

I. Augustine of Hippo

A. Background:

1. Born 354 AD in Tagaste, North Africa. Parents: Mother, Monica, was devout Christian, father was a pagan Roman official.
2. Education: Studied rhetoric and philosophy. Became professor of rhetoric. Places of study/teaching: Carthage, Rome, Milan.
3. Philosophical influences: Manicheism (dualism), Neoplatonism (emanations of the One).
4. Had concubine and son, Adeodatus.

B. Conversion and Ministry:

1. Began to listen to Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who interpreted difficult scripture passages allegorically, which resolved Augustine's reservations about certain philosophically "crude" biblical passages.
2. Conversion account in his Confessions - experience in garden "Take and Read" (Foster, Devotional Classics, 52-55). Was baptized, resigned from teaching post, and returned to North Africa to live in monastic retreat along with his son & mother. Gave up his concubine. Mother & son died. Setup comfortable monastic lifestyle at Cassiacum.
3. While visiting Hippo, he was solicited by Valerius to serve as bishop of Hippo.

II. Four Major Issues of Augustine's Ministry

A. The Problem of Evil (Theodicy)

1. Context - Dualism of Manicheism suggested humans did not have free will - their fate was determined. Evil was an equal entity with good and related to matter, while good related to the invisible realm.
2. Action/Actors - Manicheism vs. the doctrine of free will.

3. Response - Augustine - Evil is a negation or moving away from the good, not a created entity, and is based in our bad decisions.
Answers question: “How can a good God create evil?”

B. Sacking of Rome

1. Context - Rome was sacked by Alaric the Goth in 410. Christians wondered how God could allow evil to happen to his followers. Pagans said God had allowed it because Christians had abandoned the old gods.
2. Action/Actors - Augustine lays groundwork for understanding opposing sides in this world represented by the city of God and the earthly city (built on love of God vs. love of self).
3. Response - (City of God) - There is a struggle between these two cities in which the city of God will always prevail and the human city based on love of self will pass away (human kingdoms in history).

C. Donatist Controversy

1. Context - During persecutions, some Christians had recanted their faith. Donatist movement in Africa stated lapsed priests could not administer sacraments and sacraments received by anyone who was lapsed were invalid. Some Donatists (circumcellions) rioted in support of their beliefs.
2. Actions/Actors - Donatists who rioted, Emperor who sought justification from Augustine to mediate conflict and quell Donatist rebellion.
3. Response - (Works of St. Augustine, “Of Baptism”, IV, 16, 18; McGrath, *The Christian Theology Reader*, 293-4) Augustine develops doctrine regarding efficacy of sacraments. Sacraments are holy and not determined by person who administers them. Augustine develops guidelines for “Just War” - 1) not for exercise of power, but for just cause; 2) must be waged by recognized govt. authority; 3) motive must be love.

D. Pelagian Controversy

1. Context - British monk Pelagius taught that humans had complete free will and thus could/should overcome sin. His point was if humans weren't truly free, how could God convict us of sin since our sinful acts rose from our trapped nature and we shouldn't be held responsible for them.
2. Actions/Actors - Augustine (in his later years) & Pelagius. Series of writings and sermons back and forth addressing elements related to free will, human nature, and grace.
3. Response - (McGrath, *The Christian Theology Reader*, 217-224; McGrath, *Introduction to Christian Theology*, 426-434; McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 79-85) Augustine - human free will, created good by God, was corrupted by inherited sin nature by Adam. Thus, sin is only overcome by the initiation of God's activity.

III. Augustine's Doctrine of Grace

- A. Original Sin - humanity infected as result of Adam's disobedience. (*We sin because we are sinners, we are not sinners because we sin*).
- B. Grace - three categories of grace's functioning (resurfaces in Luther):
 1. Prevenient grace - God's grace is active in human lives before they are converted, preparing the way to draw them to Christ.
 2. Operative grace - Conversion occurs because God operates upon the sinner to draw him/her to Christ (irresistible grace).
 3. Cooperative grace - grace which occurs in life of converted believer as a cooperative effort between God and the believer to move him/her forward in the process of regeneration.

C. Grace & the Doctrine of Predestination (resurfaces in Calvin)

1. Limited election - grace is only given to some (the elect). Focused on those who are elected for salvation. Salvation is not universal.
2. Does not indicate that some are predestined to damnation (*an issue which comes up in followers of Calvin supra & infralapsarianism - 453-454*).
3. Implications of Augustine's teachings toward double predestination were taught in medieval period by Gregory of Rimini, proponent of the modern Augustinian school.