ We can easily find the difference between the two cities with its names. I would like to show this point through his *De Civitate Dei*.⁹⁰

civitas Dei (city of God)	civitas diaboli (city of the devil)
civitas caelestis (heavenly city)	civitas terrena (earthly city)
civitas aeterna (eternal city)	civitas temporalis (temporal city)
civitas piorum (city of the believers)	civitas impiorum (city of the wicked)
civitas immortalis (immortal city)	civitas mortalis (mortal city)
civitas sancta (holy city)	civitas iniqua (wicked city)

⁸⁴) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 107, 361.

⁸⁵) M. Ruokanen, *Theology of Social Life in Augustine's De civitate Dei*, 77.

⁸⁶) *DCD*, I.35.

⁸⁷) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 361.

⁸⁸) *DCD*, XI.33.

⁸⁹) *DCD*, XIV.1 and XV.1.

⁹⁰) See J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 115, and note 521.

Moreover, when Augustine uses these names, their characteristics also imply the antithesis.⁹¹

supernatural birth	natural birth
eternity	temporality
everlastingness	transitoriness
humility	pride
obedience	disobedience
love of God	love of self
worship of the true God	worship of idols
living according to the Spirit	living according to the flesh

Augustine calls Rome Babylon in *De Civitate Dei*.⁹² In his *Confessions*, we also find the same meaning. Here he called the eternal city, Jerusalem, his native city and mother.⁹³ But he was wandering in the streets of Babylon.⁹⁴ In Augustine, the earthly city is mentioned as the city of the unbelievers (*civitas infidelium*), the city of this world (*civitas huius saeculi*)⁹⁵, the wicked city (*impia civitas*)⁹⁶, the wicked city and the unfaithful people (*impia civitas et populus infidelium*)⁹⁷, the city of mortals (*civitas mortalium*)⁹⁸, the demon-worshipping city (*daemonicola civitas*)⁹⁹, the city of the devil (*civitas diaboli*).¹⁰⁰

The city of the devil, which apocalyptically means Rome in Augustine, persecutes the city of God.¹⁰¹ Indeed, throughout all time, the members of these two cities are in opposition. From the beginning of the world to the end of time the wicked indeed persecute and harass the pilgrims to

⁹¹) *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹²) *DCD.*, XVI.17. ; XVIII.2. ; XVIII.22. ; XVIII.27. Cf. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 96-97.

⁹³) *Conf.*, IX.xiii.37. ; X.xxxv.56. ; XII.xvi.23. ; XIII.ix.10.

⁹⁴) *Conf.*, II.iii.8.

⁹⁵) *DCD.*, XVIII.1.

⁹⁶) *DCD.*, XVIII.41 and 51. ; XX.11.

⁹⁷) *DCD.*, XX.9.

⁹⁸) *DCD.*, XVIII.2.

⁹⁹) *DCD.*, XVIII.2.

¹⁰⁰) *DCD.*, XVII.16. and 20.

¹⁰¹) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 129.

heaven.¹⁰² Thus, in Augustine the two antithetic cities are Jerusalem and Babylon.¹⁰³ The people in the city of God and in the city of the earth are antithetic through the whole history until the last judgement. We can find nothing which the two cities have in common.¹⁰⁴

3.1.2. The Meaning of the Two Cities

The opposed two cities, which are respectively ruled by Christ and by Satan, will be separated on the Day of Judgement. However, the cities continue in this earth, because they are intermingled in this earth, namely in *saeculum*.¹⁰⁵

For Augustine the City of God and the earthly city are ultimately eschatological entities. He considers the City of God as an *ecclesia*.¹⁰⁶ The congregation is already the kingdom of God. However, it has not yet reached its fulfillment.¹⁰⁷ Thus the historical congregation is the city of God on this earth, a sojourner at present until the last day. The earthly City, which is considered as the earthly state, especially Rome, in Augustine, persecutes the City of God now.¹⁰⁸

On this earth the City of God sojourns as an alien. I think this identification is a fundamental part of Augustine's theory on church and state, even though he showed a inconsistent attitude to the state, depending on his situation. In *De Civitate Dei* he uses these words, namely *peregrinari*¹⁰⁹, *peregrinus*¹¹⁰, and *peregrinatio*¹¹¹ very frequently. We also find the same meaning

¹⁰²) H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York and London, 1963), 31-2.

¹⁰³) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 18.

¹⁰⁴) *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁰⁵) *DCD.*, I.35.

¹⁰⁶) For example, "... civitas Dei quae est sancta ecclesia ..." (VIII.24.) ; "... civitatem Dei, hoc est eius ecclesiam ..." (XIII.16.) ; "... civitas Dei, hoc est ecclesiae ..." (XV.26.) ; "...ad Christum et eius ecclesiam quae civitas Dei est ..." (XVI.2.) etc. Cf. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 227 and note 593.

¹⁰⁷) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 124-27.

¹⁰⁸) *Ibid.*, 129-131.

¹⁰⁹) It can be translated as "to sojourn abroad, to be absent, to be an alien, to wander, to peregrinate." See J. van Oort, 131. ff. Especially J. van Oort gives abundant examples of these words in its context in his *Peregrinatio: een onderzoek naar Augustine's civitatesleer en zijn gedachten over de vreemdelingschap van de Christen in zijn*

in his *Confessions*.¹¹²

However, it is not true to say that these meanings of Augustine imply an absolute rejection of earthly life. We have to remember that, for Augustine, the two cities are intermingled in this *saeculum*. In the eschaton they will be separated and the absolute contrast will be entirely shown.¹¹³ Thus the citizens of the City of God also participate in the works of this world. They “use” the earthly peace (*pax terrena*). But they aim to “enjoy” the eternal peace of God (*pax aeterna Dei*) in the heavenly city.¹¹⁴ According to Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, the pagan Rome and the Christian one are not essentially different in that they both are used for the earthly peace alone. The City of God on this earth is now peregrinating under persecution. The citizens of the *civitas Dei* are suffering from public harshness or hypocrisy by the earthly city. But the Church will triumph over them with endurance.¹¹⁵

3.2. Church and State

According to our research, the antithesis of the City of God and the earthly city is absolutely evident in Augustine’s thoughts. The two cities are interwoven in this *saeculum*. However, they will eventually be separated in the end. For him, the characteristics of the two cities are essentially distinctive. Thus, if we follow Augustine’s theory, Church and State had to be distinguished in this world. The Roman empire, which was Babylon in Augustine, should not make any coercion to the Church, which was Jerusalem, and the Church should not either, because they are absolutely antithetic. In this *saeculum* the church and the state go parallel to the last day. The identification of the members of the City of God was important to him. Even though they live in this world, they are not citizens of this world but sojourners.

In fact, the essence of the relation between Church and State in Augustine was the problem

geschrift De Civitate Dei (Houten(U), 1978), 59-7. and also his *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 132-38.

¹¹⁰) It means “alien, foreign” as an adjective, and “alien, foreigner, non-citizen” as a noun.

¹¹¹) The meaning of this word is “journey or stay abroad, status of being an alien, pilgrimage”.

¹¹²) *Conf.*, XII.xvi.23.

¹¹³) R.A. Markus, *saeculum: History and Society in the Theology*, 71. 158.

¹¹⁴) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 142-150.

¹¹⁵) *DCD*, XVIII.53 and XIX.4.

of the coercion of schismatics by the State.¹¹⁶ Donatists' political development forced upon Augustine considerations about coercion. The grave question was, how far it is permissible to use the power of the state for the establishment of Christian unity.¹¹⁷ He gradually showed approval of state pressure, depending on the political situation.¹¹⁸

As we have already seen, the Donatist dispute was a matter of the Church's attitude to the world, rather than of dogma. During the time of Parmenian, who was the Donatist bishop of Carthage from A.D. 369 to 391, the Donatists reached a highpoint in North Africa. Especially under the revolt of Gildo from 386 to 398, Gildo and the Donatists became the real leaders in Africa.¹¹⁹ Augustine became a Roman Catholic bishop of Hippo in 395, and he was making a disputation with the Donatists. There was no possibility of help from the empire for Augustine. In these days, Augustine argues that the Church must deal with them only by argument and persuasion and not by threats of state coercion.¹²⁰ Augustine showed a similar attitude to the political power with Optatus, who became an ally of Gildo. Like Optatus, Augustine appealed to the Donatists as "brethren, fellow believers in Christ, listening to the same Gospel, singing the same Psalms, intoning the same Alleluia, responding with the same 'Amen'."¹²¹

However, Gildo's revolt against the Roman Empire failed in 398. The situation was entirely changed. Augustine changed his attitude to the State too. After the fourth Council in Carthage in 399 he openly mentioned the Donatists as "heresy."¹²² He argued that the Church had the right to ask the political authorities for protection against the "heresy," namely the Donatist sect. At last he even insisted that the Church had a duty as well as a right to ask the State to punish them. Now, Christian kings had an obligation to use their power to protect and support the Catholic

¹¹⁶) H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, 174.

¹¹⁷) For Augustine, outside the unity of the one Catholic Church, there are no acts of love and no true peace. F.W. Dillistone, "The Anti-Donatist Writings", in: *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine* (Ed.) R.W. Battenhouse (Grand Rapids, 1955/1979), 186.

¹¹⁸) G.G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950), 127-135.

¹¹⁹) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 193-226.

¹²⁰) H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, 214-15.

¹²¹) W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church.*, 239-40.

¹²²) *Ibid.*, 240-41.

Church against Donatism according to Augustine.¹²³ The Donatists began to suffer from persecutions by the secular authorities.

This attitude of Augustine to the State seems to be different from his thought of the two separated cities. How can we understand this inconsistency in Augustine's thought on church and state?

According to R.A. Markus, Augustine's appeal to the Roman secular authority was not in the context of his theory of Church and State. Markus argues that it has to be understood as a "*disciplina*" in his ecclesiology. However, I think that this cannot be a full explanation of the fact that Augustine called the Donatists "brethren," sharing in the common faith.¹²⁴

If we follow J. van Oort, in Augustine the Christian *imperium* has a meaning in connection with the suppression of heresy. For J. van Oort, if a Christian becomes an emperor, he is called upon to devote his power to the dissemination of the true religion.¹²⁵ But this argument seems to be inconsistent with Augustine's essential thought of the independence of church and state. Thus, they are not enough to account for Augustine's changed attitude.

4 Conclusion

We have thus arrived at the conclusion of this chapter. Augustine, indeed, aimed to write no systematic book concerning church and state. His thought was developed through a series of responses in the given situations of his whole life. Therefore, I argue that Augustine's idea and its development ought to be examined in connection with the North African ideas, the political situations, and various elements which influenced him through his whole life.

Behind Augustine's thoughts on church and state, there was a North African background which emphasized the antithesis of the two. Following Tertullian and Cyprian, he held a negative attitude to the state or the world. I also found this thought in the Donatists which Augustine shared. Augustine's idea of the separation of church and state was also reinforced by his impression in his youth from Manichaeism which had a Jewish-background.

¹²³) H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, 214-16.

¹²⁴) R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 133-53.

¹²⁵) J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 154-63. See, especially, 160.

Nevertheless, I think that Neo-Platonism, Ambrose, and the tradition of the Western church strongly influenced him after his conversion. In my opinion, in the relation of church and state they had an impact upon Augustine in two ways.

Firstly, Ambrose taught Augustine a thought of immaterial reality, a non-spatial, nontangible way of being, proper to God and the soul, which was a revolutionary idea to Augustine. This was a thought reflected by the Neo-Platonic element. The church was the body of Christ. The union with Christ was the union with Christ and his people. Thus for Augustine the unity with church and the unity with the Sacraments were the most important concept. The division of this unity meant the tearing apart of the body of Christ. It was heretic and demonic for him. Augustine believed that the Sacraments really work within the traditional Catholic church, so that, in his thinking, the dissenters should return to the unity of the church, even by the coercion of the state. Because he felt that there was little possibility to make the Donatists turn back, he accepted and justified that the Roman Law or the legal force of the state should press them. Augustine conceived that the Emperor had a right to intervene to solve the division of the African church, and as a Christian the emperor had the duty to practise it, but he rejected capital punishment.

Ambrose, an influential councillor of the emperor, linked the Western church to the Roman empire. It was this attitude that, secondly, made a strong impression on him. Ambrose's aim was to bind Rome to orthodox Christianity against paganism, Judaism, and Arianism. Thus for Ambrose the state was a gift of God. The emperor was a supporter of the church. What Augustine learned from Ambrose was that the emperor is within the church.¹²⁶

As a whole, I think Augustine's ecclesiology, rooted in the North African circumstances, developed in the direction of the universal and one church by the influence from the early Catholicism of Ambrose. However, there still was a North African element, namely the antithesis of church and state, in mind. Moreover, when he saw the chaos of the late Roman empire, he seemed to expect little of the state. Thus, he did not teach so strong a concept of theocracy as Calvin did later on. I think, Augustine's idea did not go so far as the Middle Ages went, although his ideas were used by the people of the Middle Ages.

¹²⁶ W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York, 1985), 159-160.