

PRINCIPLES OF MENTORING SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE PASTORAL
MINISTRY OF AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

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ABSTRACT

Though Augustine is highly regarded for his contribution to philosophy and theology, his primary occupation for the last forty years of his life was serving as the bishop of Hippo Regius. A highly personal man with a natural inclination to friendship, Augustine was a bishop-monk who served the church while living in a monastic community with other clergy. Hence, he made monks out of his clergy and regarded the monastery as a group that existed to serve the church. Through intimate contact with the clergy of Hippo as well as spiritual leaders of the fourth and fifth century African church, Augustine emerged as a mentor to these leaders influencing them in their spiritual lives while practically resourcing them in their ministries. After proposing an early Christian model of mentoring spiritual leaders and discussing the background of mentoring in the third and fourth century church prior to Augustine's episcopate, this study treats the primary forms and principles which characterized Augustine's mentoring toward supporting the claim that he was both deliberate and effective at mentoring spiritual leaders.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Works of Augustine

I am following the abbreviation scheme found in: 'Augustine's Works,' in Fitzgerald, Alan, ed., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), xxxv-xlii.

<i>c. Acad.</i>	<i>Contra Academicos</i>
<i>adul. conjug.</i>	<i>De adulterinis coniugiis</i>
<i>agon.</i>	<i>De agone Christiano</i>
<i>an. et or.</i>	<i>De anima et eius origine</i>
<i>quant.</i>	<i>De animae quantitate</i>
<i>bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo</i>
<i>b. vita</i>	<i>De beata uita</i>
<i>b. conjug.</i>	<i>De bono coniugali</i>
<i>b. vid.</i>	<i>De bono uiduitatis</i>
<i>brev.</i>	<i>Breuiulus conlationes cum Donatistis</i>
<i>cat. rud.</i>	<i>De catechizandis rudibus</i>
<i>cath.</i>	<i>Ad catholicos fratres</i>
<i>civ. Dei</i>	<i>De ciuitate Dei</i>
<i>conf.</i>	<i>Confessiones</i>
<i>corrept.</i>	<i>De correptione et gratia</i>
<i>Cresc.</i>	<i>Ad Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati</i>
<i>cura mort.</i>	<i>De cura pro mortuis gerenda</i>
<i>div. qu.</i>	<i>De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus</i>
<i>doc. Chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>Dulc. qu.</i>	<i>De octo Dulciti quaestionibus</i>
<i>Emer.</i>	<i>Gesta cum Emerito</i>
<i>en. Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>
<i>ep. (epp.)</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>ep. Jo.</i>	<i>In epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos tractatus</i>
<i>c. ep. Parm.</i>	<i>Contra epistolam Parmeniani</i>
<i>c. ep. Pel.</i>	<i>Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum</i>
<i>ep. Rm. inch.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Romanos inchoate exposition</i>
<i>exc. urb.</i>	<i>De excidio urbis Romae</i>
<i>exp. prop. Rm.</i>	<i>Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula Apostoli ad Romanos</i>
<i>c. Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum Manicheum</i>
<i>f. et. op.</i>	<i>De fide et operibus</i>
<i>f. et symb.</i>	<i>De fide et symbolo</i>
<i>c. Gaud.</i>	<i>Contra Gaudentium</i>
<i>gest. Pel.</i>	<i>De gestis Pelagii</i>
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad litteram</i>
<i>Gn. adv. Man.</i>	<i>De Genesi aduersus Manicheos</i>
<i>gr. et lib. arb.</i>	<i>De gratia et libero arbitrio</i>
<i>gr. et pecc. or.</i>	<i>De gratia Christi et de peccato originali</i>
<i>haer.</i>	<i>De haeresibus</i>
<i>imm. an.</i>	<i>De immortalitate animae</i>
<i>Jo. ev. tr.</i>	<i>In Iohannis euangelium tractatus</i>
<i>c. Jul.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum</i>

<i>c. Jul. imp.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum</i>
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio</i>
<i>c. litt. Pet.</i>	<i>Contra litteras Petiliani</i>
<i>mag.</i>	<i>De magistro</i>
<i>c. Max.</i>	<i>Contra Maximium Arianum</i>
<i>mor.</i>	<i>De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum</i>
<i>mus.</i>	<i>De musica</i>
<i>nat. b.</i>	<i>De natura boni</i>
<i>nat. et gr.</i>	<i>De natura et gratia</i>
<i>op. mon.</i>	<i>De opera monachorum</i>
<i>ord.</i>	<i>De ordine</i>
<i>orig. an.</i>	<i>De origine animae</i>
<i>pecc. mer.</i>	<i>De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum</i>
<i>perf. just.</i>	<i>De perfectione iustitiae hominis</i>
<i>perserv.</i>	<i>De dono perseuerantiae</i>
<i>praed. sanct.</i>	<i>De praedestinatione sanctorum</i>
<i>c. Prisc.</i>	<i>Contra Priscillianistas</i>
<i>ps. c. Don.</i>	<i>Psalmus contra partem Donati</i>
<i>qu. Ev.</i>	<i>Quaestiones Euangeliorum</i>
<i>qu. Mt.</i>	<i>Quaestiones XVI in Matthaeum</i>
<i>Reg.</i>	<i>Regula ad seruos Dei</i>
<i>Retr.</i>	<i>Retractationes</i>
<i>c. Sec.</i>	<i>Contra Secundium Manicheum</i>
<i>sent. Jac.</i>	<i>De sentential Iacobi</i>
<i>s.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
<i>Simpl.</i>	<i>Ad Simplicianum</i>
<i>sol.</i>	<i>Soliloquia</i>
<i>spec.</i>	<i>Speculum</i>
<i>ymb. cat.</i>	<i>De symbolo ad catechumenos</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>
<i>util. cred.</i>	<i>De utilitate credendi</i>
<i>vera rel.</i>	<i>De uera religione</i>
<i>virg.</i>	<i>De sancta uirginitate</i>

Works of Other Early Christian Writers:

Basil

<i>Hom. .</i>	<i>Homiliae</i>
<i>Reg. brev.</i>	<i>Regulae breuius tractatae</i>
<i>Reg. fus.</i>	<i>Regulae fusius tractatae</i>

Cyprian

<i>Ad Donat.</i>	<i>Ad Donatum</i>
<i>Ad Demet.</i>	<i>Ad Demetrianum</i>
<i>De unit.</i>	<i>De unitate ecclesiae</i>
<i>De laps.</i>	<i>De lapsis</i>
<i>Vita Cypriani</i>	<i>Vita Caeceli Cypriani</i>

Gregory of Nazianzus

Orat. *Orationes*

All

ep./epp. *epistula/epistulae*

Volumes and Collections of Writings:

ACW *Ancient Christian Writers*
ATTA *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*
CCSL *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*
FC *Fathers of the Church*
MA *Miscellanea Agostiniano*
PL *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*
TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
WSA *Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*

Journals

AugStud *Augustinian Studies*
EstAug *Estudios Agostinos*
JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS *Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
MonStud *Monastic Studies*
RechAug *Recherches Augustiniennes*
SP *Studia Patristica*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Aurelius Augustinus of Hippo (354-430) lived well and his legacy lives on today. His thought, carefully preserved in books, sermons and letters, has impacted theologians like Calvin (1509-1564), historians like Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406), and virtually every amateur and professional philosopher of the last millennia. His contribution continues to stimulate scholarship today in those fields of study. He was a prolific writer who authored over one hundred books, most of which were composed after a long day at work as the bishop of the church of Hippo Regius.¹ His genius is even more significant because he grew up in a family of relatively modest resources in a back water of Roman Africa far from the cultivated learning centers of the Roman Empire.²

His thought and eloquence are justifiably well lauded. Yet I find his person, character, and ministry even more remarkable. He had a sincere faith that remained consistent and passionate from the time of his conversion in Italy in 386 until his death in Hippo some forty-four years later.³ Yet, unlike the eremitic monks who fled the world for the solitude of the desert, this African pastor was always in the company of friends. He made his profession of faith, something regarded in the present day as highly personal, in the presence of a close friend.⁴ At the monastery in Hippo, where he and other clergy as well as servants of God (*serui Dei*) lived, he deliberately left

¹ *Vita* 27.

² *S.* 356.13.

³ *Conf.* 1.1; *sol.* 1.1.5; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, pp. 34-5.

⁴ *Conf.* 8.8.19; 11.27; 12.30.

his door open to visitors and his table was set with extra places.⁵ In short, his life was characterized by friendship.

My particular interest relates to the spiritual impact Augustine had on other spiritual leaders of his day. Robert Clinton defines a spiritual leader as ‘a person with a God-given capacity and a God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group.’⁶ In Augustine’s day, spiritual leaders included bishops, priests, deacons, as well as sub-deacons, acolytes, and *lectores*.⁷ As leaders, they were men set apart to serve the people of God and carry out the responsibilities of the church. The present inquiry will consider how Augustine influenced these leaders in their training and preparation for ministry. My thesis is that Augustine effectively mentored spiritual leaders, set them apart for needed ministries in the church, and that many aspects of his mentoring will serve as instructive for the modern mentor. While he did not leave behind a particular manual for how to be a spiritual leader, his example and writings provide significant evidence toward understanding his principles of mentoring.

I am writing this work first for pastors and spiritual leaders who want to mentor and equip others. In evangelical Christian circles, where I tend to most frequent, mentoring and training has gained increased importance in recent years.⁸ The large number of books, seminars, stadium events, prayer breakfasts, and fishing trips testify to an increased emphasis on mentoring. The present generation of pastors seems to be more interested in matters of the heart like integrity, humility,

⁵ S. 355.2; *ep.* 38.2; *Vita* 22.2, 6; cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 239.

⁶ Cf. R. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, p. 245

⁷ Bacchi (L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry in the Letters of Augustine of Hippo*, p. 68) writes that Augustine limited the ordained ministry to bishops, presbyters, and deacons. For the purpose of this study, I am not so much interested in these particular limits on the ministry but Augustine’s interactions with spiritual leaders or clergy in general.

⁸ Clinton and Stanley cite the increased interest in mentoring in America not only to Christian ministry but to nearly every occupational field. Cf. R. Clinton and P. Stanley, *Connections: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, p. 18.

faithfulness, personal holiness, spiritual hunger, and service than the skills normally associated with ministry — preaching, evangelizing, teaching, administrating, and visiting. Perhaps the present generation is tired of clouds without water that present a façade of Christianity demonstrated by outward skills and busy-ness while the inner man is neglected and true spirituality dwarfed. I believe Augustine has something to offer those pursuing authenticity and wanting to preach what they practice.⁹ My hope is that today's mentors will find hope, inspiration, and practical suggestions for how to mentor an emerging generation of spiritual leaders. At the same time, this study will not be without a critical evaluation of Augustine's mentoring including areas of weakness.

Secondly, I am writing to students and teachers of Christian history who would find this study a complement to present knowledge. Having surveyed much of the literature on Augustine's work as a pastor or bishop, I have yet to find any concentrated study on how he mentored other spiritual leaders.¹⁰ So, I am convinced that the fruit of this study will provide an original contribution to our knowledge in this area.

Finally, I am writing for normal people who live in places like Annaba, Souk Ahras, and La Marsa.¹¹ I would love for modern Tunisians and Algerians to gain a greater appreciation for what happened between the time of Hannibal and Uqba bin Nafi al-Fihri's conquest of Kairouan in the seventh century. My desire is that the contribution of Augustine and the church in North Africa would become regarded as more than *athar romani* (Roman ruins).

⁹ My point is not to diminish the need for skills in ministry as spiritual mentoring seeks to develop both skills and character.

¹⁰ Hamman, writing in 1989, alleges that no study exists on training the clergy in the entire early church: '... la formation du clergé dans l'antiquité chrétienne. Il n'existe ni étude ni monographie sur le problème.' Cf. A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 279.

¹¹ These are modern Hippo (Annaba), Tagaste (Souk Ahras), and Carthage (La Marsa and Carthage).

I should note what I will and will not address. First, I only intend to focus on Augustine's spiritual formation of men who were spiritual leaders occupying a clerical office. This does not mean that he did not have an edifying impact on women, particularly the nuns and virgins. Yet this study will have to be taken up by someone else. Though women who serve as spiritual leaders will find points of relevant application, the case studies will be limited to Augustine's relationship with men.

A second limit is that this study will not address Augustine's discipleship of the laity in his congregation in Hippo. Certainly, he thoroughly resourced them through sermons, catechisms, letters, legal judgments, and advice. However, what has been published regarding Augustine's general pastoral ministry will have to suffice for now. Besides his own congregation at Hippo, Augustine also influenced other laymen by correspondence. Many of these included religious men and women who had abandoned the secular world to become *serui Dei*.¹² These relationships will not be treated either.

The evidence pertaining to Augustine's life reveals a deeply personal and passionate man who was committed to people and friendship. He was never alone. Though he came from modest roots, his mind was extraordinary. As a servant of the church, his thoughts, which were dictated into books and letters and formulated into sermons, served to edify the church in Hippo, Africa, and beyond. In light of what we already know about Augustine, I am persuaded that a study on his forms and principles of mentoring spiritual leaders will be a valuable contribution to Augustinian scholarship as well as the study of mentoring, discipleship, and spiritual

¹² The breakdown between clergy, *serui Dei*, and the laity is aptly explained in D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine*, p. 368.

formation in the early church. So, let us begin to consider the life of one we should ‘emulate and imitate in this world.’¹³

I. What is ‘Mentoring’?

It will be helpful at this point to move toward establishing an early Christian model of mentoring as reflected in the earliest Christian writings. Though the term itself has only come into vogue in North America in recent years, the concept of mentoring is an ancient one. In certain African cultures, mentoring has meant things like a boy becoming a man, a young man learning a skill like playing a drum, or a novice apprenticing under a master in a trade like carpentry. Milavec cites examples in Greek culture of novices being mentored in basket weaving, hunting with a bow, or pottery making.¹⁴ Today in America, mentoring has become synonymous with counseling, advising, training, coaching, and apprenticeship while some contexts include trades, sports, education, and the fine arts. Though the contexts and the cultures may vary, mentoring in essence means that a master, expert, or someone with a significant amount of experience is imparting knowledge and skill to a novice in an atmosphere of discipline, commitment, and accountability.

Mentoring, also commonly referred to as discipleship, has been an important element to the Christian community since its inception. The nature of Christianity as a missionary faith — where the *euangelion* (good news) is proclaimed and people are invited to believe and join the community of faith — necessitates mentoring.¹⁵ The Christian claim, as reflected in the early texts, is that men are spiritually ‘dead in their

¹³ *Vita* 31.11. All English trans. of *Vita* are taken from, J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*.

¹⁴ Cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis and Commentary*, p. 47. For more domains of mentoring in the Hellenistic world, see M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 34.

¹⁵ Matthew cites among the final words of Jesus to his followers the commands to ‘make disciples of all nations’ and ‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,’ Mt. 28:18-20. All English references are from the *New American Standard Bible*, the Lockman Foundation, 1995. Used by permission.

trespasses and sins,¹⁶ and that a response of faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ allows one to be ‘made alive together with Christ.’¹⁷ Luke recorded the post-Easter evangelists announcing a gospel that included a call to: ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.’¹⁸ Hence, faith in Christ is also considered a new spiritual birth.¹⁹ This new beginning not only implies the washing away and forgiveness of sins but also the beginning of a spiritual transformation of motive and behavior. The author of Ephesians wrote: ‘For by grace you have been saved through faith’.²⁰ The English rendering of ‘you have been saved’ is the Greek word *sesosmenoi* and is parsed as a perfect passive participle meaning that it is an event which has occurred in the past and now has ongoing results. So an amplified translation might read: ‘you have been saved, you are being saved and you shall be saved.’ The goal of the Christian faith then is that one would be saved to the point of attaining the ‘measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.’²¹ Thus, the Christian who has started at ‘dead in trespasses and sin’ and is in a journey of rehabilitation toward ‘the fullness of Christ’ is surely in need of help in the way of mentoring in order to arrive at the goal of his faith. Milavec, commenting on the necessary role of a mentor in his study of the *Didache*, asserts: ‘it is apparent that one does not arrive at the skills necessary to “love those who hate you” . . . or to “judge with justice” . . . merely by being told to do so on one or two occasions.’²²

In light of the inherent need for mentoring or discipleship in Christianity, it seems best to work toward a model of mentoring by focusing on the early texts that

¹⁶ Eph. 2:1.

¹⁷ Eph. 2:5.

¹⁸ Acts 2:38; 3:12-26; 4:2; 5:42.

¹⁹ Jn. 3:1-8.

²⁰ *Tē gar kariti este sesosmenoi dia pisteōs* (Eph. 2:8).

²¹ Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28.

²² The *Didache* was a discipleship program for Gentile believers developed between 50 and 70 A.D. Cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis and Commentary*, p. 47; *Didache*, 1:3c; 4:3.

show Jesus' work as a mentor at the outset of the Christian movement as well as texts that reveal Paul mentoring men in the initial expansion of the movement. The goal of this section, therefore, is to characterize mentoring in the early Christian movement while at the same time provide an historical context for mentoring in the early church prior to the ministry of Augustine.

1. Terms Related to Mentoring

While no exact equivalent for the term 'mentoring' exists in early Christian texts, there are however, other associated words that work together to express the concept. For example, we find verbs like 'to make disciples' (*matheteuō*); 'to teach' (*didaskō*); 'to train' (*didaxō*); 'to be sound' (*hugiainō*); and 'to follow' (*akaloutheō*); as well as nouns like 'disciple' (*mathētēs*); 'teacher' (*didaskalos*); 'imitator' (*mimētēs*); and 'training' (*didachē*). Let us briefly consider the significance of each word in the context of the ministries of Jesus and Paul.

The verb 'to make disciples,' *matheteuō*, is found only a few times in early Christian writings.²³ Though rare in its overall usage, the most significant occurrence seems to be in Matthew's account of Jesus' final commission to the Twelve.²⁴ We also find it in reference to the outcome of Paul's preaching in the city of Derbe.²⁵ In both cases, disciple making was arrived at by 'teaching them to observe all that I commanded you' or by preaching the 'gospel.'²⁶

Unlike *matheteuō*, the noun *mathētēs* is found 264 times in the four Gospel accounts and Acts of the Apostles.²⁷ *Mathētēs* occurs in its plural form (*mathētai*) in

²³ Cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, pp. 160-2.

²⁴ 'Make disciples' is the key verb in the verses of the final commission and occurs in the imperative form: 'Make disciples of all nations' (*matheteusatē panta ta ethnē*). Mt. 28:19. The Twelve were of course eleven at this point.

²⁵ Acts 14:21. In Mt. 13:52; 27:57 it refers to one who 'becomes a disciple.'

²⁶ Mt. 28:20; Acts 14:21.

²⁷ For a survey of how *mathētēs* or the notion of disciple is used outside of the noted early Christian texts, see J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.41-5. For a thorough treatment of *mathētēs* in Hellenistic culture

239 of these instances. Hence, its significant repetition in only five books strongly suggests that ‘disciple’ was an important concept for the early Christian writers as they accounted for the origins and early spread of the Jesus movement.

The use of *mathētēs*, however, was not limited to the ministry of Jesus. Mark and the fourth Gospel recorded the Pharisees having disciples and that the Jews generally regarded themselves as disciples of Moses.²⁸ Each Gospel account also showed John the Baptist having disciples²⁹ while the fourth Gospel recorded John essentially giving away his disciples and orienting them toward Jesus.³⁰ Thus, it seems that John the Baptist’s teaching and disciple making was an intermediary step toward the ministry of Jesus.³¹ When ‘disciples’ was used in Acts, it referred once to Paul and Barnabas in their missionary efforts but the rest of the time it was synonymous with Christians in general.³² Luke reinforced this by writing that the ‘disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.’³³ So, indirectly, the disciples mentioned in Acts, could also be considered disciples of Jesus.

The remaining references to *mathētēs* in its plural form (*mathētai*) in the Gospel accounts refer exclusively to those who were personally with Jesus. Three of

as well as the concept of a disciple in the Jewish Scriptures, see M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, pp. 11-125.

²⁸ Mk. 2:18; Jn. 9:28; cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 131.

²⁹ Mt. 9:14; 11:2; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 5:33; 7:18, 19; Jn. 1:35; 3:25.

³⁰ Jn. 1:35-41.

³¹ Jn. 3:30. Meier alleges that Jesus was actually a disciple of John the Baptist prior to his public ministry. He makes the claim on the grounds that Jesus’ baptism by John implied he had become a follower of John and also that Jesus adopted some of John’s ascetic habits. He also rejects what he considers the theologizing of the fourth Gospel in which Jesus is elevated over John the Baptist by the author. I find Meier’s argument unsatisfactory because: (1) He fails to establish his case that accepting baptism immediately made one a disciple of the baptizer. What are we then to conclude when one of Jesus’ disciples baptized? (2) The heart of his argument is his rejection of the alleged redaction and theologizing of the fourth Gospel that elevates Jesus. I am wary of one reading too much into the motive of the author of the fourth Gospel. (3) Even if the fourth Gospel is glossed to elevate Jesus (i.e. Jn. 1:15-37), both Mt. 3:13 and Lk. 3:16-17 seem to corroborate Jesus having a higher stature than the Baptist. Meier himself depends on such corroboration to support the claims he advances throughout his fine book. See Meier’s argument in J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2.116-30.

³² Acts 13:52; 6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 19, 25, 27, 38; 11:26, 29; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 18:23, 27; 19:1, 9, 30; 20:1; 21:4, 6.

³³ Acts 11:26.

the Gospel writers depicted a larger group of disciples including some who parted company with Jesus after a while as they could no longer accept his teaching.³⁴ Luke recounted Jesus' interaction with a band of seventy followers whom he sent ahead of him to cities where he would be preaching.³⁵ Yet, the greatest significance given in the Gospels to Jesus and the notion of 'disciple' pertains to his relationship with the Twelve.³⁶ Meier, describing the three groups, writes: 'we imagine the followers of Jesus in terms of concentric circles: the "crowds" form the outer circle, the "disciples" the intermediate or middle circle, and the "Twelve" the inner circle.'³⁷

In light of the significant and repeated usage of *mathētēs* in the early Christian accounts that we have cited, it seems best to approach an understanding of mentoring by observing what was going on around the disciple or group of disciples on the journey toward the 'fullness of Christ.' What did a disciple receive from a mentor in this process?

Marshall broadly defines a disciple as 'the pupil of a teacher' indicating that learning is a key occupation of the disciple.³⁸ In one sense, this means that teaching of a cognitive nature was given that the disciple should apprehend and believe.³⁹ Jesus is called 'teacher' (*didaskalos*),⁴⁰ *rabbi*,⁴¹ or 'master' (*kyrios*)⁴² 151 times in

³⁴ Mt. 8:21; Lk. 6:17; 19:37; Jn. 6:60, 66.

³⁵ Lk. 10:1-17.

³⁶ Mt. 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 4:12, 15, 19, 22, 26; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47; Mk. 3:14, 16; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43; Lk. 6:13; 8:1; 9:1, 12; 18:31; 22:3; 22:47; Jn. 6:67, 70, 71; 20:24. Mark refers to them as *hoi dōdeka* while Matthew calls them *hoi dōdeka mathetai*. Cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, pp. 166-7.

³⁷ Cf. J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.21.

³⁸ Cf. I. Marshall, 'Disciple,' *New Bible Dictionary*, 285; Mt. 10:24, 25; Lk. 6:40.

³⁹ 'Learn' in a mere cognitive manner seems to be reflected in the rarely used term *manthano* which only occurs seven times in the Gospels and Acts (Mt. 9:13; 11:29; 24:32; Mk. 13:28; Jn. 6:45; 7:15; Acts 23:27). Cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, pp. 158-60.

⁴⁰ Mt. 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36; 26:18; Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 10:20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; 14:14; Lk. 3:12; 7:40; 8:39; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39, 21:7; 22:11; Jn. 1:38; 3:2; 8:4; 11:28; 13:13, 14; 20:16; cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope & Love*, p. 73.

⁴¹ Mt. 26:25, 49; Mk. 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; Jn. 1:38, 29; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8. Luke also used 'master' (*epistata*) in the same sense another six times. See Lk. 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13.

the Gospels and is depicted in the act of teaching (*didaskō*)⁴³ another forty-two times. What did his adherents believe that made them disciples? Indeed, Matthew recorded Jesus giving teachings of an ethical nature to the Twelve and the crowds in the Sermon on the Mount; Luke showed him privately instructing the Twelve on how to pray; while the fourth Gospel recorded the famous upper room discourse where Jesus teaches the Twelve and possibly others about love, prayer, and continuing in the faith after his departure.⁴⁴ Yet it seems, according to the Gospel writers, that what made someone a disciple of Jesus was not simply accepting his general teachings but believing in his identity as the Christ — the one who would atone for sins by his death, burial, and resurrection.⁴⁵ This confession was most succinctly rendered by Matthew in Peter's famous confession.⁴⁶ Though some of the Twelve were slow to grasp this point and many from the larger group rejected it entirely,⁴⁷ ultimately it was the identity of Jesus that was the focal point of the *euangelion* preached by Jesus in the Gospel accounts and what was proclaimed by the apostles in Acts.⁴⁸ Hence, the post-Easter disciples, whether they belonged to the Twelve or the broader group, were those who believed in his identity as the Christ.

While the identity of Jesus as the Christ was the core of belief for these early

⁴² *Kyrios* is essentially the Greek rendering of *rabbi*. Mt. 7:21-22; 8:2, 6, 8, 21, 25; 9:28; 12:8; 14:28, 30; 15:22, 25, 27; 16:22; 17:4, 15; 18:21; 20:30-31, 33; 21:3, 30; 24:42; 26:22. Mk. 2:28; 5:19; 7:28; 11:3; 16:19. Lk. 2:11; 5:8, 12; 6:5, 46; 7:6, 13; 9:54, 59, 61; 10:1, 17, 40-1; 11:1, 39; 12:41; 13:15, 23; 17:6, 37; 18:6, 41; 19:8, 31, 34; 22:33, 38, 49, 61; 24:34. Jn. 4:11, 15, 19, 49; 5:7; 6:34, 68, 8:11; 9:36, 38; 11:3, 12, 21, 27, 32, 34, 39; 13:6, 9, 13-14, 25, 36-7; 14:5, 8, 22; 15:15; 20:28; 21:7, 12, 15-17, 20-1; cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 98.

⁴³ Mt. 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:11; 13:54; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55; Mk. 1:21-2; 2:13; 4:1, 2, 6:2, 6, 34; 8:31; 9:31; 10:1; 11:1, 7; 12:14, 35; 14:49; Lk. 4:15, 31; 5:3, 17; 6:6; 13:10, 22; 19:47; 20:1, 21; 21:37; Jn. 6:59; 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20; 18:20.

⁴⁴ Mt. 5-7; Lk. 11:1-13; Jn. 13-17; cf. J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.2.

⁴⁵ 'The Christ' (*ho christos*) literally means 'anointed one' and is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *mashiah*. That the messiah would suffer and die is recounted in Dan. 9:25. Mt. 16:13-21; Mk. 8:27-33; 9:31; Lk. 9:18; Jn. 3:16; 4:39, 41; 6:69; 7:31; 8:24, 30; 11:25, 27; 13:17; 16:30; 20:31.

⁴⁶ Mt. 16:16.

⁴⁷ Mt. 16:22-3; Mk. 8:32-3; Jn. 6:60-6.

⁴⁸ Mt. 16:21; 17:12; Mk. 1:1; 8:31; 9:21; 14:9; Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 24:26-46; Acts 2:38; 3:12-26; 4:2; 5:42.

disciples, what other teaching contributed to a disciple's belief or understanding? Matthew recorded Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount saying, 'Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.'⁴⁹ In the statements that followed, Jesus is recorded several times quoting the Mosaic Law and then continuing with commentary and somewhat updated teaching on each subject.⁵⁰ That Jesus would fulfill the law or prophets meant that his teaching stemmed from the Hebrew Scriptures. Throughout the Gospel accounts, Jesus is recorded over and over teaching in the temple or synagogues where, as an unofficial rabbi,⁵¹ he would undoubtedly have been teaching from these Scriptures.⁵² Therefore, in addition to believing in the identity of Jesus as the Christ, a disciple would also have adhered to the moral and ethical teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures as taught by Jesus, as well as the updated or abrogated teaching like that contained in the Sermon on the Mount.

The apostles and evangelists who came after Jesus also seemed to follow Jesus' pattern of teaching. Luke wrote that Philip, Paul, and Apollos used the Hebrew Scriptures to present Jesus as the Christ.⁵³ A significant occupation of the apostles in Acts was teaching those who had joined the community of believers.⁵⁴ What do we know about the content of their teaching? The apostolic teaching, as we have noted, had at its core the identity of Jesus as the Christ. In fact, Luke used the term 'the word' (*ho logos*) interchangeably to mean both proclaiming Jesus as the Christ to

⁴⁹ Mt. 5:17.

⁵⁰ Mt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 35, 38, 43.

⁵¹ Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 13:54; 21:23; 26:55; Mk. 1:21; 6:2; 11:7; 12:35; 14:49; Lk. 4:15; 6:6; 13:10; 19:47; 20:1; 21:37; Jn. 6:59; 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20; 18:20; cf. I. Marshall, 'Disciple,' *New Bible Dictionary*, 285.

⁵² While Jesus did give ethical and moral teaching stemming from the Jewish tradition, it is noteworthy to mention that most of his own recorded references to scripture (*graphē*) make some connection to his identity as the Christ. See Mt. 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Mk. 12:10, 24; 14:49; Lk. 4:21; 24:27, 32, 45; Jn. 2:22; 5:39; 7:38, 42; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36, 37; 20:9.

⁵³ Acts 8:35; 17:22; 18:28.

⁵⁴ Acts 2:42; 6:2; 11:26; 15:22; 18:11; 20:20; 28:31.

non-believers⁵⁵ and teaching believers what appears to be more profound teaching regarding the Christian faith.⁵⁶ Perhaps the key to understanding the content of the apostles' teaching is to consider again how the mandate to make disciples at the end of Matthew was to be accomplished: 'teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.' The Gospel writers often depicted Jesus teaching the Twelve directly or at least have them present as he taught the crowds.⁵⁷ The three years that the Twelve spent learning from the rabbi Jesus surely provided them with a significant education in the ethical and moral teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, the members of the Twelve mentioned by Luke in Acts were well resourced to pass on the teachings of Jesus to those who joined the community of faith following Pentecost. They had essentially become disciples like the one described in Matthew's account: 'a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.'⁵⁸

The apostolic teaching that came from Jesus seems to have quickly passed on to the members of the community. This explains how believers like Barnabas, a native of Cyprus who was apparently living in Jerusalem around the time of Pentecost, and Priscilla and Aquila, who had been living as far away as Rome, were educated enough in the faith to teach emerging leaders like Paul and Apollos.⁵⁹

As the community of faith grew, one challenge that Luke and the epistle writers mentioned was the battle against heresy infiltrating the young churches.⁶⁰ Two

⁵⁵ Acts 2:41; 4:29, 31; 6:2, 4, 7; 8:4, 14, 25; 10:36; 11:1, 19; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 44, 46, 48, 49; 14:25; 15:7, 36; 16:6, 32; 17:11, 13; 18:5; 19:10, 20; 20:32, 38; 28:25.

⁵⁶ Acts 15:35; 18:11. The *Didache*, seems to act in a similar manner as its content included: Lord's Prayer (8:2), a Decalogue especially relevant to Gentile moral failures (2:2), as well as teaching regarding Christian conduct.

⁵⁷ Mt. 5-7; 9:37; 11:11; 16:5, 13, 20, 21, 24; 17:19; 19:23; 20:17; 26:1, 26; Mk. 4:34; 8:27, 33, 34; 9:28, 31; 10:23, 24; 12:43; Lk. 6:20; 9:18, 40, 43; 10:23; 11:1; 12:22; 16:1; 17:1, 22; 20:45; 22:11; Jn. 6:61; 13:5, 35; 15:18; 16:29; cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 144.

⁵⁸ Mt. 13:53; cf. D. Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 290.

⁵⁹ Acts 4:36; 18:2; 11:25-6; 18:26.

⁶⁰ Acts 15:1ff; Rom. 16:17-18; Gal. 1:6-7; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 4:1ff; 2 Tim. 4:3-4.

young pastors, Timothy and Titus, received letters in which they were exhorted to maintain ‘sound teaching’ (*hugiainousē didaskalia*) in the face of certain ascetic and Jewish teachings.⁶¹ What was meant by sound teaching? The clearest response comes in 1 Timothy where unsound teaching was described as ‘a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ.’⁶² So, it was the teachings of Jesus, ‘the things heard in the presence of many witnesses’⁶³ and apparently familiar to all church leaders and teachers, that were the standard for sound teaching. Secondly, 2 Timothy also accentuated the important role of the Scriptures for proper teaching in the face of heresy:

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.⁶⁴

The ‘sacred writings’ (*hiera grammata*), familiar to Timothy since his early education in a Jewish home,⁶⁵ and ‘all Scripture’ (*pasa graphē*) both refer to the Hebrew Scriptures. However, it is possible that the author of 2 Timothy, if he was the same who wrote 1 Timothy, might also have been alluding to at least some early Christian writings that were in circulation in the first century. In 1 Timothy 5:18 we read: ‘For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”’⁶⁶ Here the author quoted Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 referring to them both as ‘the Scripture’ (*he graphē*). Hence,

⁶¹ 1 Tim. 1:10; 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; Tit 2:1.

⁶² 1 Tim. 6:3.

⁶³ 2 Tim. 2:2. *Didache* 11:2 also warns the believer against one who ‘should train you in another tradition [1] for the destroying [of things said beforehand]’ (*didaskē allein didaskōn eis to katalusai*).

⁶⁴ 2 Tim. 3:14-17.

⁶⁵ 2 Tim. 1:5.

⁶⁶ 1 Tim. 5:18.

sound teaching for the community of disciples in early Christianity meant teaching that conformed at least to the Hebrew Scriptures, the teachings of Jesus that were transmitted by the apostles, and possibly some early Christian writings of which Luke is included.

Why was the notion of the Scriptures important in promoting sound doctrine and ultimately a key for mentoring and discipleship in early Christianity? The message of Christianity as well as that of the religion of Israel was purportedly conveyed through revelation. The Jews believed that God spoke to them through their prophets and leaders like Moses who received the law. Though this revelation was initiated by an intimate divine-human encounter, the message was ultimately written down and preserved for the members of the covenant community to learn and even memorize. While accepting the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, the early church believed that ongoing revelation in the form of Scripture accompanied the rise and expansion of the Christian movement. The author of the fourth Gospel claimed that Jesus was not merely a means of revelation but that he was the Word of God incarnate (*ho logos*).⁶⁷ As noted, the author of 1 Timothy considered Luke's writings to be Scripture, while the author of 2 Peter communicated the same about Paul's writings.⁶⁸

The value of having written Scriptures brought unity and continuity to both the people of Israel and the Christian movement. The Scriptures served as a reference point for teaching and preserving the faith. At the same time, they provided a means of distinguishing between true and counterfeit teaching. As noted, the author of 2 Timothy held up the Scriptures as well as the teachings of Jesus as the test for sound teaching. Hence, the Scriptures were the key to a disciple understanding the doctrine of the faith and his rule for discerning the value of other teaching.

⁶⁷ Jn. 1:1-14.

To this point, it has been argued that, according to the Gospel writers, one became a disciple by believing in the identity of Jesus as the Christ. Further, the disciple adhered to Jesus' teachings, which were the moral and ethical teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as his additional teachings that fulfilled the law and the prophets. Yet did the early Christian writings limit adherence to Jesus as simply intellectually accepting his teachings? To the contrary, the Gospel writers showed that it was quite impossible to separate cognitive belief about the person and teachings of Jesus from practically obeying those teachings.⁶⁹ In light of this inseparable link between intellectual assent and practical obedience, Milavec argues that *didaskolos* ought to be rendered 'master' instead of 'teacher' and *didaskō* should be translated 'to apprentice' instead of 'to teach.' Commenting on *didaskō*, he writes that 'it could only refer to that apprenticing which consumed the whole life and purpose of every Jew — that of assimilating the way of YHWH.'⁷⁰ Milavec, in his commentary on the *Didache*, similarly argues that the word *didachē*, most often translated as 'teaching' should be rendered 'training' due to the practical nature of the teaching. He writes:

The text opens with the Way of Life being described in the present indicative. The tone is descriptive. As soon as 'the training' begins, however, the text shifts into the imperative. Concrete demands are being made. The mentor directly addresses the one being trained.⁷¹

Tangibly living out the teachings of Jesus was further expressed by the active manner in which Jesus is recorded calling his disciples — 'follow me' (*akolouthei moi*).⁷² Matthew testified in his Gospel that this was how Jesus called him to be a

⁶⁸ 2 Pe. 3:16.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that the idea of 'hearing' (*akouō*) is used nearly synonymously with obeying in texts like Mt. 7:24, 26; Lk. 6:47; Jn. 12:47.

⁷⁰ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 85.

⁷¹ Cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis and Commentary*, p. 44; *Didache*, 2:1; 6:1.

⁷² Mt. 8:22; 9:19; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21, 28; Mk. 2:14; 8:34; 10:21; Lk. 5:27; 9:23, 59; 18:22; Jn. 1:43; 8:12; 10:27; 12:26; 13:36; 21:19, 22. Meier writes (J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.20): 'in the case of people specifically called disciples,' especially the particular group called the Twelve, the physical act of following usually expresses an inner adherence to the person and message of Jesus.'

disciple.⁷³ Matthew further emphasized practical obedience in his account of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, an ethical discourse characterized by practical commands for living summarized by the command to 'be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'⁷⁴ As noted, the fourth Gospel showed Jesus in the role of a master not only commending obedience but also demonstrating it by washing the feet of a group of disciples before teaching them in the upper room.⁷⁵

As the fourth Gospel recorded Jesus modeling his own teaching, Paul called the Corinthian believers to be 'imitators' (*mimētēs*) of him.⁷⁶ That is, they were to emulate his 'ways which are in Christ'.⁷⁷ 'Ways' (*hodos*) referred to Paul's morally upright conduct that conformed to the conduct and moral teachings of Jesus. The conduct and teaching of Jesus were inseparable from his person. According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus referred to himself as 'the way' (*hē hodos*). That is, he was the embodiment of moral perfection and all that pleased God the Father.⁷⁸ So, the Corinthian believers were encouraged to imitate the conduct of Paul who sought to conform to the moral perfection of Christ. In the early epistles, Christians were encouraged to imitate the good example of hard working and honest people, the faith of the saints of the Hebrew Scriptures, the example of teachers who have taught the word of God and demonstrated a holy life, as well as God and Christ.⁷⁹

To summarize, an early Christian disciple believed in the identity of Jesus as the Christ. Further, he accepted cognitively and sought to obey actively the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus, which stem from the Scriptures and Jesus' teachings.

⁷³ Mt. 8:22. See also Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27.

⁷⁴ Mt. 5:48.

⁷⁵ Jn. 13:3-17.

⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1.

⁷⁷ 1 Cor. 4:17.

⁷⁸ Jn. 4:16.

⁷⁹ 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; Heb. 6:12; 13:7; *Didache* 4:1-2; Eph. 5:1-4.

Finally, the disciple imitated the conduct of Christ and others in the community of faith whose conduct conformed to that of Christ.

Mentoring or discipleship, as portrayed in the early Christian writings, was the work of one Christian helping another disciple or group of disciples grow in their knowledge and application of the teachings of Jesus and the Scriptures. Put another way, the mentor coached his disciples toward realizing the fullness of their salvation.⁸⁰ A mentoring relationship was a personal and caring relationship between disciples committed to this common goal.⁸¹ The mentor probably had been a disciple longer than his disciples and had a more profound understanding of the teachings of Jesus and the Scriptures. With that, he was a winsome model whose conduct was more and more conforming to the way of Christ. His teaching and conduct were coherent with one another meaning that he practiced what he preached. Finally, the atmosphere of the mentoring relationship was both gracious and rigorous and characterized by encouragement and exhortation.

2. Mentoring of Spiritual Leaders

On one level, mentoring or discipleship was possible for all Christians. Disciples, as we have noted, could refer to the broader group of those who followed Jesus or even members of the early Christian movement as recorded in Acts. Yet, as our inquiry is concerned with the mentoring of spiritual leaders, those serving the community of believers or the church, it seems most helpful to concentrate on how Jesus mentored the Twelve and how Paul mentored his co-workers in mission. Meier makes the important point that Jesus called disciples not merely for their own salvation and benefit but to join him in his purpose — promoting the kingdom of

⁸⁰ Eph. 2:8; 4:13; Col. 1:28.

⁸¹ Commenting on the necessary personal relationship between mentor and disciple in the *Didache*, Milavec (A. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope & Love*, p. 88) writes: ‘when it came to deep learning, this could only be achieved by virtue of a prolonged contact with a master.’

God.⁸² Also, Paul clearly selected men and mentored them in the context of the missionary enterprise. To complete our model of early Christian mentoring of spiritual leaders, I propose the following eight characteristics or principles of mentoring drawn from the evidence already presented.

(1) The Group Context

The first apparent reality of mentoring spiritual leaders in early Christianity is that it happened in the context of a group. As noted, *mathētēs* is repeated 239 times in the plural form in the Gospels and Acts, compared to only twenty-five times in the singular form. Twelve of the twenty-five singular occurrences referred uniquely to the ‘disciple that Jesus loved’ of the fourth Gospel⁸³; while eight other instances describe a disciple in a hypothetical context.⁸⁴ In fact, the only individual disciple named in the Gospels was Joseph of Arimathea.⁸⁵ Hence, the idea of *mathētēs* was predominantly a plural and group concept according to the Gospels and Acts. We simply never observe Jesus mentoring any of the Twelve or any members of the broader group on an individual basis.⁸⁶ Meier correctly asserts: ‘As presented in the Gospels, discipleship involves not just an individualistic relation of a single pupil to his teacher but the formation of a group around the teacher who has called the group into existence.’⁸⁷

Though Paul was not initiated into the community like the other apostles who had been with Jesus, he also mentored spiritual leaders in a group context. His key mentoring contexts were the missionary journeys recorded in Acts where emerging

⁸² Cf. J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.157.

⁸³ Jn. 18:15-16; 19:26-7; 20:2-4, 8; 21:7, 20, 23-4.

⁸⁴ Mt. 10:24-5, 42; Lk. 6:10; 14:26-7, 33.

⁸⁵ Jn. 19:38. The usage here seems to resemble the way ‘disciple’ is used in Acts to refer to believers in general. The remaining singular usages of ‘disciple’ in the New Testament are in Acts 9:10, 26, 36; 16:1.

⁸⁶ There are a few instances where only Peter, James and John accompany Jesus though this does not diminish the group context of his teaching. See Mt. 17:1; Mk. 5:37; 9:2; Lk. 8:51; 9:28.

⁸⁷ Cf. J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.51-2. Wilkins (M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 169) also makes a strong case for the group in his study of Matthew: ‘Matthew often intentionally omits

leaders like John Mark,⁸⁸ Titus,⁸⁹ Timothy, Silas, Judas, and Luke himself⁹⁰ accompanied him as disciples and co-workers. Hence, early Christian mentoring for Jesus and Paul was carried out in a context of a group of disciples who were emerging leaders.⁹¹

Why did early Christian mentoring happen in a group context more than on an individual basis? Some may reasonably argue that it was on account of cultural reasons as first century Palestine was more communal in nature than modern Europe or North America where individualism is more highly valued. However, I suggest that the more compelling reason, which is above culture, is that Jesus and Paul and other early Christian mentors were mentoring spiritual leaders in the context of their goal—the establishment of the church.⁹² The church was to be a body of believers living together in faith, hope, and love so it makes sense that its leaders needed to be mentored as a community as well. Wilkins rightly asserts: ‘The church as a whole can identify with the group of disciples.’⁹³

Ultimately mentoring in a group context is more effective and natural because it takes into account the relational make up and needs of human beings. Milavec

reference to specifically named disciples (e.g. 20:20-8; 24:3; 26:37) or categories in the disciples (e.g. 24:1; 26:18-19) in order to present the disciples as a unified nameless group.’

⁸⁸ Luke recorded John Mark leaving Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:13 however some have argued that John Mark was later reinstated based on statements made about him in Col. 4:10 and Philem. 1:24.

⁸⁹ Though Titus was not mentioned by name in Acts, other New Testament epistles provide evidence of his being present with Paul. See Gal. 2:1; 2 Cor. 8:23.

⁹⁰ The ‘we’ statements of Acts indicates Luke’s presence and the group of men around Paul during missionary journeys. See Acts 16:10-13, 16; 20:6-8, 13-15; 21:1-8, 10, 12, 14-17; 27:1-8, 15-16, 18, 27, 29; 28:1, 10-14, 16.

⁹¹ Milavec (A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis and Commentary*, pp. 13, 48) makes the case for ‘each novice having a single master’ in the *Didache* based on the singular ‘my child’ (*teknon mou*) of *Didache* 4:1. Indeed, it may be that an individual was charged with overseeing the initiation of a new believer. Yet the verse does not claim that mentoring happened exclusive of the life of the community of faith. To the contrary, *Didache* 4:2 encourages the believer to ‘seek everyday the presence of the saints (*ta prosota ton hagiōn*) in order that you may rest upon their words (*tois logois autōn*)’ which is surely an invitation to mentoring in the context of a community and consistent with the early Christian principle of mentoring in the group context.

⁹² Mt. 16:18; Acts 11:26; 14:23-7.

⁹³ Cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 170.

draws our attention to the vital role of the family, particularly a set of parents, in forming children in their basic belief system.⁹⁴ A healthy family could in many regards be considered the most ideal nurturing community. Aside from the family, the expression, ‘no one is an island,’ signifies further that humans do not seem to flourish nor develop well emotionally, mentally, or spiritually in isolation. Theologians explain the relational make up of humans by pointing to their creation in the image of a triune God, one who by necessity is in relationship with the Godhead.⁹⁵ Humans who already demonstrate a need for others are in even greater need of relationships as they pursue relationship with God. Hence, we begin to understand a bit of the theological speculation between the mystery of the Trinity and the doctrine of the body of Christ. In summary, mentoring in the context of a community is effective because it appeals to the natural make up and needs of disciples.

(2) A Mentor is a Disciple

A second characteristic of mentoring in the early Christian texts was that the mentor was still a disciple continuing to grow spiritually toward the fullness of his salvation. Paul wrote to the Phillipian believers: ‘Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.’⁹⁶ Though still far from attaining the ‘measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ,’⁹⁷ the point is that the mentor was still growing and his conduct was becoming more and more Christ-like.

Early Christian texts also reveal Jesus in human form living by faith and dependence on God though he is presented as having a divine nature. The simple fact

⁹⁴ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, pp. 8, 11.

⁹⁵ Gen. 1:26-7.

⁹⁶ Phil. 3:12.

⁹⁷ Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28.

that he prayed and sought wisdom from God demonstrated that he also took the posture of a disciple. The writer to the Hebrews described it this way:

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.⁹⁸

It was this attitude and way of life that qualified a mentor to be imitated by his disciples. Certainly, the mentor's continual posture of learning demonstrated authenticity and humility for his disciples making his mentoring more attractive and effective. Augustine aptly communicated this point in *Sermo* 340: 'For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian.'⁹⁹

Practically speaking, the mentor continued to meditate on 'the things heard in the presence of many witnesses.' That is, he constantly had before him the teachings of Jesus as transmitted by the apostles as well as the Scriptures. Milavec, describing Jesus' commitment to knowing the Scriptures writes: 'Employing the time-honored methods of his day, Jesus was the master who sensitively immersed himself in God's Torah with his disciples.'¹⁰⁰ With this teaching in mind, the mentor continually pursued behavioral change essentially 'working out his salvation with fear and trembling.'¹⁰¹ Also, he probably had been or continued to be mentored by another spiritual leader. In the case of Paul, Barnabas initially served as his mentor though later they seem to have more of a peer mentoring relationship.¹⁰²

(3) Selection

Third, in each mentoring context that has been surveyed, there was a definite point of selection in which the mentor took the initiative to call a disciple or group of

⁹⁸ Heb. 5:7-8.

⁹⁹ *Vobis enim sum episcopus, uobiscum sum Christianus.* s. 340.1, PL 38, 1483.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, pp. 134, 317.

¹⁰¹ Phil. 2:12.

¹⁰² Acts 9:27; 11:25-6.

disciples to join him in growing in Christ and serving the community of believers.¹⁰³ While we have noted the times in the Gospels where Jesus invited disciples to follow him, there was also a distinct point when he selected or appointed the Twelve to be with him, learn from him, and minister with him.¹⁰⁴ Meier asserts that ‘Jesus’ initiative in summoning a person to discipleship is a necessary condition for becoming his disciple.’¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Barnabas traveled to Tarsus in search of Paul to recruit him for the important work of teaching the recently converted Greeks in Antioch.¹⁰⁶ Later Paul, upon receiving the good recommendation of the church at Lystra, chose Timothy to travel and minister with him.¹⁰⁷

Milavec writes that ‘Jesus’ choice of collaborators was one of the most critical of his career’ meaning that this stage of selection is not without risk.¹⁰⁸ First, there was the risk that the disciple would not hold up over time causing potential damage to the ministry or friction within the mentoring community. Though having received good references from the Lystra church about Timothy, Paul surely had not forgotten the incident of another disciple, John Mark, who had abandoned him and Barnabas after their preaching campaign in Cyprus. John Mark’s departure of course resulted in conflict and a parting of ways between Paul and Barnabas.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, the mentor potentially risked his own reputation as a spiritual leader if the disciple did not hold up. Barnabas certainly taught Paul something about this when he put his own reputation on the line in vouching for the newly converted Saul of Tarsus before the

¹⁰³ On the question of initiative, Rengstorf (*TDNT*, 4.444, 447, 449), cited by Milavec (A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 113) argues that the key difference in selecting disciples between the Pharisees and Jesus was that potential disciples sought out the Pharisees while Jesus takes the complete initiative in selecting disciples.

¹⁰⁴ Mk. 3:13-19; Lk. 6:13-16.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.54; 3.21, 45, 50-4.

¹⁰⁶ Acts 11:19-26.

¹⁰⁷ Acts 16:1-3.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁹ Acts 12:25-13:13; 15:36-40.

apostles at Jerusalem.¹¹⁰ Though the element of risk in selecting disciples is unavoidable, a mitigating factor was the mentor's ability to identify potential in a person.¹¹¹ The mentor was aided in making this decision if he had already observed faithfulness in a disciple, as in the case of Jesus and the Twelve, or if he had a good report from a reliable source as Paul had with Timothy.

(4) Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

Fourth, the mentor invited a disciple or group of disciples into a caring personal relationship characterized by both discipline and grace. Because the mentor wanted to see the potential of the disciple fulfilled, the training program was rigorous. When the Twelve wanted to send the crowds away because the hour was getting late, Jesus challenged his men to feed them.¹¹² Coleman suggests that it was the objective of the Twelve's training, leading the church when Jesus was gone, that caused him to demand total obedience and to train them in such an atmosphere of discipline.¹¹³ Perhaps it was similar high standards that led Paul to reject John Mark as a companion on the following missionary journey.

The mentoring relationship was also marked by much grace. That is, the mentor was patient and forbearing with his disciples in the process of their growth. The fourth Gospel communicated this notion by depicting Jesus as a shepherd: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.'¹¹⁴ Paul repeatedly referred to Timothy as 'my child.'¹¹⁵ One way that grace was demonstrated was through the patient manner that the mentor dealt with his disciples in their immaturity.

¹¹⁰ Acts 9:27.

¹¹¹ Cf. Clinton and Stanley, *Connections*, p. 38. Referring to Jesus' selection process recorded in Matt. 8:18-20, Milavec adds: 'A master must discern who is capable of entering into his/her vocation and turn down those who are deficient' (Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 110).

¹¹² Mk. 8:35-7.

¹¹³ Cf. R. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, pp. 58-9.

¹¹⁴ Jn. 10:5, 27.

The Twelve argued between themselves over who would be the greatest in the kingdom, they offered to call down fire from heaven against those who disagreed with them, and they were irritated with parents who brought their children to Jesus to be blessed.¹¹⁶ Yet, as Coleman writes, ‘Jesus patiently endured these human failings of His chosen disciples because in spite of all their shortcomings they were willing to follow him.’¹¹⁷ Similarly, a mentor demonstrated grace in how he responded to a disciple’s failure. According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus tenderly restored Peter, who had denied Jesus and then returned to the comfortable confines of fishing. As the text records, Jesus called him once again to follow him and to continue in the ministry.¹¹⁸

Due to the mentor’s stature of spiritual maturity and ministry experience, there was clearly a spiritual hierarchy that existed in the relationship.¹¹⁹ While the mentor’s spiritual authority over his disciples was quite clear, it was an authority realized more through caring influence than by an imposing title or rank. It was servant leadership. As noted, before beginning his upper room discourse, Jesus demonstrated the humble servitude of a mentor by washing the feet of his disciples.¹²⁰

Despite being their rabbi and master, Jesus also referred to the Twelve as his friends.¹²¹ The fraternal and friendly nature of their relationship was evidenced by the significant time and the various contexts that they were together. We, of course, observe them together during times of teaching and ministry; what we would expect

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22; 1 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4. The mentor of the *Didache* also called the new believer ‘my child’ in *Didache* 3:1-8; 4:1. Cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope & Love*, pp. 147-8.

¹¹⁶ Mt. 18:1-5; Mk. 9:33-7; Lk. 9:46-8, 51-4; Mk. 10:13.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Coleman, *The Master Plan*, p. 55; and Clinton and Stanley, *Connections*, p. 38.

¹¹⁸ Jn. 21:3, 15-19.

¹¹⁹ This is also reflected in *Didache* 4:1. Cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary*, pp. 13, 49.

¹²⁰ Jn. 13:4-5. Matthew and Mark also recorded Jesus similarly saying, ‘For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’ Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; cf. B. McGuire, *Friendship & Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250*, p. xxvii.

¹²¹ Jn. 15:15.

from a master and disciples.¹²² Yet the Gospel writers also recorded them eating together, going to a wedding, and taking a break and resting together.¹²³ More than a group of students studying under a teacher, the Twelve were more like a family or group of friends living together.

Paul also seemed to have a fraternal mindset with his disciples. This is reflected in a letter to the Corinthians where he called Titus ‘my partner and fellow worker among you.’¹²⁴ It is also interesting to note that in the salutations of at least eight epistles attributed to Paul, the recipients were greeted not only by Paul but also by disciples like Silas and Timothy who were referred to as ‘brothers.’¹²⁵ Paul’s inclusion of these disciples in the greetings of what the early churches considered his writings reflected his humility and a fraternal mindset.

(5) Sound Teaching

A fifth characteristic of early Christian mentoring was that the mentor imparted sound teaching (*hugiainousē didaskalia*) to his disciples. As we have noted, sound teaching consisted of that which conformed to the words of Jesus. More precisely, a mentor taught from the Hebrew Scriptures, the teachings of Jesus, and the early writings that circulated throughout the churches that were later confirmed as Scripture. We noted that written Scriptures, a hallmark of the Christian movement, provided a point of reference for not only teaching sound doctrine, but also guarding against unsound teaching.

Jesus insisted that the apostles uphold sound teaching. The final command given to the Twelve, to make disciples of all nations, was to be accomplished through

¹²² Mt. 5:1; 8:23; 9:10, 19, 37; 11:1; 16:5; 17:19; Mk. 4:34; 8:34; 10:13, 46; 13:1; Lk. 6:20; 7:11; 9:40; 10:23; 12:22; 16:1; 17:1, 22; Jn. 3:22; 11:7-12.

¹²³ Mk. 2:15, 16; Lk. 5:30; Jn. 2:2, 11-12; Mt. 14:22; Mk. 3:7; 6:45.

¹²⁴ 2 Cor. 8:23.

¹²⁵ See 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1, 19; Gal. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1:1; cf. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, p. 99.

teaching what Jesus had taught them.¹²⁶ Timothy was commanded to teach ‘the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses’¹²⁷ and to ‘retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.’¹²⁸ The post-Easter disciple, much less an emerging spiritual leader in the church, was one who believed in the person of Jesus as the Christ as well as what Jesus taught.

A clear necessity for the spiritual leader committed to maintaining sound doctrine was the ability to read the Scriptures. Though first century Palestine could be characterized as an oral culture and it was possible for a Jew to hear Torah in the synagogue, this did not allow for the spiritual leader entrusted with teaching to be illiterate. As noted, the Scriptures, preserved in scrolls and later codices, were written down. Milavec writes: ‘The Pharasaic masters customarily required that their disciples be able to read the text of the Scriptures before undertaking to train them in its proper interpretation.’¹²⁹ It would be unlikely that Jesus, who emerged from the rabbinic tradition, would have required any less of his disciples.

(6) Modeling and Involving in Ministry

Sixth, a mentor was not only a growing disciple and a winsome model for imitation; he also demonstrated faithfulness and skill in the work of ministry. The Twelve watched Jesus confound the Jewish leaders attempting to trap him by their questions.¹³⁰ They observed how he drew the crowds in and amazed them with his teaching during the Sermon on the Mount.¹³¹ They also learned how to rest and pray

¹²⁶ Mt. 28:19; cf. M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 144.

¹²⁷ 2 Tim. 2:2; *Didache* 11:2.

¹²⁸ 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 1 Tim. 6:20.

¹²⁹ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 109.

¹³⁰ Mt. 21:23-7; Lk. 20:1-8.

¹³¹ Mt. 7:29.

after a long day of ministering to the crowds.¹³² Paul surely learned much about teaching new believers from Barnabas during the year they spent together in Antioch prior to the missionary journeys to the Gentiles.¹³³ Clinton writes that emerging leaders learn through ‘imitation modeling’ and that skills for ministry are acquired in part through ‘observation.’¹³⁴ Milavec similarly suggests that skill begins to be grasped intuitively by the disciples over time.¹³⁵

The mentor not only modeled ministry, but he deliberately involved his disciples in the work as well. Clinton adds that ministry skills are also acquired through ‘informal apprenticeships’ and ‘experience.’¹³⁶ Though the initial tasks may not have been overly spiritual, responsibility was increased with time and faithfulness on the part of the disciples.¹³⁷ As noted, the Twelve were involved in the distribution of food and the clean up during Jesus’ recorded miraculous feedings¹³⁸ as well as securing the colt for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.¹³⁹ They were also entrusted with tasks like baptizing, preaching, and casting out demons.¹⁴⁰ Finally, after a few years of traveling and serving with Jesus, the Twelve were promoted to the greater assignment of making ‘disciples of all nations.’

¹³² Mt. 14:22; Mk. 3:7; 6:45.

¹³³ Cf. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, p. 83. See Acts 11:25-6. Paul’s year in Antioch could be seen as a cross cultural internship of sorts as his ministry was among Greeks in Antioch and not Jews.

¹³⁴ Cf. Clinton, op. cit., pp. 31, 89.

¹³⁵ Cf. A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 19.

¹³⁶ Cf. Clinton, op. cit..

¹³⁷ Clinton calls this the ‘little much’ principle and cites Lk. 16:10: ‘He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much.’ Cf. Clinton, op. cit., pp. 35, 81; A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 133.

¹³⁸ Mt. 14:19; 15:36; Mk. 6:41; 8:6; Lk. 9:14, 16; Jn. 6:3, 12. Wilkins (M. Wilkins, *The Concept of a Disciple*, p. 166) writes of Matthew’s account: ‘As Matthew depicts Jesus caring for the [okloi], he accents Jesus’ care even more in his sovereign choice of the disciples to serve the crowds (9:36, 37; 14:19; 15:36). The disciples will serve the crowds, but the “Lord” serves the [okloi] through the disciples.’

¹³⁹ Mt. 21:1, 6; Mk. 11:1; Lk. 19:29.

¹⁴⁰ Jn. 4:1-2; Mk. 6:7-12.

Similarly, Timothy began traveling with Paul and his team on the second missionary journey.¹⁴¹ Later, he was sent on a few occasions to minister in place of Paul.¹⁴² Finally, the Pastoral Epistles recorded that Timothy was entrusted with a greater responsibility of serving as the pastor of the church in Ephesus.¹⁴³

An important quality of mentoring at this stage was debriefing. That is, a group of disciples was entrusted with a task, executed it successfully or unsuccessfully, and then returned back to discuss the experience with their mentor. Luke recorded Jesus giving the seventy the assignment to go and preach in towns and cities where he would later preach.¹⁴⁴ In this case, they returned back elated at their success while Jesus responded by encouraging them to be humble though he openly praised the Father for their success.¹⁴⁵ Matthew recorded an instance when some of the Twelve unsuccessfully attempted to cast out a demon. Jesus arrived, cast out the demon, and later used it as an object lesson to teach them about faith.¹⁴⁶ In summary, the mentor effectively mentored his disciples at this stage through modeling ministry, involving the disciples in ministry, and debriefing successes and failures in preparation for future ministry.

(7) Releasing

A seventh characteristic of mentoring spiritual leaders in early Christianity was that the mentor released or set apart his disciples to their own ministry where they had authority and responsibility. This point of releasing a leader flowed quite naturally from the previous stage of increased involvement and responsibility in

¹⁴¹ For a full account of Timothy's travels with Paul see: Acts 16:1-3; Acts 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:24; Rom. 16:21.

¹⁴² 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2, 6.

¹⁴³ Cf. D. Guthrie, 'Timothy,' *New Bible Dictionary*, 1201. 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:19.

¹⁴⁴ Lk. 10:1-24. Mark records a similar account with the Twelve in Mk. 6:7-13.

¹⁴⁵ Lk. 10:20-4.

¹⁴⁶ Mt. 17:19-20.

ministry. In the case of the Twelve, Jesus had taught and trained them, entrusted them with the commission to make disciples, and then he purposefully departed leaving them on their own to succeed or fail in the task. In Timothy's case, after years of observing Paul and receiving assignments of increasing responsibility, he was entrusted with the authority and responsibility to pastor the church at Ephesus where some of his tasks included teaching sound doctrine, leading the church, raising up other leaders, and caring for widows.¹⁴⁷ These were tasks that could not be delegated back to Paul when they became difficult. This stage was a veritable weaning for the disciples and was probably painful for both mentor and disciples alike. Yet given the proper training and timing, this stage was crucial and necessary to keep the disciples from developing an unhealthy dependency on the mentor and ultimately depriving the church of needed ministers.

(8) Resourcing

Finally, though the disciples were released with authority and responsibility, a mentor could still be available as a resource or consultant providing encouragement and perhaps practical advice. As distance could make personal contact or visits difficult, the forms of mentoring probably needed to change. For instance, both Timothy and Titus were resourced with letters that affirmed their ministries and addressed specific issues they were facing.¹⁴⁸ Though the role of the mentor changed

¹⁴⁷ 1 Tim. 1:10; 3:1-13; 4:6; 5:3-22; 6:3, 20; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:24-6; 4:3.

¹⁴⁸ 2 Tim. 1:5-6, Tit. 1:4-5. Though the consensus of critical scholarship does not regard the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline, I personally continue to maintain Pauline authorship following the arguments of D. Carson, D. Moo, and L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 359-71. Due to the scope of the present thesis, the authorship issue of Pastorals does not concern us and we will leave this important work to New Testament scholars. It is worth mentioning that even those who reject Pauline authorship consider the anonymous author(s) of Pastorals to be a sincere follower(s) of Paul. So even if Paul did not write Pastorals, any thoughts we may find of a mentoring nature that correspond with mentoring in the generally accepted Pauline epistles actually underscore their importance and show how mentoring had entered the 'bloodstream' of the early church. In short, the evidence of mentoring in Pastorals and the form of letter writing as a means of mentoring must be admissible evidence toward our model of early Christian mentoring.

at this point, the caring relationship between mentor and disciples remained unchanged.

3. Outcomes of Mentoring

We should consider a final aspect of mentoring that will not be directly included in our model though it is an important notion. That is, having mentored his disciples, the impact of the mentor continued through his disciples who mentored other groups of disciples and the influence continued in a multiplying fashion. In short, the mentor left a legacy in his disciples. This idea was communicated in part to Timothy who was to take the teachings he had learned and ‘entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.’¹⁴⁹ Adherence to the teachings of Jesus, as we have noted, included belief and practice. One particular fruit of this legacy of spiritual leaders who mentored others was that ‘faithful men’ were raised up and appointed to serve the necessary ministries of the church. The Pastoral Epistles articulated the qualifications of such men who were called elders and deacons.¹⁵⁰ Following the apostolic period, spiritual leaders began to occupy positions of church leadership such as bishop, presbyter, deacon, and *lector* while others carried on in missionary endeavors.

The testimony of early Christianity was that the disciples of Jesus and Paul did become mature disciples and leaders in the church in most of the known world.¹⁵¹ The Jesus movement has continued down to the present day and taken root in most of the countries of the world, which is quite remarkable in that it began amidst a group of ordinary Galilean fishermen. While this phenomenon is undeniable and that

¹⁴⁹ 2 Tim. 2:2.

¹⁵⁰ 1 Tim. 3:1-10; Tit. 1:5-9.

¹⁵¹ Milavec (A. Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, p. 149) writes: ‘History relates how the disciples of Jesus did assimilate the spirit/Spirit of their master and did apprentice other disciples to leaven the next generation.’

mentoring and discipleship of leaders has played a large role in the on-going mission of the church, the legacy of a mentor is not something automatic like the result of a formula. In fact, one's legacy is largely out of his control. What would have happened, for instance, if the Twelve had changed their minds after Jesus left and gone back to fishing? We should also note that the legacy or influence of a person will differ according to the gifting and contribution of the mentor. Some mentors write and have their books preserved, others preach and have their sermons recorded, while others simply serve and their nameless example lives on. The point is that a legacy will look different according to the mentor and it is difficult if not wrong to judge or rate a person's legacy. Finally, due to circumstances, a person's legacy may lie dormant for a while only to resurface in a later generation. We must not forget that Van Gogh never sold a painting in his lifetime! Nevertheless, we can at the very least say that a spiritual leader, ministering in the community of faith, generally has left some lasting influence into the next generation of spiritual leaders. The present study will look to support this hypothesis.

4. Summary of Early Christian Mentoring¹⁵²

A mentor was a growing disciple in that he believed in the identity of Jesus as the Christ, he had a profound grasp of the teachings of Jesus and the Scriptures, and his conduct was more and more becoming like that of Christ's. His stature as a mature disciple was the result of a significant period of immersion in the Scriptures and putting their teachings into practice. While serving the community of believers with

¹⁵² Though these eight characteristics of mentoring have been observed in early Christianity, we should not be forced to conclude that a mentor is only a mentor if he fulfills all eight characteristics. Our definition is intentionally exhaustive in reference to the stages of a disciple's development. Rather, the fuller definition should be seen as an ideal for mentoring and that good mentors demonstrate most of the qualities. Also, a mentor may not 'cover' every stage of mentoring with a disciple. We should also allow for the potential that some disciples may come to a mentor at a more mature stage in their discipleship and not be in as much need of proper selection or sound doctrine while younger disciples may move on to another mentor before getting to the latter stages of mentoring.

well developed ministry skills, he invited a group of disciples to join him in a caring relationship in which they could grow in their understanding of doctrine and holy living in the context of serving the community of faith. While modeling holy character and skill in ministry, he deliberately involved emerging leaders in the ministry by giving them tasks of increasing responsibility. At the right time, the mentor released the disciples to their own ministries in which they were empowered with responsibility and authority. Finally, there was the possibility that the mentor could serve as a resource to his released disciple by offering encouragement and occasional practical help. An outcome of effective mentoring was that the mentor could very likely leave a legacy of multiplying disciples or some other form of lasting influence.

Having articulated this model for early Christian mentoring, we should beware that these eight aspects are merely observations in the process of a mentor growing spiritually and helping others to grow as well. Because this process involves human beings and the human experience, we should avoid viewing the eight aspects as steps in a formula but rather we should appreciate the process of mentoring with its gaps and inconsistencies. As we will see in the following chapters, there will be cases when several aspects of mentoring happen simultaneously while in other instances, it will be difficult to discern where one stage begins and the other ends. In short, we should regard the proposed model as simply an observation of what takes place in the processing of mentoring. In summary, the work of a mentor of spiritual leaders in essence is not unlike the work of any other mentor except for the context of the Christian life and serving the church. Hence, a mentor of spiritual leaders is also a master, expert, or someone with a significant amount of experience imparting

knowledge and skill to a novice in an atmosphere of discipline, commitment, and accountability.

Augustine's forms and principles of mentoring will be considered according to the proposed model allowing us to evaluate and critique his mentoring of spiritual leaders. It is appropriate that Augustine be considered in this manner as his writings and teachings do bear witness to the impact of the teachings of Jesus, Paul, and the early Christian writings.

II. The Status of Scholarship

Scholars of the past century have produced a fair amount of work related to Augustine's pastoral ministry and, indeed, the present study falls within this broader scope. While I will interact with the relevant literature at appropriate points throughout the study, we should initially survey the status of scholarship paying attention to the goals of the various works, how they relate and contribute to the present work, while showing what gaps remain that make the present study necessary.

The classic work on Augustine's pastoral ministry, written over fifty years ago, is Frederick van der Meer's *Augustine the Bishop*. Van der Meer's stated goal is to evaluate 'Augustine's practice in liturgical affairs, in preaching and in the matter of popular devotion.'¹⁵³ Further, he does not attempt a critical survey of Augustine's ministry but rather a descriptive one that he calls 'a readable presentation of the facts.'¹⁵⁴ Van der Meer's tome is indeed quite readable and, in the spirit of Possidius, he paints a lively picture of Augustine's daily life as the bishop of Hippo. For our purposes, van der Meer provides detailed accounts of Augustine's relationship to the clergy, the monastic communities at Tagaste and Hippo, as well as much evidence for

¹⁵³ Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. xix.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. xx.

how Augustine selected and trained men for ministry. While rich in detail, there is, however, no analysis of Augustine's mentoring the clergy that the present study will pursue. Further, the fact that van der Meer's work is still important after fifty years seems to indicate that significant work in this area has been lacking in the last half century.

Eugene Kevane's *Augustine the Educator* is a unique work that seeks to highlight the importance of Augustine as a Christian teacher while gleaning principles from Augustine for educating youth. Beginning with Augustine's youth, where he received a frustrating liberal education and no formal religious education, Kevane casts each period of his life in the light of instruction.¹⁵⁵ Kevane argues that though Augustine resigned his post of teaching rhetoric in Milan, he continued for the rest of his life primarily functioning as a teacher conducting 'schools' at Cassiciacum, Tagaste, and Hippo.¹⁵⁶ Further, Kevane makes the case that Augustine essentially created a Christian *paideia* — a Christian culture for learning that included a new sacred view of history.¹⁵⁷ Though Kevane's thesis is intriguing, he seems to characterize Augustine rather narrowly as a sort of Christian school headmaster. Nevertheless, his treatment of the educational aspect of Augustine's ministry at Cassiciacum, Tagaste, and Hippo are helpful to our inquiry. Though Kevane shows Augustine teaching and resourcing spiritual leaders, especially from the Scriptures, our study will hope to be more complete in presenting Augustine as a mentor.

George Howie's *Educational Theory and Practice in Saint Augustine* is a study of considerable interest. Howie goes into great depth to analyze Augustine's philosophy of education in the context of classical Roman education. He writes at

¹⁵⁵ Cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, pp. 33, 38-46.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 59.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 105.

length on Augustine's psychological views and methods of teaching, concluding with a study of the impact of Augustine's educational theory that stretches well into the modern era. For the purposes of our study, Howie has provided much evidence into Augustine's motivations and values for being a teacher, which will help us to better understand him as a mentor. In particular, his treatment of *De catechizandis rudibus* and *De doctrina christiana* reveals how he trained spiritual leaders to train and teach the church. As Howie's study is geared toward the classroom of classical education, our focus of Augustine as a mentor of spiritual leaders takes a different path.

In Lucien Jerphagnon's, *Saint Augustin, le pédagogue de Dieu*, the author offers a short survey of Augustine's life, ministry, and thought while advancing the thesis that Augustine was primarily a teacher. Jerphagnon nicely presents the cultural background of Augustine's world including the influence of paganism and Hellenistic thought. He also gives some helpful insights, which relate to our study regarding the communities at Cassiciacum and Tagaste, Augustine's motivation and philosophy of teaching, as well as some ways in which Augustine trained men for ministry. Overall, Jerphagnon's book is limited in detail and analysis relating to Augustine as a mentor. Finally, he seems to view Augustine as more of an ancient teacher and fails to show the significance of his pastoral ministry or the importance of his life being rooted in the community of faith. His role as a bishop engaged in serving the church is of course foundational to the present study that Augustine was a mentor to spiritual leaders.

William Harmless' *Augustine and the Catechumenate* is also a helpful book. Harmless' purpose is to investigate Augustine's method of teaching baptismal candidates and make application for modern Christian education.¹⁵⁸ He gives

¹⁵⁸ Cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 24.

particular attention to Augustine's work *De catechizandis rudibus* while also discussing Augustine's own experience as a catechumen in Milan under Ambrose enabling us to learn something about Ambrose's mentoring as well. While the focus is on training and teaching the laity, we are able to understand Augustine's thoughts on mentoring in general and in turn, make connections to his mentoring of the clergy.

In Lee Bacchi's *The Theology of Ordained Ministry in the Letters of Augustine of Hippo*, he presents the thesis that Augustine's chief characteristic of the ordained ministry is humility.¹⁵⁹ He also argues that in his letters, Augustine limits the ordained ministry to presbyters, priests, and deacons. While working to support his thesis, Bacchi provides much evidence into Augustine's relationship with fellow clergy through his correspondence. Though not Bacchi's focus, much of his work does give insight into Augustine as a mentor, which will in turn facilitate the present study.

A similar work to Bacchi's is Daniel Doyle's *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the letters of St. Augustine*. Doyle's goal, through a thorough study of Augustine's correspondence, is to show the role of discipline in the ministry of the bishop. He dedicates a great deal of his book to a lexical study of the word *disciplina* in Augustine's letters.¹⁶⁰ Doyle's analysis also touches upon Augustine's training, correction, and teaching of the clergy, which reveals some of Augustine's thoughts and practice on mentoring leaders. Like Bacchi, Doyle's treatment of Augustine's letters directs us to the bishop's relationships with the clergy facilitating our study to some degree. Doyle does not go into the depth that we desire in the present inquiry regarding Augustine as a mentor nor does he focus solely on Augustine and spiritual leaders.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. xiii.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian*, pp. 27-61

Adolar Zumkeller's *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life* provides valuable insight into Augustine as a mentor of spiritual leaders by thoroughly treating his monastic experience. Zumkeller traces Augustine's monastic journey from being with friends at Cassiciacum in a sort of Christian retreat (*otium*), to the community of *serui Dei* at Tagaste, to the full-fledged monastery at Hippo whose greatest value was serving the church. Zumkeller's most helpful contribution to our study is his presentation of Augustine as a mentor in the context of the *monasterium clericorum* that he initiated after being made co-bishop of Hippo in 395. Thus, his work provides support for the present study's assertion that one clear mentoring form used by Augustine was the monastery. This, however, was not Zumkeller's focus as he goes into much verbose and at times repetitive detail about Augustine's theology of the monastic life.

Thomas F. Martin's article, '*Clericatus sarcina* (ep.126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' falls nicely in line with the scope of the present study. With a focus on the importance of the Scriptures in Augustine's life and in the clergy he influenced, Martin seeks to answer how Augustine went about training the clergy.¹⁶¹ He affirms that Augustine's training was both intellectual and spiritual. Though he admits that evidence for the details of a clerical training program is limited, his exploration into several clues found throughout the writings of Augustine attempts to answer this question. His treatment of *Sermones* 355 and 356, in particular, are quite helpful to the present work. However, Martin seems to only focus on Augustine's training of the clergy through the form of the clerical monastery while our study will attempt to show that Augustine's training took other forms as well. Perhaps the greatest limitation of Martin's work is that it does not take into consideration the

broader concept of mentoring that we are exploring. Augustine's mentoring surely included intellectual and spiritual training in the context of the monastery, yet we will show that his mentoring included other components as well.

A.G. Hamman's 'Saint Augustin et la formation du clergé en Afrique Chrétienne' is also quite relevant to our study. Hamman begins by showing the origins of the clergy with particular attention to the rise and development of *lectores* and then preachers. He also comments on Augustine's own training as a priest and how he went about training men at Hippo. The most helpful insights relate to Augustine's commitment to learning the Scriptures and how significantly they figured into his writings. Hamman also reminds us of the context of theological battle, particularly with the Donatists, in which Augustine trained his men in the Scriptures. Finally, Hamman argues that Augustine used letters and books to train the clergy, an argument that our present study will seek to support. Despite these helpful aspects of Hamman's article, he seems to make a couple of errant assertions regarding Augustine's own training while spending too much time discussing the development of the *lector* in the early church.¹⁶²

The most influential survey of Augustine in the last fifty years in English is Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo*. Brown gives a vivid description of Augustine's entire life in five chronological periods while shedding light on the cultural background of Augustine's world. Chapters devoted to his friends, Ambrose, Cassiciacum, and the community at Tagaste and Hippo relate to our study by providing evidence and further insight into Augustine's mentoring. Brown even treats some outcomes of Augustine's mentoring. Most notably is his errant assertion that

¹⁶¹ Cf. T. Martin, 'Clericatus sarcina (ep.126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' 3. *The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa*, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>.

¹⁶² Cf. A. Hamman, 'Saint Augustin et la formation du clergé en Afrique Chrétienne,' *Atti del Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione*, 2.337-46.

with the Vandal invasion, Augustine's life's work was destroyed.¹⁶³ The present study will argue that Augustine's life's work continued on through other spiritual leaders, his books, and his influence. Though a significant reference and starting point for many areas of Augustinian studies, Brown's work is still a survey and does not attempt to examine thoroughly Augustine's pastoral or mentoring ministry.

Another significant survey is Gerald Bonner's, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, which frames Augustine's life in the context of the Manichaean, Donatist, and Pelagian controversies. As we will show, the continual fight against heresy in Augustine's ministry was an important context for mentoring his disciples. Bonner also provides some insights into Augustine's mentoring ministry by discussing his cultural background; the communities at Cassiciacum, Tagaste, and Hippo; as well as Bishop Valerius' influence on Augustine. Yet again, Bonner does not intend to treat Augustine as a mentor.

Though published over fifty years ago, Gustave Bardy's, *Saint Augustin: l'homme et l'œuvre* continues to be a valuable survey into Augustine's pastoral ministry. He ably treats Augustine's monastic experiences at Cassiciacum, Tagaste, and Hippo while giving much detail about Augustine's companions and disciples present with him at each stage. His relationship with other members of the clergy is highlighted through personal interaction as well as clerical correspondence. Though Bardy's insight into Augustine's letters as well as other books allows us to understand Augustine better as a mentor, his work remains a general survey on Augustine's pastoral ministry and does not attempt to analyze Augustine as a mentor.

The surveyed works reveal to an extent the fine scholarship dedicated to Augustine's pastoral ministry. The work of these scholars is certainly an important

¹⁶³ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 429.

starting point into the works of Augustine to help us better understand his relationship to the clergy. Despite the quality of the scholarship, the fact remains that nothing substantial and focused has been researched and written on Augustine as a mentor to spiritual leaders thus showing the need for the present inquiry.

III. Method and Approach

Given the early Christian model that we have explored and set out for evaluating Augustine as a mentor of spiritual leaders, in what manner should evidence be gathered to support the arguments of the present work? Since Augustine did not write a specific manual on mentoring spiritual leaders, the best method will be to analyze his works that are more biographical in nature allowing us to observe how Augustine actually went about mentoring. The key biographical works for consideration will be his *Confessiones* as well as the *Vita Augustini* written by his friend and disciple Possidius. A survey of Augustine's *epistulae* directed toward spiritual leaders will also prove very helpful as well as some *sermones* that recount his relationship to the clergy. To some extent, the Cassiciacum dialogues will provide insight into Augustine's earlier experience as a mentor. In addition to these biographical works that describe his work as a mentor, we will also consider what Augustine believed and prescribed about mentoring. The key works revealing his thoughts on mentoring include his *epistulae*, *Regula*, *De doctrina Christiana*, *De catechizandis rudibus*, *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, as well as expositions on the Scriptures in his *sermones*.

The period of Augustine's life most in question for this study will be from 391, the time of his ordination as priest in Hippo, until his death in 430. This does not mean Augustine was not mentoring men prior to 391, as indeed he was having an impact on men in their faith at Cassiciacum and Tagaste. However, it was not until 391 that Augustine's mentoring ministry took on its most mature purpose — training

leaders to serve and lead the church. Though the primary focus of our study will be the period mentioned, Augustine's personal background as well as his initial experiences as a mentor prior to 391 will be presented for consideration.

The most valuable strategy of getting at Augustine's principles of mentoring will be to first identify the observable forms of mentoring found in his relationships with other spiritual leaders. That is, the forms or ways in which Augustine mentored spiritual leaders must be studied and categorized. This data will most naturally come from the biographical works. Secondly, the data will be combined with evidence from Augustine's other works that reveal what he thought, believed, or taught about mentoring. Only once the evidence from these two perspectives has been thoroughly considered will a conclusion about Augustine's principles of mentoring be possible.

Prior to moving to the focus of this study — analyzing and treating Augustine's forms and principles of mentoring — we will be well served to consider two important background questions. First, what was the status of mentoring spiritual leaders in the church prior to Augustine? The lives and ministries of several third and fourth century mentors will be considered as well as any influences they may have had on Augustine's mentoring. Secondly, who mentored Augustine? It goes without saying that many had a hand in his development toward becoming a mentor of spiritual leaders. We will consider who these individuals were, how they mentored Augustine, and how their mentoring influenced his principles of mentoring.

In terms of the structure of this work, the present introductory chapter will be followed by chapter two, which will treat mentoring of spiritual leaders in the church prior to Augustine. Chapter three will be devoted to those who mentored Augustine. Chapter four will consider the specific forms of mentoring found in Augustine's life and ministry. A fifth chapter will seek to articulate Augustine's principles of

mentoring from his practice and thought. Finally, the sixth chapter will contain a concluding discussion as well as suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Mentoring Prior to Augustine

The goal of this chapter is to set the stage for Augustine's mentoring of spiritual leaders by examining some examples of mentoring that took place in the church in the third and fourth centuries. Our inquiry will begin in the mid-third century and extend to the beginning of Augustine's episcopate while focusing on areas such as North Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Italy. The key characters in this background survey include: Cyprian of Carthage (195-258), the Egyptian monk Pachomius (290-346), Basil of Caesarea (329-379), and Ambrose of Milan (340-397). With the exception of Pachomius, each leader functioned in the role of a metropolitan bishop. Pachomius, however, has been included because of his significant work as a mentor in the context of coenobitic monasticism, which has great relevance to Augustine's mentoring. These leaders have been chosen because of their significant contribution as leaders and mentors to the Christian movement of the third and fourth centuries — the matrix and backdrop to Augustine's life and ministry. While primarily providing some historical background, this survey will, in some instances, show influences on Augustine's mentoring of spiritual leaders as well.

In each case, a brief historical and biographical sketch will be given, including the relationship of the spiritual leader to other spiritual leaders, which will in most instances be the clergy around him. Finally, the method employed will be to identify clear and repeated forms of mentoring in the ministry of the spiritual leader followed by a summary of his observed principles of mentoring.

I. Mentoring in Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian came from a prominent family in Carthage, was educated in both classical and religious literature, and probably initially worked as a teacher of rhetoric.¹⁶⁴ He converted to Christianity in 246 and was ordained bishop of Carthage just two years later. The historical context of Cyprian's tenure as bishop was dominated by the imperial persecutions of the church under the Emperors Decius (249-50) and Valerian (257-58) in which Christians were essentially ordered to deny their faith by making sacrifices to the Roman deities. During the Decian persecution, Cyprian chose to go into hiding — a decision which drew mixed reactions from his clergy. Though physically absent, he endeavored to lead the church and clergy of Carthage through messengers and letters.¹⁶⁵ During the Valerian persecution, Cyprian was first banished to exile for a year before returning to Carthage where he was put to death in 258 for refusing to comply with Valerian's edict.

Following the Decian persecution, the church wrestled with and at times became divided over issues that arose out of the persecution. The first issue was dealing with the restoration of the lapsed — those who had succumbed to the order to sacrifice. Cyprian sought to implement a consistent policy of penance for the fallen. Nevertheless, Novatian, a rigorist living in Rome, opposed Bishop Cornelius and brought schism to the church, which prompted significant correspondence, treatises, and councils from the bishop of Carthage. Finally, Cyprian tangled with Bishop Stephen of Rome, over the issue of re-baptizing heretics — those who were coming to the catholic church from the Novatian party. Hence, the political situation that put pressure on the church also provoked at least a few battles inside the church that

¹⁶⁴ Cf. M. Tilley, 'Cyprian of Carthage,' *ATTA*, 262; and R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ep.* 20.12; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 2.

occupied Cyprian for most of his career as bishop. This context also became a significant terrain in which Cyprian led and mentored his clergy.

Clarke notes that Cyprian's style of leadership and particularly his view of the authority of a bishop resembled that of a Roman pro-consul.¹⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, his background and familiarity with Roman administration influenced his philosophy of leading the church. For Cyprian, the church was composed of bishops, clergy, and faithful members and she was made complete due to the unity of bishop and church.¹⁶⁷

1. Cyprian the Bishop

What was the role of a bishop for Cyprian? As a *sacerdos* in the legacy of Melchizedek and the Levites of the Hebrew Scriptures, Cyprian presided over all liturgical assemblies.¹⁶⁸ This of course included presiding over the Eucharist and initiating new believers into the church.¹⁶⁹ As a *pastor*, he listened to confession and restored the lapsed.¹⁷⁰ As a *doctor*, it was his duty to preach and teach the word of God.¹⁷¹ Cyprian communicated this responsibility to his clergy:

Our duty is clear: we must hold fast to the faith and truth of the catholic church, we must continue to teach it, and by the means of all the commandments of the Gospels and the apostles we must set forth the nature of the order and unity ordained by God.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ See Clarke's commentary in ACW, 43.19.

¹⁶⁷ *Epp.* 33; 66; *De unit.* 5; cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 72; J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 213; and R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁸ *Ep.* 63.4.1; cf. R. Seagraves, *op. cit.*, p. 26; G. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, p. 40; and V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 88.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 68; and J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 213.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. R. Seagraves, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-7, 174.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* pp. 68-70.

¹⁷² *Quare ecclesiae catholicae fidem ac ueritatem, frater carissime, et tenere debemus firmiter et docere et per omnia euangelia et apostolica praecepta rationem diuinae dispositionis adque unitatis ostendere. ep.* 73.20.2, CCSL, 3C.554. English trans. cited in R. Seagraves, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

As a metropolitan bishop, he convened and participated in councils with the *collegium* of bishops.¹⁷³ Finally, as our present study will show, he not only set apart clergy for service but also oversaw the ministry of the clergy at Carthage providing instruction, exhortation, rebuke, encouragement, as well as opportunities for service and development.¹⁷⁴

2. The Clergy in Carthage

Although he was a young Christian at the time of his consecration, Cyprian seemed to have had a mature understanding of the offices and roles of church leadership.¹⁷⁵ Aside from the bishop, the clerical offices in Cyprian's day included presbyters, deacons, sub-deacons, *lectores*, exorcists, and acolytes. Only the bishop and presbyters were consecrated by the laying on of hands; while the other clergy were simply appointed by the bishop.¹⁷⁶ As Cyprian's letters alone reveal no less than thirty-nine clergy serving with him in Carthage, the structure of the church leadership in that city was quite developed.¹⁷⁷ Let us briefly consider the role of each clerical office in Carthage during Cyprian's ministry.

In general, the presbyter served, assisted, and advised the bishop.¹⁷⁸ In the bishop's absence, he presided over the Eucharist.¹⁷⁹ In some cases, the presbyters were delegated the authority to hear confession from the lapsed and offer reconciliation.¹⁸⁰ They were also entrusted with the task of teaching, especially instructing the catechumens.¹⁸¹ In other cases, presbyters were responsible for pastoral care including visiting the sick, ministering to Christians in prison, and dispensing

¹⁷³ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 213.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 213.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 278.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 173.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 318.

¹⁷⁸ *Epp.* 14.3.1; 16.1.2; cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214; and R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, pp. 83-4.

material aid to the poor.¹⁸² Other presbyters performed administrative tasks such as carrying letters and money on behalf of the bishop.¹⁸³ Finally, they participated with the bishop in church councils.¹⁸⁴

Cyprian's deacons also largely existed to serve the bishop.¹⁸⁵ Their tasks included visiting the sick and imprisoned, ministering to the needs of the poor, handling church finances, assisting in the liturgy and baptisms, and distributing the cup during the Eucharist.¹⁸⁶ In the absence of the bishop, some Carthaginian deacons were allowed to hear the confession of the dying lapsed and offer them reconciliation.¹⁸⁷ Sub-deacons assisted the deacons in their ministry. Their role included delivering letters as well as money.¹⁸⁸

Lectores were highly regarded by Cyprian for their ministry of reading the Scriptures in the liturgical assembly.¹⁸⁹ Some *lectores* assisted the presbyters in reading the Scriptures to the catechumens during their instruction while others delivered letters for Cyprian.¹⁹⁰ This office was often occupied by youth whose clear reading voices were greatly valued.¹⁹¹ Also, this position seems to have been a

¹⁸⁰ *Ep.* 29; cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214.

¹⁸¹ Cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 82.

¹⁸² Cf. J. Joncas, op. cit..

¹⁸³ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214.

¹⁸⁴ *Epp.* 1; 4; 29; 38; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, pp. 97-8.

¹⁸⁵ *Epp.* 3.3.1; 5.2.2.3; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 110; and V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 80.

¹⁸⁶ *Epp.* 5.1.2; 5.2.1; 12.1.1; 13.7; *De laps.* 25; cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214; ACW, 43.168; and J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 19.

¹⁸⁷ *Ep.* 18.1.2; cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214; and R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 113.

¹⁸⁸ *Epp.* 9.1.1; 9.2.1; 20.3.2; 35.1.1; 36; 45.4.3; 47.1.2; 77-9; ACW, 43.206; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁹ *Epp.* 38-9; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 150 and V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁰ *Epp.* 24; 29; 32; cf. V. Saxer, op. cit., p. 78; and R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 151.

¹⁹¹ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 214.

stepping stone into the higher ranks of the clergy as the individual increased in age and spiritual maturity.¹⁹²

Cyprian also included exorcists among the clergy in Carthage. Their ministry included leading catechumens through a renunciation of Satan and the flesh prior to baptism as well as caring for others who were apparently oppressed by demons. They also accompanied the bishop and presbyters on visits to the sick.¹⁹³

The remaining clerical office noted by Cyprian in Carthage was the acolyte. Generally, they served the presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons while carrying letters and distributing money to prisoners.¹⁹⁴

3. Forms of Mentoring

Having surveyed Cyprian's *epistulae*, *De unitate ecclesiae*, *De lapsis*, and Pontius' *Vita Cypriani*, we do gain a sense of Cyprian's relationship to the clergy in Carthage and in other parts of Africa. Further, there is significant evidence to show that Cyprian was active in mentoring these clergy. Five key forms of mentoring in Cyprian seem to emerge from his repeated behavior. They include: involving the clergy in ministry; participation in church councils; resourcing them with letters; resourcing them with books; and disciplining the clergy.

(1) Involving Clergy in Ministry

While Cyprian is regarded as the Roman pro-consul type bishop possessing authority and a certain power in the church, it would be fallacious to think that he took all of the church responsibilities on himself and did not entrust leadership to his clergy. This is rather evident already from our brief survey of the roles of the clergy.

¹⁹² Saxer (V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 80) writes, 'Déjà du temps de S. Cyprien, le lectorat ne constituait souvent qu'une étape dans le vie cléricale.' See also *epp.* 24; 39.

¹⁹³ *Epp.* 69.15.2; 75.10.4; *Ad Donat.* 5; *Ad Demet.* 15; *Quod idola dii non sint*, 7; ACW, 43.343; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 162, 164.

¹⁹⁴ *Epp.* 45.4.3; 52.1; 59.1; 77.3.2; 78.1; ACW, 43.202; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 168.

Moreover, I argue that he was active in involving his clergy in ministries where responsibility and authority were delegated and where the spiritual leader had the opportunity to grow and develop as a leader.

How did Cyprian involve his clergy in ministry? Without repeating the clerical roles already listed, let us first consider the significance of some tasks entrusted to the lower clergy. First, virtually every member of the clergy, including presbyters, was at some point involved in the work of carrying letters for Cyprian.¹⁹⁵ Though this administrative task does not seem to have tremendous importance, Cyprian believed it did. The minister was not simply a postman but one entrusted with official church documents; one who needed to insure that the true and accurate message of the bishop reached its destiny.¹⁹⁶ This ministry was so important to Cyprian that he demanded that his couriers be men of irreproachable character.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, he often sent his correspondence with a group of clergy traveling together which perhaps provided some accountability. What seems most significant is that Cyprian would entrust what he deemed such an important ministry to members of the lowest clerical ranks.

Secondly, we have noted that Cyprian greatly valued the role of the *lector* in the liturgical assembly, as the place of the Holy Scriptures was central to the worship experience. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that teenagers routinely fulfilled this important role.

Third, deacons along with presbyters were entrusted with providing financial help for the confessors in prison,¹⁹⁸ celebrating the Eucharist with them,¹⁹⁹ and caring

¹⁹⁵ *Epp.* 29.1.1; 34.4.1; 44.2.2; 45.4.3; 47.1.2; 49.3.1; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁶ *Epp.* 9.2.2; 49.3.1; 59.9.4; cf. R. Seagraves, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁷ *Ep.* 20.1.1; cf. R. Seagraves, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁸ *Quantum ad sumptus suggerendos, siue allis qui gloriosa uoce dominum confessi in carcere sunt constituti, siue his qui pauperes et indigentes laborant et tamen in domino perseuerant, peto nihil desit, cum summula omnis quae redacta est illic sit apud clericos distributa propter eiusmodi casus, ut haberent plures unde ad necessitates et pressuras singulorum operari possint.* *ep.* 5.1.2, CCSL, 3B.27. See also *ep.* 13.7; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 19.

for their needs in general.²⁰⁰ We may first conclude that great confidence must have been placed in these deacons to manage and disperse finances. Yet they were also called upon to perform more than just a service role, as they also assumed some pastoral duties and served at the altar.

In summary, members of the lower clerical orders were entrusted with significant responsibility by the bishop. In the case of deacons, they were seemingly drawn into the ranks of the presbyters and bishop in what they were called upon to do. Cyprian, throughout his writings, referred to the position of clergy as *honor* or a place of dignity in the church.²⁰¹ It seems clear that he did not exclude the lower members of the clergy from this distinction.

A second key way that Cyprian involved the clergy in ministry, particularly presbyters and deacons, was through seeking their advice. He sought their input in how to proceed in the question of the lapsed and welcomed their thoughts as he was making clerical appointments.²⁰² As noted, he affirmed their involvement in decision making by involving them in the councils of the African church.²⁰³ Thus, it is clear that Cyprian did not merely employ ‘yes’ men as advisors but rather seriously solicited the input of his clergy for leading the church. As a result, these men received training in real life decision making that contributed to their development as spiritual leaders.

A third important way that Cyprian involved the clergy in ministry was through delegating significant responsibility to his presbyters. While Cyprian

¹⁹⁹ *Consulite ergo et prouidete ut cum temperamento fieri hoc tutius possit, ita ut presbyteri quoque qui illic apud confessores offerunt singuli cum singulis diaconis per uices alternent. ep. 5.2.2, CCSL, 3B.28.*

²⁰⁰ *Sed officium meum uestra diligentia repraesentet et faciat omnia quae fieri oportet circa eos quos in talibus meritis fidei ac uirtutis suae inlustrauit diuina dignatio. ep. 12.1.1, CCSL, 3B.67-8. See also ep. 5.2.1; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 19.*

²⁰¹ Cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, pp. 32-4.

²⁰² *Epp. 17.3.2; 19.2.2; 26.1.2; 38.1.1; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 107-08.*

²⁰³ *Epp. 14.4; 19.1; 19.2.2; 26.1.2; 43.3.2; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 118.*

maintained the authority of bishop, it is noteworthy to consider just how much responsibility was given to the presbyters, particularly during his time in hiding and exile. In fact, if we simply consider the main roles of the bishop — presiding over liturgical assemblies, hearing confession and restoring the lapsed, preaching and teaching, and participating in councils — we find that nearly all of these were at some point fulfilled by the presbyters. This significant delegation of responsibility certainly flies in the face of the authoritarian image often associated with the bishop of Carthage.

Did Cyprian's time in hiding and exile accelerate the clergy's involvement in ministry and delegation of responsibility? Judging from the content of his correspondence during this period, Cyprian seemed to be encouraging the clergy to do more than they would actually be doing if he were present.²⁰⁴ In *Epistula* 5, he provided a specific list of duties to be carried out in his absence; while in *Epistula* 14, he directed the clergy to do his job of caring for the poor and ministering to the confessors in prison.²⁰⁵ Finally, it should be noted that the absence of a strong leader with his directives and encouragement to continue the ministry in his absence would by necessity force potential leaders to realize their potential.²⁰⁶

Though the circumstances of Cyprian's time in hiding and exile did seem to accelerate his clergy's involvement in ministry and increased responsibility, this did not occur against his will. Rather, as his correspondence indicates, he was

²⁰⁴ *Epp.* 5-7 and 14 were written while he was in hiding in 250 and *epp.* 76 and 81 were written from exile in 257-8.

²⁰⁵ *Epp.* 5.1.1; 14.2.1-2.

²⁰⁶ Cyprian's absence did of course have the opposite effect as some clergy took the matter of the lapsed into their own hands and began prematurely restoring the fallen. This scandal is the subject of *epp.* 16 and 18. Burns (J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, pp. 21, 80) argues that these were clergy unfavorable to electing a bishop who was such a young Christian. See also *epp.* 5.2; 16.4.2; 34.1; 59.12.1-2; *Vita Cypriani*, 5.

encouraging that development with the unselfish heart of a *pastor* who longed to see the flocked cared for whether he was present or not.

To summarize, a first clear form of mentoring in Cyprian was that he involved the clergy in ministry. This included a wide range of ministry from administrative tasks to performing sacramental functions. The clergy were quite active in tasks assigned by the bishop and this led to their development as spiritual leaders.

(2) Participation in Church Councils

Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Agrippinus of Carthage (c. 220), Cyprian greatly valued convening councils of African bishops to deal with church matters. Arguably, Cyprian's greatest lasting influence on the structure of the North African church was in advancing and developing this forum.

Cyprian participated in seven councils during his time as bishop.²⁰⁷ The first four, convened in 251,²⁰⁸ 252,²⁰⁹ 253²¹⁰ and 254,²¹¹ largely dealt with the question of the lapsed. The council of 254 in particular chastised clergy who had prematurely restored the lapsed without proper penance. The other three councils — held in 255,²¹² the spring of 256,²¹³ and in September of 256²¹⁴ — addressed the question of whether heretics requesting membership in the catholic church needed to be re-baptized. The council of 255 as well as the council of the spring of 256 essentially reaffirmed the decision of the council of 220 under Agrippinus in which those coming out of heresy were ordered to be re-baptized.²¹⁵ Finally, the September 256 council

²⁰⁷ Cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 13.

²⁰⁸ *Epp.* 42; 45; 49; cf. V. Saxer, *op. cit.*, p. 14; and J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 5.

²⁰⁹ *Ep.* 57; cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 14.

²¹⁰ *Ep.* 64; cf. V. Saxer, *op. cit.*, p. 14; and J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 8.

²¹¹ *Ep.* 67; cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 14.

²¹² *Ep.* 70; cf. V. Saxer, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

²¹³ *Ep.* 72; cf. V. Saxer, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²¹⁴ *Sententiae episcoporum*, 83-5; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 106.

²¹⁵ *Epp.* 70; 72; cf. V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, pp. 14-15.

was an outright condemnation of Bishop Stephen of Rome, who did not require re-baptism.²¹⁶

How did Cyprian mentor the clergy through church councils? First, it is important that we recognize the influence of Cyprian on the rest of the clergy. As metropolitan bishop, it was Cyprian who took the initiative to convene the bishops and they responded to his call to gather.²¹⁷ This was especially significant in the initial years when Cyprian endeavored to establish these meetings as a regular practice. Cyprian's opinion on doctrinal matters, as in the case of re-baptizing heretics, also seemed to carry more weight than that of his colleagues. For example in the second council of 256, Cyprian's previous correspondence with Jubianus on the matter was read aloud followed by a decision from the council that remained consistent with Cyprian's opinions.²¹⁸ Cyprian's influence over the council extended further as he customarily drafted the letters, which articulated the proceedings and decisions of the council.²¹⁹ Hence, he influenced the clergy through initiating the gathering, through his actual participation in the council, as well as in the period following the council.

Though it is clear that Cyprian led the councils with authority, he also seemed to have done so with a great deal of humility. In the midst of one council, he made the famous remark that 'no one is a bishop of bishops.'²²⁰ Though some are skeptical of Cyprian's declaration of humility,²²¹ some of his actions ought to be taken into consideration. First, during one council, Cyprian humbly postured himself by choosing to be the last one to sign his name to the council's proceedings.²²² Secondly,

²¹⁶ *Sententiae episcoporum*, 83-5; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, pp. 9, 106.

²¹⁷ *Epp.* 3-4; 56; 58; 62-4; 70; 72; cf. J. Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²¹⁸ *Sententiae episcoporum*, 83-5; *epp.* 70; 73; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 106.

²¹⁹ *Epp.* 57; 64; 67; 70 and 72 comprise the conciliar letters. See also *ep.* 48.2.2.

²²⁰ *Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se episcoporum constituit aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem colleges suos adigit. Sententiae episcoporum*, 87, PL 3, 1054.

²²¹ Saxer (V. Saxer, *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage*, p. 17) writes: 'les grandes protestations d'humilité peuvent être le signe de la plus grande autorité.'

²²² *Ibid.*

Cyprian went to great lengths to assemble the *collegium* of bishops, which demonstrated his insistence on the involvement of the African bishops and a value for collective decision-making.²²³ While this required much patience, Cyprian sought to model the unity of the church through the unity of the *collegium* of bishops.²²⁴ Finally, as noted, during some councils Cyprian humbly solicited the input of the presbyters, deacons, and sometimes even the laity; especially regarding decisions pertaining to the lapsed.²²⁵ If Cyprian had not been a humble leader, he surely would not have gone to the trouble to unify the bishops and involve the clergy.

Hence, through the medium of church councils, Cyprian mentored the clergy by exercising a healthy influence over the doctrinal debates and practical decisions of the council. At the same time, he humbly facilitated the decision making of a *collegium* of bishops while involving other clergy in the process as well. Through the council, Cyprian's mentoring influence extended beyond his own clergy in Carthage to the majority of bishops in Africa.

(3) Letters

The bishop of Carthage, as we have already seen, attached great importance to messages and written correspondence. Clarke writes that Cyprian's letters were intended to be read publicly and that copies were generally made before they were sent so that they would also serve as a resource to others.²²⁶ Fifty out of Cyprian's eighty-one surviving letters were written to members of the clergy. At least twenty-one letters were addressed to his own clergy in Carthage²²⁷; while another twenty-nine

²²³ *Epp.* 26.1.2; 55.6.1-2; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, pp. 87-8.

²²⁴ Cf. J. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church*, p. 37.

²²⁵ *Epp.* 11.7.3; 16.4.2; 19.2.2; 26.1.2; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 21.

²²⁶ Cf. G. Clarke in ACW, 43.9.

²²⁷ *Epp.* 6; 7.2; 8.1; 12.2.1; 13.7; 14.4; 21; 23; 27.1.2; 29.1.2; 32.1.2; 34.1, 34.4.1; 36.1.1; 40; 41.1.1; 43.1.1; 44.2.1-2; 45.4.3; 59.1.1; 75.1; 77.3.2 were penned to Cyprian's Carthaginian clergy. Cf. G. Clarke in ACW, 43.42-3.

were intended for other clergy in Africa and beyond.²²⁸ Generally, Cyprian used letters to resource the clergy by answering questions on practical church matters; giving practical instructions for ministry; exhorting the clergy to the work of ministry; at times disciplining the clergy; encouraging them; dealing with doctrinal issues; and simply communicating church related information. Five other letters were written by Cyprian to communicate the decisions of a council of bishops.

In at least ten of Cyprian's letters, he responded to questions regarding practical church matters. In four of these letters, he gave instructions for dealing with the lapsed.²²⁹ Three letters included affirmation and instruction to clergy for carrying out church discipline in the case of both clergy and lay people.²³⁰ In one letter, he responded to clergy who were trying to rectify the situation of a presbyter who was improperly installed as acting bishop following the death of the previous bishop.²³¹ In another letter, he gave instruction on how to deal with a former actor who joined the church but was earning a living by teaching his former profession to youth.²³² Finally, Cyprian replied to one bishop on how to prepare the wine for the Eucharist.²³³

Three letters contained instructions for specific ministry assignments for Cyprian's clergy in Carthage during the time he was in hiding in 250. Some tasks included distributing money to the poor, visiting the confessors in prison,²³⁴ and properly honoring and burying those confessors who died in prison.²³⁵

Also during his time in hiding, Cyprian sent three letters of exhortation to the Carthaginian clergy. In one letter, he urged the clergy to get along with one another,

²²⁸ *Epp.* 1-5; 11; 16; 18-19; 25-6; 38; 55-7; 61-5; 67; 69; 70-1; 73-4; 76; 80-1 were written to clergy outside of Carthage.

²²⁹ *Epp.* 19; 25-6; 56.

²³⁰ *Epp.* 3-4; 34.

²³¹ *Ep.* 1.

²³² *Ep.* 2.

²³³ *Ep.* 63.

²³⁴ *Epp.* 5.1.2; 5.2.1; 7.2.

²³⁵ *Ep.* 12.1.2; 12.2.1.

to be steadfast in prayer, to stand firm in their faith, and to be careful about what they eat and drink.²³⁶ In the other two letters, the clergy were strongly reminded to continue in the work of ministry by dispensing money to the poor,²³⁷ ministering to the confessors in prison, and rebuking any confessors for inappropriate behavior.²³⁸

Three of Cyprian's letters were specifically intended to discipline the clergy. In two letters, written to his Carthaginian clergy from hiding in 250, he chastised them for taking matters into their own hands by prematurely re-admitting the lapsed to communion.²³⁹ The other disciplinary letter was addressed to a certain Felicissimus who was being excommunicated for greed and fraud.²⁴⁰

Cyprian wrote ten letters of encouragement to his clergy in Carthage and others as well. In two letters, he encouraged the clergy for their role in providing spiritual counsel to those who were suffering.²⁴¹ Two others contained encouragement for newly ordained bishops at the outset of their ministry.²⁴² One letter affirmed and encouraged a bishop whose position was being challenged by a fallen bishop.²⁴³ Another two were written to encourage clergy who were either in prison or sentenced to hard labor because of their refusal to offer sacrifices to the Roman deities.²⁴⁴ Cyprian also sent a letter of encouragement to one bishop and his colleagues who had just returned from being banished.²⁴⁵ In another letter, he responded with practical encouragement to a group of Numidian bishops who had had some of their flock kidnapped by a band of thieves. He provided verbal encouragement but also sent a

²³⁶ *Ep.* 11.3.2; 11.5.1; 11.7.3; 11.5.3; 11.6.2.

²³⁷ *Epp.* 13.7; 14.2.1.

²³⁸ *Ep.* 14.2.2; 14.3.2.

²³⁹ *Epp.* 16; 18. Though grouped with the letters of exhortation, *ep.* 11 has a disciplinary tone to it as well.

²⁴⁰ *Ep.* 41.

²⁴¹ *Epp.* 19; 43.

²⁴² *Epp.* 45.3.1; 48.3.2; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 92.

²⁴³ *Ep.* 65.

²⁴⁴ *Ep.* 6 was penned in 250 during Cyprian's time in hiding while *ep.* 76 was written during Cyprian's exile in Curubis in 257-8.

monetary gift to help ransom the believers.²⁴⁶ Finally, Cyprian's last letter contained a message of hope and encouragement to the clergy as well as the laity in light of his imminent martyrdom. He encouraged them to accept his suffering with courage and calm.²⁴⁷

Five of Cyprian's letters were replies to doctrinal questions. The first was a persuasive work written to a certain Bishop Antonianus to keep him from being swayed by Novatian's teaching.²⁴⁸ The other four letters dealt with the importance of re-baptizing heretics who desired membership in the church.²⁴⁹ In one of the four letters, Cyprian responded to a certain Pompeius who had asked Cyprian for Stephen's argument for refusing to re-baptize heretics. Cyprian not only sent Stephen's letter but also attached a significant note showing Stephen's erroneous thinking.²⁵⁰

Cyprian wrote six letters to the clergy to update them on church business. In one letter, he was merely 'copying' his clergy on official correspondence with Rome; information that they were free to pass on to others who were in need of it.²⁵¹ In another letter, addressed to a certain Bishop Successus, Cyprian informed him of the persecution that had happened under Valerian and encouraged the bishop to prepare for it.²⁵² In the other four letters, Cyprian made the clergy aware of some clerical appointments he had made.²⁵³

Cyprian's final five letters were written to communicate decisions made by the *collegium* of bishops. The first letter, addressed to Bishop Cornelius of Rome,

²⁴⁵ *Ep.* 61.

²⁴⁶ *Ep.* 62.4.1; 62.3.2.

²⁴⁷ *Ep.* 81.

²⁴⁸ *Ep.* 55.

²⁴⁹ *Epp.* 69; 71-2; 74.

²⁵⁰ *Ep.* 74.

²⁵¹ *Ep.* 32.

²⁵² *Ep.* 80.

²⁵³ *Epp.* 29; 38-40.

communicated the decision of the council on the situation of the lapsed.²⁵⁴ A second letter, written to a certain Fidus, dealt with the doctrinal issue of baptizing children as well as the practical issue of a fallen presbyter who had been restored too hastily.²⁵⁵ A third letter, addressed to the Spanish clergy Felix and Aelius, was rather disciplinary in tone as Cyprian affirmed the high standards of holiness required for a bishop. It should be noted that this letter was written as a response to the moral failure of two Spanish clergy.²⁵⁶ The final two letters were both doctrinal and practical in nature as they clarified the need for re-baptism for those who had come into the church from heresy.²⁵⁷

As we have seen, Cyprian made great use of letters to mentor both his Carthaginian clergy as well as to influence other clergy. During times of hiding, exile, peace, and following church councils, Cyprian used letters to give practical instruction, to exhort, to discipline, to encourage, and to give information that would equip the clergy in carrying out their ministry.

(4) Books

Aside from his clerical correspondence, Cyprian also made use of small books as a means of resourcing the clergy. In 251, following his return from hiding, he authored two significant treatises — *De lapsis* and *De unitate ecclesiae* — whose primary audience was the clergy.

The purpose of *De lapsis* was to give clarity on how to reconcile those who had given in to the order to sacrifice.²⁵⁸ As noted, the crisis of the lapsed along with Cyprian's self imposed exile, caused many clergy to do what was right in their own eyes. In *De lapsis*, Cyprian solidified once again the authority of the bishop while

²⁵⁴ *Ep.* 57.

²⁵⁵ *Ep.* 64.

²⁵⁶ *Ep.* 67.

²⁵⁷ *Epp.* 70; 72.

correcting the thinking of the church on this issue. Burns writes: ‘It reveals a shrewd program which he moved the church to affirm its protective boundary and to realign its system of offices and roles which had been distorted by the martyrs, confessors, and laxist clergy.’²⁵⁹ Burns adds that prior to its publication, *De lapsis* was probably given in the form of a speech to the clergy at Carthage upon the return of Cyprian.²⁶⁰

The practical purpose of *De unitate ecclesiae* was to defend the authority of the office of bishop and specifically Cornelius of Rome when he was opposed by Novatian.²⁶¹ Yet the circumstances of schism in Rome following the Decian persecution also afforded Cyprian the opportunity to enlighten the clergy on the nature of the church. Cyprian winsomely argued in this treatise for the necessity of the unity of the church against all attempts at factions and schisms.²⁶²

The clergy at Carthage, it seems clear, were intimately aware of Cyprian’s thought on restoring the lapsed and the unity of the church. Yet, by publishing the books through the hands of careful copyists, the bishop of Carthage enjoyed a broader mentoring influence on the clergy outside of Carthage as well on future generations.

(5) Discipline

A final form of mentoring observed in Cyprian was disciplining the clergy. Though he was not a rigorist like Novatian, Cyprian still held very high moral standards for the clergy, as he believed that their impropriety could easily thwart God’s blessing on the church. For this reason, it was necessary that Cyprian confront and even dismiss clergy who were immoral.

²⁵⁸ Cf. M. Tilley, ‘Cyprian of Carthage,’ *ATTA*, 263.

²⁵⁹ Cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 37.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 85.

²⁶¹ Cf. M. Tilley, ‘Cyprian of Carthage,’ *ATTA*, 263.

²⁶² Cf. J. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church*, pp. 37-8.

The letters and writings of Cyprian are filled with instances of clergy being disciplined or dismissed.²⁶³ Some were disciplined for improperly dealing with the lapsed, for rebellion, for greed or fraud, or for lapsing in the faith.²⁶⁴ Though Cyprian was severe with immoral clergy, it is clear that his hope was that they would repent and be restored to communion with the church.²⁶⁵ However, the more significant value of discipline as a mentoring tool was that the clergy in good moral standing were indirectly warned when the immoral were disciplined.²⁶⁶

Discipline does not have to be simply regarded as penal. As shown in the correspondence of Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage wrote disciplinary letters to exhort and rebuke the clergy toward fulfilling their duties.²⁶⁷ These clergy apparently continued in their ministries following their receipt of Cyprian's letter.

In light of his view of the priesthood, Cyprian maintained high standards of holiness for the clergy. It was this conviction that compelled him to discipline and remove unworthy clergy while rebuking and exhorting to good deeds those who remained faithful.

4. Principles of Mentoring

Given the five forms of mentoring observed in Cyprian's ministry, what were Cyprian's principles for mentoring spiritual leaders? His principles, drawn from his observed behavior as well as from his articulated thought, seemed to resemble those of the early Christian model. They include: the group context; the mentor is a disciple; the nature of the mentor-disciple relationship; sound teaching; modeling and involving in ministry; releasing leaders; and resourcing leaders.

²⁶³ *Epp.* 1.2.1; 3.3.1-3; 4.4.1; 9.1; 16.4.2; 34.1, 34.4.1-2; 45.4.1; 52.3; 59.1; 64.1.1-2; 65.4.2; 66.10.1; 67.3.1-5.2; 68.2.1-4.3; 72.2; *De laps.* 10-11; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 15.

²⁶⁴ *Epp.* 3; 16.4.2; 34.1; 34.3.2; 34.4.1; 41.2.2; 52.1.2; 55.4.3; 59; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 105, 110, 125, 169.

²⁶⁵ *Ep.* 54.

²⁶⁶ *Ep.* 67.

(1) The Group Context

The fact that Cyprian mentored his clergy in the context of a group is evident for several reasons. First, the simple fact that he supervised nearly forty clergy in the ministry of the church at Carthage meant that he was leading and mentoring them as a group. Secondly, as Cyprian's mentoring correspondence to clergy was characteristically addressed to groups of clergy serving together, it is likely that his direction, exhortation, or encouragement was meant to be received by the group. Third, Cyprian's letters, which contained ministry instruction or assignments, were often directed to groups of clergy. Hence, he probably believed that the group would provide both support and accountability toward completing the task. Fourth, on at least one occasion, Cyprian set apart spiritual leaders together — two *lectores* named Celerinus and Aurelius.²⁶⁸ The intention was that these *lectores* would advance in the ranks of the clergy toward becoming presbyters and it seems plausible that they could support and encourage each other along the way. Finally, Cyprian influenced church councils and had a mentoring influence on the *collegium* of African bishops. It was Cyprian who insisted on these gatherings believing that church matters of great importance should be settled by a body of clergy. Joncas asserts that it was probably Cyprian who first coined the word *collegium* to refer to the group of bishops.²⁶⁹ Thus, Cyprian seemed quite committed to mentoring in the context of a group of spiritual leaders.

(2) A Mentor is a Disciple

Pontius, in his *Vita* of his mentor Cyprian, made mention of Caecilian, the Carthaginian presbyter who first disciplined Cyprian when he was a new believer. Caecilian was referred to as a *doctor* or at least a *doctor audientium* — one

²⁶⁷ *Epp.* 11; 14; 16; 18.

²⁶⁸ *Epp.* 38-9.

responsible for instructing catechumens.²⁷⁰ It is significant that followers of Cyprian like Pontius realized that their highly regarded bishop who functioned as a *doctor* himself had also spent a period of time being mentoring in doctrine.

In *Epistula* 74, Cyprian wrote to his clergy: ‘It is thus a bishop’s duty not only to teach; he must also learn. For he becomes a better teacher if he makes daily progress and advancement in learning what is better.’²⁷¹ Cyprian was not only taught as a new believer but he valued continual, life-long learning realized through daily study and interaction with the Scriptures.²⁷²

Finally, Cyprian demonstrated that he was a continual disciple and learner by humbly looking to his clergy for advice in important areas like restoring the lapsed and appointing clergy. His humility in gathering the *collegium* of bishops also reflects a learner’s posture because as a metropolitan bishop, he was not obliged to seek such input, especially from subordinate clergy.

(3) Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

Cyprian indeed exercised significant authority over his clergy.²⁷³ This authority was clear in his correspondence through the posture he took in assigning ministry tasks, exhorting the clergy to ministry, and in disciplining wayward clergy. Although some clergy ignored Cyprian’s directives during his time in hiding in 250, he never lost his grip on the leadership of the church at Carthage. Burns comments: ‘Cyprian had managed to meet the threats which might have resulted in the dissolution of the community or his own isolation. . . He had asserted the rights of his

²⁶⁹ Cf. J. Joncas, ‘Clergy, North African,’ *ATTA*, 213; see also *epp.* 55; 68.

²⁷⁰ *Vita Cypriani*, 4; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 102.

²⁷¹ *Oportet enim episcopos non tantum docere, sed et discere, quia et ille melius docet qui cotidie crescit et proficit discendo meliora.* *ep.* 74.10.1, CCSL, 3C.576-7. English trans. cited in R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 69.

²⁷² Hamman (A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 285) writes to that effect: ‘La Bible pour lui est un livre de vie, l’évangile, un style de l’existence.’

²⁷³ *Epp.* 16.3.2; 16.4.2; 43.5.2; 59.7.3; 70.3.1; 73.11.1; cf. J. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, p. 96.

office within the context of its service to the whole church.²⁷⁴ Seagraves summarizes the purpose of Cyprian's authority:

To preserve this dignity of the church, the bishop (in this case, Cyprian) needs and has his God-given authority. The sole possession of authority, however, is not sufficient: the bishop must exercise it in the various facets of his direction and guidance of his subordinates.²⁷⁵

Though Cyprian did manage to maintain and exercise authority over the clergy, this characterization alone is far from complete. As we have already shown, Cyprian demonstrated great confidence in the clergy during his times of exile in which he entrusted them with significant ministry responsibility. Also, he showed much humility in seeking the advice of the clergy in important church decisions and in including them in church councils. In these senses, Cyprian allowed the clergy to be his peers. The fact that he referred to other bishops and presbyters as *conpresbyteri nostri* and that younger clergy were called 'brothers' illustrates well this peer aspect of their relationship.²⁷⁶ Though leading with authority, Cyprian also believed that the bishop must teach and lead through his example.²⁷⁷ In summary, Cyprian's relationship to the clergy was a delicate balance of authority and cooperation.

(4) Sound Teaching

Nemesianus of Numidia, in his eulogy of Cyprian, praised the bishop of Carthage for being a good and true teacher (*bonus et uerus doctor*).²⁷⁸ Aside from his regular duties of preaching, the situation of the lapsed and the question of re-baptizing heretics provoked a thorough doctrinal response from Cyprian. This response often came in the form of books and letters addressed to the clergy. In addition, his convening of church councils allowed him to influence the clergy and actually involve them in the process of upholding sound doctrine. The importance Cyprian placed on

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 84.

²⁷⁵ Cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 273.

²⁷⁶ Cf. G. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, p. 44.

²⁷⁷ *Ep.* 4.3.3; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 69.

sound teaching was perhaps most strongly reflected in how he stood up to the recognized church hierarchy, particularly in his opposition to Bishop Stephen in the case of re-baptizing heretics.

Cyprian underscored his value of upholding sound teaching in a previously cited letter to the clergy where he urged them to ‘hold fast to the faith and truth of the catholic church’ which must be taught ‘by the means of all the commandments of the Gospels and the apostles.’²⁷⁹ Hence, an important aspect of Cyprian’s mentoring was encouraging the clergy to maintain sound teaching.

(5) Modeling and Involving in Ministry

As noted, Cyprian actively modeled the work of a minister by serving around the altar, teaching, fulfilling pastoral functions, and leading with courage. We have also shown that virtually every role he performed as bishop was at one time or another fulfilled by his presbyters; while some of his roles were even carried out by deacons. By entrusting the lower clergy with important administrative tasks such as delivering letters and money or by setting apart youth to read the Scriptures in the liturgical assembly, Cyprian was quite committed to involving men in the work of ministry for the growing needs of the church. In *Epistula* 41, he expressed this by writing: ‘I desire to be informed about them all and to advance everyone who is suitable, humble and meek to the duties of the ecclesiastical office.’²⁸⁰

Though he exercised a high level of scrutiny in appointing even the lower orders of clergy,²⁸¹ Cyprian still seemed quite willing to take a risk to set apart leaders

²⁷⁸ *Ep.* 77.2.1; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 267.

²⁷⁹ *Ep.* 73.20.2.

²⁸⁰ *Si qui etiam uellent suas artes exercere additamento quantum satis esset desideria eorum iuuaretis, simul etiam et aetates eorum et condiciones et merita discerneretis, ut etiam nunc ego, cui cura incumbit, omnes optime nossem et dignos quosque et humiles et mites ad ecclesiasticae administrationis officia promouerem.* ep. 41.1.2, CCSL, 3B.196-7. English trans. cited in R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 101.

²⁸¹ *Ep.* 29.1.2; cf. R. Seagraves, op. cit., p. 93.

to be raised up for the work of the church. It is apparent that Cyprian saw the lower levels of clergy as reasonable entry points into the ministry after which faithful clergy could be promoted to the higher offices of increased responsibility. Though Cyprian himself was elected directly to the office of bishop, he praised Cornelius of Rome for having gone through all of the orders of the clergy, which made him more qualified to serve as bishop.²⁸² Cyprian's nomination of Celerinus and Aurelius as *lectores* also supported this notion of developing leaders through the lower ranks of the clergy. In *Epistulae* 39 and 40, he spoke of their nomination as *lectores* in light of their intended eventual nomination as presbyters. They were simply too young to be named presbyters so they were assigned to a season of training as *lectores*.

To summarize, Cyprian mentored his clergy by modeling the work of ministry for them. Further, he invited them to minister by involving them in various ministries of increasing levels of responsibility, which led to their development as spiritual leaders in their own right.

(6) Releasing

Though Cyprian maintained the authority of his office, it is evident that he desired to share and delegate the responsibility of ministry. Particularly during his times in exile, he went beyond simply involving the clergy in ministry by releasing them to do what was normally his work. *Epistula* 14 provides the clearest evidence to this effect. The fact that Cyprian delegated nearly every role as bishop to the presbyters is also evidence of his releasing them to ministry. Through releasing the clergy to minister with authority and responsibility, Cyprian effectively mentored them in their overall development as spiritual leaders.

²⁸² *Ep.* 55.8.2; cf. R. Seagraves, *Pascentes Cum Disciplina*, p. 57.

(7) Resourcing

Though they were released to ministry during his time of exile, Cyprian did resource the clergy with letters of instruction, encouragement, exhortation, and even discipline. As noted, he also provided resourceful letters to clergy outside of Carthage. His books and treatises provided clarity in matters of doctrine and practical church matters. Finally, there is some evidence that Cyprian may have resourced some clergy outside of Carthage through personal visits.²⁸³

5. Summary

The evidence of Cyprian's relationship and dealings with his clergy in Carthage and beyond support the claim that he was purposefully involved in mentoring and developing spiritual leaders. We have considered five forms of mentoring observed in Cyprian: involving the clergy in ministry; participation in church councils; resourcing them with letters; resourcing them with books; and disciplining the clergy. These repeated behaviors along with Cyprian's articulated thought in some areas do reveal principles of mentoring largely consistent with the early Christian model. He consistently mentored and led his men in the context of a group. Though disciplined initially by Caecilian, he continued to be a disciple and learner throughout his life and ministry. He led his men with strength and authority yet also considered them brothers and fellow ministers. He insisted upon sound doctrine consistent with the Scriptures expressed through the traditions of the church. While modeling the work of ministry, he deliberately involved his clergy in ministry of increasing levels of responsibility. Finally, due to periods of exile, he released the clergy to do the work of ministry while serving as a resource to them.

²⁸³ *Epp.* 48.2.2; 58.1.1.

II. Mentoring in Pachomius

Nearly a half century after Cyprian's death, Pachomius was born into a pagan family in Upper Egypt. While serving in the Roman army as a young man, he was deeply impacted by the kindness of a Christian who cared for him during a time of difficulty.²⁸⁴ Upon his release from the army, Pachomius returned to Upper Egypt, converted to Christianity, and became a part of the church. Later, he sought out the eremitic monk Palamon and spent seven years pursuing an ascetic lifestyle in his company.²⁸⁵ While learning from Palamon, he reportedly heard a voice calling him to begin a monastery in the deserted village of Tabennesi.²⁸⁶ As Pachomius' vision differed from Palamon's monasticism, it became necessary that he leave his mentor, although the two covenanted to remain in contact.²⁸⁷ Pachomius is generally credited as being the father of coenobitic monasticism; while Antony (251-356) supposedly pioneered eremitic living.²⁸⁸ Though the history of the two movements did not unfold so neatly, it is still valuable that we consider the work of Pachomius as innovative and representative of Egyptian coenobitic monasticism.

Beginning at Tabennesi, Pachomius attracted disciples who came to abandon the world.²⁸⁹ The community later expanded to include other settlements down the Nile in Upper Egypt. According to the historian Palladius, Pachomius' movement grew to three thousand monks during his lifetime while others have speculated that the number was as high as five thousand.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴ Cf. J. McGuckin, 'Pachomius, St.,' *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 985-6.

²⁸⁵ *Vita prima*, 6-11; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 59.

²⁸⁶ Cf. J. McGuckin, 'Pachomius, St.,' *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 985-6.

²⁸⁷ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 119.

²⁸⁸ The English coenobite is derived from the Latin *coenobium*, which is transliterated from the Greek *konobiam*, which emphasizes that they held things in common and thus acted like a community. The eremitic monks, on the other hand, pursued more of an isolated experience. Cf. W. Harmless, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²⁸⁹ *Vita prima*, 23; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 61.

²⁹⁰ Cf. J. McGuckin, 'Pachomius, St.,' *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 985; and W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 124.

As monastic communities grew in Egypt, conflict arose between the monasteries and the organized church because, in some areas, the monastic communities rivaled the purpose of the church.²⁹¹ For instance, the duties of monks, which included ministering to physical needs, performing liturgical functions, and teaching, tended to mirror those of the clergy.²⁹² While church leaders could feel threatened by the monasteries, the *abbas* also feared the church conscripting their monks into the ranks of the clergy. Though Pachomius refused ordination for himself and his monks, the ordination of monks did increase during his lifetime. Two Egyptian bishops, in particular, began as monks with Pachomius.²⁹³

Despite the potential conflict between church and monastery, Pachomius enjoyed good relations with the organized church and particularly with Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373). Athanasius, who of course authored the *Vita Antonii*, highly esteemed the monastic movement and made personal visits to strengthen ties with the *abbas*.²⁹⁴ He led a movement of clergy interested in incorporating aspects of monasticism into the life and work of the clergy, which ultimately culminated in the notion of the monk-bishop²⁹⁵ — a way of life that would later be observed as far away as Cappadocia and Hippo.²⁹⁶ At the same time, he was not opposed to recruiting clergy from the monastery as he considered it an excellent training center for ministers.²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 15.

²⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 19-20.

²⁹³ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 18-20; and P. Rousseau, 'The Spiritual Authority of a "Monk-Bishop,"' *JTS* 23 (1971), 398.

²⁹⁴ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 34.

²⁹⁵ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 153.

²⁹⁶ Two excellent studies on the notion of the 'monk-bishop' include: P. Rousseau, 'The Spiritual Authority of a "Monk-Bishop:" Elements in Some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries,' *JTS* 23 (1971), 380-419; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity*.

²⁹⁷ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 16-17, 34.

1. Forms of Mentoring

Though Pachomius was not mentoring men in the context of church ministry, his monastic values certainly began to catch on and influence the training of clergy. Let us for the moment; however, consider Pachomius' forms of mentoring in the context of the monastery. Three key forms include the monastery itself, dialogue between master and disciple, and his writings.

(1) The Monastery

The monastic movement under Pachomius was organized by houses, monasteries, and an overall *koinonia* that consisted of a network of monasteries in different locations. Each monk lived in a house that was directed by an *oikiakos* (head of house) who was assisted by a *deuteros* (number two).²⁹⁸ The *oikiakos* was responsible for teaching the monks, assigning tasks of manual labor, and was generally responsible for the actions of his monks.²⁹⁹ Harmless writes, 'For the average monk, the housemaster was at once supervisor and superior, teacher, and spiritual father.'³⁰⁰ About forty monks lived in a house and each one had his own cell where he prayed and slept.³⁰¹

An individual monastery was comprised of thirty or forty houses and was led by a superior known as an *oikonomos* (steward) who was also assisted by a *deuteros*.³⁰² Pachomius referred to the network of monasteries in different locations along the Nile as the *koinonia*. The *koinonia* developed and expanded due to the increased enrollment of monks as well as existing monasteries that began to affiliate with the Pachomian network. Pachomius served as the *abba* or father and had authority over the entire *koinonia*. Though he personally lived at the monastery at

²⁹⁸ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 126.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 125.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

Pbow, he regularly traveled to visit and resource the *oikonomoi* of the individual monasteries.³⁰³

What did the daily routine consist of in the monastery? After waking up, the monks walked to a *synaxis* (assembly) reciting Scripture along the way. During the *synaxis*, the monks prayed and listened to Scripture readings while weaving baskets with their hands.³⁰⁴ Following the *synaxis*, they returned to their houses and waited for the *oikiakos* to assign them manual labor for the day. The work, which included working in the fields, making crafts, or preparing food, was carried out in silence.³⁰⁵ The monks ate two meals a day in silence while fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays.³⁰⁶ Following the meal, they returned to their houses for evening prayers. On days of fasting, the *oikiakos* gave an evening teaching in the house that was followed by a discussion. On the weekends, Pachomius or the *oikonomos* of a particular monastery would also teach while the Eucharist was celebrated on Saturdays and Sundays.³⁰⁷ Finally, the monks retired at night to a seat in their individual cells where they kept vigil or slept only lightly.³⁰⁸

The hierarchical structure meant that the *abba* mentored the *oikonomoi*; the *oikonomoi* mentored the *oikiakoi*; while the *oikiakoi* mentored the individual monks. The monks were disciplined in an ascetic manner that incorporated the physical disciplines of manual labor, fasting, and keeping vigil, as well as spiritual disciplines like prayer, Scripture memory, teaching, and dialogue. The monastic context of course meant that this mentoring happened in a community.

³⁰³ Ibid. p. 122.

³⁰⁴ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 128.

³⁰⁵ Ibid..

³⁰⁶ Ibid.; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 84

³⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 85; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 129.

³⁰⁸ Ibid..

(2) Dialogue

Within the monastery, there was one interesting form of mentoring employed by Pachomius — dialogue. Though much of the day, including work and meals, was carried out in silence, the post-teaching times of dialogue gave the monks the chance to verbally express themselves. While most of the physical and spiritual disciplines were directed in a rather authoritative manner, the dialogue sessions between the *oikiakos* and the monks allowed the monks to express opinions and even disagree with their teacher.³⁰⁹ Pachomius commented on the importance of this time by saying: ‘Everything that is taught them in the assembly of the brothers they must absolutely talk over among themselves, especially on the days of fast, when they receive instruction from their masters.’³¹⁰ Dialogue was not only a form in which Pachomius or an *oikiakos* could open up about his spiritual life or understanding and impart it to the disciple, but it also provided a forum for the monk to contemplate and wrestle with spiritual instruction.

Dialogue as a mentoring tool gained increased importance in the monastic movement following Pachomius. For instance, the *Conlationes* of John Cassian (360-435) summarized Egyptian monasticism and, according to Steward, ‘the format is generally that of the classical dialogue or *erotapokriseis* (question and answer session).’³¹¹ O’Loughlin, summarizing this form, writes:

One of the preferred literary conventions in early monastic theology is that of master-pupil dialogue. The disciple questions and craves knowledge, and the master replies and dispenses it. Such question-and-answer texts cover the liberal arts, theology, scriptural exegesis, monastic training . . . and even the history of the monastery.³¹²

³⁰⁹ *Vita prima*, 61, 88, 125; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 81.

³¹⁰ *Praecepta*, 138; English trans. cited in W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 129.

³¹¹ Cf. C. Steward, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 30.

³¹² Cf. T. O’Loughlin, ‘Master and Pupil: Christian Perspectives,’ *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 836.

(3) Writings

Though Pachomius was not a prolific writer, he did write some letters and his *Rule*, which were intended as a resource for the *oikonomoi* and *oikiakoi*. Harmless, commenting on his writings, writes ‘that Pachomius not only dictated “ordinances” and “talks” but also sent cryptic letters to the heads of the various monasteries.’³¹³ Indeed the letters were written in a code of Greek letters and have yet to be deciphered. Nevertheless, Pachomius communicated in one letter his mentoring intent: ‘I have written to you with images and parables so that you would search them with wisdom, following the footsteps of the saints.’³¹⁴

Pachomius was indeed an innovator in the monastic movement in that he developed the first monastic rule.³¹⁵ Within his *Rule*, there are four smaller books; two of which were intended for spiritual leaders. One was essentially a handbook for the *oikiakoi* while another was a resource for the *oikonomoi*. The books provided some instruction on the work and living environment, rules about liturgy, as well as how to deal with defiant monks.³¹⁶

2. Principles of Mentoring

From our short survey of Pachomius’ life and his forms of mentoring, at least seven principles of mentoring can be identified that conform to the early Christian model. They include: the group context; the mentor is a disciple; selection; nature of the mentor-disciple relationship; sound teaching; releasing leaders; and resourcing leaders.

³¹³ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 131.

³¹⁴ *Ep.* 4.6 cited in W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 131.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 124; cf. P. Rousseau, ‘The Spiritual Authority of a “Monk-Bishop,”’ *JTS* 23 (1971), 403.

³¹⁶ Cf. W. Harmless, *op. cit.*

(1) The Group Context

It almost goes without saying that Pachomius' coenobitic monastery exemplified mentoring in a group context. The element of community distinguished his work from that of his mentor Palamon and from Antony. As noted, in Pachomius' monastery the men lived, ate, worked, and performed spiritual disciplines together under the direction of an *oikiakos*, *oikonomos*, and *abba*. Not only was the leadership responsible for the monks but the men took responsibility for one another, which led to accountability and support in the common ascetic goal.³¹⁷ Commenting on the heart and core values of the monastery, Rousseau writes that the Pachomian monks recognized 'human weaknesses and individual need, and the sense that growth was necessary and possible. Those were the convictions that governed community life above all else.'³¹⁸ Pachomius, championing the life in community proclaimed to his monks, 'it is better for you to live with a thousand in all humility than alone with pride in a hyena's den' and urged them to 'join another who is living according to the gospel of Christ, and you will make progress with him.'³¹⁹

(2) A Mentor is a Disciple

Pachomius, as noted, sought out the hermit Palamon to mentor him in the ascetic life and stayed with him for seven years. After his departure and a promise to stay in touch, Pachomius apparently stayed in contact with Palamon until the latter's death shortly thereafter.³²⁰ Thus, prior to launching his own full-scale monastic work, Pachomius spent a significant period of time learning from Palamon. It is important to note that Pachomius departed with a clear sense of his identity and vision for the monastic life. While he would pass on to his own disciples a conviction for prayer³²¹

³¹⁷ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, pp. 66, 98.

³¹⁸ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 100.

³¹⁹ *Instruction*, 1.17 cited in W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 130.

³²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 119.

³²¹ *Vita prima*, 60; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 68.

as well as the tendency to keep vigil,³²² which he learned from Palamon, he would take a more moderate approach to diet and of course embrace spiritual growth in the context of a community of monks.³²³

Though Pachomius had spent seven years with a master and probably even longer receiving helpful input from Palamon, he continued to demonstrate the heart of a disciple. Perhaps the clearest example of this is that, though serving as the *abba* over the entire *koinonia*, Pachomius still lived in a house and ‘remained subject to a housemaster’s authority for his everyday needs.’³²⁴

That Pachomius was still a growing disciple provided a model for the *oikonomoi*, *oikiakoi*, and monks to imitate. Rousseau writes:

It was Pachomius himself who was the ‘rule’ in the fullest sense. The personal example of his service, the fruit of his own experience, above all his insight into scripture, conveyed in frequent catechesis: those were the indispensable keys to his enduring influence . . . The formative quality of his own character lay at the root of his own ascetic experiments and persisted in its effect throughout his lifetime, molding also the conduct of successors and subordinates in every community of the federation.³²⁵

Hence, Pachomius mentored by personal example. He also instilled that in Theodore, his eventual successor, by teaching him that a leader should be the first to keep the *Rule* and thus lead and disciple by example.³²⁶ The same Theodore, apparently already impacted by the model of Pachomius, referred to his mentor as ‘an imitator of the saints’ and encouraged the monks that ‘all men, can follow after him for he follows the saints . . . Let us die with this man and we shall also live with him for he guides us straight to God.’³²⁷ After Pachomius’ death, Theodore continued to refer to the example of Pachomius by urging the monks to imitate this spiritual father, which

³²² *Vita prima*, 14; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 129.

³²³ *Ibid.* pp. 128-9.

³²⁴ *Vita prima*, 110; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 126.

³²⁵ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 106.

³²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 118.

³²⁷ *Vita prima*, 36; 35 cited in P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*.

became a mentoring tool in itself. This naturally led to the writing of Pachomius' *Vita*, which served a mimetic purpose for Pachomius' generation and the ones to come as versions appeared in Coptic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic.³²⁸

(3) Selection

A clearly observed tendency in the monastic movement is that the potential monk took most of the initiative to seek out a holy man as a mentor or to join a monastery. This was the case with Pachomius as he sought out Palamon. It was also the case with Pachomius' monastery as his new recruits were generally those who took the initiative toward him. In light of this tendency, Pachomius employed a doorkeeper of sorts who initially received those who were applying to be monks.

Due to his early experience with lax monks, Pachomius did not automatically accept anyone who appeared at his door. Rather, the doorkeeper was responsible for interviewing the potential monk to ascertain his motivations for joining the monastery as well as initially teaching the candidate the Lord's Prayer and having him memorize some Psalms.³²⁹ Because reading was crucial to learning in the monastic context, part of the training included learning to read if the candidate was illiterate.³³⁰ Given that he passed the initial entrance exam, the candidate was invited to renounce family and possessions and was taught the rules of the monastery.³³¹ The only formal sign of admission was when the new monk exchanged his clothes for a monastic habit distinguishing him from those living in the world.³³²

In summary, the initiative toward the monastic life seems to have come entirely from the individual. Yet, selection was not automatic as the candidate went through some initial steps of an interview and training in spiritual disciplines. This

³²⁸ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, pp. 117, 140.

³²⁹ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 126; and P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 70.

³³⁰ *Praecepta*, 139; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 127.

³³¹ *Vita prima*, 35; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 70.

helped to eliminate unworthy candidates and allowed the *abba* some information and time to make a good decision.

(4) Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

Pachomius was largely regarded as a father to the *koinonia*. In fact, his title, the Coptic *apa* or Greek *abba*, meant ‘father.’³³³ As coenobitic monasticism developed, the monastic superior took the transliterated title ‘abbot.’³³⁴ Pachomius’ fatherly role implied his authority and organizational leadership over the *koinonia* including the *oikonomoi*, *oikiakoi*, and monks.³³⁵

His fatherly authority was also evident on an inter-personal level as he expected obedience from the monks.³³⁶ As he interacted with them, he did not abstain from admonishing them and instilling in them a sense of holy fear.³³⁷ In some extreme cases, he invoked discipline by giving a verbal rebuke or temporarily separating the monk from the community. These measures were of course carried out in the hope that the disciplined monk would be healed and restored to the community.³³⁸ Pachomius justified his authoritative position from the example of the prophet Elijah who had authority over Elisha.³³⁹

His role as *abba* implied a fatherly care as well. Though at times he needed to discipline the monks, he also was eager to hear confession of sins and restore them.³⁴⁰ The *Vita* indicates that he gave a great deal of personal time to the monks ‘approaching each on his own, and putting his soul to work according to his

³³² Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, pp. 126-7.

³³³ *Ibid.* p. 125.

³³⁴ Cf. M. Derwich, ‘Abbot: Christian,’ *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 6.

³³⁵ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 67; and W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 120.

³³⁶ *Vita prima*, 69; 89; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 101.

³³⁷ *Vita prima*, 84; 86; 118; cf. P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-1.

³³⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 95, 97.

³³⁹ *Instruction*, 1.17; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 130.

³⁴⁰ Cf. B. McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, p. 22.

capacity.’³⁴¹ This time of interaction probably included dialogue as well as pastoral counseling.

Hence, the fatherly nature of Pachomius’ role as *abba*, as well as that of the *oikonomos* and *oikiakos* toward the monks, presented a clear hierarchy in the mentor-disciple relationship. O’Loughlin summarizes the necessity of the hierarchical relationship: ‘The monastery is a school of holiness, a place of disciples/disciplines, where an elder welcomes those who seek to learn and teaches by sharing his life with them.’³⁴² Thus, ‘the relationship of master to pupil was necessarily unequal.’³⁴³

Pachomius’ initial failed experience with lax monks surely taught him the importance of being a strong leader. Yet, he seemed to have won the respect and allegiance of the monks who came after by quietly serving them. In the *Vita prima* Pachomius was recorded telling the men: ‘As for me, it is by serving God and you according to God’s commandment that I find rest.’³⁴⁴ His servant leadership was also reflected in a teachable and humble attitude. In the *Vita prima* we read of an encounter that he had with a young monk in which Pachomius allowed the monk to show him a more effective way to weave a basket.³⁴⁵ His humility was also reflected in how he submitted himself to his *oikiakos* even though he was at the same time superior to him. Rousseau asserts that Pachomius ‘seems to stand at times at the top of the ladder, at other times virtually at the bottom.’³⁴⁶ That is, he led the monastic communities with the care and authority of a father as well as the posture of a servant.

³⁴¹ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 90.

³⁴² Cf. T. O’Loughlin, ‘Master and Pupil: Christian Perspectives,’ *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 836.

³⁴³ *Ibid.* 837.

³⁴⁴ *Vita prima*, 24 cited in W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 120.

³⁴⁵ *Vita prima*, 86; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 112.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 118.

(5) Sound Teaching

Pachomius and Athanasius were allies in the cause of orthodoxy.³⁴⁷ One of the reasons that Athanasius coveted monks for ordination was because of their thorough training in the Scriptures.³⁴⁸ As noted, the daily program in Pachomius' monastery consisted of a great deal of Scripture memorization, teaching from Scripture, as well as the opportunity for dialogue about the teaching. In addition to this rigorous daily program, Pachomius made rounds to the various monasteries in the *koinonia* to provide additional teaching.³⁴⁹

As noted, Pachomius insisted that his monks know how to read. In fact, if they entered the monastery illiterate, part of their initial training was to learn to read. This was mainly so the monks could study and memorize the Scriptures. Yet we also learn that Pachomius used books as a resource in training his monks though we have no precise idea of their content.³⁵⁰ The books were probably an exegetical resource in light of the overall schema of Scriptural study and dialogue. They were considered the property of the monastery and were lent out by the *oikiakos*. Pachomius warned the monks about being drawn to the outward beauty of a book as he did not want them to be distracted from the purpose of study — advancement in the ascetic life.³⁵¹

In summary, Pachomius made Scriptural teaching and memorization a vital part of the daily monastic program and encouraged his monks to read while following a *Rule* that had Scripture as its basis. This evidence shows the value that Pachomius placed on his monks being grounded according to sound teaching.

³⁴⁷ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, pp. 26-7.

³⁴⁸ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 16-18; and M. Derwich, 'Monk-Bishops,' *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 878.

³⁴⁹ Later, Pachomius' disciples Theodore and Horsiesius also made similar visits; cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 130.

³⁵⁰ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 81.

³⁵¹ *Vita prima*, 63; cf. P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*.

(6) Releasing

From what has been presented on the organizational structure of the *koinonia*, monastery and houses, it is clear that Pachomius favored setting apart leaders to mentor the monks. Many of these *oikonomoi* and *oikiakoi* were even listed by name in the *Vita prima*.³⁵²

The most personal account of a leader being set apart was the case of Theodore. Pachomius appears to have brought him along in leadership by entrusting him with various tasks that included dealing with personnel issues among the monks and meeting with visiting philosophers.³⁵³ Later, Theodore was entrusted with teaching the entire monastery at Tabennesi, a role that only Pachomius had previously fulfilled.³⁵⁴ Finally, he replaced Pachomius as *oikonomos* over the Tabennesi monastery when Pachomius moved on to begin the monastery at Pbow.³⁵⁵

Pachomius was clearly committed to setting apart leaders who would replace him. In the case of Theodore, Pachomius entrusted him with tasks of increasing responsibility until Theodore had essentially replaced him. O'Loughlin, describing the tendency in early monasticism to set apart leaders, writes: 'Having shared the life of each of the fathers and heard them speak, the young become fit to succeed them.'³⁵⁶ The result was that the disciple 'becomes master in place of his teacher.'³⁵⁷ According to the *Vita prima*, Theodore and another monk visited Antony after Pachomius' death in order to share the grief they felt at their master's passing away. Yet, Antony responded: 'Do not weep. All of you have become *Abba* Pachomius.'³⁵⁸

³⁵² *Vita prima*, 123; cf. P. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 185.

³⁵³ Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 132.

³⁵⁴ Ibid..

³⁵⁵ *Vita prima*, 77; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 180.

³⁵⁶ Cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'Master and Pupil: Christian Perspectives,' *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 836.

³⁵⁷ Ibid..

³⁵⁸ *Vita prima*, 120 cited in W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 135.

(7) Resourcing

As Pachomius set apart leaders, he continued to resource them. Theodore, for example, would reportedly walk a couple of kilometers each day to hear Pachomius' teaching and then return to Tabennesi and pass on that teaching to his monks.³⁵⁹ As noted, Pachomius also traveled to the different monasteries and taught. Finally, Pachomius resourced the *oikonomoi* and *oikiakoi* with his monastic *Rule*, with teaching that had been transcribed for the purpose of circulation, as well as through the cryptic letters.

3. Summary

The life and work of Pachomius present us with an excellent example of mentoring in the context of coenobitic monasticism. Pachomius largely mentored through the forms of the monastery itself, through dialogue, and through writing. He mentored men within the context of the monastic community in which he was a growing disciple worthy of imitation. After careful selection, he welcomed men who wanted to abandon the world. He maintained a delicate balance of spiritual authority and servant leadership. Also, he insisted upon a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, which led to sound doctrine. Finally, he set apart leaders whom he resourced to become *abbas* in his place.

III. Mentoring in Basil of Caesarea

In this section, we will consider the ministry of Basil of Caesarea as a mentor of spiritual leaders. Basil, along with his brother, Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), and close friend, Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389), made up the famed threesome known as the Cappadocian fathers. They of course originated from and served the church of Cappadocia in Asia Minor, which is now central and eastern Turkey. The Cappadocians are perhaps best known for their theological works on the Trinity and

for upholding the legacy of Athanasius of Alexandria and Nicene orthodoxy.³⁶⁰ They were also influenced by Athanasius in that they pursued a coenobitic monastic lifestyle while serving as ordained clergy. They furthered the notion of the monk-bishop that was briefly mentioned in the last section. Though Basil's work as a mentor will be the primary focus of this section, as he was the most influential of the Cappadocians in this area, the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa will at various points be considered.

Basil was born into an upper class family known for its Christian piety.³⁶¹ His grandmother, Macrina, lived an ascetic lifestyle and was influenced by Bishop Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neocaesarea. (c. 213-275).³⁶² Along with Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil studied rhetoric and philosophy in Cappadocia, Constantinople, and Athens.³⁶³ After an abbreviated career teaching rhetoric, Basil went East in 356 to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in pursuit of the ascetic life and, in particular, the tutelage of the renowned ascetic Bishop Eustathius of Sebaste.³⁶⁴ In 357, he was baptized and retired to a family estate in Pontus where Gregory of Nazianzus and a group of others joined him to form a type of monastery.³⁶⁵ Having been influenced by Bishops Eustathius and Gregory Thaumaturgus, who were also ascetics, Basil, unlike Pachomius, did not reject ordination to the clergy. He was appointed as a *lector* by Bishop Dianius of Caesarea in 360, promoted to presbyter in 364, and finally ordained bishop of Caesarea in 370.³⁶⁶

³⁵⁹ *Vita prima*, 88; cf. P. Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 181; and W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 133.

³⁶⁰ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 2; and L. Ayres, 'The Cappadocians,' *ATTA*, 122.

³⁶¹ Cf. L. Ayres, 'The Cappadocians,' *ATTA*, 121; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 35.

³⁶² Cf. H. Leclercq, 'Gregory of Neocaesarea,' *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/cathen/07015a.htm>.

³⁶³ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 27; and L. Ayres, 'The Cappadocians,' *ATTA*, 121.

³⁶⁴ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 39-40.

³⁶⁵ Basil, *epp.* 207.2; 223.5; Gregory of Nazianzus, *ep.* 6.37; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 68-9; 84-5.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 2; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 43.

The ongoing Christological controversy in Asia Minor provided a key context for Basil's episcopate. His role as metropolitan bishop, which gave him oversight of some fifty bishops and even more clergy, forced him into the messy politics of the church and into these theological battles.³⁶⁷ This put him into regular contact with theological allies and enemies but also secular leaders who often became involved. Yet, Basil seemed to balance his role rather nicely as an urban dwelling monk and a metropolitan bishop in regular contact with church and secular leaders.³⁶⁸

A second issue that marked Basil's ministry was the crisis of leadership in the church. As Sterk points out, there was a 'lack of suitable candidates for the episcopate,' which made it difficult to set apart leaders.³⁶⁹ Perhaps an even greater problem was the lack of suitable clergy already in positions of leadership. The leadership of the church was marred by the immorality and greed of many who had actually paid money to have themselves ordained.³⁷⁰ Hence, Basil's monastic ideals, reflected in his writings, letters, and influence would fly in the face of these existing tendencies. His influence in setting apart leaders would further demonstrate his determination to purify the leadership of the church.

1. Basil the Bishop and his Clergy

Compared to Cyprian, it is much more difficult to describe Basil's roles as bishop, to list the clergy around him in Caesarea, or to give much detail about their roles. The main reason is that Basil, who clearly disliked the existing hierarchical structure of the clergy, was 'imprecise in his vocabulary regarding positions of authority in the church.'³⁷¹ His lack of attention to specific offices and roles seemed to flow from the monastic influence on his ideas about the ordained ministry.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 73.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 44-6.

³⁶⁹ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 47.

³⁷⁰ *Epp.* 53-4; cf. A. Sterk, *op. cit.*.

Nevertheless, drawing upon the evidence in Basil's correspondence as well as the state of the clergy in the fourth century church in Asia Minor, we can gain something of an idea of Basil's work as a bishop and the clergy around him.

As bishop of Caesarea, Basil was first involved in preaching. Employing a more literal hermeneutic following the Antiochan school of interpretation, Basil's surviving work includes homilies on the books of Moses, the Psalms, as well as general discourses of a moral and doctrinal nature.³⁷² Secondly, Basil was responsible for convening and conducting church councils.³⁷³ Third, he strongly believed that a bishop should care for the physical needs of the poor in his city. Following the example of his mentor Eustathius of Sebaste, Basil founded the *Basileiados*, a hospice for the poor located on the outskirts of Caesarea.³⁷⁴ Fourth, as a monk-bishop, he oversaw the monasteries in his province.³⁷⁵ Fifth, Basil, like his contemporaries, would have presided over liturgical assemblies, celebrating the Eucharist, as well as performing baptisms. Finally, he served as a mentor to those clergy serving with him in Caesarea and to the fifty bishops and their clergy in his province.

Basil's presbyters probably assisted him with preaching, presiding over the Eucharist, and in pastoral ministry, which would have included the work of the *Basileiados*.³⁷⁶ Most fourth century presbyters also presided over the liturgical assembly in the absence of the bishop. Basil's correspondence reveals that at least one presbyter, Sanctissimus, was involved in delivering some of his letters.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 48

³⁷² Cf. J. McSorley, 'St. Basil the Great,' *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/cathen/02330b.htm>.

³⁷³ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 74.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 70.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 74.

³⁷⁶ *Epp.* 150; 176; cf. P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3.258.

³⁷⁷ *Epp.* 120; 132; 221; 225; 253-4.

Basil's deacons probably assisted him in his duties as bishop. It is also likely that they were involved in some preaching and baptizing.³⁷⁸ Basil's correspondence also indicates that a deacon named Dorotheus, who later became a presbyter, was entrusted with the task of delivering some of Basil's letters.³⁷⁹ The remaining clergy who served with Basil probably included sub-deacons, who assisted the deacons in their work, and *lectores*, who read the Scriptures in the liturgical assembly.

2. Forms of Mentoring

Basil responded to the crisis of leadership in the church of his day by mentoring men for ministry. His correspondence; moral and doctrinal writings; as well as some of the *Orationes* of his friend Gregory of Nazianzus; provide us with evidence to support the claim that he was actively involved in mentoring the clergy of Asia Minor and sometimes beyond. The key forms of mentoring that surface from a survey of these works include: monasticism; books and writings; letters; and church councils.

(1) Monasticism

An initial form of mentoring evident in Basil's ministry was ascetic and communal living. As noted, prior to his ordination, Basil had gone East pursuing the ascetic life and later invited others to join him in a monastic *aprogmon* (retreat) on his family's estate in Pontus.³⁸⁰ Yet, even after his ordination, he continued to live as a monk while serving as bishop, a program that included regular retreats back to the

³⁷⁸ Cf. P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3.259.

³⁷⁹ *Epp.* 47; 50; 52; 61-2; 243; 273.

³⁸⁰ The Greek *aprogmon* is rendered *otium* in Latin. The notion of *otium* will of course be significant in our study of Augustine; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 71.

estate in Pontus.³⁸¹ Sterk writes: ‘Basil saw all the more need to hold monastic life and ecclesiastical authority in tandem.’³⁸²

How did Basil mentor spiritual leaders through the monastery? Essentially, the monastery served as an indirect training center for monks who would eventually be ordained. In light of the weak spiritual state of the clergy that Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus decried, Basil’s training program provided a great spiritual foundation for future clergy. His program included daily singing of the Psalms, daily Scripture reading, mealtime reading, memorizing Scripture, training against heresy, and ascetic discipline. Some monks were set apart to serve as Bible teachers for other monks. His monastic rule — the *Regulae brevius tractatae* (Short Rules) and *Regulae fusius tractatae* (Long Rules) — provided written direction for common life, especially in how a monk and superior ought to relate to one another.

Though we have asserted that Basil’s monastery was an indirect training center for clergy, it would be difficult to argue that that was what he purposed. However, in considering Basil’s standards and qualifications for the clergy, especially from Gregory Nazianzus’ *Orationes*, it becomes clear that those qualities were very much those of a monk.³⁸³ Hence, in light of the great need of the church for holy and trained leaders and the strategic recruiting pool that the monastery presented, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom all followed the example of Athanasius and chose to ordain monks to the clergy.³⁸⁴

Though Basil did not institute a *monasterium clericorum* as Augustine would do at Hippo, there is evidence that clergy came to Caesarea for the purpose of living

³⁸¹ *Ep.* 43; cf. P. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 85; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 43.

³⁸² *Ibid.*.

³⁸³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 2.49; 43.60-6; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 136.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 136, 147-50.

and serving in the *Basileiados*.³⁸⁵ While the *Basileiados* was a hospice to care for the needs of the poor, it was also a community in which monks could grow together in a common existence while serving and living out the precepts of their faith.³⁸⁶ In some cases, clergy were a part of this monastic community, which meant that to some extent, the community was a means of training and mentoring for spiritual leaders.

(2) Books and Writings

Basil was a prolific writer who used books to speak to his fellow clergy about the key issues of his day — the crisis of doctrine and lack of holy leadership in the church. Two of his books, in particular, addressed those issues.

In 375, Basil wrote his famous *De Spiritu Sancto*, in which he dealt with both issues. Though addressed to his disciple Amphilochius, Basil was clearly writing to a much larger audience of clergy as he assailed the orthodox bishops for spending more energy fighting amongst themselves and jockeying for positions of power than dealing with the Arian struggle.³⁸⁷ After affirming Amphilochius for his desire for truth over mere speculation and inviting him to an in depth investigation of the Scriptures,³⁸⁸ Basil gave a clear defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit in response to charges of heresy that had been made against him.³⁸⁹

Among his ascetic works, Basil wrote *Moralia*, a treatise on spiritual leadership for those occupying roles of leadership in the church.³⁹⁰ Though his audience did include monastic overseers, his main audience seemed to be the clergy. In the introduction, he wrote of his desire to pass on what he has learned from the Scriptures to ‘recipients who should fulfill the word of the apostle: “Entrust these

³⁸⁵ *Epp.* 150; 176.

³⁸⁶ Cf. A. Sterk, *op. cit.*, p. 27; and P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 142.

³⁸⁷ *De Spiritu Sancto*, 30.76-9; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 46; and J. McSorley, ‘St. Basil the Great,’ *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/cathen/02330b.htm>.

³⁸⁸ *De Spiritu Sancto*, 1; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 122, 265.

³⁸⁹ Cf. J. McSorley, ‘St. Basil the Great,’ *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/cathen/02330b.htm>.

things to faithful men who will be able to teach others.” Further, he addressed *Moralia* to ‘those who preside in the teaching of the word of God.’³⁹¹

The main goal of the work was to impress upon spiritual leaders the holy character required of a priest of God as well as the value of ascetic discipline.³⁹² With holiness as the key theme, he treated numerous supporting themes such as: repentance,³⁹³ good works,³⁹⁴ focusing on the call and work of ministry,³⁹⁵ holiness,³⁹⁶ the fear of God,³⁹⁷ being bold witnesses in the faith,³⁹⁸ trusting God,³⁹⁹ constantly being a disciple,⁴⁰⁰ believing and obeying the word of God,⁴⁰¹ maintaining sound doctrine,⁴⁰² benefiting from the influence of a godly community,⁴⁰³ imitating God and the saints of Scripture,⁴⁰⁴ being a godly example,⁴⁰⁵ serving God,⁴⁰⁶ showing hospitality,⁴⁰⁷ remaining steadfast in the faith,⁴⁰⁸ and exercising spiritual disciplines such as prayer and thanksgiving.⁴⁰⁹ He also commended holy character through: not lying,⁴¹⁰ not quarreling,⁴¹¹ avoiding scandal,⁴¹² showing humility and generosity,⁴¹³ simplicity,⁴¹⁴ working,⁴¹⁵ forgiving,⁴¹⁶ and mortifying the flesh.⁴¹⁷

³⁹⁰ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 53.

³⁹¹ English trans. of *Proemium ad hypotyposin* is cited in A. Sterk, op. cit., p. 53.

³⁹² Ibid..

³⁹³ *Moralia*, 1.1-3.

³⁹⁴ Ibid. 1.4; 13.1-2.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. 2; 30.1.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. 2.1.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. 11.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. 6.1.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. 8.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. 9.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. 8; 12.2; 17.1; 18.1-6; 26.1-2; 28.

⁴⁰² *Moralia*, 41; 44.

⁴⁰³ Ibid. 16.1; 48.5; 52.1.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. 27; 72.1.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. 34.1.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. 37.1.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. 38.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. 39.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. 55-6.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. 24.1.

⁴¹¹ Ibid. 25.1-2; 54.1-2.

⁴¹² Ibid. 33.1-4.

⁴¹³ Ibid. 45; 48; 57; 59.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. 47; 48.3.

In chapter seventy of *Moralia*, Basil continued to discuss the character of spiritual leaders while giving some instruction on their roles. First, he urged that leaders be set apart carefully.⁴¹⁸ Like the author of the Pastoral Epistles, Basil provided a set of qualifications for bishops, presbyters, and deacons.⁴¹⁹ Secondly, a spiritual leader must not deny his call to the ministry.⁴²⁰ Third, a leader cannot ask more of his disciples than what he himself is doing and must practice what he preaches.⁴²¹ Fourth, a leader must encourage his flock through preaching as well visiting them.⁴²² Fifth, he should demonstrate mercy and care for the physical needs of those in the church.⁴²³ Sixth, a leader should avoid becoming entangled in worldly affairs and pursue simplicity.⁴²⁴ Finally, Basil gave some direction on the act of preaching itself. He urged that the gospel message should not be compromised nor ears be tickled by preaching⁴²⁵; that the preacher should prioritize his teaching according to the most important needs of the church⁴²⁶; that he should demonstrate humility⁴²⁷; that style should not supercede content in a message⁴²⁸; that the goal of teaching should be sanctification⁴²⁹; that the preacher should confront gently; and to ultimately abandon those who continue to be unresponsive to teaching.⁴³⁰

While *De Spiritu Sancto* contained some pastoral exhortation from Basil, it was largely a treatise on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. While containing some

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. 48.6.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. 49.2; 53.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. 69.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. 70.1-2.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. 71.1-2.

⁴²⁰ Ibid. 70.3.

⁴²¹ Ibid. 70.8-9.

⁴²² Ibid. 70.11, 17.

⁴²³ Ibid. 70.19-20.

⁴²⁴ *Moralia*, 70.27-8.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. 70.12, 22, 29.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. 70.21.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. 70.23.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. 70.25.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. 70.30.

⁴³⁰ Ibid. 70.31-32, 34.

admonition to guarding sound doctrine, *Moralia* was primarily a handbook for spiritual leaders for holy conduct in one's personal life and ministry. Both books, intended for the clergy and spiritual leaders, were significant mentoring tools for Basil.

(3) Letters

Basil made extensive use of letters as at least two thirds of his 366 surviving letters were written while he was bishop of Caesarea.⁴³¹ One fourth of his letters were addressed to his fellow clergy. Sterk argues: 'The large number of extant letters to bishops throughout the Roman Empire suggests that he consistently attempted to influence ideas and decisions both within and beyond his diocesan frontiers.'⁴³² While Basil indeed wrote letters to influence church leadership in Asia Minor, this influence should not be merely construed as political or manipulative; rather, he made use of letters to mentor the clergy. Basil's clerical correspondence can largely be categorized as: letters in which Basil himself was being mentored; peer mentoring; invitation or selection for mentoring; encouragement; exhortation; discipline; theological resource; doctrinal influence; practical ministry instruction; and letters which influence church business.

In four of Basil's letters, the bishop himself was in the posture of the disciple and seeking the help of mentors. Two letters were addressed to Eustathius of Sebaste, who had been Basil's personal mentor at the outset of his ascetic journey. In the first letter, Basil shared with Eustathius some of his struggles in leading the church⁴³³; while in the second, he humbly recounted his spiritual journey and continual need for prayer.⁴³⁴ Similarly, Basil wrote two letters to Athanasius of Alexandria, whom he

⁴³¹ Cf. J. McSorley, 'St. Basil the Great,' *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/cathen/02330b.htm>.

⁴³² Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 91.

⁴³³ *Ep.* 79.

⁴³⁴ *Ep.* 119.

never personally met. In the first letter, he confided in Athanasius about the difficulty of leading the church and asked for prayer and wisdom.⁴³⁵ In the second, he requested that Athanasius prepare a circular letter for Basil and his fellow bishops to provide them with some wisdom in their ministries.⁴³⁶

In eighteen letters, Basil exchanged friendly correspondence with eight different clergy that reveals an element of peer mentoring. When Basil was still a presbyter, he wrote two such letters to Gregory of Nazianzus describing where he lived while communicating friendship.⁴³⁷ Similarly, Basil rejoiced in the friendship and fellowship experienced through correspondence with such clergy as Arcadius,⁴³⁸ Innocent,⁴³⁹ Theodorus,⁴⁴⁰ Peter,⁴⁴¹ and Paeonius. Basil expressed the value he placed on friendship to Paeonius:

I am always eager to receive news from your Perfection, but, when I took your letter into my hands and read it, I was not more pleased with what you had written than I was grieved at considering how great a loss had befallen me during your period of silence.⁴⁴²

In two letters to Ascholius of Thessalonica, the two carried on a bit of a dialogue about the state of the church⁴⁴³ while Basil acknowledged that he was ‘nourished by frequent letters’ from Ascholius.⁴⁴⁴ Basil’s key peer mentoring relationship seemed to be with Bishop Eusebius of Samosata as he sent Eusebius nine letters. Basil did not hesitate to open his heart to Eusebius sharing about his illnesses,⁴⁴⁵ the death of his mother,⁴⁴⁶ the challenges of church ministry including the threat of heresy of

⁴³⁵ *Ep.* 80.

⁴³⁶ *Ep.* 82.

⁴³⁷ *Epp.* 14; 19.

⁴³⁸ *Ep.* 49.

⁴³⁹ *Ep.* 50.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ep.* 124.

⁴⁴¹ *Ep.* 133.

⁴⁴² *Ep.* 134. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of Basil’s letters are from FC.

⁴⁴³ *Ep.* 164.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ep.* 165.

⁴⁴⁵ *Epp.* 30; 136; 141; 162.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ep.* 30.

heresy,⁴⁴⁷ and his need for prayer.⁴⁴⁸ Basil further affirmed Eusebius' work and ministry⁴⁴⁹ while seeking his advice about ordaining clergy outside of his diocese.⁴⁵⁰ Finally, as we have seen in his other peer mentoring letters, Basil expressed a deep sense of friendship and his longing to see Eusebius.⁴⁵¹ Though a personal visit was preferable to a letter, Basil nevertheless acknowledged that 'letters are not a trifling matter' and a valuable means of mutual encouragement and mentoring.⁴⁵²

Four of Basil's letters reveal the bishop initiating toward other spiritual leaders for some type of mentoring relationship. In two letters to Amphilochius of Iconium, Basil essentially invited him to join him in the work of the *Basileiados*.⁴⁵³ In a letter to Theodotus, Basil invited him to dialogue and a relationship of mutual encouragement.⁴⁵⁴ Finally, in the case of Basil's relationship with Ascholius of Thessalonica, it was actually Ascholius who initiated toward Basil for mentoring and encouragement. Basil replied with an affirmation of Ascholius' letter while communicating that he looked forward to a relationship through correspondence.⁴⁵⁵

Twenty letters show Basil mentoring clergy through encouragement or comfort. Two letters of comfort were sent to clergy who had experienced death in their families.⁴⁵⁶ Another five letters were written to encourage clergy or groups of clergy experiencing persecution⁴⁵⁷ while eight letters were addressed to spiritual leaders who had been exiled.⁴⁵⁸ Basil wrote two letters affirming leaders for their orthodoxy — one of which was written to the presbyters of Nicopolis who were

⁴⁴⁷ *Epp.* 30-1; 138; 239; 241.

⁴⁴⁸ *Epp.* 30; 241.

⁴⁴⁹ *Epp.* 136; 145.

⁴⁵⁰ *Epp.* 138; 141.

⁴⁵¹ *Epp.* 31; 136; 145; 162.

⁴⁵² *Ep.* 162.

⁴⁵³ *Epp.* 150; 176.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ep.* 185.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ep.* 154.

⁴⁵⁶ *Epp.* 5; 206.

⁴⁵⁷ *Epp.* 184; 219; 246-7; 256.

serving under a bishop who was doctrinally unsound.⁴⁵⁹ Basil also wrote encouraging Diodorus of Antioch to exercise his gift as a writer.⁴⁶⁰ Finally, Basil wrote letters of encouragement to Amphilochius of Iconium and Ambrose of Milan at the time of their consecration as bishop.⁴⁶¹ Regarding Amphilochius, Basil made himself available to the young bishop while exhorting him to ‘be a man . . . and be strong and go before the people whom the Most High has entrusted to your right hand.’⁴⁶²

Exhortation was the theme of six of Basil’s letters. In a letter to Abramius of Batnae, Basil positively exhorted him to faith, love, and fellowship.⁴⁶³ In another letter, he challenged the newly appointed Bishop Peter of Alexandria, to carry on the legacy of his predecessor Athanasius.⁴⁶⁴ In more of a rebuke, Basil wrote to the young Bishop Artabius of Neocaesarea, confronting him over working in isolation and exhorting him to work with other church leaders in the region.⁴⁶⁵ Similarly, in a letter to the bishops of Pontus, Basil called them to pursue unity in the church.⁴⁶⁶ He also exhorted the presbyter, Evagrius of Antioch, to avoid schism in the church.⁴⁶⁷ Finally, in a letter to the bishops of Neocaesarea, Basil confronted them for slandering him while also exhorting them to unity with the church.⁴⁶⁸

Seven of Basil’s letters were disciplinary in nature. Three letters were addressed to the body of bishops entrusted with ordaining new clergy. Basil condemned them for accepting money in exchange for ordination⁴⁶⁹; for ordaining

⁴⁵⁸ *Epp.* 57; 89; 168; 182; 198; 264; 267-8.

⁴⁵⁹ *Epp.* 172; 240.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ep.* 135.

⁴⁶¹ *Epp.* 161; 197.

⁴⁶² *Ep.* 161.

⁴⁶³ *Ep.* 132.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ep.* 133.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ep.* 65. Artabius was also a distant relative of Basil.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ep.* 203.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ep.* 156.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ep.* 204.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ep.* 53.

friends, family, and unqualified clergy⁴⁷⁰; and for mixing worldly pursuits with the call to ministry.⁴⁷¹ In one letter, Basil wrote to a priest named Paregorius who was living with a woman and threatened him with excommunication if he did not repent.⁴⁷² A similar letter was written to a renegade deacon named Glycerius.⁴⁷³ Basil also sent a confrontational letter to a bishop who refused to cooperate with the collegiality of bishops and attempted to arrange a meeting with him.⁴⁷⁴ Finally, Basil did not hesitate to write and condemn his own brother, Gregory of Nyssa, for sending him a forged letter in the name of their uncle!⁴⁷⁵ Basil's disciplinary correspondence gives us an idea of some of the excesses and immorality present in the leadership of the church of his day as well as his need to mentor at times through rebuke and discipline.

Nine of Basil's letters served as a theological resource to other clergy. In one letter, addressed to an unknown recipient, he laid out his theology of the monastic life. The letter, which was somewhat of an abbreviated monastic rule, was clearly intended for a broader audience. He wrote: 'I am therefore leaving behind me the easily comprehended evidence on each such point, so that those may take note who are engaged in reading and who also will be capable of informing others.'⁴⁷⁶ He wrote another letter to Gregory of Nyssa, in the midst of the ongoing Arian struggle, explaining the difference between Christ's *ousia* (substance) and *hypostasis* (person). Basil wrote a third letter to a certain Cyriacus giving some corrective teaching on the person of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷⁷ In a fourth letter, Basil responded to a letter supposedly

⁴⁷⁰ *Ep.* 54.

⁴⁷¹ *Ep.* 291.

⁴⁷² *Ep.* 55.

⁴⁷³ *Ep.* 170.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ep.* 282.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ep.* 58.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ep.* 22.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ep.* 114.

from Diodorus of Antioch answering theological questions about marriage.⁴⁷⁸ Basil wrote another letter to Optimus of Pisidia providing some exegetical help on the meaning of Genesis 4:15.⁴⁷⁹ Finally, Basil resourced Amphilocheus with five theological letters dealing with themes such as instruction on heresy; animals in the Scripture; interpreting Scripture⁴⁸⁰; the nature of the mind⁴⁸¹; the substance of God⁴⁸²; the relationship between faith and knowledge⁴⁸³; and the relationship between the Father and the Son.⁴⁸⁴

Basil dedicated eighteen letters to influence his fellow clergy in matters of doctrine. In two letters, he defended himself against heresy⁴⁸⁵ while writing another to clear the name of two other clergy who had been similarly accused.⁴⁸⁶ Basil wrote three letters positively encouraging the clergy toward maintaining orthodoxy.⁴⁸⁷ Five more letters show Basil exerting a doctrinal influence by collaborating with his theological allies. In three of these letters, Basil specifically discussed the orthodoxy of three bishops who were about to be ordained⁴⁸⁸; while in the other two, he emphasized the importance of separating from heretics⁴⁸⁹ and discussed the overall battle for sound doctrine in the churches.⁴⁹⁰ In two other letters, Basil confronted clergy who had departed from sound doctrine and urged them to repent.⁴⁹¹ A final five letters of doctrinal influence related to Eustathius of Sebaste — Basil's former mentor who had apparently gone into heresy. In one letter, Basil drafted a declaration of faith

⁴⁷⁸ *Ep.* 160. Some have alleged that the letter from Diodorus was spurious.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ep.* 260.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ep.* 188.

⁴⁸¹ *Ep.* 233.

⁴⁸² *Ep.* 234.

⁴⁸³ *Ep.* 235.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ep.* 236.

⁴⁸⁵ *Epp.* 25; 224.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ep.* 266.

⁴⁸⁷ *Epp.* 113; 129; 245.

⁴⁸⁸ *Epp.* 127; 227; 238.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ep.* 128.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ep.* 258.

consistent with the council of Nicea and asked Eustathius to sign it.⁴⁹² In a follow up letter, Basil wrote to condemn Eustathius, who had apparently refused to sign the initial letter.⁴⁹³ In the other three letters, Basil wrote to other clergy recounting the unsound doctrine of Eustathius and his reasons for breaking fellowship with him.⁴⁹⁴ Hence, Basil used the negative example of Eustathius to influence and warn his fellow clergy about the dangers of heresy.

Basil wrote four letters in which he gave practical instruction on church matters. All four were addressed to Amphilochus of Iconium and were also known as the canonical epistles.⁴⁹⁵ While giving a plethora of instruction on issues from abortion to polygamy, Basil also offered some practical advice to Amphilochus on delegating responsibility and selecting leaders for a nearby church.⁴⁹⁶ As in the case of Basil's theological correspondence with Amphilochius, the canonical letters were intended to resource a broader audience of clergy.

Three final letters from Basil reveal him in the role of a mentor seeking the input of other church leaders and involving them in church decisions. For instance, in two letters to Gregory of Nazianzus, he included Gregory in the discussion over how to proceed with the immoral deacon Glycerius, whom Basil eventually disciplined.⁴⁹⁷ Finally, Basil sought the help of Poemenius of Satala over the ordination of a certain Bishop Anthimus who was not ordained according to church canons.⁴⁹⁸

We have surveyed ninety-three of Basil's letters to clergy in Asia Minor and beyond in which he related to them in a mentoring capacity on some level. In some

⁴⁹¹ *Epp.* 126; 207.

⁴⁹² *Ep.* 125.

⁴⁹³ *Ep.* 223.

⁴⁹⁴ *Epp.* 130; 244; 250.

⁴⁹⁵ *Epp.* 188; 190; 199; 217.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ep.* 190.

⁴⁹⁷ *Epp.* 169; 171.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ep.* 122.

letters, Basil was himself the disciple while other letters testify to the value he put on the input of his peers. Some letters reveal the influence he exerted on clergy in doctrinal matters. Finally, other letters show him in the role of a mentor who was encouraging, exhorting, disciplining, resourcing, and involving others in ministry. Basil's key peer mentoring relationship in his correspondence seemed to be with Eusebius of Samosata.⁴⁹⁹ Even when Eusebius was in exile, Basil did not hesitate to be vulnerable about his poor health!⁵⁰⁰ Basil's key disciple in his letters was clearly Amphilochius of Iconium whom he invited to join him in a mentoring relationship both personally and by correspondence.⁵⁰¹ Basil's letter to Amphilochius following his ordination as bishop was quite an empowering and visionary document that revealed Basil's prowess as a mentor. Apparently, Basil found Amphilochius to be a teachable disciple as he significantly poured himself into this bishop both theologically⁵⁰² and with practical instruction.⁵⁰³ In summary, Basil greatly valued letters and made significant use of them as a means of mentoring spiritual leaders.

(4) Church Councils

As metropolitan bishop, one of Basil's roles was to initiate and preside over the councils of bishops.⁵⁰⁴ Like Cyprian, he made great use of this form of interaction with church leaders in order to exercise a mentoring influence over them. According to his correspondence, Basil convened a council each year in Caesarea in the month of September.⁵⁰⁵

As in his writings, Basil used church councils to address the key issues of facing the church. Sterk asserts that one goal of the councils was 'theological

⁴⁹⁹ *Epp.* 27; 30-1; 34; 127-8; 136; 138; 141; 145; 162; 198; 239; 241; 268.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ep.* 198.

⁵⁰¹ *Epp.* 150; 176.

⁵⁰² *Epp.* 188; 233-6. *De Spiritu Sancto.*

⁵⁰³ *Epp.* 188; 190; 199; 217; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 261-3.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 74.

clarification.⁵⁰⁶ Indeed, on at least a few occasions, Basil convened a council to deal with some theological issue.⁵⁰⁷ In his famous appeal to the western bishops during the height of the Arian crisis in Asia Minor, Basil's main request was that they send a delegation to strengthen the orthodox cause in an impending confrontation that would probably take the form of a council.⁵⁰⁸ Basil also used councils to address the crisis of leadership in the church. Sterk writes: 'Through such episcopal gatherings, Basil was able to influence a wide range of decisions affecting the life of the church, not least of which was the selection and discipline of ecclesiastical leaders.'⁵⁰⁹

As metropolitan bishop and convener of church councils in Caesarea, it is clear that Basil's influence was greater than that of his fellow bishops and he was not at all hesitant about exercising this influence. Nevertheless, Basil, like Cyprian, was committed to the collegiality of bishops and involving other clergy in the process of decision-making. When he invited the younger Bishop Amphilochius to participate in a council he welcomed him to participate in the dialogue and share his 'spiritual gifts.'⁵¹⁰ Hence, as a mentor, Basil used councils to influence the clergy toward sound doctrine, toward restoring a sense of holiness in the office of clergy, and to allow clergy to participate in the decision making process.

3. Principles of Mentoring

Having discussed Basil's forms of mentoring spiritual leaders, we should consider the principles that guided his mentoring. As in other cases, Basil's principles will be taken from his observed repeated behavior as well as his relevant thought articulated in his writings. Basil's principles of mentoring included: the group context;

⁵⁰⁵ *Ep.* 100; cf. A. Sterk, op. cit..

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*.

⁵⁰⁷ *Epp.* 92; 98; 204-5.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ep.* 92.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 74.

⁵¹⁰ *Ep.* 176.

the mentor is a disciple; selection; the nature of the mentor-disciple relationship; sound doctrine; releasing leaders; and resourcing leaders.

(1) The Group Context

In a few instances already, we have noted that Basil valued the context of a group for mentoring. His background included being mentored in the community of an ascetic family while later he initiated an ascetic community on his family's estate in Pontus, which attracted Gregory Nazianzus and other disciples. Secondly, one of Basil's roles as bishop was overseeing the monasteries in his diocese. His monastic program was largely based on life in community. As noted, the monastery became an indirect training center for clergy in light of the shortage of qualified clergy. Third, the ministry of the *Basileiados* was characterized by service and discipleship in the context of community. In addition to the monks who served there, there is evidence that some ordained clergy lived and served in the hospice. Finally, Basil, like Cyprian, valued gathering bishops together at least once a year to strengthen the unity of the church, to set apart leaders, and to deal with heresy. For Basil, the council presented him with the opportunity to influence and encourage the collegiality of bishops rendering it a form of mentoring in a group context.

Basil's writings also reflect the great value he put on mentoring in a community. In the *Regulae*, he articulated down to the smallest detail how the monastic community should function together.⁵¹¹ In the *Moralia*, spiritual leaders were encouraged to benefit from the godly influence of a community,⁵¹² to consider the needs of the community,⁵¹³ and to confront the sins of one another.⁵¹⁴ McGuire concludes that 'in the writings of Saint Basil the Great . . . community is exalted as

⁵¹¹ Cf. G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, pp. 341-2.

⁵¹² *Moralia*, 16.1.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.* 48.5.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.* 52.1; 27; 30-1; 33-4; 37-8; 42-6; 60; 70.

desirable in itself⁵¹⁵ and that ‘Basil is the first monastic writer in the East to be totally convinced that a common life provided the best way of bringing individual men to God.’⁵¹⁶

(2) A Mentor is a Disciple

Basil enjoyed the benefits of mentors for most of his life. From his childhood, he was reared in a family that practiced asceticism. He was notably influenced by his grandmother and sister, both named Macrina, who had been influenced by the ascetic Bishop Gregory of Thaumaturgus.⁵¹⁷ In light of this family spiritual heritage, Gregory of Nazianzus concluded that Basil had been ‘exercised in piety.’⁵¹⁸ When Basil headed East in 356 to know more of the ascetic life, he was also pursuing a mentor in Eustathius of Sebaste. Rousseau comments:

His very search for models and mentors, in the period immediately following his departure from Athens, shows that he was not content merely to respond to, let alone cater for, existing forms of ascetic life. His most characteristic inclination was to interweave the moral with the social and practical aspects of Christianity.⁵¹⁹

In his initial clerical post as a *lector*, Basil was apparently mentored by Bishop Dianius of Caesarea, who modeled holy character, simplicity of life, and practical ministry skills for Basil.⁵²⁰ Though the relationship between Basil and Dianius was at times marked by conflict, Basil continued to value the input and example of this mentor.

When Basil became bishop of Caesarea and was responsible for other spiritual leaders, he continued to learn and grow as a disciple. The fact that he maintained an ascetic lifestyle of simplicity in community with others showed his humility and need

⁵¹⁵ Cf. B. McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, p. 25.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁵¹⁷ *Epp.* 204.6; 223.3; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 3-6; 10; 12; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 36.

⁵¹⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.12. English trans. cited in P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 5.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 5.

for further growth. Also, as noted, Basil corresponded with Eustathius and Athanasius in which he sought the help of these mentors.⁵²¹ Similarly, Rousseau cites Basil's regard for Athanasius of Ancyra and Musonius of Neocaesarea as mentors and models in the early days of his ministry.⁵²² Finally, in correspondence with other peers, Basil was equally vulnerable about his need for growth and repeatedly requested the prayers of his colleagues.⁵²³

Basil's writings also reveal his conviction that the spiritual leader must continue to be a disciple. In the *Moralia*, he essentially communicated this word for word.⁵²⁴ In his *Regulae brevius*, he cited the posture of a learner as an important quality for superiors in the monastery. He wrote: 'I conclude that the one, entrusted with the leadership and care of the larger body, ought to know and learn by heart every thing that they may teach all men what God wishes, showing each one his duty.'⁵²⁵ Also, in light of the stress on monastic overseers, Basil encouraged them to seek out other more experienced overseers as mentors while also taking time to discuss the main issues that they were facing with their peers.⁵²⁶

Like Pachomius, the fact that Basil was a growing disciple made him an example for imitation. In Gregory of Nazianzus' funeral eulogy of Basil, he held up Basil as the standard for a worthy and upright bishop placing Basil's life and ministry in the context of saints like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Elijah.⁵²⁷ Basil had also encouraged spiritual leaders to look to the example of the saints of Scripture that they

⁵²⁰ *Ep.* 51.1; cf. P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

⁵²¹ *Epp.* 79-80; 82; 119.

⁵²² *Ep.* 28-9; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 154-5.

⁵²³ *Epp.* 2.1; 98.1; 99.1; 119; 136.2; 204.4; 223.2; 248; 258.2; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 97.

⁵²⁴ *Moralia*, 9.

⁵²⁵ *Reg. brev.* 235. English trans. cited in A. Sterk, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵²⁶ *Reg. brev.* 104. *Reg. fus.* 48; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 51.

⁵²⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.2, 35-7; 71-6; cf. A. Sterk, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-2.

might in turn be such examples to their flocks.⁵²⁸ Basil summarized the imitative value of a mentor who is a disciple by writing that the spiritual leader ‘must make his life a clear example of every commandment of the Lord so as to leave the taught no chance of thinking that the commandment of the Lord is impossible or may be despised.’⁵²⁹

(3) Selection

As noted, prior to his consecration as bishop of Caesarea, Basil founded a sort of monastic community on his family’s estate in Pontus. The most famous disciple that Basil invited was his friend Gregory of Nazianzus. Three of Basil’s surviving letters provide evidence of Basil’s initiative toward Gregory inviting him to come to Pontus⁵³⁰ while three responses from Gregory reveal his reluctance to join Basil.⁵³¹ Ultimately, Gregory accepted Basil’s invitation and later would write about the mentoring impact Basil had in his life.⁵³²

As bishop, Basil continued to initiate toward potential disciples. We have noted Basil’s initiative toward Amphilochius, whom he invited on two occasions to join him in the work of the *Basileidos* as well as to grow with him as a disciple.⁵³³ Basil concluded one letter by impressing upon Amphilochius the importance of a mentor: ‘a man who both knows much from the experience of others, as well as from his own wisdom, and can impart it to those who come to him.’⁵³⁴ Also noted in Basil’s correspondence was his apparent initiative toward a certain Theodotus for

⁵²⁸ *Epp.* 2.3; 150.4; cf. A. Sterk, op. cit., p. 64; and P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 81.

⁵²⁹ *Reg. fus.* 43. English trans. cited in A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 52. See also *Moralia*, 70.8-9.

⁵³⁰ *Epp.* 2; 4; 19.

⁵³¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epp.* 4-6.

⁵³² Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43; *epp.* 16.4; 58.4; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 65-8.

⁵³³ *Epp.* 150; 176.

⁵³⁴ *Ep.* 150.4. English trans. cited in P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 118.

dialogue and mutual encouragement.⁵³⁵ Finally, Basil favorably responded to the initiative of Ascholius of Thessalonica who sought out Basil as a mentor.⁵³⁶ Ascholius was following the example of Pachomius, Basil and others, in which the disciple initiated a relationship with a mentor.

(4) Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

Rousseau indicates that the most important aspect of mentoring for Basil was the relationship between mentor and disciple.⁵³⁷ Basil, throughout his writings, described the mentor's care for the disciple with pictures of parental tenderness and nurture. In a homily on Psalm 33, he said that a disciple was 'formed by [a mentor] and brought into existence just as an infant is formed within a pregnant woman.'⁵³⁸ Similarly, within the context of the monastery, the mentoring overseer offered his disciples *trophos* (nourishment) by opening both the Scriptures and his own soul to them.⁵³⁹ Basil's mentoring relationship with Amphilochius, recorded in their correspondence, was also quite father-like. In two letters, Basil wrote to Amphilochius as a 'father to a son'⁵⁴⁰; while in several other letters, his tone was characterized by paternal affection.⁵⁴¹ Finally, Basil exhibited similar fatherly care in his letters of encouragement to those clergy who were being persecuted and enduring exile.

Basil also believed that there was a clear hierarchy of spiritual authority in the mentor-disciple relationship. He demonstrated such authority in his correspondence when he wrote to other clergy in a persuasive, exhorting, and even disciplinary

⁵³⁵ *Ep.* 185.

⁵³⁶ *Ep.* 154.

⁵³⁷ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 213.

⁵³⁸ *Hom. Ps.* 33:8. English trans. cited in A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 59.

⁵³⁹ *Trophos* is rendered *nutrix* in Rufinus' Latin translation of Basil. *Rufinus*, 15; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 213.

⁵⁴⁰ *Epp.* 161.2; 176; cf. P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

manner. His authority was also clear in convening and presiding over church councils in Caesarea. In the context of the monastery, Basil believed that monks needed the authority of a superior to help overcome the weaknesses of the flesh.⁵⁴² Basil stated that the overseer should be obeyed and that he should only be reproved by his peers.⁵⁴³ Though encouraged to do so with mildness and patience, it was sometimes necessary for a superior to discipline his monks.⁵⁴⁴

While the mentor-disciple relationship was a balance between fatherly tenderness and spiritual authority, Basil also placed an important value on what a disciple could learn from his peers. His eighteen peer mentoring letters reveal him being vulnerable about his spiritual state and seeking practical ministry help from his peers. As noted, Basil's most significant peer mentoring relationship was with Eusebius of Samosata.

(5) Sound Teaching

With the death of Athanasius in 373, the orthodox party looked to Basil to lead them in the fight against Arianism in the East. According to Gregory of Nazianzus, it was the battle for orthodoxy that drew both Basil and Gregory from their ascetic retreat in Pontus to accept ordination in the church.⁵⁴⁵ In his letters to the leadership of the western church, Basil provided some insight into the extent of the battles with the Arians as well as the opposition the orthodox party faced from the state.⁵⁴⁶

How did Basil go about mentoring the clergy toward sound doctrine? First, as noted, Basil made use of regular church councils to influence his fellow clergy toward

⁵⁴¹ *Epp.* 200; 202; 231; 248; cf. P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.* p. 215.

⁵⁴³ *Reg. brev.* 235. *Reg. fus.* 27; 31; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁴⁴ *Reg. fus.* 25; 35. *Rufinus*, 26; 43; 48; 76; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 52 and P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 217.

⁵⁴⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.30-1; *ep.* 8; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 88.

⁵⁴⁶ *Epp.* 90-2; 242-3; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 44-5.

orthodoxy. Secondly, he wrote eighteen letters with the purpose of influencing the clergy toward sound doctrine to some degree. Gregory of Nazianzus described Basil's ongoing campaign for orthodoxy among the clergy by writing:

He drew up a sketch of pious doctrine, and by wrestling with and attacking their opposition he beat off the daring assaults of the heretics . . . Again, since unreasoning action and unpractical reasoning are alike ineffectual, he added to his reasoning the succor which comes from action; he paid visits, sent messages, gave interviews, instructed, reprovved, rebuked, threatened, reproached.⁵⁴⁷

Gregory's remarks about Basil drawing up 'a sketch of pious doctrine' surely referred to his famous confrontation with Eustathius, which was recorded in Basil's correspondence.⁵⁴⁸ Yet, following Eustathius' apparent refusal to comply with orthodoxy, Basil not only condemned him by letter, but he corresponded with three other clergy effectively making an example out of Eustathius so that other leaders would not be led astray.⁵⁴⁹ The fact that Basil would publicly denounce his own spiritual mentor strongly showed his commitment to sound teaching.⁵⁵⁰ Finally, we have shown that Basil helped the clergy maintain sound doctrine by writing letters and books that served as a theological resource. In particular, Basil's treatise, *De Spiritu Sancto*, as well as five very thorough letters addressed to Amphilochius, provided a theological resource for Amphilochius as well as other clergy.

The basis of Basil's orthodoxy was a high view of the Scriptures. In the *Moralia*, he emphasized to his audience of spiritual leaders the primacy of the Scriptures for spiritual growth and for ministry.⁵⁵¹ The Scriptures were to be believed, followed,⁵⁵² obeyed,⁵⁵³ and taught faithfully.⁵⁵⁴ In the *Regulae*, Basil asserted that

⁵⁴⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.43. English trans. *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/3102.htm>.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ep.* 125.

⁵⁴⁹ *Epp.* 130; 223; 244; 250.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 101, 242.

⁵⁵¹ *Moralia*, 8; 12.2; 17.1; 18; 26.1-2; 28; 41; 44; 70.12.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.* 8; 12.

Scripture should be the basis of monastic education while a key occupation of the overseer was teaching the Scriptures.⁵⁵⁵ Basil's emphasis on the Scriptures reveals that he clearly regarded them as more valuable than the liberal arts. Having experienced both a sacred education at home and a secular one in Athens, Basil clearly preferred the former for himself and his disciples.

(6) Releasing

One of Basil's roles as metropolitan bishop was influencing the process of setting apart leaders to be ordained as clergy. Overall, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa were hesitant about ordaining new leaders in light of the lack of qualified men.⁵⁵⁶ Thus, it was not unusual for Basil to thoroughly examine candidates through a gathered council or by writing to other leaders for their input on the candidate's worthiness.⁵⁵⁷

What qualities did Basil look for in a spiritual leader? Basil's standards were perhaps most clearly expressed in one of his letters to Amphilochius in which he required the young leader to commit to ascetic living, to serve a community, and to teach sound doctrine.⁵⁵⁸ Sterk adds that a spiritual leader must also have experience in ministry and be morally above reproach.⁵⁵⁹

As noted, in light of the lack of morally upright and doctrinally sound candidates, Basil at times leaned on the monastery and ordained monks to fill needed

⁵⁵³ Ibid. 17.1; 18.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. 70.12.

⁵⁵⁵ *Reg. fus.* 15; 41; 47; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 326; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 51.

⁵⁵⁶ *Moralia*, 70.1; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 2.8, 49, 71; Gregory of Nyssa, *ep.* 17; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 54, 113, 123-4; and P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 87.

⁵⁵⁷ *Epp.* 120-2; 190; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, pp. 77-8.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ep.* 150; cf. A. Sterk, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ep.* 222; cf. A. Sterk, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 90.

ministry positions in the church.⁵⁶⁰ Basil seems to have also leaned on his friends a time or two as he was involved in Gregory of Nazianzus' rather forceful ordination while not opposing the same happening to Gregory of Nyssa.⁵⁶¹ Finally, though Basil was generally committed to the canons of Nicea, which dictated the process for ordaining clergy, he did not mind overlooking the canons at times when he found a suitable choice for the clergy. This was the case when Basil ordained Poemenius in Satala, a morally upright and orthodox clergy who had served with him in Caesarea.⁵⁶²

(7) Resourcing

While releasing and setting apart spiritual leaders to their own ministries, Basil actively served as a resource to these clergy as well as other clergy in Asia Minor. As noted, Basil helped Amphilochius and other leaders by writing letters that treated theological and practical issues. In addition, through works like *De Spiritu Sancto* and the *Moralia*, Basil resourced the clergy on matters of doctrine, spiritual leadership, and practical ministry. Gregory of Nazianzus indicated that Basil even provided him at times with material for preaching.⁵⁶³ Finally, Basil served as a resource by making himself personally available. Again, in the case of Amphilochius, Basil not only promised to be available to the young bishop, but he made this more of a reality by having Amphilochius ordained in the diocese next to him.

4. Summary

In the evidence presented, we have shown Basil actively involved in mentoring spiritual leaders in the region of Asia Minor and beyond. His key forms of mentoring included the monastic context; writings of a moral and doctrinal nature;

⁵⁶⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, *De vita sua*, 2.1.11; ep. 63.6; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 80.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. p. 83.

⁵⁶² *Epp.* 102-03; cf. A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 87.

letters; and church councils. From those forms of mentoring as well as his thought articulated in his writings, Basil's ministry of mentoring spiritual leaders does resemble the early Christian model proposed in the first chapter. He valued mentoring in a group context through the monastery, the community of the *Basileidos*, and the gatherings of clergy at church councils. Secondly, he modeled being a disciple by maintaining an ascetic lifestyle and by continually seeking the help of mentors. Thirdly, he selected disciples by inviting them to serve with him personally, initiating a mentoring relationship by letter, and acceding to the mentoring request of a disciple. Fourth, he valued a mentor-disciple relationship that was paternal and nurturing, authoritative, and in some cases fraternal. Fifth, in the context of the ongoing battle against Arianism, he mentored the clergy toward maintaining sound doctrine through his correspondence, writings, and by convening church councils. Sixth, he carefully released leaders to positions of ministry. Finally, he resourced them with letters, writings, and personal attention. In summary, Basil's ministry of mentoring spiritual leaders set a standard for mentoring in the eastern fourth-century church that had an immediate impact on the ministries of Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom.

IV. Mentoring in Ambrose of Milan

Like some of the other Latin fathers, the ministry was a career change for Ambrose. Born in Trier (modern Germany), Ambrose was the son of a prefect and received an education in the liberal arts at Rome specializing in law.⁵⁶⁴ After a period of climbing the ladder of government service, he was appointed governor of Aemilia-Liguria in northern Italy in 370.⁵⁶⁵ McLynn, referring to Ambrose's career change, writes: 'As

⁵⁶³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.1.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. N. McLynn, 'Ambrose of Milan,' *ATTA*, 17.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*.

governor he intervened in a disputed episcopal election at Milan and was unexpectedly appointed bishop (374).⁵⁶⁶ Having never been baptized, Ambrose experienced this rite only eight days before his consecration as bishop and his new career was underway.⁵⁶⁷ He served as the bishop of Milan until his death in 397.

Ambrose carried out the office of bishop much like a respected governor — with benevolent authority.⁵⁶⁸ As a metropolitan bishop, his influence was felt not only in Milan but also throughout the rest of Italy. Ambrose was no stranger to controversy even in his dealings with government officials and the emperor.⁵⁶⁹ Finally, as he had succeeded an Arian bishop in a region sharply divided over the Arian controversy, he would defend Nicene orthodoxy for much of his career in Milan.⁵⁷⁰

1. Ambrose the Bishop

Within this framework of spiritual authority, what roles and duties did Ambrose perform as bishop? The first and most important role for Ambrose was preaching. In the opening line of *De officiis*, three books written for the clergy, he wrote: ‘A bishop's special office is to teach.’⁵⁷¹ A second responsibility was presiding over the liturgical assembly and, in particular, the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist and baptism.⁵⁷² Third, he prepared catechumens for baptism by instructing them on

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid..

⁵⁶⁷ Scholarly consensus indicates that Ambrose's ordination was *per saltum* in that he did not pass through the minor clerical orders prior to becoming bishop just a week after his baptism despite that claim by Paulinus: *Baptizatus itaque fertur omnia ecclesiastica officia implese atque octavo die ordinatus est. Vita Ambrosii*, 9, PL 14, 32. This important phrase is discussed in B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, pp. 20-1.

⁵⁶⁸ Lamirande (E. Lamirande, *Paulin de Milan et la vita Ambrosii*, p. 76) writes, ‘c'est avant tout l'évêque qui compte, si c'est lui qui prend toutes les initiatives et qui porte toutes les responsabilités.’

⁵⁶⁹ *Epp.* 20; 41.27-8; cf. N. McLynn, ‘Ambrose of Milan,’ *ATTA*, 17; and H. Chadwick, ‘The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society,’ *Protocol of the Thirty-Fifth Colloquy*, 11.

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷¹ *Episcopi proprium munus, docere. De officiis*, 1.1, PL 16, 23. All English trans. of *De officiis* are from *New Advent* <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3401.htm>>. Cf. E. Lamirande, *Paulin de Milan et la vita Ambrosii*, p. 80.

⁵⁷² Ibid. pp. 80-1; cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, pp. 98-149.

the creed.⁵⁷³ Fourth, in cooperation with some of the clergy, Ambrose exorcised catechumens as well as baptized Christians who were experiencing demonic oppression.⁵⁷⁴ Fifth, he was active in combating heresy, particularly Arianism, while also fighting the influence of paganism in Milan. One way that he did this was through his participation and influence in church councils.⁵⁷⁵ Sixth, Ambrose was involved in providing for the needs of the poor in Milan.⁵⁷⁶ Seventh, he rendered verdicts in civil cases as a bishop was empowered by the state to serve as a judge.⁵⁷⁷ Finally, Ambrose was responsible for overseeing the clergy attached to the church in Milan, which will in part be the focus of our inquiry in this section.

2. The Clergy in Milan

The clerical offices during Ambrose's life and ministry were well developed. Besides the office of bishop, there were six other clerical positions that will be considered. The three higher orders — presbyters, deacons and sub-deacons — functioned primarily around the altar while the three lesser orders — exorcists, *lectores*, and *ostiarii* (doorkeepers) — performed non-sacramental services.

Presbyters essentially functioned to serve the bishop, advising and assisting him in leading the church.⁵⁷⁸ Ambrose regarded them as *sacerdotes* and involved them in presiding over the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist as well as in leading the liturgy.⁵⁷⁹ Occasionally, at the request of the bishop, the presbyters also

⁵⁷³ Cf. E. Lamirande, op. cit.; W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, pp. 94-8; See also *ep.* 20.4

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 96.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. E. Lamirande, *Paulin de Milan et la vita Ambrosii*, p. 82.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 132-5.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 135-6; cf. H. Chadwick, 'The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society,' *Protocol of the Thirty-Fifth Colloquy*, 6.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, pp. 131-2.

⁵⁷⁹ *De mysteriis*, 6; *De officiis*, 1.152; 2.69; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, pp. 131-2.

preached.⁵⁸⁰ Finally, at times, the presbyter was sent by the bishop to minister in his stead to other churches within the diocese.⁵⁸¹

Deacons also fulfilled an important pastoral role in Milan. Holmes-Dudden writes that ‘the chief function of the deacons, according to Ambrose, was to tend the sanctuary, and assist at the altar during the celebration of the sacred mysteries.’⁵⁸² During the Eucharist, they read the Gospel and served the cup.⁵⁸³ They also served alongside the bishop and presbyter during baptisms.⁵⁸⁴ Finally, under the direction of the bishop, the deacons were involved in attending to the physical needs of the poor in the church and community.⁵⁸⁵ Sub-deacons completed the higher clerical orders. They also served the bishop around the altar as well as carrying out some administrative functions.⁵⁸⁶

The lower clerical orders began with the exorcists. Often, those entering the ministry as adults were initially appointed to this office. They were responsible for casting out demons from catechumens prior to baptism as well as ministering to those who experienced apparent on-going problems including those who essentially lived in the vicinity of the church. The exorcist generally performed his ministry by leading the individual through a prayer of renunciation of evil and consecration to Christ while laying hands on him.⁵⁸⁷

Those entering the ministry before adulthood were most often assigned to the office of *lector*. The lector read the Scriptures in the church and led the singing of

⁵⁸⁰ *Ep.* 20.22; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit., p. 132.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.* pp. 131-2.

⁵⁸² *De officiis*, 1.255; 248; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁸³ *De officiis*, 1.204; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit..

⁵⁸⁴ *De mysteriis*, 6; 8; *De sacramentis*, 1.4; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 131.

⁵⁸⁵ *De officiis*, 1.252; 2.140; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 130.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 131

Psalms — a practice made popular by Ambrose.⁵⁸⁸ As noted, however, the deacons read the Gospel during the Eucharist. The writings of Ambrose reveal that some young *lectores* were raised among the clergy and some went on to be ordained to the higher orders of the clergy.⁵⁸⁹

Ostiarii (doorkeepers) made up the last group of lower orders in Milan. We actually learn about them in Augustine's *Confessiones* when Monica encountered the *ostiarius* at the church in Milan.⁵⁹⁰ According to Holmes-Dudden the doorkeeper 'attended to the cleaning of the church, kept order among the worshippers, and prevented the intrusion of unauthorized persons during the celebration of the sacred mysteries.'⁵⁹¹

3. Forms of Mentoring

Having surveyed Ambrose's *epistulae*, *De officiis*, and *De mysteriis* as well as the *Vita Ambrosii* by Paulinus, his actions toward the clergy reveal an important quality of mentoring. The following forms of mentoring have been noted through careful observation of Ambrose in repeated and varied contexts. They include: involving the clergy in ministry; participation in church councils; letters; and books.

(1) Involving Clergy in Ministry

While Ambrose led the church of Milan with authority, it is clear from our description of the clergy in Milan that he did not take every aspect of ministry on himself nor did he simply have clergy running around as his servants. Rather, as noted, Ambrose entrusted his clergy with responsibilities in ministry and in so doing, he mentored them toward their development as spiritual leaders.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 129.

⁵⁸⁹ *Epp.* 1.13; 70.25; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 129.

⁵⁹⁰ *Conf.* 6.2; cf. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit., p. 129.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid. p. 129.

The job descriptions of the lower orders of the clergy, especially the *ostiarius* and *lector*, suggest that Ambrose was willing to involve men in basic ministries that required neither theological training nor years of faithful service. As we have seen in the case of the *lectores*, this ministry was often performed by youth. Paulinus also recorded that Ambrose employed a deacon to carry letters to the Emperor Theodosius.⁵⁹² On one occasion Ambrose sent some of his clergy to rescue an Arian priest who was about to be attacked by a riot.⁵⁹³ Similarly, Ambrose accompanied his clergy to protect a certain Cresconius who had taken refuge inside the church.⁵⁹⁴ Therefore, Ambrose first mentored the clergy by entrusting them with some of the more basic tasks of ministry.

We also observe in some cases that Ambrose entrusted ministry assignments to the clergy while overseeing and monitoring their work. Paulinus wrote that Ambrose was known for being adept at exorcism.⁵⁹⁵ Yet, he largely delegated this ministry to the exorcists on his staff who exercised their ministry under his supervision.⁵⁹⁶ Similarly, deacons were given the responsibility to care for the poor in the church and to dispense material aid under the guidance of the bishop.⁵⁹⁷ Presbyters assisted the bishop in baptisms and foot washings and occasionally preached under the supervision of the bishop.⁵⁹⁸ As Ambrose provided teaching on how to preach in *De officiis*, it was strategic that he provided avenues of practice to complement this theoretical teaching. Finally, as noted, the presbyters were sent by Ambrose to minister in his place in other churches.⁵⁹⁹ While such confidence in a presbyter is

⁵⁹² *Vita Ambrosii*, 31.

⁵⁹³ *Ep.* 20.5; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 26.

⁵⁹⁴ *Vita Ambrosii*, 34.

⁵⁹⁵ *Vita Ambrosii*, 21, 43.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 130.

⁵⁹⁷ *De officiis*, 1.140, 252; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁵⁹⁸ *De sacramentis*, 3.4; *De officiis*, 1.101; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 132.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ep.* 20.22; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

remarkable, the fact remains that the presbyter was the representative of the bishop serving under his spiritual and mentoring authority.

It seems that Ambrose was deliberately mentoring the clergy by involving them in the ministry. Areas of service ranged from the very basic work performed by the clergy of the lower orders to the more sacramental and teaching ministries of the higher orders. As he involved them in ministry, he supervised them in the context of his own ministry and under his authority while mentoring them toward developing as ministers in their own right. In summary, the church of Milan was very much a practical training center for ministers.

(2) Participation in Church Councils

As noted, Ambrose carried out his ministry in northern Italy, an area largely divided by the Arian controversy. Though appearing cool and aloof at times, Ambrose was nevertheless fully engaged in fighting for orthodoxy and sound doctrine within his spheres of influence. The clearest form that this took was his involvement in at least six church councils during his tenure as bishop of Milan.⁶⁰⁰ As Ambrose sought to instill sound doctrine in the clergy he influenced, church councils were used as a form of mentoring the clergy toward this end.

The first council in which Ambrose took part was at Sirmium sometime between 375 and 380.⁶⁰¹ Ramsey writes: ‘Although Ambrose had only recently been elected bishop, he was the natural leader of the gathering both because of the importance of Milan and because of his connections with the highest circles in Sirmium.’⁶⁰² Ramsey continues, ‘The result of the synod . . . was a strengthening of

⁶⁰⁰ *Epp.* 13-14; 21.17-18; 42; 51.6; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 40; and F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 126.

⁶⁰¹ Both 375 and 378 have been proposed as dates; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 40.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*.

the orthodox Christian position through the deposing of several Arian clerics.⁶⁰³ A second council, probably held in the following year in northern Italy, also saw a bishop with Arian tendencies removed from his position.⁶⁰⁴ Finally, at the council of Aquileia in 381, Ambrose influenced the gathered bishops to denounce the Arians Palladius and Secundianus. The outcomes of each council show that Ambrose was successful in using his position to stamp out heretical influences on the church. Yet I suggest that his influence also taught the clergy present the importance of orthodoxy and that they were warned indirectly of the perils of drifting off into unsound doctrine.

To consider more precisely how Ambrose mentored the clergy through his participation in church councils, we should consider more closely at his role in the council of Aquileia. The *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis* show that Ambrose was the first and most frequent speaker during the gathering.⁶⁰⁵ Yet the atmosphere was such that the other bishops freely contributed and at one point, Ambrose specifically asked for the participation of the African delegates.⁶⁰⁶ As Ambrose questioned Palladius, he made clear that the issue was about the divinity of Christ and refused to lose that focus despite Palladius' repeated attempts to divert the issue.⁶⁰⁷ Though Ambrose was diligent in his case, he also demonstrated fairness to the accused. At one point, he said to Palladius and the members of the council: 'Lest it should appear that he has been unfairly treated, let him state his opinion.'⁶⁰⁸ Finally, Ambrose called on the members of the council, those responsible for the sound interpretation of Scripture, to condemn

⁶⁰³ Ibid..

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid..

⁶⁰⁵ *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis*, 2.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. 16.

⁶⁰⁷ *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis*, 5; 9; 12; 18; 20-2; 25; 33; 39.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ne quid illi uideatur esse subreptum, confirmet sententiam suam. Gesta concilii Aquileiensis*, 71, PL 16, 937-8. All English trans. of Ambrose's *epistulae* are from *The Tertullian Project*, <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ambrose_letters_00_intro.htm>.

Palladius as a heretic.⁶⁰⁹ Paredi rightly asserts that ‘Ambrose knew how to bring matters to a point.’⁶¹⁰

Ambrose demonstrated to the clergy present at the council a zeal for orthodoxy based on a correct interpretation of Scripture. He communicated these thoughts in a letter to Theodosius following the council:

This was why we asked for a council of bishops, that no one should be permitted to state what was false against a person in his absence, and that the truth might be cleared up by discussion in the council. We ought not then to incur any suspicion either of over-zeal or over-leniency, seeing that we made all our observations in the presence of the parties.⁶¹¹

As he pursued getting to the bottom of the truth, Ambrose demonstrated to the clergy present an ability to stay focused on the issue, to refrain from quarreling,⁶¹² to be fair to the accused, and to involve the lesser influential members in the discussion. He also served the bishops after the council by writing a concise summary to the emperor of what transpired which indirectly served as a record and reminder to the clergy. In short, the context of the church council was an important form used by Ambrose to mentor the clergy.

(3) Letters

A third form of mentoring observed in the ministry of Ambrose toward the clergy was letter writing. In Ambrose’s day, it was common practice for a newly appointed bishop to write to the existing bishops announcing his ordination while making a declaration of orthodoxy.⁶¹³ The bishops customarily replied with words of affirmation and encouragement, as did Basil in his letter to Ambrose.⁶¹⁴

⁶⁰⁹ *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis*, 53.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, p. 194.

⁶¹¹ *Eo igitur obsecrauimus sacerdotale concilium, ut nemini liceret medacium in absentem componere, et in concilio discuteretur quid esset in uero. Itaque non cadit in eos intentionis uel facilitatis ulla suspicio, qui omnia praesentibus partibus obseruarunt.* ep. 14.5, PL 16, 954.

⁶¹² *De officiis*, 1.99.

⁶¹³ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 126-7.

⁶¹⁴ Basil, ep. 197; cf. A. Paredi, op. cit..

Of the ninety-one letters that make up Ambrose's surviving correspondence, at least forty-three were written to the clergy. McLynn asserts: 'From Milan, letters of instruction, exhortation and advice radiated outwards to the churches of Trent, Verona, Claterna, Piacenza, and Vercelli.'⁶¹⁵ Indeed, Ambrose enjoyed a mentoring influence over those who had worked with him in Milan and had gone on to other ministry posts as well as the other clergy in northern Italy.

Was mentoring the intent of Ambrose's correspondence? In *Epistula* 47 written to Bishop Sabinus of Placentia, Ambrose likened his own writing to Paul's and communicated a mentoring purpose:

And why need I produce the example of our ancestors, who by their letters have instilled faith into the minds of the people, and have written to whole nations together, and have shown themselves to be present although writing from a distance, according to the words of the apostle, that he was absent in body, but present in spirit, not only in writing but also in judging. Again, he condemned them while absent by epistle, and also absolved them by epistle; for the epistle of Paul was a certain image of his presence and form of his work. For the epistles of the apostles were not, like those of others, weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible, but his letter was of that kind that such as was the substance of his work such also was the form of his precept; for such, says he, as we are in word by letters when absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. He imprinted the image of his presence on his letters, he declared its fruit and testimony in his work.⁶¹⁶

Ambrose believed that letters to fellow clergy were a means of making his presence known though he was personally distant. Through a study of his clerical correspondence, Ambrose mentored the clergy through letters in at least three ways:

⁶¹⁵ Cf. N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, p. 282.

⁶¹⁶ *Quid autem maiorum nostrorum exempla proferam, qui epistolis suis fidem infuderunt populorum mentibus, atque ad integros et confertos scripserunt populos: et praesentes se esse, cum absentes scriberent, significarunt, dicente sancto Apostolo [1 Cor. 5:3], quia absens erat corpore, sed praesens spiritu; non solum cum scriberet, sed etiam cum iudicaret? Denique absens per Epistulam condemnabat, et idem absoluebat per Epistulam; Epistula enim Pauli quaedam effigies erat eius praesentiae, et forma operis. Nom enim ut aliorum Epistulae, graues, inquit, et fortes, praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptibilis [2 Cor. 10:10] ; talis et Apostoli: sed talis huius Epistula, ut talis esset forma praecepti, qualis esset operationis substantia: quia quales sumus, inquit, uerbo per Epistulam absentes, tales et praesentes sumus in opere [2 Cor. 10:11]. Imaginem praesentiae suae in epistolis expressit, fructum et testimonium in opere significauit. Vale, et nos dilige, ut facis; quia nos et te diligimus. ep. 47.6-7, PL 16, 1151.*

instructing them in practical church matters; responding to theological and exegetical questions; and encouraging and exhorting them to the work of ministry.

Six letters were devoted to practical matters related to leading the church. In *Epistula* 19, Ambrose wrote to Bishop Vigilus of Trent with a customary letter of encouragement on the occasion of Vigilus' ordination in 385.⁶¹⁷ The focus of the letter was to warn the new bishop against the dangers of inter-marriage between Christians and pagans and its effect on his congregation.⁶¹⁸ He also warned about fraud and usury in the church as well as the need for believers to be hospitable.⁶¹⁹ In *Epistula* 23, he wrote to the bishops of Aemilia answering their question about the correct date of Easter. In *Epistula* 5, he counseled Syagrius of Verona on how to handle a certain case brought before him for judgment.⁶²⁰ In *Epistulae* 59 and 87, Ambrose wrote to the bishops commending certain believers who had recently come into their midst.

The majority of Ambrose's mentoring letters, which number thirty, were devoted to answering theological questions from the clergy. In *Epistulae* 7 and 8, written to Justus of Lyon, Ambrose treated questions related to the interpretation of Scripture as well as how the Scriptures were actually written. Eleven letters were addressed to a certain Irenaeus who had probably been trained as a clergy in Milan.⁶²¹ They included replies to exegetical questions, why the law was given, and an exposition on Ephesians.⁶²² Similarly, Ambrose resourced Honorontius with eight letters treating subjects like the nature of the soul, the death of Paul, and creation.⁶²³ Ambrose also wrote to Sabinus regarding the days of creation and how he went about

⁶¹⁷ *Ep.* 19.1.

⁶¹⁸ *Ep.* 19.2, 8-33; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 127.

⁶¹⁹ *Ep.* 19.3-4, 6.

⁶²⁰ *Ep.* 6 was also written to Syagrius; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 38.

⁶²¹ *Ep.* 27; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 126.

⁶²² *Epp.* 27; 32-3; 64; 69; 73-4; 76. See also *epp.* 28-31.

refuting an Arian heretic in Milan.⁶²⁴ Ambrose even resourced his own theological teacher, Simplicianus, with four letters of reply to exegetical questions.⁶²⁵ Finally, he wrote *Epistula 72* to Constantius on the significance of circumcision for Christians.

A final seven letters focused on simple encouragement and at times exhortation to the ministry. In 393, Ambrose addressed *Epistula 81* to his clergy in Milan who remained behind following his departure from the city after he had excommunicated the Emperor Eugenius for re-opening of the pagan temples. He sought to encourage them during the difficult pagan influence in the city and exhorted them to carry on the work of the ministry.⁶²⁶ In *Epistula 2*, Ambrose wrote to Constantius at the time of his ordination exhorting him to minister while giving some specific instruction on preaching.⁶²⁷ Further, Ambrose encouraged him to look after the congregation in a neighboring city that had no bishop.⁶²⁸

Ambrose's two letters to Felix of Como testified to the friendship between the two bishops.⁶²⁹ While Ambrose offered encouragement and the exhortation to 'fight the good fight of faith,'⁶³⁰ the tone of the letters suggests more of a peer mentoring relationship in which Ambrose himself asked Felix for prayer.⁶³¹ The same was true of some of his correspondence with Sabinus. In *Epistula 48*, Ambrose asked for Sabinus' feedback on books that he had written placing him in somewhat of an editorial role. In *Epistula 49*, he added that he particularly liked writing to Sabinus when he was alone because it made him feel close to his friend. Finally, in *Epistula 58*, he raised the issue of Paulinus of Nola's decision to renounce the world inviting

⁶²³ *Epp.* 34-6; 43-4; 70-1; 77-8

⁶²⁴ *Epp.* 45-7.

⁶²⁵ *Epp.* 37-8; 65; 67.

⁶²⁶ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 360, 433.

⁶²⁷ *Ep.* 2.4-8. *ep.* 19 to Vigilius, already cited in this section, also contains a quality of exhortation to the ministry as the letter is written on the occasion of Vigilius' consecration as bishop.

⁶²⁸ *Ep.* 2.27.

⁶²⁹ *Ep.* 3 is a letter of thanks with some playful humor as well.

⁶³⁰ *Fac ergo bonum opus. ep.* 4.6, PL 16, 891.

Sabinus to a discussion on the matter. Again, we get a sense of Ambrose encouraging and receiving encouragement in the context of friendship with another bishop.

Though not included in Ambrose's correspondence, there was also evidence that Ambrose mentored Paulinus of Nola by letter.⁶³² In Paulinus' *Epistula* 3, he wrote: 'I still consider the venerable Ambrose as my spiritual father. It was Ambrose who instructed me on the mysteries of the faith, who still gives me the advice I need to carry out my duties as a priest worthily.'⁶³³ Paulinus' letter is noteworthy because, while he may have spent some time with Ambrose in Milan, he spent the majority of his career in ministry elsewhere. Ambrose's continual advice may have come through lost letters or the other forms of mentoring addressed in the following sections.

The fact that Ambrose wrote forty-three of his ninety-one letters to other clergy is significant as he deemed it important to be in contact with other clergy, especially those in northern Italy. The content of the letters — advice on practical church matters, theological questions, and encouragement and exhortation to the ministry — support the claim that Ambrose was using letter writing as a means of mentoring the clergy.

(4) Books

A final form in which Ambrose mentored spiritual leaders was through books. Though Ambrose employed a stenographer, Paulinus wrote that many of his books were written by his own hand.⁶³⁴ Ramsey adds that most of Ambrose's books were initially sermons that he preached in the church.⁶³⁵ Further, Ambrose's books, though addressed to a specific recipient or group, were probably intended for a wider

⁶³¹ *Ep.* 4.3

⁶³² Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, p. 372.

⁶³³ Paulinus of Nola, *ep.* 3.4. English trans. cited in A. Paredi, *op. cit.*. See also Paulinus' letter to Alypius that appears in Augustine's correspondence (*ep.* 24).

⁶³⁴ *Vita Ambrosii*, 38.

⁶³⁵ Cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 55.

audience including the clergy. For instance, in 378 when Ambrose replied to the Emperor Gratian's request for an exposition of orthodoxy with his book *De fide*, we can imagine that the clergy also benefited from such exposition as it was in many ways a summary of what had been discussed at the council of Sirmium.⁶³⁶ Likewise, Ambrose's *De mysteriis* was addressed to the catechumens and treated the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist. In the book, he made reference to the clergy and their role in the mysteries at least five times.⁶³⁷ While the clergy were surely aware of their ministry, perhaps this book served as a reminder to the clergy of their role around the altar as well as the theological significance of the mysteries. Ambrose wrote in *Epistula 47* to Sabinus that he had sent a book along with his letter, which was intended to resource the bishop.⁶³⁸ Since there is no record of any book by Ambrose being directly addressed to Sabinus, it stands to reason that this bishop benefited as a member of Ambrose's wider audience. We can only speculate as to the number of other clergy who also read Ambrose's works not to mention those clergy in Milan who first heard the content of many of his books preached in the form of sermons.

Let us support the claim that Ambrose mentored through books by considering his work *De officiis*, a book penned specifically for the clergy. Holmes-Dudden writes: 'Ambrose's solicitude for his clergy is shown by the trouble he took in their instruction. For their benefit he composed the important series of addresses which were afterwards gathered up in that very famous treatise [*De officiis*].'⁶³⁹ Indeed, *De officiis* was probably initially a series of lectures given by Ambrose to his clergy at Milan. 'Solicitude' and 'trouble' are appropriate descriptions for Ambrose's teaching as it should be reiterated that he had inherited a largely Arian clerical staff from his

⁶³⁶ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, p. 180.

⁶³⁷ *De mysteriis*, 2.6; 3.8, 14; 5.27; 6.29.

⁶³⁸ *Ep.* 47.1.

⁶³⁹ Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, pp. 125-6.

predecessor Auxentius — a group of men in dire need of orthodox teaching.⁶⁴⁰ It was only later that these lectures took the form of a book intended for a wider clerical audience.

Structured with precepts heavily supported by Scriptural exegesis and principles from the lives of the saints of Scripture, Ambrose's stated intent was 'to teach you, my children.'⁶⁴¹ As Ambrose's main theme was the need for a minister to pursue holiness, the book may be divided into three broad categories: attributes the minister must adopt; things he must avoid; as well as general practical instruction.⁶⁴²

First, Ambrose called his clergy to be men of holy character and conduct following the models of the saints of Scripture. He exhorted them to 'be humble, gentle, mild, serious, [and] patient'⁶⁴³ while demonstrating the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.⁶⁴⁴ He urged them to show love, mercy, kindness, good will and to give freely out of pure motives.⁶⁴⁵ He also called them to be sexually pure⁶⁴⁶ and to have a good testimony before the secular authorities.⁶⁴⁷ He further advised them to demonstrate modesty in speech,⁶⁴⁸ tone of voice,⁶⁴⁹ in praying,⁶⁵⁰ and even in walking.⁶⁵¹ In short, Ambrose's minister should live to please God alone.⁶⁵²

Secondly, Ambrose advised the men to put off or avoid things that would distract them from personal holiness. They were to decline invitations to banquets in

⁶⁴⁰ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 127-8.

⁶⁴¹ *Ita ego quoque ad uos informandos filios meos. De officiis*, 1.24, PL 16, 30.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.* 1.11.

⁶⁴³ *Humiles nos esse decet, mites, mansuetos, graues, patientes. De officiis*, 1.89, PL 16, 50.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 1.115.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 2.39; 1.38, 143, 147, 160-2.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 1.265.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 1.207.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 1.67, 76, 235.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 1.84.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 1.70.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.* 1.71-5.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.* 2.2-3.

order to resist the temptation of indulging in food, gossip or drinking.⁶⁵³ Younger clergy were not allowed to visit the home of a virgin or widow unless accompanied by an older minister or the bishop.⁶⁵⁴ The clergy were to avoid the love of money by refraining from trade or lawsuits⁶⁵⁵ as well as seeking inheritances.⁶⁵⁶ They were not allowed to marry a second time after being divorced⁶⁵⁷; they were to avoid anger and lust allowing reason to prevail over the soul's passions⁶⁵⁸; and they were to avoid quarreling.⁶⁵⁹ Finally, a minister should not be jealous when another minister was praised nor should he posture himself in a manner superior to his bishop.⁶⁶⁰

Finally, Ambrose gave some practical instruction to the clergy in *De officiis*. First, he urged them to show hospitality to visitors.⁶⁶¹ In addition, he encouraged ministers to strike a balance between laxness and severity in their clerical authority⁶⁶² while urging them to counsel the faithful with prudence and justice.⁶⁶³

Finally, he offered some instruction on how to preach:

The treatment also of such subjects as the teaching of faith, instruction on self-restraint, discussion on justice, exhortation to activity, must not be taken up by us and fully gone into all at one time, but must be carried on in course, so far as we can do it, and as the subject-matter of the passage allows. Our discourse must not be too lengthy, nor too soon cut short, for fear the former should leave behind it a feeling of aversion, and the latter produce carelessness and neglect. The address should be plain and simple, clear and evident, full of dignity and weight; it should not be studied or too refined, nor yet, on the other hand, be unpleasing and rough in style.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁵³ Ibid. 1.76, 86, 256.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. 1.87.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. 1.184.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid. 3.58.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid. 1.257-8.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. 1.237-8, 240.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid. 1.99.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. 2.122-3.

⁶⁶¹ *De officiis*, 2.21.103.

⁶⁶² Ibid. 2.120.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. 2.41.

⁶⁶⁴ *Tractatus quoque de doctrina fidei, de magisterio continentiae, de disceptatione iustitiae, adoratione diligentiae, non unus semper, sed ut se dederit lectio, nobis et arripiendus est, et prout possumus, prosequendus: neque nimium prolixus, neque cito interruptus; ne uel fastidium derelinquat, uel desidiam prodat atque incuriam. Oratio pura, simplex, dilucida, atque manifesta, plena grauitatis et ponderis: non affectata elegantia, sed non intermissa gratia. De officiis, 1.101, PL 16, 54.*

In short, Ambrose called his preachers to be balanced in their presentation so that the listener would be able to fully understand what was being said. He wanted them to speak plainly and discouraged them from telling jokes.⁶⁶⁵

In summary, *De officiis* was a significant manual for the clergy in Ambrose's day. With a focus on personal holiness and conduct illustrated by the lives of the saints of Scripture, it also contained some very practical instruction. The evidence from *De officiis* alone indicates that Ambrose regarded a book as an important tool for mentoring the clergy — particularly those who were not present in Milan. While *De officiis* was precisely intended for the clergy, we should not discount the mentoring impact of books like *De fide*, *De mysteriis*, and others as theological and practical resources for the clergy.

4. Principles of Mentoring

Having considered the context of Ambrose's ministry in Milan and the clergy who served with him, as well as Ambrose's observed forms of mentoring, Ambrose's principles for mentoring spiritual leaders will now be summarized. I suggest that there were seven clear principles of mentoring present in Ambrose's ministry that largely correspond with the early Christian model. They include: the mentor is a disciple; selection; the nature of the mentor-disciple relationship; sound teaching; modeling and involving in ministry; releasing leaders; and resourcing leaders.

(1) A Mentor is a Disciple

Ambrose was a disciple who was continually growing spiritually and as a minister throughout his time as bishop. Simplicianus, whom Ambrose called his friend and father,⁶⁶⁶ not only taught Ambrose theology but seems to have had an impact on his character as well. Ramsey acknowledges Simplicianus 'as a kind of

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid. 1.102, 104.

mentor to him.⁶⁶⁷ Simplicianus certainly modeled humble life long learning as he later wrote letters posing theological questions to his former students Ambrose and Augustine.⁶⁶⁸

In *De officiis*, Ambrose communicated his own desire continually learn: ‘A bishop's special office is to teach; St. Ambrose himself, however, has to learn in order that he may teach’⁶⁶⁹ and ‘men learn before they teach, and receive from [God] what they may hand on to others.’⁶⁷⁰ In *Epistula* 18, Ambrose declared to Symmachus, ‘It is surely true that no age is too late to learn.’⁶⁷¹ He further demonstrated this conviction in *Epistula* 48 in which he sent Sabinus a book and asked for his feedback before he published it.⁶⁷² Thus, even as Ambrose went about mentoring other clergy, it seems that he had benefited from Simplicianus’ example and he remained a continual learner throughout his life.

Like Cyprian, Pachomius and Basil, Ambrose’s continual journey as a disciple rendered him an example for other leaders to imitate. Paulinus, in his *Vita*, referred to Ambrose as *sanctus* (holy) on nine occasions.⁶⁷³ Ambrose, writing to the church at Vercelli in 396 in the midst of their struggle to find a suitable bishop, expressed his convictions about the holiness of a spiritual leader: ‘The life of the priest ought to be

⁶⁶⁶ *Ep.* 37.2; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 43.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*.

⁶⁶⁸ Ambrose responded with *epp.* 37-8; 65; 67; while Augustine responded with *ep.* 37 and *Ad Simplicianum*.

⁶⁶⁹ *Episcopi proprium munus, docere: sibi autem discendum esse, ut doceat. De officiis*, 1.1, PL 16, 23.

⁶⁷⁰ *Homines autem discunt prius quod doceant, et ab illo accipiunt quod aliis tradant. De officiis*, 1.3, PL 16, 24.

⁶⁷¹ *Verum certe est quia nulla aetas ad perdiscendum sera est. ep.* 18.7, PL 16, 973; cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, p. 130.

⁶⁷² *Ep.* 48.1.

⁶⁷³ In *Vita Ambrosii* Paulinus calls him: *sanctus Ambrosius* (*Vita*, 16.3; 18.4; 52.1); *sanctus uir* (*Vita*, 12.1; 30.2); *sanctus sacerdos* (*Vita*, 33.1; 40.1; 45.2); *sanctus Domini sacerdos* (*Vita*, 51.1). I am indebted to Lamirande, (E. Lamirande, *Paulin de Milan*, p. 77) for these observations.

pre-eminent as well as his graces, for he who obliges others by his precepts ought himself to observe the precepts of the law.⁶⁷⁴

In what ways did Ambrose mentor by his example? First, Ambrose's initial refusal of the episcopal office in Milan prior to a reluctant acceptance seems to have sharply contradicted any impure pursuit of the office of bishop.⁶⁷⁵ Secondly, Paulinus recorded that, upon his ordination as bishop, Ambrose renounced his personal property distinguishing him from others who sought ordination for material gain.⁶⁷⁶ Third, Ambrose not only praised virginity but he personally maintained a celibate lifestyle.⁶⁷⁷ Fourth, Paulinus added that Ambrose was known for his commitment to the disciplines of prayer and fasting.⁶⁷⁸ Finally, Paulinus highlighted the holy example of Ambrose who guarded in confidence what confessors shared with him.⁶⁷⁹

While Ambrose became an example for imitation, it is important to note that he made significant use of the examples of the saints of Scripture in his teaching. In *De officiis*, a work filled with references to the saints, he summarized his practice by writing:

These things I have left with you, my children, that you may guard them in your minds — you yourselves will prove whether they will be of any advantage. Meanwhile they offer you a large number of examples, for almost all the examples drawn from our forefathers, and also many a word of theirs, are included within these three books; so that, although the language may not be graceful, yet a succession of old-time examples set down in such small compass may offer much instruction.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁴ *Debet praeponderare uita sacerdotis, sicut praeponderat gratia; nam qui alios praeceptis suis ligat, debet ipse legitima praecepta in se custodire. ep.* 63.64, PL 16, 1206.

⁶⁷⁵ Cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 42. Ambrose described his objection to his episcopal appointment in *ep.* 63.65.

⁶⁷⁶ *Vita Ambrosii*, 38. Though Holmes-Dudden argues that Ambrose still possessed property, a clear distinction must be made between the character of Ambrose and some of his contemporaries. Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 107; and A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 124-5.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 18.

⁶⁷⁸ *Vita Ambrosii*, 38.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 39.

⁶⁸⁰ *Haec apud uos deposui, filii, quae custodiatis in animis uestris: quae utrum aliquid profectus habeant, uos probabit; interim copiam multam exemplorum offerunt: nam prope omnia Maiorum exempla, plurima quoque dicta his tribus inclusa libris tenetur; ut et si sermo nihil deferat gratiae, series tamen uetustatis quodam compendio expressa plurimum instructionis conferat. De officiis, 3.138, PL 16, 184.*

Similarly, in the opening of *De mysteriis*, Ambrose commended the principles illustrated in the lives of the saints of Scripture:

We have spoken daily upon subjects connected with morals, when the deeds of the patriarchs or the precepts of the Proverbs were being read, in order that being taught and instructed by these you might grow accustomed to enter the ways of the ancients and to walk in their paths, and obey the divine commands.⁶⁸¹

In summary, Ambrose's continual journey as a disciple was a key principle in mentoring the clergy under his charge and influence. His personal example was particularly captured by Paulinus in the *Vita* in which Ambrose became a model for imitation. Finally, the tendency to highlight holy examples from Scripture was also a practice in Ambrose's writings.

(2) Selection

While the evidence is lacking to show how Ambrose selected clergy to mentor, many, however, came to join him in Milan. We know that Ambrose invited Paulinus of Nola to join him in Milan and that an African numbered among his clergy as well.⁶⁸² Also, when Ambrose returned to Milan in 394 following his conflict with Eugenius, he brought with him Paulinus who became one of his clergy and later wrote his *Vita*.⁶⁸³ As noted, some *lectores* joined Ambrose at a young age and were later promoted to the higher orders.⁶⁸⁴ McLynn adds: 'Milan's developing position as an avenue of promotion must have had helped recruitment to the clergy there.'⁶⁸⁵

It is also possible that some of these, having heard of the reputation of Ambrose, may have taken the initiative themselves to seek out Ambrose as a mentor.

⁶⁸¹ *De moralibus quotidianum sermonem habuimus, cum uel Patriarcharum gesta, uel Prouerbiorum legerentur praecepta; ut his informati atque institui assuesceretis maiorum ingredi uias, eorumque iter carpere, ac diuinis obedire oraculis. De mysteriis*, 1.1, PL 16, 389. For similar teaching from Ambrose see also *epp.* 63.97; 103; 111; *De officiis*, 2.98-100.

⁶⁸² Paulinus of Nola, *ep.* 3.4; *Vita Ambrosii*, 54.1; cf. N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, pp. 284-5.

⁶⁸³ Cf. A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, p. 361.

⁶⁸⁴ *Epp.* 1.13; 70.25, *Vita Ambrosii*, 46; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 215.

In *De officiis*, Ambrose seemed to encourage the initiative of a disciple toward a mentor, similar to the monastic tendency of a disciple seeking out a holy man that we observed in Pachomius and Basil. Ambrose wrote:

It is a very good thing to unite oneself to a good man. It is also very useful for the young to follow the guidance of great and wise men. For he who lives in company with wise men is wise himself; but he who clings to the foolish is looked on as a fool too. This friendship with the wise is a great help in teaching us, and also as giving a sure proof of our uprightness. Young men show very soon that they imitate those to whom they attach themselves. And this idea gains ground from the fact that in all their daily life they grow to be like those with whom they have enjoyed intercourse to the full.⁶⁸⁶

(3) Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

Ambrose's relationship to the clergy can best be described as father-like. Just like the relationship of mentor and disciple in the early Christian model, his fatherly manner was a delicate balance of authority and discipline as well as grace. Holmes-Dudden writes: 'Towards these ministers the bishop's relation was that of a father to his sons; he was accordingly bound to keep them in good discipline, taking care to avoid the extremes of laxity and harshness.'⁶⁸⁷

The graceful aspect of Ambrose's fatherly relationship was apparent in his correspondence with Irenaeus. At the conclusion of *Epistula 27*, he wrote, 'Farewell, my son; blush not to ask questions of your father.'⁶⁸⁸ Ambrose used similar language in at least five other instances in their correspondence.⁶⁸⁹ In *De officiis*, he addressed the clergy in a similar gentle and paternal manner.⁶⁹⁰ Finally, he asserted that a bishop

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, pp. 284-5.

⁶⁸⁶ *Plurimum itaque prodest unicuique bonis iungi. Adolescentibus quoque utile, ut claros et sapientes uiros sequantur; quoniam qui concreditur sapientibus, sapiens est: qui autem cohaeret imprudentibus, imprudens agnoscitur. Et ad instructionem itaque plurimum proficit, et ad probitatis testimonium. Ostendunt enim adolescentes eorum se imitatores esse, quibus adhaerent; et ea conualescit opinio, quod ab his vivendi acceperint similitudinem, cum quibus conversandi hauserint cupiditatem. De officiis*, 2.97, PL 16, 129.

⁶⁸⁷ Cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 122.

⁶⁸⁸ *Vale, fili, et non erubescas patrem interrogare. ep. 27.17*, PL 16, 1051.

⁶⁸⁹ *Epp.* 28.8; 29.24; 30.16; 32.9; 34.11.

⁶⁹⁰ *De officiis*, 1.24; 2.155.

must serve his clergy: ‘The bishop should treat the clerics and attendants, who are indeed his sons, as members of himself.’⁶⁹¹

What has already been noted about *De officiis* and Ambrose’s prescriptions for holiness for the clergy reveals another aspect of his fatherly posture — his disciplinary manner. The fact that Ambrose could exact a high standard for holiness and conduct simply points back to his stature as the bishop and the authority that he possessed. While some may argue that Ambrose’s authority stemmed from his political background and the fact that he was the bishop of an important city like Milan, Ambrose supported his understanding of the hierarchy between mentor and disciples with several examples from Scripture. He cited the relationships between Moses and Joshua⁶⁹²; Elijah and Elisha; Barnabas and Mark; and Paul and Timothy and Titus.⁶⁹³ Essentially, the mentor’s age, life experience, and personal holiness qualified him to have authority over younger disciples.⁶⁹⁴

There is also evidence that Ambrose demonstrated and encouraged peer mentoring. His friendly interaction with both Felix of Como and Sabinus was quite apparent in his letters to these leaders.⁶⁹⁵ Despite his disapproval of telling jokes in *De officiis*,⁶⁹⁶ Ambrose used humor in his interaction with Felix, which revealed their relaxed and amicable relationship.⁶⁹⁷ As noted, Ambrose recounted to Sabinus how writing letters made him feel close to his friend and that it combated loneliness.⁶⁹⁸ His correspondence with Sabinus also reveals a fraternal relationship of intellectual

⁶⁹¹ *Episcopus ut membris suis utatur clericis, et maxime ministris qui sunt uere filii. De officiis*, 2.134, PL 16, 139.

⁶⁹² *De officiis*, 2.98-9.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.* 2.100.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 2.100-01.

⁶⁹⁵ *Epp.* 3-4; 47-9.

⁶⁹⁶ *De officiis*, 1.102, 104.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ep.* 3.

⁶⁹⁸ *Epp.* 48-9. Ambrose expressed similar thoughts on friendship in *De Spiritu Sancto*, 2.19.101-102.2.; cf. J. Lienhard, ‘Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,’ *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 283.

inquiry as Ambrose sent a book to Sabinus and asked for his feedback. In *Epistula* 47, Ambrose alluded to both the affective and scholarly aspects of their friendship:

While your judgment of my book is still in suspense, let us entertain each other by letters; the advantage whereof is that although severed from each other by distance of space we may be united in affection; for by this means the absent have the image of each other's presence reflected back upon them, and conversation by writing unites the severed. By this means also we interchange thoughts with our friend, and transpose our mind into his.⁶⁹⁹

In light of this friendly correspondence, it is important to remember that Ambrose was largely regarded as the mentor in these relationships. His posture showed that he was not only a personal, approachable mentor but that he also benefited from the interaction. Finally, he briefly made reference to peer mentoring in *De officiis* when he cited the relationship between Peter and John ‘who were alike in virtue but unlike in years’ [and] ‘greatly rejoiced at their union.’⁷⁰⁰

Ambrose not only demonstrated a fraternal quality of mentoring but he also prescribed it for spiritual leaders. In *De officiis*, he urged the clergy to relate to one another as a community as Paul had taught:

Wherefore that beautiful rule of the apostle stands forth brightly, that we should look each one, not on his own things, but on the things of others. In this way it will never come about that we shall in anger give way to our own feelings, or concede more than is right in favor to our own wishes.⁷⁰¹

Specifically, he encouraged the men to be vulnerable and open up their hearts to one another as well as bearing one another’s burdens.⁷⁰² In addition, he urged them to

⁶⁹⁹ *Tamen dum adhuc habes de libris iudicium, interludamus Epistulas, quarum eiusmodi usus est, ut disiuncti locorum interuallis, affectu adhaeremus: in quibus inter absentes imago refulget praesentiae, et colloquio scripta separatos copulat: in quibus etiam cum amico miscemus animum, et mentem ei nostram infundimus.* ep. 47.4, PL 16, 1150-1.

⁷⁰⁰ *Plerumque etiam uirtutibus pares, dispares aetatibus, sui delectantur copula, sicut delectabantur Petrus et Ioannes.* *De officiis*, 2.101, PL 16, 130.

⁷⁰¹ *Unde pulcherrimum illud praeceptum magnis eminet [Phil. 2:4]. Hoc enim modo nihil erit, quod uel irati nostro indulgeamus affectui, uel fauentes nostrae plus iusto tribuamus aliquid uoluntati.* *De officiis*, 2.135, PL 16, 139.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.* 3.128-9.

exercise fraternal correction when necessary. Yet, as we have noted in other cases, Ambrose advocated a balance between the extremes of harshness and flattery.⁷⁰³

Ambrose was like a father to his clergy demonstrating both grace and discipline. Yet, from the evidence presented, he also demonstrated fraternal mentoring, especially in relation to Felix and Sabinus. Finally, he prescribed fraternal correction and mentoring among the clergy in Christian community.

(4) Sound Teaching

If being the bishop of Milan was simply another political appointment in ecclesiastical clothing for Ambrose, he surely would not have risked opposing Valentinian in the Portian Basilica affair.⁷⁰⁴ Rather the reason that Ambrose stood up to the emperor in 385-386 and so vehemently fought Arianism through church councils was due to his commitment to sound doctrine. As we have argued, his involvement in these controversies served as a training ground for mentoring the clergy to be doctrinally sound.

For Ambrose, the basis of sound doctrine was the Scriptures. In *De officiis* he wrote: ‘The divine Scriptures are the feast of wisdom, and the single books the various dishes.’⁷⁰⁵ Throughout *De officiis*, he continually argued for the supremacy of the Scriptures over philosophy.⁷⁰⁶ The Scriptures were not only to be revered, but they needed to be interpreted correctly. Ambrose called upon his fellow bishops present at the council of Aquileia to condemn the Arian Palladius based on their judgment as ‘interpreters of the Scriptures.’⁷⁰⁷ Similarly, Ambrose sent Sabinus a book he had written and asked for feedback not pertaining to its eloquence but for its doctrinal

⁷⁰³ Ibid. 3.127, 134.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ep.* 20; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 25-9.

⁷⁰⁵ *Scriptura diuina conuiuium sapientiae est: singuli libri singula sunt fercula. De officiis*, 1.165, PL 16, 71.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. 1.30-2; 42-4; 47-50 are just a few examples.

accuracy and proper use of Scripture. He wrote: 'Be so kind therefore as to lend an ear of keen attention, peruse the whole thoroughly, test my discourses, see whether they contain, not rhetorical charms and persuasive words, but a sound faith and a sober confession.'⁷⁰⁸

Ambrose's commitment to sound doctrine pushed him to be a diligent student of the Scriptures and to require that for his clergy as well. Paulinus wrote that Ambrose originally wanted to be a philosopher but ended up being a Christian philosopher.⁷⁰⁹ Ambrose's education in the liberal arts brought him into contact with the pagans and neo-Platonic writers and he was also familiar with the writings of Greek church fathers. Trapé asserts that it was this background that enabled him to develop an apologetic for Christianity in the face of pagans and heretics.⁷¹⁰ His disciplined mind was notably at work in the shrewd manner in which he debated the Arians at the council of Aquileia. Yet, Ambrose did not merely rely on his educational background but he remained a continual student and reader as Augustine and Monica witnessed.⁷¹¹ He also encouraged a studious community of clergy around him.⁷¹² In *De officiis*, he counseled the clergy to avoid idleness and to use their free time reading.⁷¹³ We must not forget that most of Ambrose's clergy in Milan had been reared in Arianism and were in need of a rigorous theological program. He instructed them through sermons that later became books as well as the seminar version of *De officiis*.

⁷⁰⁷ *Quoniam igitur nobis iudicium uidetur delatum interpretes esse Scripturarum. Gesta concilii Aquileiensis*, 53, PL 16, 932.

⁷⁰⁸ *Assume igitur beneuolenti animo aurem uersutiae, et pertracta omnia, sermones uellica; sin in iis non forenses blanditiae, et suasoria uerba, sed fidei sinceritas est, et confessionis sobrietas. ep.* 48.3, PL 16, 1152.

⁷⁰⁹ *Vita Ambrosii*, 7; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 20.

⁷¹⁰ Cf. A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin: l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 69.

⁷¹¹ *Conf.* 6.3.3.

⁷¹² Cf. A. Trapé, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁷¹³ *De officiis*, 1.87-8.

Through his preaching, writing, teaching, and involvement in church councils, Ambrose was committed to sound teaching based on a careful interpretation of Scripture. To uphold this conviction, Ambrose was a Christian scholar and he encouraged his clergy to be scholars as well.

(5) Modeling and Involving in Ministry

As noted, Ambrose actively involved his clergy in the ministries of the church, entrusting them with various levels of responsibility. Though he could do exorcisms himself, he largely delegated this task to the exorcists among the clergy. The significant responsibility given to presbyters who were at times called upon both to preach and to minister in other locations on behalf of the bishop has also been observed. Finally, there were some young men who joined the clergy as *lectores* and were later promoted to the higher ranks of the clergy.

Ambrose does seem to be committed to the development and even the advancement of men in the ranks the clergy. In *De officiis*, he articulated three criteria for promoting the clergy. First, a clergy could be promoted to a higher ecclesiastical order because of merit or seniority.⁷¹⁴ Hence, time and faithful service were essential to moving to the next step. Secondly, those clergy who were negligent in their ministry should not be promoted but rather removed from their present office all together.⁷¹⁵ Finally, a man should be given a ministry assignment that corresponded with his temperament and natural abilities. Ambrose wrote: ‘since the duty which suits a man, and which is in line with his natural bent, is always discharged with greater grace.’⁷¹⁶

⁷¹⁴ *De officiis*, 2.121; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 124.

⁷¹⁵ *De officiis*, 2.22-3; cf. F. Holmes-Dudden, op. cit..

⁷¹⁶ *Quo etenim unumquemque suum ducit ingenium, aut quod officium decet, id maiore impletur gratia. De officiis*, 1.215, PL 16, 87. English trans. from Holmes-Dudden, op. cit..

The church at Milan does seem to have operated as a laboratory for training the clergy and Ambrose was the key model and trainer. McLynn, speaking of the clergy who left Milan to serve elsewhere, writes: ‘These men had imbibed the bishop’s teachings at first hand, and had learned by observation the patterns of behavior that were packaged, for wider circulation in *De officiis*.’⁷¹⁷

(6) Releasing

Having considered the context of the clergy in Milan and having shown the manner in which Ambrose entrusted the members of the clergy with assignments of increasing responsibility, he was preparing them to eventually be released to their own ministries. Paulinus made note of two clergy in particular who trained with Ambrose at Milan and then went on to serve as bishops in other cities. They included Felix who had served as a deacon under Ambrose and later became the bishop of Bologna; and Theodulus, a *notarius* who and went on to become the bishop of Modena.⁷¹⁸

Ambrose, due to his stature as bishop of Milan, was also involved in releasing leaders to ministry in Italy through ordination. He participated in the consecration of at least three bishops: Anemius of Sirmium in the late 370s; an unnamed bishop of Pavia in 397; and Gaudentius of Brescia in 397.⁷¹⁹ Ambrose had high standards for the clergy and it seems that the most important quality for their selection was personal holiness. His lengthy teaching on the holiness of a spiritual leader has been noted in *De officiis* as well as in *Epistula* 63. Paulinus, on one occasion, recorded Ambrose grieving the death of a priest because ‘it would be difficult to find a man who might

⁷¹⁷ Cf. N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, p. 284.

⁷¹⁸ *Vita Ambrosii*, 35.1; 46.1; cf. N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, p. 284.

⁷¹⁹ *Vita Ambrosii*, 11; cf. B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, pp. 39-40.

be considered worthy of the high priesthood.’⁷²⁰ Finally, Ambrose, writing to his disciple Ireneus in *Epistula* 28, summarized his high standards for the priesthood:

Nothing vulgar, nothing popular, nothing in common with the ambitions and customs and manners of the rude multitude, is expected in priests. The dignity of the priesthood demands a sober and elevated calmness, a serious life, a special gravity.⁷²¹

(7) Resourcing

While Ambrose was committed to releasing qualified men to places of leadership in the church, he was equally interested in resourcing the clergy. As noted, his letters provided answers to theological inquiries as well as practical help for leading the church. Ambrose also resourced leaders with books. Most notably, *De officiis* exhorted the clergy to personal holiness while providing practical instruction for ministry.

5. Summary

The evidence surrounding Ambrose’s relationship to the clergy supports the claim that he served as a mentor to spiritual leaders. Ambrose’s mentoring of spiritual leaders has been observed through his deliberate involvement of the clergy in ministry; through mentoring sound doctrine by participating in church councils; and by resourcing the clergy with letters and books. From Ambrose’s repeated and observable behavior as well as his relevant thought on each point, seven principles of mentoring have been observed in his relationship to the clergy. Ambrose continued to be a disciple and his life was an example for imitation. He invited men to join him in the work at Milan while probably receiving others who sought him out as well. He enjoyed a caring fatherly relationship with his men while, in some cases, he

⁷²⁰ *Vel quia difficile esset inuenire uirum, qui summo sacerdotio dignus haberetur. Vita Ambrosii*, 40, PL 14, 43. English trans. from B. Ramsey, *Ambrose*, p. 212. Also *Vita*, 41.

⁷²¹ *Nihil in sacerdotibus plebeium requiri, nihil populare, nihil commune cum studio atque usu et moribus inconditae multitudinis? Sobriam a turbis grauitatem, seriam uitam, singulare pondus dignitas sibi uindicat sacerdotalis. ep. 28.2, PL 16, 1051. English trans. from F. Holmes-Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 108.*

demonstrated and encouraged peer mentoring. He instilled in his disciples at Milan a conviction for sound teaching while modeling ministry and involving his men in the work. This training led to their release to other ministries in which Ambrose resourced them through letters, books, and influence at church councils.

V. Summary of Third and Fourth Century Mentoring

This chapter has sought to provide some insight into the forms and principles of mentoring spiritual leaders in the third and fourth century prior to the ministry of Augustine. Indeed, Cyprian's ministry as bishop in the context of Roman persecution differed greatly from Pachomius' work as the *abba* of the *koinonia*. Likewise, the ministries of Basil and Ambrose, carried out at the height of the Christological controversy, were quite unlike those of Cyprian and Pachomius. Though the men were separated by their circumstances, culture and in some cases language, they each demonstrated a commitment to mentoring spiritual leaders. As we have considered the contribution of each one in light of our early Christian model of mentoring, there is a significant amount of conformity to the model.

1. Prominent Forms of Mentoring

What were the most prevalent forms of mentoring in the third and fourth centuries? Perhaps surprisingly, the key forms involved written communication – specifically letters and books. We have noted that around half of Cyprian's letters, half of Ambrose's letters, and one fourth of Basil's letters were written to clergy with some level of mentoring emphasis. Even Pachomius' cryptic letters were intended as a resource to the leaders of monasteries. The main purposes of the bishops' correspondence were encouragement, exhortation, discipline, responding to theological and exegetical questions, and practical instruction regarding church matters. These purposes were quite similar to those of the Pastoral Epistles noted in

chapter one. Hence, Cyprian, Basil and Ambrose seemed to continue to use letters in the same manner that they were used in the earliest Christian writings. Gamble goes even further by asserting: ‘The persistence of Christian epistolography through the first five centuries attests to the usefulness of this genre to the ancient church, for it was well suited to communication between widespread congregations and a valuable instrument for teaching.’⁷²²

Each third and fourth century leader surveyed in this chapter made significant use of writings in the form of books and treatises. Again, the key issues addressed by the leaders in their books were practical church matters, spiritual leadership,⁷²³ and doctrinal issues.⁷²⁴ Also, Pachomius and Basil each developed a written *Rule* for how the monastic community should function.

Because preaching and teaching were important functions of each of the bishops, it is likely that their books were first delivered as sermons or discourses. This was clearly the case with Cyprian’s *De lapsis* and Ambrose’s *De officiis*, which were both delivered to the clergy in a seminar format. It is also important to remember the manner in which books were published and read in this period that pre-dated the printing press. Essentially, the author wrote with his own hand or dictated his work to a copyist. Because paper and bookbinding were expensive, most readers were actually listeners — those who gathered in a public place to listen to the author or someone else read the book. The book was further published by copyists, those present for the reading of the book, who re-copied the text and disseminated it to a wider audience.⁷²⁵

⁷²² Cf. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, p. 37.

⁷²³ Cyprian, *De laps.*; *De unit.*; Basil, *Moralia*; Ambrose, *De officiis*.

⁷²⁴ Cyprian, *De unit.*; Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*; Ambrose, *De fide*.

⁷²⁵ For more on this process, see: W. Tabbernee, ‘Noiseless Books and Pilfered Manuscripts: Early Christian “Desk-Top” Publishing in Carthage,’ *Devotion and Dissent: The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>; also H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, p. 140; and P. Achtemeier, ‘*Omne Verbum Sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,’ *JBL* 109/1 (1990), 12-14.

Thus, it is very likely that when *De officiis* was read by clergy outside of Milan, it was probably read aloud to a group of listeners in essentially another seminar type setting. Though Augustine and Monica happened upon Ambrose reading alone and quietly, this was generally not the way that books were read in the third and fourth century.⁷²⁶

Although books were read aloud, it was nevertheless imperative that the clergy know how to read. They needed to be able to read letters, books but mostly the Scriptures.⁷²⁷ Because Christianity is a movement that depends upon a written book, it was impossible for the clergy not to have the faculties to access it for themselves and for their congregations. A certain level of education was therefore a necessary qualification for the clergy. Pachomius, as we noted, included a literacy program as part of his initial monastic training.

A second key form of mentoring, particularly in the ministries of Cyprian, Basil and Ambrose, was church councils. Because each was a metropolitan bishop, convening councils was one of their expected roles. Yet, it is clear that each man took councils seriously and valued them as a means of dealing with heresy and issues facing the church. All three seemed to use the council as a forum to influence the clergy toward sound doctrine. Yet they also clearly valued the *collegium* of bishops; involving other leaders in a collective decision making process for the church. Finally, Cyprian and Ambrose especially believed it important to articulate in writing the decisions of the councils that would serve as a written point of reference for the churches.

⁷²⁶ *Conf.* 6.3.3; cf. P. Achtemeier, op. cit., 15-17.

⁷²⁷ Cf. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, pp. 9-10; and P. Achtemeier, op. cit., 15-16.

2. Prominent Principles of Mentoring

Having concluded that the principles of mentoring of these third and fourth century leaders conformed on some level to the early Christian model, what principles were most prominent? The evidence in our survey indicates that these leaders were most concerned with the principle of sound teaching in their mentoring. In the case of the bishops, each carried out his ministry in the midst of doctrinal controversy. Cyprian's battle was in the realm of ecclesiology while Basil and Ambrose fought for an orthodox understanding of the nature of Christ. As noted, they wrote a significant amount letters and books and convened councils to influence the clergy toward orthodoxy in these areas. Yet, aside from the context of theological controversy, the bishops as well as Pachomius clearly saw Scripture as the basis of orthodox doctrine. Scripture was the core educational element in the monastic programs of Pachomius and Basil. The monks read, memorized, and discussed the Scriptures while regularly hearing them explained. As noted, both Cyprian and Ambrose also had a conviction for the primacy of Scripture that was evident in their writings, correspondence, and preaching.

The second key element observed in these leaders was the nature of the mentor-disciple relationship. Each leader was clearly in the position of spiritual authority over his disciples and at times exercised discipline. Yet, especially in the cases of Pachomius, Basil, and Ambrose, this authority was strengthened and given credibility by a tender and fatherly manner. As in the early Christian model, the relationship was characterized by discipline and grace. Pachomius, Basil and Ambrose also seem to have had mentoring relationships with their peers. Pachomius, though functioning as *abba* of the *koinonia*, still received spiritual help from an *oikiakos*. The correspondence of both Basil and Ambrose reveal men who had friends to whom they opened their souls.

The third important aspect seems to be that the mentor was still a disciple. It was noted that each leader had personally been mentored and Basil continued to reach out to mentors while serving as bishop. Each leader was also characterized by humility and a continual need to learn and grow spiritually. A significant principle that surfaced from studying this aspect was the importance of imitation. Briefly put, the mentor who continues to be a disciple has as his most powerful mentoring tool his own example that is available for imitation. Each leader could join Paul who encouraged the Corinthians to be *mimētēs* (imitators) of his ‘ways which are in Christ’.⁷²⁸ We have noted that Basil and Ambrose referred often to the saints of Scripture and held them up as models for imitation. Yet, the disciples of these four leaders also elevated their mentors as models of imitation. The clearest expression of this is that each was remembered with some sort of hagiographical biography. A *Vita* was written for Cyprian, Pachomius, and Ambrose, while Gregory of Nazianzus honored Basil through his *Oratione* 43 delivered at the time of Basil’s death. To be sure, each hagiographer generally refrained from a critical analysis of their subject, which leaves us with an incomplete historical picture of the spiritual leader’s life. Nevertheless, each *Vita* served as a mentoring tool for the next generation and was intended to inspire imitation. When Ponticianus orally recounted aspects of the *Vita Antonii* to Augustine and Alypius in Milan in 386, the men were indeed challenged to imitate the example of Antony. Augustine regarded the experience as a significant step toward his conversion to Christianity.⁷²⁹

The fourth prominent element of mentoring in this chapter was the principle of involving leaders in ministry. Though Cyprian’s clergy were already entrusted with the work of ministry, the circumstances of his exile accelerated the opportunities that

⁷²⁸ 1 Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1.

his clergy had to be involved in ministry. Basil's ministry at the *Basileidos* was also a natural place for developing spiritual leaders to serve. Ambrose, as well, entrusted much of the work of the church to his clergy.

The fifth aspect that was as equally prominent as involving leaders in ministry was the principle of releasing leaders. This stage of releasing flows logically from the involving stage. In the cases studied, there were indeed clergy from Carthage, Caesarea, and Milan who were released to other ministries. Yet the notion of releasing leaders was also at work when these metropolitan bishops were ordaining clergy that did not come from their particular church. Cyprian, Basil, and Ambrose were quite willing to set apart clergy given that the men were qualified. Pachomius was also committed to setting apart house leaders and heads of monasteries to serve the monastic community.

Sixth, and equal in prominence to releasing leaders was the element of resourcing them. Again, this included leaders that they knew intimately and those they had never personally met. As noted, the main forms used by these leaders to resource other leaders in doctrinal and practical matters were letters and books.

The seventh element was the group context. It was most significant in the ministries of Pachomius and Basil as life in community was foundational to spiritual growth in their monastic program. Though Cyprian and Ambrose believed in the *collegium* of bishops that met for church councils and Cyprian often assigned ministry tasks to groups of clergy, neither Cyprian nor Ambrose had as much to say about the value of the community in mentoring.

Finally, the principle of mentoring least observed in these leaders was selection. It was most evident in Pachomius' habit of receiving candidates who

⁷²⁹ *Conf.* 8.6.14-7.18.

wanted to renounce the world and leading them through an initial period of training and testing before allowing them to fully become a part of the monastery. As noted, the initiative for joining the monastery largely came from the potential monk. In our treatment of both Basil and Ambrose, it was noted that each took the initiative in some cases to invite younger clergy to come join them in their ministries. We also know that it was common in the third and fourth centuries for youth to join the clergy as *lectores* and later be promoted through the ranks of the clergy with age and spiritual maturity. However, with regard to the majority of the clergy who served with the three bishops, we simply do not have the evidence to understand how they were initially challenged or selected to spiritual leadership.

Chapter 3: Augustine's Mentors

Having considered the background of mentoring spiritual leaders in the century prior to Augustine's ministry, we will now explore the mentoring influences in Augustine's personal life. As modern travelers visit the museums of Tunisia, they are immediately struck by the most unique art form from the period of Roman Africa — the mosaic.⁷³⁰ Constructed from tiny pieces of colored tile that combine to make a beautiful portrait or object, mosaics have managed to survive wars, conquest, and the turnover of several civilizations while continuing to tell the story of daily life in Roman Africa. If we regard Augustine's life as a figurative mosaic, it is important to recognize the individual tiles as well as those who laid them that contribute to the overall portrait of his life and ministry. Before we can fully consider how Augustine mentored spiritual leaders of his day, we must pose the important question — who mentored Augustine? As we will see, there were several contributors to his mosaic from various backgrounds and personalities who mentored Augustine at different periods of his life. In this chapter, we will consider the mentoring influence of his mother Monica, some close friends, Ambrose, Simplicianus, and Valerius.

I. Monica

Indeed, Monica occupies a venerated place as one of the most famous mothers in Christian history. Her presence was well recorded by Augustine in his *Confessiones* as well in the Cassiciacum dialogues where it is clear that he regarded her as more than a devoted mother, but as a model and guide for the Christian life. Like Basil of Casesarea and Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine benefited from a pious upbringing due to

⁷³⁰ I wish to credit William Harmless (W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 39) for his use of this image as a colorful means of describing a background.

his mother's influence. He wrote: 'My mother did all she could to see that you, my God, should be more truly my father than he [Patricius] was.'⁷³¹ Having surveyed the texts that show Monica's mentoring influence on her son, I suggest that she mentored him in at least four ways: through her pious example; through her practical faith; through her commitment to sound doctrine and practice; and through the early Christian education she provided at home. Hence, Monica's mentoring influence was primarily felt by Augustine prior to his conversion in 386.

1. Pious Example

Monica was most often characterized in *Confessiones* as a woman of prayer and tears while the focus of her supplications was often the spiritual welfare of her wayward son.⁷³² Further, it was not unusual for Augustine to report that his mother experienced dreams and visions that confirmed an affirmative answer to her prayers.⁷³³

In addition to a dependency on prayer, Augustine highlighted her pious character especially regarding her personal relationships. Among her friends and acquaintances, she not only resisted the urge to gossip or entertain gossip, but she resolved to carefully listen and serve as a peacemaker amidst potential rivals.⁷³⁴ Augustine also wrote that after an initial rocky beginning with her mother-in-law, Monica was able to win her affections because of her upright character.⁷³⁵ Finally, she was faithful and showed respect to an unbelieving, hot-tempered, and often times unfaithful husband which ultimately resulted in Patricius' conversion near the end of

⁷³¹ *Nam illa satagebat, ut tu mihi pater esses, deus meus, potius quam ille. conf.* 1.11.17, PL 32, 669. All English trans. from *Confessiones* are from M. Boulding, *Confessions*.

⁷³² *Conf.* 1.11.17; 3.4.8; 3.11.19; 3.12.21; 5.7.13; 5.9.15, 17; 6.1.1; 6.2.2; 9.13.36; *persev.* 20; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 759.

⁷³³ *Conf.* 3.11.19; 3:12.21; 8.12.30; cf. M. O'Ferrall, 'Monica, the mother of Augustine: A reconsideration,' *RechAug* 10, (1975), 40-1.

⁷³⁴ *Conf.* 9.9.21.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.* 9.9.20; cf. J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, p. 17.

his life.⁷³⁶ Monica was also a model and mentor to other women struggling with difficult marriages.

Though Augustine consistently made note of her pious life, he certainly does not ‘saint’ her.⁷³⁷ Rather, he realistically presented her as a recovering sinner not immune to struggles or weaknesses. As a young woman, Monica had gone through a period of struggling with wine.⁷³⁸ He also criticized her failure to arrange a marriage for him — a young man struggling with lust — because she and Patricius seemed to care more about his academic success than his moral purity.⁷³⁹ Finally, he admitted that she could be quite controlling.⁷⁴⁰ Thus, through the example of Monica, Augustine learned that Christian piety was not necessarily at the exclusion of a continual struggle with sin.

The impact of Monica’s pious yet imperfect example would be quite evident in Augustine’s later ministry as a spiritual leader and mentor. Possidius, who wrote Augustine’s *Vita* ‘based on what I saw of him and heard from him,’⁷⁴¹ mentioned a holy and pious example as Augustine’s most significant tool for influencing others. The holy example of Augustine, which Possidius held up for imitation, was balanced with the transparent example of one who continued to struggle with sin. This transparency was most apparent in his *Confessiones* where Augustine confessed his sinful past⁷⁴² but more significantly, ‘what I am now.’⁷⁴³ The bishop of Hippo openly shared with his readers his struggle with lustful thoughts⁷⁴⁴; food and gluttony⁷⁴⁵; his

⁷³⁶ *Conf.* 9.19, 22.

⁷³⁷ Cf. M. O’Ferrall, ‘Monica, the mother of Augustine: A reconsideration,’ *RechAug* 10, (1975), 29-30.

⁷³⁸ *Conf.* 9.8.18.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.* 2.8.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 5.8. 15.

⁷⁴¹ *Quae in eodem uidi, ab eoque audiui, minime reticere. Vita praef.*, PL 32, 33. All English trans. of *Vita* are taken from J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*.

⁷⁴² *Conf.* 1.5.6; 1.10.16; 1.13.21-2; 1.19.30; 2.2.2; 3.1.1; 2.4.9.

⁷⁴³ *Hic est fructus confessionum mearum, non quails fuerim, sed qualis sim. conf.* 10.4.6, PL 32, 781.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 10.30.42.

fascination with sounds, shapes and colors⁷⁴⁶; a lust of the eyes⁷⁴⁷; pride⁷⁴⁸; and that he enjoyed the praise of men.⁷⁴⁹ Hence, like his mother, Augustine mentored others through his personal example, which was not immune to an on-going struggle with sin.

2. Practical Faith

Monica's example, highlighted in the last section, instilled in her son the importance of practical faith lived out in the context of the real world. She was concerned with prayer, perseverance, and promoting peace in her most significant relationships.⁷⁵⁰ Though Augustine became intrigued by philosophy and intellectual speculation on his spiritual journey, he would not escape Monica's influence of practical faith.

The most poignant example of Augustine's intellectual world and Monica's practical world converging was at the retreat at Cassiciacum. Augustine indicated that he was very pleased that his mother was present in this rather philosophical community.⁷⁵¹ This was the same Augustine who, just a few years earlier, deceitfully left his mother behind in Carthage to continue an academic career in Italy.⁷⁵² According to the Cassiciacum dialogues, it is quite evident that Monica was not simply present to cook and keep house as she participated in the discussions as well.⁷⁵³ Augustine wrote: 'the power of her mind came home to me and I realized that it could not be more suited to true philosophizing . . . I decided therefore, that when

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. 10.31.43, 45, 47.

⁷⁴⁶ *Conf.* 10.33.49-50; 10.34.51.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid. 10.35.54-7.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid. 10.36.59.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid. 10.37.61.

⁷⁵⁰ Cf. J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, p. 18.

⁷⁵¹ *Ord.* 2.1.1.

⁷⁵² *Conf.* 5.8.15.

⁷⁵³ *B. vita.* 1.6; 2.16; 3.17; 4.23; *c. Acad.* 1.11.31; 2.5.13; 2.6.14; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 761; and A. Di Berardino, 'Monnica,' *ATTA*, 570.

she was at leisure she should be present at our conversations.⁷⁵⁴ In fact, she gained the reputation of being able to overturn a speculative conversation with a few simple thoughts. Brown writes that she was able to ‘dismiss a whole philosophical school in a single vulgar word.’⁷⁵⁵

Monica’s participation at Cassiciacum leads us to three conclusions. First, Augustine’s intellectual world was quite open to his mother as he welcomed her to this community. The suggestion that this aspect of Augustine’s life and faith was off limits to his mother fails to take into consideration her presence at Cassiciacum.⁷⁵⁶ Secondly, Monica, contrary to the conclusions of some scholars, did have the capacity to participate in philosophical discussions. Though she had not read Plato or Vergil, the fact that she could contribute to a conversation and even bring it to a grinding halt meant that she did have the intellectual capacity to follow and understand what was being said. Her lack of formal education did not disable her from being able to reason and articulate.⁷⁵⁷ Third, her choice to contribute to the dialogues from a practical perspective of simple faith as opposed to adopting philosophical rhetoric showed that she placed greater value on practical faith.⁷⁵⁸ This value was perhaps most aptly communicated in her conclusion to the dialogue *De beata uita*: ‘Holy Trinity, hear our

⁷⁵⁴ *Nobiscum erat etiam mater nostra, cuius ingenium atque in res diuinas inflammatum animum . . . Itaque institueram, cum abundaret otio, agere ut colloquio nostro non deesset. Quod et in primo etiam huius operis libro abs te cognitum est. ord. 2.1.1, PL 32, 993. English trans. from A. Di Berardino, ‘Monnica,’ *ATTA*, 570.*

⁷⁵⁵ Brown (P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 111) is referring to *b. vita*, 3.16.20.

⁷⁵⁶ O’Meara (J. O’Meara, *The Young Augustine*, p. 16) asserts: ‘It is true that one who side of his life, the intellectual, must have been almost closed to her.’

⁷⁵⁷ I am following the conclusion of Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 762) who wrote: ‘Monique se révèle dans ces dialogues une femme supérieurement intelligente, à qui les termes techniques font sans doute défaut, mais qui sait se placer d’emblée aux sommets d’une sagesse consistant avant tout dans la recherche de la vérité et du progrès spirituel.’ See also *b. vita* 2.10; *ord.* 2.17.45.

⁷⁵⁸ *B. vita* 2.8; 3.21; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 761-2.

prayers. Here without a doubt is the happy life which is also a perfect life that includes a firm faith, a living hope and an ardent grace that guides our steps.⁷⁵⁹

Augustine's spiritual journey was one that took him from the very speculative to the practical. This is quite evident from an examination of his pre-391 writings, written while at leisure in Cassiciacum or Tagaste, which dealt largely with philosophical issues. Yet the majority of his books, letters and sermons following his ordination in 391 were exegetical or pastoral in nature and were designed to serve the needs of the church while others were polemical and intended to refute the attacks of the Manichees, Donatists, and Pelagians. As a presbyter and bishop, Augustine did not have the luxury of being a professional scholar and much of what he wrote was composed at night after a day of dealing with the challenges of church work. His letter to a young philosopher in 410 illustrated rather bluntly his thoughts on philosophical speculation: 'I wish I could snatch you away from your titillating disquisitions and ram you into the sort of cares I have to cope with.'⁷⁶⁰ Thus, as Augustine took on the cares of the ministry, his focus went from philosophical speculation to practical Christian living.

Perhaps we can also attribute to Monica Augustine's practice of communicating with less educated audiences in a simple, understandable manner. Despite Frend's assertion, that Augustine's ideas were too intellectual for rural Donatists,⁷⁶¹ his famous *Psalmus contra partem Donati* that he wrote as a presbyter around 394, was a thorough apologetic in the form of a jingle that seemed quite

⁷⁵⁹ *Foue precantes, Trinitas, laeta effudit, atque subiecit: Haec est nullo ambigente beata uita, quae uita perfecta est, ad quam nos festinantes posse perducere, solida fide, alacri spe, flagrante caritate praesumendum est. b. vita. 4.35, PL 32, 976. Cf. G. Bardy, Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre, p. 117.*

⁷⁶⁰ *Ego autem uellem te abripere de medio deliciosarum inquisitionum tuarum, et constipare inter curas meas. ep. 118.1.1, PL 33, 432. English trans. from P. Brown, Augustine of Hippo, p. 297.*

⁷⁶¹ Cf. W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 238.

accessible to this group.⁷⁶² Augustine was also known for delivering sermons filled with illustrations related to local life in Hippo.⁷⁶³ Van der Meer adds: ‘in the pulpit he never used language that was above his hearers’ heads, but always chose his words in such a fashion that everyone would understand him.’⁷⁶⁴ Finally, Augustine was practical in his sermons as he addressed specific issues and sins that his congregation faced.⁷⁶⁵

In summary, Augustine not only admired the simple and practical faith of his mother, but he appeared to imitate her especially as he progressed in his Christian experience. He became less speculative and more practical as he served the church at Hippo, as he chose to preach and write in accessible language for those lacking formal education, and as addressed the relevant issues of his day in his preaching.

3. Sound Teaching

A third way that Monica mentored her son was through her commitment to sound doctrine and practice. Though she was a simple and uneducated woman, on at least three occasions in *Confessiones*, we observe evidence of her commitment to orthodoxy. First, when she became aware that her son had become a Manichean, she expelled him from her home.⁷⁶⁶ While unwilling to tolerate heresy in her own son, it was only the consolation of a dream revealing that he would return to the true faith that moved her to allow him back in the house again. Secondly, Monica’s concern for sound doctrine was clear in her willingness to part with the African custom of bringing offerings to the tombs of martyrs when she came to Milan. She was motivated to obey Ambrose, who had forbidden the practice, because she respected

⁷⁶² Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 258.

⁷⁶³ Cf. C. Mohrmann, ‘Saint Augustin écrivain,’ *RechAug* 1, (1958), 59-62.

⁷⁶⁴ Cf. F. van der Meer, op. cit..

⁷⁶⁵ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁶⁶ *Conf.* 3.11.19.

him as an ‘illustrious preacher and exemplar of piety’⁷⁶⁷; that is, one who gave practical instruction from a sound interpretation of the Scriptures. Third, Augustine noted the stand that Monica took with Ambrose and the Milanese believers who filled the Portian Basilica against the Arian Emperor Valentinian.⁷⁶⁸ Her participation in the protest also testified to her practical concern for sound doctrine.

Previously we have considered the value of sound teaching in preachers and exegetes like Paul, Cyprian, Basil, and Ambrose. Not surprisingly in the case of Monica, we find someone who demonstrated a commitment to sound doctrine, not through exegesis, but through practical application.

As will be shown in the following chapters, Augustine was also committed to sound doctrine based on the primacy of correctly interpreted Scriptures. He wrote letters, sermons, and treatises fighting against the heresies of the Manichees, Donatists, Pelagians, and Arians while expending significant energy in church councils defending orthodoxy. Augustine was firm with heretics, but like his mother who allowed him back into the house following a dream, he also extended grace and kindness to his theological opponents.

4. Christian Education

It seems quite erroneous to conclude with Madec that ‘Augustine was always a Christian.’ What is rather contradictory is that this assertion is made in the section of his article entitled ‘before his conversion.’⁷⁶⁹ If Augustine was always a Christian, then what did he become after his conversion?⁷⁷⁰ It seems more productive to

⁷⁶⁷ *Praeclaro praedicatorum atque antistite pietatis. conf.* 6.2.2, PL 32, 720.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 9.7.15; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 760.

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. G. Madec, ‘Christian Influences on Augustine,’ *ATA*, 151.

⁷⁷⁰ I must acknowledge that Madec’s thoughts are the fruit of an old debate 1918 over whether Augustine was converted to Manichaeism, Neo-Platonism, Catholicism, or Christianity. My interest is not to enter into this debate but rather show that at Augustine’s conversion, his life did indeed change because he had embraced Christianity. In his personal life, he went from living with a concubine to

conclude that what Augustine embraced as an adult in a villa near Milan was largely the faith that his mother had taught and modeled for him for most of his life and what he had been successfully avoiding. Thus, Monica had trained up her son in the way he should go and he did not depart from it when he was old.⁷⁷¹

Hence, a fourth way that Monica mentored her son was through providing a Christian education at home.⁷⁷² It is remarkable that she was able to do this in light of the fact that her husband was not a Christian. While Augustine was clear that Patricius did not oppose Monica raising her son as a Christian,⁷⁷³ it remains noteworthy that Patricius' contrary example did not seem to hinder Augustine's Christian education. Apart from registering him as a catechumen, Monica's program of education was quite informal.⁷⁷⁴ As noted, she mentored her son through her example of virtue, prayer, and devotion to the church.⁷⁷⁵ Also, she warned him about sin particularly in the area of sexual immorality.⁷⁷⁶ As Brown writes, she was 'the voice of God in his early life.'⁷⁷⁷

Though he remained unconverted during his youth and early adulthood, Monica's mentoring did have an impact. Augustine indicated that he rejected pagan philosophy because it lacked 'the name of Christ . . . [that] my tender little heart had drunk in . . . with my mother's milk, and in my deepest heart I still held on to it.'⁷⁷⁸

celibacy. Professionally, he left career ambitions for a life as a *seruus Dei* and later accepted ordination. Materially, he renounced his estate and chose a life of voluntary poverty.

⁷⁷¹ Prov. 22:6.

⁷⁷² Cf. A. Mandouze, *L'aventure de la raison et la grâce*, pp. 84-6.

⁷⁷³ *Conf.* 1.11.17.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 1.11.17; 3.4.8; 5.14.25; *c. Acad.* 2.2.5; cf. L. Bertrand, *Autour de Saint Augustin*, p. 33; E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 33; W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 80; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 759; and A. Mandouze, *L'aventure de la raison et la grâce*, p. 86.

⁷⁷⁵ *Conf.* 5.9.17; cf. L. Bertrand, *Autour de Saint Augustin*, pp. 32-3; and A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin: l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, pp. 23-4.

⁷⁷⁶ *Conf.* 2.7; cf. J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, p. 32.

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 18.

⁷⁷⁸ *Quod nomen Christi non erat ibi . . . in ipso adhuc lacte matris tenerum cor meum pie biberat et alte retinebat. conf.* 3.4.8, PL 32, 686. Cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'The *Libri Philosophorum* and Augustine's

Similarly, when Augustine became dissatisfied with being a Manichean and later a skeptic, he reverted back to his Christian upbringing until he could find something more compelling. He wrote: ‘I resolved therefore to live as a catechumen in the catholic church, which was what my parents had wished for me, until some kind of certainty dawned by which I might direct my steps aright.’⁷⁷⁹ The impact of Monica’s training was ultimately felt when Augustine stood before his mother in the villa near Milan converted to faith in Christ.⁷⁸⁰

Following Augustine’s conversion, we continue to observe Monica in the role of a mentor as she encouraged and affirmed him in his faith.⁷⁸¹ During their time together at Ostia, we witness not only a mother and son talking about spiritual matters, but also two spiritual sojourners enjoying fellowship and mutually encouraging one another in their faith.⁷⁸²

Monica’s training program was informal and largely accomplished through her example that Augustine could imitate. Yet it was obviously effective as Augustine embraced the faith of his mother and continued to live as a Christian for the rest of his life while serving the church.

Monica’s legacy seems to have also impacted Augustine’s philosophy on training new believers, particularly in his manual *De catechizandis rudibus*. First, Augustine instructed Deogratias that the teacher must be experiencing the faith, hope, and love of Christ and that these qualities should be contagious to the student.⁷⁸³ Augustine seemed less concerned with transferring religious propositions than he was

Conversions,’ in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity*, p. 119.

⁷⁷⁹ *Statui ergo tandiu esse catechumenus in catholica Ecclesia mihi a parentibus commendata, donec aliquid certi eluceret, quo cursum dirigerem. conf. 5.14.25, PL 32, 718.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Conf. 8.12.30.*

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid..*

⁷⁸² *Ibid. 9.10.23.*

⁷⁸³ *Cat. rud. 3.6.*

handing down a living faith as he had received from his mother. Secondly, Augustine believed that the teacher would be more motivated and effective if he loved the new believer as a brother, father, or mother.⁷⁸⁴ Indeed, it was a mother's love that motivated Monica to train Augustine in the faith.

5. Summary

Augustine deeply revered Monica as his mother but also as a spiritual mentor. She provided a pious yet imperfect example of the Christian life for Augustine to imitate. Though intelligent enough to participate in philosophical discussions with her son and his friends, she preferred to remain focused on the practical aspects of faith. As well, she was committed to sound doctrine in accordance with the Scriptures. Finally, she raised her son as a Christian through involving him in the church and teaching him by her example. Though he wandered for many years through an extended period of youth, he ultimately embraced the faith that she had instilled in him. Indeed, Monica was Augustine's first spiritual mentor and her legacy would become evident in his letters, sermons, participation in church councils, philosophy of training new believers, and in how he mentored spiritual leaders.

II. Friends

We have previously alluded to Augustine's natural disposition to friendship. As a youth, friends influenced him to steal pears from a tree.⁷⁸⁵ Later, he attempted to bring together a community pursuing the *uita beata* — a group of friends with a common interest in philosophical pursuits.⁷⁸⁶ Similarly, following his conversion, he gathered together a diverse group of friends at Cassiciacum for a retreat focused on

⁷⁸⁴ *Cat. rud.* 12.17; cf. G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine*, p. 150.

⁷⁸⁵ *Conf.* 2.4.9.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 6.14.24; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 81; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 53.

philosophical and spiritual understanding.⁷⁸⁷ Hence, for Augustine, community and friendship became necessary elements for spiritual growth. Though friendship and community and their relationship to mentoring will be taken up in the coming chapters, let us now consider the mentoring impact of some of Augustine's friends leading up to his conversion and in the period immediately after.

1. Alypius

Alypius, the friend of Augustine most often mentioned in the *Confessiones*,⁷⁸⁸ was also a native of Tagaste and studied rhetoric under Augustine in Tagaste and Carthage, while later following his friend into the Manichean sect.⁷⁸⁹ After a period of working in Rome, Alypius joined Augustine in the villa near Milan where together they listened to Ponticianus recount the life of Antony.⁷⁹⁰ Augustine's famous conversion experience was paralleled by that of Alypius, who was also moved by a verse of Scripture and resolved in his heart independently of Augustine, to become a Christian.⁷⁹¹ Alypius was also present for the retreat and dialogues at Cassiciacum.⁷⁹²

How did Alypius have a mentoring impact on Augustine? Augustine referred to Alypius as *fratrem cordis mei* (my heart's brother).⁷⁹³ That is, he was Augustine's peer and confidant on the journey to faith.⁷⁹⁴ Indeed, Augustine needed an intellectual sparring partner, yet he also needed someone for support and encouragement on this delicate and uncertain journey. The two also provided one another mutual support once they made the decision to be Christians and to be baptized. Though Augustine

⁷⁸⁷ *Sol.* 1.12.20; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Friendship, Friends,' *ATTA*, 372-3.

⁷⁸⁸ Alypius is a key figure in *conf.* 6; cf. A. Mandouze, *L'aventure de la raison et la grâce*, p. 188.

⁷⁸⁹ *Conf.* 6.7.11-12; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 53.

⁷⁹⁰ *Conf.* 8.6.13-7.18; cf. A. Mandouze, *op. cit.*, p. 53-4.

⁷⁹¹ *Conf.* 8.12.30.

⁷⁹² For a summary of Alypius' participation in two of the dialogues (*c. Acad.* and *ord.*), see A. Mandouze, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-5.

⁷⁹³ *Conf.* 9.4.7, PL 32, 768.

⁷⁹⁴ It must be noted that prior to this Augustine helped his friend give up his fascination with the circus. *conf.* 6.7.11; cf. K. Paffenroth, 'Bad Habits and Bad Company: Education and Evil in the *Confessions*,' in K. Paffenroth and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 9.

had always been disposed to friendship, he especially needed a soul mate at this critical period. While Augustine will forever appear the genius and the strong one, he clearly needed Alypius.⁷⁹⁵

2. Nebridius

Nebridius was born in Carthage where he made Augustine's acquaintance. Later, he followed Augustine to Milan as a partner in search of the *uita beata* where, along with Alypius, the three engaged in dialogue over philosophical and spiritual issues.⁷⁹⁶ Augustine, reflecting on this time from a spiritual perspective, said that they were 'looking to you [God] to give them their food in due time.'⁷⁹⁷ Nebridius was not present at Cassiciacum as he had returned to his family's estate in Carthage. However, he exchanged letters with Augustine during this period in which the content resembled the discussions at Cassiciacum.⁷⁹⁸ Augustine reported that Nebridius was converted along with his family not long after his return to Africa and prior to his premature death around 391.⁷⁹⁹

How did Nebridius have a mentoring influence on Augustine? First, like Alypius, Nebridius was a peer and a sounding board in their quest for understanding. Secondly, and more significantly, Nebridius managed to play a large role in convincing Augustine to give up his involvement in the Manichean sect and his interest in astrology.⁸⁰⁰ That is, as a friend, he exhorted Augustine to set aside frivolous thinking and ideologies which indirectly helped clear up Augustine's mind to accept Christianity. Third, once Augustine had settled back in Africa with his group

⁷⁹⁵ Alypius would go on to be the bishop of Tagaste before Augustine became the bishop of Hippo; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 56.

⁷⁹⁶ *Conf.* 6.7.11; cf. A. Mandouze, *op. cit.*, p. 774.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ut dares eis 'escam in tempore opportuno.'* *conf.* 6.10.17, PL 32, 728. See also Ps. 103 (104):27; 144 (145):15.

⁷⁹⁸ *Epp.* 3-4; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 775.

of *serui Dei* in Tagaste, Nebridius made a point to encourage Augustine to take some time to rest as the demands of his new life were leaving him quite tired.⁸⁰¹ Finally, it is worth mentioning that Nebridius was apparently the first recipient of any letter from Augustine — a form that Augustine would go on to employ greatly in his ministry of mentoring and encouraging spiritual leaders of his day.

3. Evodius

Though Evodius was also a native of Tagaste, he did not meet Augustine until 387 in Milan after Augustine's baptism and time at Cassiciacum. Evodius was already a Christian when he met Augustine and ended up joining the group of *serui Dei* who were en route to Tagaste.⁸⁰²

The main way that Evodius had a mentoring influence on Augustine was through his participation in two dialogues with Augustine while the two were in Rome delayed for a year before their return to Africa.⁸⁰³ In the first dialogue, *De animae quantitate*, which happened in 388, Augustine and Evodius wrestled over issues related to the nature of the soul.⁸⁰⁴ The second dialogue, *De libero arbitrio*, which took place in 387 and 388, generally dealt with the tension of God's foreknowledge and man's free will while they also discussed the origin of evil and the definition of sin.⁸⁰⁵

⁷⁹⁹ *Conf.* 9.3.6. Augustine's heart break over Nebridius' death is recorded in *ep.* 98. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 57; A. Fitzgerald, 'Nebridius,' *ATTA*, 587-8; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 775.

⁸⁰⁰ *Conf.* 7.2.3; 7.6.8; 4.3.6; cf. A. Mandouze, *op. cit.*, p. 774.

⁸⁰¹ *Ep.* 5; cf. R. Battenhouse, *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, p. 57.

⁸⁰² Evodius would go onto be ordained bishop of Uzalis, a city near Carthage. Cf. J. O'Donnell, 'Evodius of Uzalis,' *ATTA*, 344; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 367; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 120.

⁸⁰³ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 146-7.

⁸⁰⁴ Augustine's *epp.* 158-64; 169 confirmed that the dialogues were between Augustine and Evodius. Cf. R. Teske, '*Animae quantitate, De,*' *ATTA*, 23 and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 368.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ep.* 162 confirmed Evodius as Augustine's partner in this dialogue. Cf. R. Teske, '*Libero arbitrio, De,*' *ATTA*, 494.

Evodius served as a peer mentor to Augustine through the dialogues as the two were able to pursue truth together. Yet, these works were later published and it was Augustine alone who was credited for the thought involved. The structure of *De libero arbitrio* is such that it began in the form of dialogue between Augustine and Evodius before later becoming a complete discourse by Augustine.⁸⁰⁶ Even if *De libero arbitrio* was largely the thought of Augustine, we must still recognize the presence of Evodius whose questions and thoughts helped bring the best out of Augustine toward clearly articulating his early thought on the tension of divine foreknowledge and human freedom.

4. Summary

Alypius, Nebridius, and Evodius were three friends who served as peer mentors to Augustine. Alypius was Augustine's 'heart's friend' who gently walked beside him as the two were converted to Christ. Nebridius was more of a prophet who admonished Augustine to rid himself of his ridiculous connections to astrology and Manichaeism. Evodius, through the dialogues in Rome, challenged Augustine's mind and thought helping him to become an articulate and clear thinking theologian. Alypius and Evodius went on to become bishops in North Africa continuing a life-long relationship of friendship and collaboration in ministry with Augustine.

III. Ambrose

Having previously cited the work of Ambrose as a mentor of spiritual leaders in the period prior to Augustine's ministry, let us now consider the personal mentoring impact he had on Augustine. In his *Confessiones*, Augustine acknowledged Ambrose as a mentor: 'So I came to Milan and to Bishop Ambrose . . . Unknowingly I was led

⁸⁰⁶ Cf. R. Teske, '*Libero arbitrio, De*,' *ATTA*, 494.

by you to him, so that through him I might be led, knowingly, to you.’⁸⁰⁷ While Ambrose’s mentoring initially helped Augustine to become a Christian, his legacy would also be felt in Augustine’s mentoring of other leaders. The main ways that Ambrose mentored Augustine were: through his holy example; through the primacy of properly interpreted Scriptures; through the ‘language’ of preaching; and through preparing him for baptism.

1. Holy Example

Like Monica, it was Ambrose’s holy life that profoundly touched Augustine. Augustine described him as: ‘one of the best of men,’ ‘a devout worshipper of you,’ and a ‘man of God.’⁸⁰⁸ Augustine wrote that Ambrose treated him like his own son:

This man of God welcomed me with fatherly kindness and showed the charitable concern for my pilgrimage that befitted a bishop. I began to feel affection for him, not at first as a teacher of truth, for that I had given up hope of finding in your church, but simply as a man who was kind to me.⁸⁰⁹

Though both Ambrose and Augustine are reputed as significant thinkers, it seems significant that Augustine’s heart was touched by Ambrose before his mind was challenged. Perhaps Ambrose was filling the void in Augustine’s life of a spiritual father figure — a role that Patricius had failed to play.

Finally, the fact that Ambrose also demonstrated kindness to Monica seems to have also impacted Augustine. Though Augustine had limited personal contact with Ambrose, Monica apparently enjoyed more contact.⁸¹⁰ Ambrose praised the faith and

⁸⁰⁷ *Et ueni Mediolanum ad Ambrosium episcopum . . . Ad eum autem ducebar abs te nesciens, ut per eum ad te sciens ducerer. conf. 5.13.23, PL 32, 717.* Though Augustine was interpreting his experience with Ambrose in light of his spiritual journey, his initial contacts with Ambrose were merely professional as it was expected that the new professor of rhetoric call on the bishop. Cf. A. Mandouze, *L’aventure de la raison et la grâce*, pp. 108-09.

⁸⁰⁸ *In optimis notum orbi terrae, pium cultorem tuum . . . ille homo Dei. conf. 5.13.23, PL 32, 717.* Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 95.

⁸⁰⁹ *Suscepit me paterne ille homo Dei et peregrinationem meam satis episcopaliter dilexit. Et eum amare coepi primo quidem non tamquam doctorem ueri, quod in Ecclesia tua prorsus desperabam, sed tamquam hominem benignum in me. conf. 5.13.23, PL 32, 717.*

⁸¹⁰ *B. vita. 1.4; cf. P. Brown, Augustine of Hippo*, p. 119.

example of Monica and she was highly impressed with her new bishop.⁸¹¹ Hence, the pious examples of his mother and Ambrose indeed influenced the searching Augustine. One could speculate that the Ambrose and Monica were even conspiring to bring the wayward Augustine to faith!

2. Primacy of Scripture

Previously we have shown that Ambrose mentored spiritual leaders through a commitment to sound teaching based on properly interpreted Scriptures. Ambrose succeeded in opening the Scriptures for Augustine for truly the first time creating in him a desire to search them for himself.⁸¹² Augustine wrote:

Another thing that brought me joy was the ancient writings of the law and the prophets were now being offered to me under quite a different aspect from that under which they had seemed to me absurd when I believed your holy people held such crude opinions.⁸¹³

The ‘crude opinions’ which led him to leave the church as a young man and join the Manichean sect included the church’s supposed teaching on the nature of God, the problem of evil, and the constitution of Christ.⁸¹⁴ Yet Ambrose, demonstrating a background in the liberal arts and Platonic thinking in particular, resolved these interpretative difficulties for Augustine by using an allegorical hermeneutic that featured Christ as the center of the Scriptures.⁸¹⁵ Augustine wrote:

I delighted to hear Ambrose often asserting in his sermons to the people, as a principle on which he must insist emphatically, the letter is death-dealing, but the spirit gives life. This he would tell as he drew aside the veil of mystery and

⁸¹¹ *Conf.* 6.2.2; 6.1.1.

⁸¹² Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 77.

⁸¹³ *Gaudebam etiam, quod uetera scripta Legis et Prophetarum iam non illo oculo mihi legenda proponerentur, quo antea uidebantur absurda, cum arguebam tamquam ita sentientes sanctos tuos; uerum autem non ita sentiebant. conf.* 6.4.6, PL 32, 722. Cf. M. Jourjon, ‘Le Saint Évêque d’Hippone,’ *La Tradition Sacerdotale*, p. 133.

⁸¹⁴ Cf. J. Burns, ‘Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith,’ *Collectanea Augustiana*, p. 374.

⁸¹⁵ Cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 211; N. McLynn, ‘Ambrose,’ *ATTA*, 17; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 5; and L. Jerpahagnon, *Saint Augustin, le pédagogue de Dieu*, p. 46.

opened to them the spiritual meaning of passages which, taken literally, would seem to mislead.⁸¹⁶

Though Augustine did not arrive at precisely the same conclusions that Ambrose offered on evil, the nature of Christ, and other questions; Ambrose nevertheless convinced him of the divine authority of the Scriptures, which could give more satisfying answers than the Manichean teachers had offered.⁸¹⁷

Augustine, having had the Scriptures opened to him by Ambrose, went on to spend his career as a presbyter and bishop studying, expounding, and defending the Scriptures while never losing the conviction of their divine authority. Even toward the end of his life, as he taught younger men how to interpret the Scriptures, he held up the example of Ambrose as one who understood the Scriptures and made them clear to others.⁸¹⁸

3. The 'Language' of Preaching

Augustine admitted that in his initial trips to hear Ambrose preach, he was not interested in 'what Ambrose was saying, but interested only in listening to how he said it.'⁸¹⁹ Augustine was earning his living teaching people how to speak eloquently and he took this opportunity to take notes from a gifted communicator. Despite his initial motives, Augustine became attracted to this man who was not only kind, but demonstrated that it was possible for someone to be both an intellectual and a

⁸¹⁶ *Et tamquam regulam diligentissime commendaret, saepe in popularibus sermonibus suis dicentem Ambrosium laetus audiebam: 'Littera occidit, spiritus autem uiuificat' [2 Cor. 3:6], cum ea, quae ad litteram peruersitatem docere uidebantur, remoto mystico uelamento spiritualiter aperiret, non dicens quod me offenderet, quamuis ea diceret, quae utrum uera essent adhuc ignorarem. conf. 6.4.6, PL 32, 722.*

⁸¹⁷ Cf. J. Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith,' *Collectanea Augustiana*, p. 374 and E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 210.

⁸¹⁸ *Doc. Chr.* 4.46; 48; 50; cf. J. Loughlin, 'St. Ambrose,' *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/cathen/01383c.htm>.

⁸¹⁹ *Cum enim non satagerem discere quae dicebat, sed tantum quemadmodum dicebat audire. conf. 5.14.24, PL 32, 717.* Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *L'aventure de la raison et la grâce*, p. 109) writes that Augustine was interested in: 'quelque chose dans le genre de l'enseignement d'un grand rhéteur, d'un <<éminent collègue>> qui, au lieu de parler dans une école, parlait dans une église.'

Christian.⁸²⁰ As noted, Ambrose's allegorical approach to the Scriptures proved to be very attractive to Augustine. The result was that Augustine began listening to Ambrose's sermons for their content and not merely for their eloquent packaging. Possidius wrote: 'This preacher of God's word spoke very often in the church; Augustine was present in the congregation, listening with great interest and attention.'⁸²¹

As Augustine's hunger increased for the life that Ambrose was preaching about, he desired to go and speak with Ambrose. Rousseau asserts that Augustine, following in the Egyptian monastic tradition of master-pupil dialogue, was initiating toward Ambrose for this purpose.⁸²² Yet, according to *Confessiones*, Augustine found it difficult to find a time when Ambrose was not occupied.⁸²³ Thus, the two ended up having very little personal contact and when Augustine was converted, he informed Ambrose of his decision by letter!⁸²⁴

If Ambrose had such little personal contact with Augustine, can we really consider him Augustine's mentor? While our early Christian model of mentoring begs strongly of the need for close, human interaction in the process of spiritual growth, it seems that Ambrose and Augustine enjoyed a sense of intimacy at a distance through the form or 'language' of preaching. It is apparent that Augustine was quite uncomfortable speaking one on one with Ambrose. Yet, when Ambrose stood to preach the Scriptures, unveiling through skilled interpretation the inspiring content of their meaning in a form that was eloquent and even entertaining, this medium was a

⁸²⁰ Cf. N. McLynn, 'Ambrose of Milan,' *ATTA*, 17; and J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine*, p. 111.

⁸²¹ *Huius interea uerbi Dei praedicatoris frequentissimis in ecclesia disputationibus astans in populo, intendebat suspensus atque affixus. Vita* 1.3, PL 32, 35. *conf.* 6.3.4. It is worth mentioning that this period of Augustine's increased interest in the content of Ambrose's sermons also coincided with his mother coming to join him in Milan in 385. Cf. J. Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith,' *Collectanea Augustiana*, pp. 373-4.

⁸²² Cf. P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 152.

⁸²³ *Conf.* 6.3.3; 4.4; 11.18.

familiar ‘language’ that Augustine the rhetor could connect with on a profound level.⁸²⁵ Though Ambrose was the only one speaking, the sermon became a quasi-dialogue. As Augustine assimilated Ambrose’s teaching, the sermon served as a catalyst for Augustine’s on-going commitment to seeking truth — a pursuit that often included dialogue with others.

Augustine the rhetor would go on to become Augustine the preacher who would deliver many more sermons than Ambrose as he greatly valued this form of teaching. Yet, Augustine will despise eloquent delivery at the expense of nourishing content in a sermon. Certainly, Ambrose should be credited for helping Augustine go from a rhetor to a preacher.

4. Preparation for Baptism

A fourth way that Ambrose mentored Augustine was through overseeing his preparation for baptism. After Augustine made his profession of faith in the villa near Milan, he wrote to Ambrose sharing the news of his conversion, submitted his name for baptism for the coming Easter, and requested advice on what he could read to grow in his new faith.⁸²⁶ Augustine was a bit surprised that Ambrose encouraged him to read Isaiah as he found it quite inaccessible and quickly put it aside.⁸²⁷ Perhaps Ambrose overestimated the abilities of one trained in the liberal arts to be able to understand Isaiah. Also, such advice revealed Ambrose’s preference for teaching from the Hebrew Scriptures. Nevertheless, Augustine began to prepare for baptism in the same way he had come to faith — in the company of some close friends.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁴ Ibid. 9.5.13; cf. A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin, l’homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 73.

⁸²⁵ Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *L’aventure de la raison et la grâce*, pp. 110-11) writes: ‘les sermons d’Ambroise se sont trouvés répondre en même temps à l’attente d’une âme religieuse et à la recherche, d’un esprit exigeant . . . cette extraordinaire conjonction . . . a permis d’emblée aux deux hommes d’établir entre eux un mode de communication profonde.’

⁸²⁶ *Conf.* 9.5.13; cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechuminate*, p. 93.

⁸²⁷ *Conf.* 9.5.13; 6.14.

⁸²⁸ Ibid. 9.6.14.

Besides a questionable reading assignment in Isaiah, how did Ambrose prepare Augustine for baptism? First, according to Paulinus, Ambrose was personally involved in initiating all catechumens. Though Ambrose and Augustine did not enjoy a close, personal relationship, they would have spent much time together during the period of Lent leading up to the Easter baptism.⁸²⁹

Secondly, in the context of a daily liturgical setting, Ambrose taught the catechumens a series of organized lessons.⁸³⁰ The teaching consisted of a ‘moral education’ based on principles of holy living prescribed in the Scriptures and demonstrated through the lives of the saints of Scripture.⁸³¹ Hence, the catechumens were invited to imitate the holy examples of men and women from Scripture. Ambrose’s content also included a handing over of the creed, a thorough line-by-line treatment of the creed, which included teaching on the nature of the Trinity. Finally, Ambrose’s teaching also included an exhortation to take seriously the commitment to the Christian life.⁸³²

In addition to the content of Ambrose’s pre-baptismal teaching, it is important to note the forms in which he delivered it. Though the context was a small group of catechumens, Ambrose still communicated through his preferred method of the sermon, which, as we have shown, would have also been meaningful for Augustine.⁸³³ When communicating the creed, Ambrose employed a ‘chiastic rhyme scheme’ that Harmless says ‘made his passage memorable — aptly framed to impress itself on the oral memory.’⁸³⁴ In a similar way, catechumens like Augustine were able to commit

⁸²⁹ *Vita Ambrosii*, 38; cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 94.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 100. Examples of Ambrose’s baptismal sermons are found in E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, pp. 98-149.

⁸³¹ *De mysteriis*, 1; cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, pp. 94-5.

⁸³² *Quant.* 314.77; *f. et op.* 6.9; cf. W. Harmless, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 96-8.

⁸³³ *De mysteriis*, 1; W. Harmless, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 101; cf. P. Achtemeier, ‘*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,’ *JBL* 109/1 (1990), 7.

to memory the theological truths they were learning through hymns.⁸³⁵ Augustine wrote: ‘How copiously I wept at your hymns and canticles, how intensely was I moved by the lovely harmonies of your singing church! Those voices flooded my ears, and the truth was distilled into my heart until it overflowed in loving devotion.’⁸³⁶ Though the practice was not without controversy, Ambrose had been innovative in introducing hymns into the church at Milan at this time for the purpose of worship and teaching.⁸³⁷

Augustine, his friends, and fellow catechumens were baptized by Ambrose on Easter in 387.⁸³⁸ As was the custom in Milan, Ambrose, perhaps with the help of an exorcist, laid hands on each catechumen and invited them to renounce the works of Satan prior to baptizing them.⁸³⁹

Indeed, Ambrose’s mentoring during this period had a lasting impact on Augustine. When Augustine became a presbyter in Hippo in 391, one of his first roles was preparing catechumens for baptism.⁸⁴⁰ As bishop in 399, Augustine devoted an entire work, *De catechizandis rudibus*, to the subject of training new believers for baptism. Like Ambrose, Augustine seemed passionate about articulating the creed. His *De fide et symbolo* was a commentary on the creed and served as a revised version of the teaching he gave to the clergy at the council of Hippo in 393.⁸⁴¹ Toward the end of his life, Augustine authored yet another commentary on the creed, *De symbolo ad catechumenos*, especially for catechumens.⁸⁴²

⁸³⁵ *Conf.* 9.12.31.

⁸³⁶ *Quantum fleui in hymnis et canticis [Col. 3:16] tuis suaue sonantis ecclesiae tuae uocibus commotus acriter! Voces illae influebant auribus meis et eliquabatur ueritas in cor meum et exaestuabat inde affectus pietatis.* *conf.* 9.6.14, PL 32, 769.

⁸³⁷ *Sermo contra Auxentium*, 34; cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumate*, p. 99.

⁸³⁸ *Conf.* 9.6.14; *ep.* 147.52.

⁸³⁹ Cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, p. 102.

⁸⁴⁰ *S.* 216.1-2; cf. W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumate*, p. 105.

⁸⁴¹ Cf. F. Clancy, ‘*Fide et Symbolo, De*,’ *ATTA*, 360-1.

⁸⁴² The creed was also the subject of *s.* 212-15. Cf. A. Fitzgerald, ‘*Symbolo ad catechumenos, De*,’ *ATTA*, 820.

5. Summary

The influence of Ambrose was quite significant in bringing Augustine back to being a catechumen in the church and then finally a baptized Christian. Ambrose mentored Augustine through a holy and caring example even though there was not a great deal of personal contact. He opened the Scriptures for Augustine and convinced him of their authority demonstrating that one could be an intellectual and a Christian. He communicated to Augustine personally via sermon — a familiar ‘language’ to one trained in rhetoric. Finally, Ambrose was personally involved in Augustine’s initiation in Milan in 387.

IV. Simplicianus

During Augustine’s time in Milan, he also benefited from the mentoring of Simplicianus. Simplicianus, as we have noted, had been Ambrose’s theological teacher and mentor and eventually succeeded Ambrose as the bishop of Milan. As Augustine was following the sermons of Ambrose and going through an intensive period of searching in his spiritual journey, he made the acquaintance of Simplicianus who was more available than Ambrose. Simplicianus mentored Augustine in three clear ways: through being an intellectual resource; by emphasizing the authority of the church; and through modeling that the mentor is still a disciple.

1. Intellectual Resource

Simplicianus also appealed to Augustine as a thinking Christian who was trained in the liberal arts and understood the philosophers that so impressed Augustine.⁸⁴³ Though Augustine looked to Simplicianus as an intellectual resource, it is significant that he first made note of Simplicianus’ pious character as he had done with Ambrose:

⁸⁴³ *Conf.* 8.1.1-2; cf. G. Madec, ‘Christian Influences on Augustine,’ *ATTA*, 151; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 95, 97.

I regarded him as your good servant, a man from whom your grace radiated. Moreover I had heard how from his youth he had lived for you in complete dedication and since he was an old man by now I assumed that after following your way of life for long years and with such noble zeal he must be rich in experience and deeply learned.⁸⁴⁴

As Augustine's faith concerns at this point were quite intellectual, Simplicianus was qualified and available to dialogue with him over some of the key issues.⁸⁴⁵

Augustine's initiative toward Simplicianus, like his attempts to move toward Ambrose, resembled the initiative taken by Egyptian monks toward a potential mentor.⁸⁴⁶ Burns writes that Simplicianus was especially helpful in explaining the 'union of the divine and human in Christ.'⁸⁴⁷

Simplicianus also encouraged Augustine toward being an intellectual Christian by recounting the story of Marius Victorinus — a Platonist who had converted to faith in Christ in large part through dialogue with Simplicianus.⁸⁴⁸ While Ponticianus' account of the holy man, Antony, had profoundly touched Augustine's heart on his journey to conversion, Simplicianus' account of a Platonist coming to Christ equally moved Augustine to have the courage to confess Christ. Augustine wrote: 'On hearing the story I was fired to imitate Victorinus; indeed it was to this end that your servant Simplicianus had related it.'⁸⁴⁹ If Ambrose, Simplicianus, and Marius Victorinus were educated, thinking Christians then Augustine could also be a Christian.

Though Augustine's faith would become less speculative after his ordination as presbyter and bishop, the example of Simplicianus appeared to later impact the

⁸⁴⁴ *Ad Simplicianum, qui mihi bonus apparebat seruus tuus et lucebat in eo gratia tua. Audieram etiam, quod a iuuentute sua deuotissime tibi uiueret; iam uero tunc senuerat et longa aetate in tam bono studio sectandae uitae tuae multa expertus, multa edoctus mihi uidebatur: et uere sic erat. conf. 8.1.1, PL 32, 749. See also ep. 37.1.*

⁸⁴⁵ *Conf. 8.1.1; 2.3.*

⁸⁴⁶ Cf. P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 152.

⁸⁴⁷ Cf. J. Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith,' *Collectanea Augustiana*, p. 377.

⁸⁴⁸ *Conf. 8.2.4.*

⁸⁴⁹ *Sed ubi mihi homo tuus Simplicianus de Victorino ista narrauit, exarsi ad imitandum: ad hoc enim et ille narrauerat. conf. 8.5.10, PL 32, 753.*

manner in which Augustine initiated those with an intellectual background. In *De catechizandis rudibus*, Augustine instructed Deogratias to take into account the superior knowledge of the Scriptures that someone trained in the liberal arts would have compared to someone less educated and to orient the training program to the level of understanding of the educated catechumen.⁸⁵⁰

2. Authority of the Church

Through his account of Marius Victorinus, Simplicianus also emphasized to Augustine the spiritual authority of the church. Though Victorinus initially did not see the relationship between the four walls of the church and his faith, nor did he want to cause problems for himself socially and professionally, Simplicianus insisted that he needed to experience salvation and declare his faith within the context of the church.⁸⁵¹ This message was also intended for Augustine and he ultimately responded by being baptized in the church and remaining in it for the rest of his life. As Augustine's ecclesiology developed, Simplicianus' impact was surely felt. For Augustine went on to affirm in his preaching and writing that salvation needed to be experienced within the spiritual authority of the church and that being a Christian necessitated fellowship with other believers.⁸⁵²

3. A Mentor is a Disciple

Prior to Augustine's conversion, Simplicianus mentored Augustine through intellectual dialogue and emphasizing salvation through the church. However, Simplicianus impacted Augustine in a third way when Augustine was bishop of Hippo. Simplicianus demonstrated that a mentor should still be a learner by writing to

⁸⁵⁰ *Cat. rud.* 8.12.

⁸⁵¹ *Conf.* 5.8; 6.4; 8.2.4; cf. P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 153.

⁸⁵² *En. Ps.* 132.2; *Vita* 3; *bapt.* 3.13.18; 4.1.1; 4.2.2; cf. M. Jourjon, 'Le Saint Évêque d'Hippone,' *La Tradition Sacerdotale*, p. 130.

Augustine, as well as Ambrose, posing theological questions.⁸⁵³ The teacher was asking a former student for help! As we will see, Augustine also demonstrated the posture of a learner progressing in his understanding and practice of the Christian life as he served as a bishop and mentor to spiritual leaders.

4. Summary

Simplicianus was available for Augustine as an intellectual resource in the critical days leading up to his conversion. He not only answered Augustine's questions, but he gave him hope and inspired him toward accepting the Christian life by telling the story of Marius Victorinus. This account also impressed upon Augustine the conviction of being a Christian in the context of the church. Finally, Simplicianus, through his humble posture of learning, demonstrated the principle that a mentor must continue to be a disciple.

V. Valerius

The final mentor who had a significant impact on Augustine was Bishop Valerius, Augustine's predecessor in Hippo.⁸⁵⁴ It was this aging Greek-speaking pastor who strategically let the need be known for a presbyter in Hippo on a Sunday that Augustine happened to be present in church. His initiative drew a reluctant Augustine, who had been largely pondering philosophical and theological questions in his monastic *otium* in Tagaste, into the ordained ministry. Valerius was not only instrumental in getting Augustine into ministry, but he was Augustine's primary mentor during the first five years of his ministry. While Monica, friends, Ambrose, and Simplicianus had mentored and influenced Augustine primarily before his conversion, it was Valerius who was Augustine's key mentor once he became a

⁸⁵³ *Ep.* 37.

⁸⁵⁴ To this point in the present chapter, my practice has been to show how Augustine was mentored and then to make connections to Augustine's later work as a mentor. However, in the case of Valerius, the implications are so significant, that they will be taken up in the following chapters.

spiritual leader. The great irony is that Valerius appears rather ignored compared to Monica and Ambrose for his impact on Augustine.⁸⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Valerius mentored Augustine by selecting him for ministry; through a rich mentor-disciple relationship; by involving him in ministry; and by releasing him to ministry.

1. Selection

Possidius wrote that, for some time prior to Augustine's visit to Hippo, the aging Valerius had been in search of a presbyter — one 'capable of building the Lord's church by preaching the word of God and salutary doctrine.'⁸⁵⁶ While Valerius was thinking like a mentor in wanting to raise up future leadership for the church, it is also evident that he was looking for someone to serve in areas where he was weak. While some have suggested that Valerius was not a strong theologian⁸⁵⁷ and incapable of mounting an apologetic against the growing Donatist movement in Hippo,⁸⁵⁸ it is safest to assert that Valerius' main weakness was language. Hence, he needed someone who could effectively communicate in Latin.⁸⁵⁹

As noted, Valerius, who had been praying for a qualified presbyter in Hippo, quite intentionally reminded the congregation of this great need on a Sunday that Augustine happened to be present, forcing something of an ordination by stealth.⁸⁶⁰ Though Augustine was not comfortable with the events and later, as bishop, would not allow such ordinations,⁸⁶¹ this manner of setting apart leaders was nevertheless common in his day and served as Valerius' official means of selecting him for

⁸⁵⁵ I find it somewhat surprising that thorough Dictionary and Encyclopedia volumes such as *Augustine Through the Ages*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, and *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* contain no entry for Valerius.

⁸⁵⁶ *Qui posset uerbo Dei et doctrina salubri Ecclesiam Domini aedificare*. *Vita* 5.2, PL 32, 37.

⁸⁵⁷ Cf. A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 273.

⁸⁵⁸ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 132.

⁸⁵⁹ Augustine (*ep. Rm. inch.* 13) indicated that Valerius also had no ability in Punic. Cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 1139.

⁸⁶⁰ *Vita* 4.1; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 157; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 4.

spiritual leadership.⁸⁶² As we saw in chapter two, this had also been the experience of Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus.

Though Valerius orchestrated the ordination because of the great needs in Hippo, his decision was still not without a significant risk. Would he let a former Manichean preach in the church at Hippo? It was precisely for this reason that Megalius of Calama, the senior ranking bishop in Numidia, initially opposed Augustine's ordination.⁸⁶³ Yet, why did Valerius stand firm on his choice of Augustine? It seems clear that Valerius knew something of Augustine's reputation as a *seruus Dei* in Tagaste. Augustine admitted in a sermon many years later that at the time of his ordination he had 'already begun to acquire a reputation of some weight among the servants of God.'⁸⁶⁴ Similarly, Possidius affirmed: 'The catholics already knew of Augustine's way of life and teaching.'⁸⁶⁵ Though Augustine had a Manichean background, Valerius was able to mitigate the risk in his selection because Augustine had spent the previous three years in Tagaste living according to the moral principles taught in the Scriptures, teaching sound doctrine, and exercising spiritual gifts and natural talents that could help the church.⁸⁶⁶

Secondly, Valerius was willing to take a risk with Augustine because he saw tremendous potential in him. Pellegrino writes: 'Valerius judged the new priest to be fully fit for the exercise of the priestly ministry, whereas Augustine himself, with his better and deeper knowledge of himself, was convinced he could not face it without a

⁸⁶¹ *Ep.* 126.

⁸⁶² *Vita* 4.2; *adul. conjug.* 2.20.22; cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 18.

⁸⁶³ *Vita* 5.4; *c. litt. Pet.* 3.16.19; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 198; and G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 120.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ut quoniam coeperat esse iam alicuius momenti inter Dei seruos fama mea. s.* 355.2, PL 39, 1569. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations from *sermones* are from WSA. Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 158.

⁸⁶⁵ *Iam scientes catholici sancti Augustini propositum et doctrinam. Vita* 4.1, PL 32, 37.

⁸⁶⁶ As we will see in the following chapter, Augustine's focus at Tagaste became less philosophically inclined and more theologically and exegetically oriented in his final year there.

more searching preparation.⁸⁶⁷ Pellegrino is referring to Augustine's request of Valerius to take a period of concentrated study in the Scriptures before assuming his duties as presbyter.⁸⁶⁸ While Augustine was quite sensitive to his own shortcomings about the ministry, there is no indication that Valerius ever wavered on his choice of Augustine. He granted Augustine the period of study but he did not give him too long!

This raises a more important question — if Valerius had not seen Augustine's potential and orchestrated his ordination, would Augustine have ever gone into the ministry on his own initiative? Augustine, recounting to the Hippo faithful in late 425 the events that led up to his ordination, declared that he had not come to Hippo 'seeking to be what I am now.'⁸⁶⁹ Rather, since the time of his conversion in Milan in 386 and following his contact with monasteries in Milan and Rome,⁸⁷⁰ he had returned to Africa and fulfilled his plan of establishing a community of *serui Dei* in Tagaste.⁸⁷¹ His experience there was an *otium sanctum* (holy leisure) characterized by prayer, reading, dialogue, and writing — quite a world away from the *sarcina* (burden) of the ministry in Hippo. Hence, when Valerius ordained Augustine in 391, he had a vision for Augustine's potential that Augustine had never had for himself.⁸⁷² Yet, it was a vision that Augustine did not refuse nor depart from in the following five years with Valerius or in the nearly forty years that he spent in church ministry in Hippo.

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 33.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ep.* 21.

⁸⁶⁹ *Quaesiui tamen quod sum. s.* 355.2, PL 39, 1569.

⁸⁷⁰ *Conf.* 8.6.15; *mor.* 1.33.70.

⁸⁷¹ *S.* 355.2.

⁸⁷² Mandouze (A. Mandouze, 'L'Évêque et le Corps Presbytéral au Service du Peuple Fidèle Selon Saint Augustin,' H. Bouëssé et al., *L'Évêque Dans L'Église du Christ*, p. 126) writes: 'La Providence ironique se charge de bouleverser bien des projets, et précisément chez les homes les plus religieux. Pour ce qui est d'Augustin, elle avait fait en Italie du rhéteur ambitieux un simple catechumène. En Afrique, elle va faire du recent converti et de l'aspirant aux vœux monastiques un condamné à l'épiscopat.'

In summary, Augustine needed a catalyst like Valerius in his life not only to see his potential but also to ‘push him in’ by actively calling him to the ministry. Though Augustine felt inadequate and unprepared for the task, he needed Valerius to give him some time for preparation but not too much time. Finally, Valerius provided him a specific context, the church community at Hippo, in which he could put his gifts to work.

2. Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

As we do not have the benefit of any surviving sermons or correspondence from Valerius, what we know of their relationship comes only from Augustine and Possidius. Yet, it is apparent that their relationship was characterized by a father-son intimacy, a clear sense of authority, mutual respect, and Valerius pushing Augustine to maximize his potential.

Valerius, like Ambrose and Simplicianus, served as a spiritual father figure to Augustine. In his only letter to Valerius, Augustine addressed him as ‘sincerely beloved father’⁸⁷³ and ‘father.’⁸⁷⁴ In letters to others, Augustine referred to Valerius as ‘most blessed and venerable father’⁸⁷⁵ or ‘most blessed father.’⁸⁷⁶ Augustine’s regard for his spiritual father was only reinforced by Valerius’ holy character. In a letter to the Donatist bishop of Hippo, Augustine wrote of Valerius: ‘For I know how much he desires peace, and he is not tossed about by the inanity of vain pride.’⁸⁷⁷ In a letter to Aurelius of Carthage, Augustine called Valerius ‘a man of such modesty and gentleness and also of such prudence and solicitude in the Lord.’⁸⁷⁸ Possidius joined

⁸⁷³ *Sincera charitate charissimo patri Valerio. ep. 21, PL 33, 88.*

⁸⁷⁴ *Pater Valeri, ep. 21.3, PL 33, 89.*

⁸⁷⁵ *Beatissimi et uerabilis mihi patris Valerii. ep. 33.4, PL 33, 131.*

⁸⁷⁶ *Beatissimus pater Valerius, ep. 31.4, PL 33, 123.*

⁸⁷⁷ *Noui enim quantum diligit pacem, et nulla uani fastus inanitate iactetur. ep. 33.4, PL 33, 131.*

⁸⁷⁸ *Et nos quidem illarum partium hominem habemus episcopum, unde magnas agimus gratias Deo. ep. 22.4, PL 33, 91.*

in the chorus by calling him ‘a devout and God-fearing man.’⁸⁷⁹ Thus, Augustine regarded Valerius as a man of upright character and loved him as a father.

Augustine also expressed a great sense of respect for Valerius for his authority as the bishop of Hippo. Again, in *Epistula* 21, Augustine addressed him as ‘most blessed and venerable lord’⁸⁸⁰ and ‘your holiness.’⁸⁸¹ Also, Augustine repeatedly referred to Valerius as ‘old.’⁸⁸² This title, *senex*, though perhaps strange or even disrespectful to the modern reader, was actually another way in which Augustine communicated respect for his bishop.⁸⁸³ Edmund Hill adds: ‘*senex* was a formal, almost official title of respect for a senior bishop, in particular for *the* senior bishop of a province; Valerius may well have been the senior bishop or primate of Numidia by seniority.’⁸⁸⁴ Augustine’s respect for the authority of his bishop was quite significant in that just a few years prior, he had been critical of clergy.⁸⁸⁵ Clearly, it was Valerius’ fatherly manner and holy character that strengthened Augustine’s respect for him.

Though Valerius had authority over Augustine, he also showed a great deal of respect to his young presbyter. We have already mentioned that Augustine petitioned Valerius for a period of study before reporting to Hippo to which Valerius consented.⁸⁸⁶ While Hamman suggests that Augustine was granted a year in which he succeeded in memorizing the Scriptures, neither assertion can be supported from

⁸⁷⁹ *Ut erat uir pius et Deum timens. Vita* 5.2, PL 32, 37.

⁸⁸⁰ *Domino beatissimo et uenerabili, ep.* 21, PL 33, 88.

⁸⁸¹ *Sanctitas tua, ep.* 21.4, PL 33, 89.

⁸⁸² *Epp.* 21.5-6; 29.7, 11; see also *Vita* 8.1; s. 355.2.

⁸⁸³ In *ep.* 29, Augustine recounted to Alypius his experience with a rather hostile crowd in church on the day of St. Leontius’ feast. Augustine thought of calming the crowd by appealing to ‘the inexpressible love of the venerable, old Valerius toward me’ (*et cogitarent uenerabilis senis Valerii circa me ineffabilem charitatem*). *ep.* 29.7, PL 33, 117.

⁸⁸⁴ See commentary in WSA, 3.10.171. Augustine also referred to Aurelius (*ep.* 64.2); Xantippus (*ep.* 65.2); the unnamed primate of Numidia (*ep.* 209.3); and Alypius (*ep.* 227) as *senex*. Also, Hefele (C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.157) records that at the council of Carthage of 407 the Numidian primate was called *senex*.

⁸⁸⁵ *Vita* 4.3.

Augustine's works.⁸⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Valerius' agreement to a pre-assignment study sabbatical for a newly appointed presbyter revealed a certain respect for Augustine. In short, Valerius, from the beginning allowed Augustine to decide what he needed to be successful in ministry.

Secondly, Valerius did not restrict Augustine from continuing his monastic lifestyle. Rather, Valerius gave him the freedom to pursue these convictions and desires and essentially allowing him to be his own kind of presbyter. Valerius went a step farther and resourced Augustine to this end by giving a plot of land in the garden by the church at Hippo to build a house for a community of clergy and *serui Dei*.⁸⁸⁸ Hence, instead of imposing controls on his new presbyter, Valerius empowered and resourced Augustine to live out his own vision of the ministry.

While demonstrating respect for his young and talented presbyter, it is also apparent that Valerius never felt threatened by Augustine.⁸⁸⁹ We recall that Valerius had deliberately recruited someone better than himself for preaching. How many bishops in Valerius' day, or at any point in the history of the church, would have demonstrated such humility? When Augustine's reputation as a teacher and apologist increased, Valerius did not try to suppress his young presbyter; rather, he sought to create even more opportunities for him to shine. Paulinus of Nola appropriately referred to Valerius as 'that blessed old man, whose most pure mind has never been touched by any stain of jealous envy.'⁸⁹⁰ Valerius was surely thinking more about the

⁸⁸⁶ *Ep.* 21; s. 355.2.

⁸⁸⁷ In *ep.* 21.4, Augustine asks for 'a short time for myself, say, up to Easter.' (*mihi paruum tempus uelut usque ad Pascha*), PL 33, 89. Cf. A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, pp. 273-4.

⁸⁸⁸ S. 355.2; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 4; G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 160; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 133.

⁸⁸⁹ Cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 114.

⁸⁹⁰ *Et ille beatus senex, cui purissimam mentem nulla unquam liuentis inuidiae macula suffudit. ep.* 32.2, PL 33, 126.

present and future needs of the church at Hippo than his own career ambitions. In this sense, Valerius modeled what Augustine would later call the *sarcina* of ministry.

While loving Augustine as a son and giving him the freedom to become his own type of minister, Valerius was also not shy about giving his protégé significant tasks for which Augustine did not feel prepared. As noted, this was certainly the case with Augustine's ordination in 391. While we will treat how Valerius increasingly involved Augustine in ministry more later, let us consider one example. Augustine was called upon by Valerius to preach on the morning of the feast of Saint Leontius to give what would surely be an unpopular message against the drunken excesses that had come to characterize the feast. Augustine, recounting the experience to Alypius, wrote: 'For he [Valerius] did not hesitate to lay upon my shoulders the very dangerous burden of commenting on the words of the truth on their account.'⁸⁹¹ After getting through that challenging message, Valerius had Augustine preach yet a second time to those who came to the church in the afternoon. Augustine added: 'though I was reluctant, since I now wanted so perilous a day to be over with, old Valerius forced me under an order to say something to them.'⁸⁹² We get the impression from this account that Valerius did not mind forcing Augustine into some awkward and uncomfortable situations. Valerius believed in his young presbyter and continued to see Augustine's potential even when Augustine did not. Though Augustine would have much rather been somewhere else on that day, the experience served as preparation for the many other confrontational sermons that he would give in his career.

⁸⁹¹ *Qui mihi tractandi uerba ueritatis tam periculosum onus non dubitarit propter eos imponere. ep. 29.7, PL 33, 117.*

⁸⁹² *Deinde me inuitum, qui iam cupiebam peractum esse tam periculosum diem, iussum compulit senex ut aliquid eis loquerer. ep. 29.11, PL 33, 119.*

In summary, the mentor-disciple relationship between Valerius and Augustine was characterized by a father-son intimacy, a clear sense of spiritual authority, and mutual respect. Further, Valerius, because he believed in Augustine's potential, forced him into situations where he would develop as a spiritual leader.

3. Involving in Ministry

In ordaining Augustine, Valerius recruited a man whose communication skills were superior to his own. Early in Augustine's ministry as presbyter, Valerius began to give the former teacher of rhetoric teaching assignments of increasing responsibility. As Cyprian had done with his presbyters and probably deacons as well, Valerius entrusted Augustine with the task of teaching catechumens as they prepared for baptism.⁸⁹³ Augustine had the opportunity to hand over the creed that he had learned from Ambrose and Simplicianus just a few years before.

Valerius continued to stir up things and invite more opposition by setting Augustine apart to preach in the church while he was still a presbyter.⁸⁹⁴ Valerius, who originated from the eastern church where it was an accepted practice for presbyters to preach, did not mind going against the tradition of the North African churches because Augustine's teaching ability was benefiting the church in Hippo.⁸⁹⁵ According to Pellegrino, the North African bishops were justified in their concern for a young presbyter preaching due to the infamous legacy of Arius of Alexandria, who had spread his heresy through preaching while still a presbyter.⁸⁹⁶ In light of this concern of the North African bishops, Valerius' decision to go ahead and have Augustine preach was even more significant. Before we too hastily label Valerius a rebel or someone star struck by newfound talent, we must remember that Valerius was

⁸⁹³ S. 214-16; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 134.

⁸⁹⁴ *Vita* 5.3; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 4; G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 164; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 133.

⁸⁹⁵ *Vita* 5.4.

in the process of mentoring an emerging spiritual leader. From Possidius we are reminded of the important point that Augustine preached under Valerius' supervision: '[Valerius] gave his priest permission to preach the gospel in church even when he himself was present.'⁸⁹⁷ So, instead of merely setting Augustine free to preach where and when he liked, Valerius was supervising him through teaching assignments of increasing responsibility.

Possidius recorded that in addition to having him preach in the church, Valerius encouraged Augustine to use his gifts by 'holding frequent public discussions.'⁸⁹⁸ Possidius was surely referring to Augustine's debate with Fortunatus the Manichean in Hippo,⁸⁹⁹ as well as Augustine's apologetic teaching 'against all the African heretics, especially the Donatists, the Manicheans, and the pagans.'⁹⁰⁰

If the North African bishops were already displeased with Valerius for allowing Augustine to preach, one can only imagine how they must have felt when this presbyter of only two years was asked by Aurelius to teach at the council of Hippo in 393! According to Bonner, Augustine's purpose for speaking was to resource the fairly large number of uneducated bishops with teaching on the creed.⁹⁰¹ Though it is difficult to know what initially prompted Aurelius high regard for Valerius' presbyter that he would have him address a council of bishops; yet, through Augustine's role in that council, Valerius succeeded in convincing his critics that he had made a good choice in Augustine. The result was an increase in the number of presbyters preaching in the African churches.

⁸⁹⁶ See Pellegrino's commentary on *Vita* 5.3 in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 48.

⁸⁹⁷ *Et eidem presbytero potestatem dedit coram se in ecclesia Evangelium praedicandi. Vita* 5.3, PL 32, 37.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ac frequentissime tractandi. Vita* 5.3, PL 32, 37.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 6.

⁹⁰⁰ *Aduersas Africanas haereses, maximeque contra Donatistas, Manichaeos et Paganos. Vita* 7.1, PL 32, 39.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 115.

As Valerius involved Augustine in ministry, it is significant that Valerius gave him assignments in ministries that corresponded with Augustine's strengths and talents. Augustine was gifted in communicating, debating, teaching, and writing. Valerius put him to work where those skills were needed in the church and where Valerius himself was unable to meet the need. When Augustine became bishop, he was of course obliged to perform tasks that he did not care for; yet, Valerius' wisdom to involve Augustine in ministries that corresponded with his strengths was an important quality of a mentor.⁹⁰²

4. Releasing

In the initial four years of Augustine's ministry under Valerius, Augustine, through faithfulness and success in assignments of increasing levels of responsibility, was realizing the potential Valerius saw in him.⁹⁰³ According to Possidius, Valerius began to fear that Augustine would be selected for another place of ministry in much the same manner that Valerius had conscripted him in 391.⁹⁰⁴ Thus, after consorting with the bishops of Carthage and Calama, as well as presenting the idea to the congregation at Hippo, Valerius made Augustine his co-bishop in 395.⁹⁰⁵ Despite Augustine's resistance to the idea and Valerius' apparent oversight of the canons of Nicea, which forbade two bishops serving in the same church, Valerius had his way once again and Augustine was ordained bishop.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰² As I showed in the previous chapter, this principle was also valued by Ambrose in *De officiis*, 1.215.

⁹⁰³ *Vita* 8.1.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 8.2.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 8.3.

⁹⁰⁶ See *ep.* 213.4. Pellegrino cites canon 8 of the council of Nicea in his commentary of *Vita* 8.5 in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 54. Though we cannot know for sure whether Valerius was ignorant of the canons of Nicea or simply ignoring them to help his cause in getting Augustine ordained bishop, we must note that he would not be the first spiritual leader to ignore church canons when setting apart a key leader. This was also the case of Basil's ordination of Poemenius of Satala. See Basil, *epp.* 102-03; and A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, p. 87.

Indeed Valerius, demonstrating his *sarcina* for the ministry, wanted to see the church of Hippo in the capable hands of Augustine for many years to come.⁹⁰⁷ As we have stated, this value of raising up future leadership to sustain the ministry of the church is an important quality of a mentor. Nevertheless, Possidius added that what Valerius really wanted ‘was not so much a successor as a fellow bishop here and now.’⁹⁰⁸ Paulinus, in a letter to Augustine about Valerius’ decision, wrote: ‘That blessed old man . . . now gathers from the Most High fruits worthy of the peace of his heart, for he has now merited to have as a colleague the man whom he simply desired to have as his successor in the priestly office.’⁹⁰⁹ Valerius was recruiting Augustine to be his equal. Through these events we are reminded of Valerius’ humility and that he was not threatened by Augustine. Rather, for the sake of the church, he was happy to share the work of ministry and to release a young leader to service and responsibility.

5. Summary

As the coming chapters will show, it was Valerius who left the greatest imprint on Augustine for mentoring other spiritual leaders. Valerius had a great burden for the church at Hippo and he desired to raise up a presbyter who would serve the church. Hence, the context of their mentoring relationship was the Christian community at Hippo. Though questionable by modern standards and not Augustine’s preferred method, Valerius selected and set apart Augustine for ministry in quite a dramatic fashion. He was able to make a good choice because he knew Augustine’s reputation and saw his potential. The relationship between Valerius and Augustine

⁹⁰⁷ In fact, in *ep.* 31.4 to Paulinus, Augustine described Valerius’ naming him co-bishop as ‘imposing upon me the greater burden of being his coadjutor in the episcopacy’ (*nisi maiorem mihi coepiscopatus sarcinam imponeret*). *ep.* 31.4, PL, 33, 123. Cf. A. Mandouze, *L’aventure de la raison et la grâce*, pp. 141, 143.

⁹⁰⁸ *Quo suae cathedrae non tam succederet, sed consacerdos accederet Augustinus. Vita* 8.2, PL 32, 39.

⁹⁰⁹ *Et ille beatus senex . . . dignos sui cordis pace nunc ab altissimo fructus capit, ut quem successorem sacerdotii sui simpliciter optabat, hunc mereatur tener collegam. ep.* 32.2, PL 33, 126.

was characterized by a father-son intimacy, a clear sense of authority, mutual respect, and Valerius pushing Augustine to become his very best. He involved Augustine in the ministry with increasing levels of responsibility while encouraging him to minister according to his gifts. Finally, he recruited Augustine to be his equal as co-bishop of Hippo effectively releasing him to full spiritual leadership in Hippo. Though Valerius is largely forgotten by most modern students of Christian history, his legacy through the life and ministry of Augustine of Hippo continues after two millennia.⁹¹⁰

VI. Summary of Augustine's Mentors

When we look more closely at Augustine's mosaic — those who shaped him into what he would become — the influences were quite diverse. A simple and uneducated mother modeled prayer and piety, emphasized practical faith, remained sound in doctrine, and raised him as a Christian. Friends were simply there with him on the delicate journey to faith; one rebuked him for strange ideas, while another brought out his greatness in dialogue. A distinguished and eloquent bishop who showed him the kindness of a father, opened the Scriptures to him for truly the first time, communicated in a medium that he understood, and personally oversaw his initiation into the church. Another educated man, available to him for intellectual dialogue, impressed upon Augustine the necessity of the church while demonstrating the posture of a life-long disciple. Finally, a humble, father-like figure with an accent ordained him to the ministry, gave him the freedom to become his own type of minister, involved him increasingly in the work of ministry, and then released him to his own work. With this mosaic in mind, let us now begin to consider how Augustine served to shape and color the mosaics of the spiritual leaders of his day.

⁹¹⁰ Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 1141) nicely summarizes this thought with: 'tel est celui qui, par des audaces successives et sa constante confiance en son adjoint, a par le fait même donné sa chance à son prestigieux successeur.'

Chapter 4: Forms of Mentoring in Augustine

In the first three chapters, it has been our aim to provide some background on the subject of mentoring spiritual leaders. This has included a treatment of mentoring in early Christianity, in the third and fourth centuries prior to Augustine's life and ministry, as well as the mentoring influences on Augustine's personal life. We will now move to the focus of this study and consider how Augustine went about mentoring spiritual leaders of his day. From the time of his ordination as presbyter in 391 until his death in 430, Augustine had relationships with hundreds of clergy in Hippo, in the provinces of North Africa, and beyond. Generally regarded as the most significant Christian leader of his day, let us consider the mentoring impact Augustine had on the clergy in his sphere of influence. As our practice has been in the preceding chapters, we will first consider the work of ministers in Augustine's day. Given that context, we will treat in detail the most significant, repeated forms of mentoring observed in Augustine's relationship to the clergy.

I. Augustine's View of the Offices of Spiritual Leadership

During Augustine's episcopate, the number of clergy in North Africa was quite large and the clerical offices were well developed.⁹¹¹ At the council of Carthage in 411, the catholic bishops alone numbered 268. Most towns had their own bishop and some like Hippo, even had presbyters and deacons serving in the church. According to Victor de Vita, there were around 500 clergy in Carthage at the time of the Vandal conquest.⁹¹² After considering Augustine's perspective on the ordained ministry, a summary of the roles and duties of the clergy in Augustine's day will be presented.

1. Augustine's Perspective on Ministry

Though many in Augustine's day aspired to the office of bishop in search of honor or even wealth,⁹¹³ both Augustine's ordination as presbyter in 391 and co-bishop to Valerius in 395 were preceded by great reluctance on his part.⁹¹⁴ Mandouze correctly refers to Augustine as a 'bishop despite himself.'⁹¹⁵ As noted previously, his intention since the time of his conversion had been to begin a community of *serui Dei*, pursuing a monastic lifestyle in *otium sanctum* (holy leisure).⁹¹⁶ He was often critical of the clergy and purposefully avoided churches for fear of being ordained by force — the very thing that happened to him.⁹¹⁷ Thus, Augustine arrived at his ordination not by ambitious motives but more out of surrender to what he believed was a divine call. Surely if his ordination in 391 had merely been an attempt to please the crowd that day in Hippo, he would not have endured the following forty years of challenges that came with the ministry.⁹¹⁸

As noted in the previous chapter, Augustine most often referred to ministry, particularly his work as a bishop, as a *sarcina* — 'this responsibility for the spiritual health and well-being of the flock.'⁹¹⁹ His use of the term *sarcina* was most often

⁹¹¹ *Ep.* 43, written to some Donatist leaders, gives us some indication of the structure of the bishop and clerical offices going back to the time of the schism's beginning. Cf. D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinary*, p. 178.

⁹¹² Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 216.

⁹¹³ *Epp.* 21.1; 125.2.

⁹¹⁴ *Vita* 4.1-2; 8.3; s. 355.2; cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 22.

⁹¹⁵ Mandouze (A. Mandouze, 'L'Évêque et le Corps Presbytéral au Service du Peuple Fidèle Selon Saint Augustin,' in H. Bouëssé et al., *L'Évêque Dans L'Église du Christ*, p. 142) calls him an 'évêque malgré lui.'

⁹¹⁶ *Vita* 2.2; 3.1; see also G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 41

⁹¹⁷ *Vita* 4.1, 3.

⁹¹⁸ *Ep.* 124.2; cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, pp. 23-6; G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, pp. 158-60; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, pp. 14-15.

⁹¹⁹ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 79; M. Jourjon, 'L'évêque et le peuple de Dieu selon saint Augustin,' in H. Rondet et al., ed., *Saint Augustin parmi nous*, pp. 155-7; G. Lawless, 'Augustine's Burden of Ministry,' *Angelicum* 61 (1984), 295-315; and T. Martin, 'Clericatus sarcina (ep. 126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' *The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>.

found his correspondence with other spiritual leaders.⁹²⁰ Implicit in this idea was that Augustine regarded himself as a servant of the church. While he would have much preferred a quiet life of contemplation with like-minded friends, it was the great needs of the church that beckoned him from his *otium* to use his gifts to serve the church.⁹²¹ Lienhard writes that the word *ministerium*, which could refer to many contexts of service, meant ministry to the church for Augustine.⁹²² He adds that *ministri* (ministers) are ‘defined by the one whom they serve’ meaning that they are ‘ministers of God,’ ‘ministers of Christ’ and ‘ministers of the church.’⁹²³ Pellegrino similarly remarks that Augustine believed that ‘the priesthood was a social office with stringent obligations to the community.’⁹²⁴ Augustine expressed this conviction of service over personal rights in a letter to the presbyter Eudoxius and his monks at Capraria — a group resisting ordination. He wrote: ‘Do not prefer your leisure to the needs of the church. If no good men were willing to minister to her as she brings to birth new children, you would not have found a way to be born in Christ.’⁹²⁵ Thus, the office of bishop and the other clerical offices were not simply reasonable career options; rather, they were places of service that required great sacrifice due to the needs of God’s people.

⁹²⁰ *Epp.* 31.4; 69.1; 71.2; 85.2; 86; 101.3; 149.34; 242.1; 20*.4; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 75-80.

⁹²¹ In this sense, his ordination to ministry is comparable to that of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus who left their own ascetic retreat in Pontus to join the battle against unsound doctrine. Their ‘retreat’ — *aprogmon* in Greek — is rendered *otium* in Latin; see Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 43.30-1; Basil, *ep.* 8; cf. P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 88.

⁹²² Cf. J. Lienhard, ‘Ministry,’ *ATTA*, 568; see also *en. Ps.* 118.32.8; *Jo. ev. tr.* 34.1; *ep.* 34.1.

⁹²³ Cf. J. Lienhard, *op. cit.*, p. 568 and M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, pp. 59-88. See also *en. Ps.* 102.13; *Jo. ev. tr.* 51.12; *epp.* 134.14; 228.10,12; *s.* 46.2; 340.1; *op. mon.* 29.37.

⁹²⁴ Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, pp. 24-5.

⁹²⁵ *Nec uestrum otium necessitatibus Ecclesiae praeponatis, cui parturienti si nulli boni ministrare uellent, quomodo nasceremini, non inueniretis.* *ep.* 48.2, PL 33, 188. Unless otherwise noted, English trans. of *epp.* 1-149 are from WSA. See also *civ. Dei* 19.19; *en. Ps.* 103.9; *s.* 355.2; *epp.* 101.3; 128; *Jo. ev. tr.* 57.4.

Finally, Bacchi correctly asserts that the letters of Augustine presented ‘the ordained ministry as one characterized by and exercised in humility.’⁹²⁶ Pellegrino suggests that Augustine considered humility ‘the virtue he considers to be the foundation of the Christian life.’⁹²⁷ Surely, the mentoring influences of Ambrose, Simplicianus, and Valerius contributed heavily to this value in Augustine. As alluded to in the previous chapter, his *Confessiones*, penned from 397 to 401 while he was preaching from the *cathedra* in Hippo and influencing important church councils, was his greatest statement of humility for a spiritual leader.

To summarize, Augustine viewed the office of a spiritual leader as a divine call more than a career option. Bishops especially were to carry the burden of the ministry while all spiritual leaders were to serve the church humbly above any desires for personal leisure.

2. Duties of a Bishop

Given this perspective on ministry in general, what were the everyday duties for Augustine as the bishop of Hippo? In *Sermo* 340, preached on the anniversary of his ordination, he exhorted the people to pray for him and obey him as their spiritual leader. Yet he also summarized some of his work as a bishop:

The turbulent have to be corrected, the faint-hearted cheered up, the weary supported; the gospel’s opponents need to be refuted, its insidious enemies guarded against; the unlearned need to be taught, the indolent stirred up, the argumentative checked; the proud must be put in their place, the desperate set on their feet, those engaged in quarrels reconciled; the needy have to be helped, the oppressed to be liberated, the good to be given your backing, the bad to be tolerated; all must be loved.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁶ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. xiii.

⁹²⁷ Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 156

⁹²⁸ *Corripiendi sunt inquieti, pusillanimes consolandi, infirmi suscipiendi, contradicentes redarguendi, insidiantes cauendi, imperiti docendi, desidiosi excitandi, contentiosi cohibendi, superbientes reprimendi, desperantes erigendi, litigantes pacandi, inopes adiuuandi, oppressi liberandi, boni approbandi, mali tolerandi, omnes amandi.* s. 340.1, PL 38, 1484. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of Augustine’s *sermones* are from WSA.

In *Sermo* 339, he further summarized his duties as: ‘to preach, to refute, to rebuke, to build up, to manage for everybody.’⁹²⁹ From these general descriptions of his ministry duties, let us summarize Augustine’s main roles as the bishop of Hippo.

(1) Preaching

Like Ambrose, the primary responsibility for Augustine was preaching and expositing the Scriptures.⁹³⁰ He wrote in *Confessiones*:

My pen serves me as a tongue, but when will it find eloquence enough to recount all those exhortations and threats, all that encouragement and guidance, by which you led me to this position where I must preach the word and administer the sacrament to your people?⁹³¹

Augustine often spoke to the church about his burden and responsibility to preach describing the work through various word pictures.⁹³² In *Sermo* 95, he described the task of interpreting the Scriptures as breaking bread for the church; while in *De doctrina Christiana*, he likened it to Jesus taking the fish and loaves of bread and distributing them to the crowds.⁹³³ He also believed that as soon as he learned something in the Scriptures, he should quickly pass it on for the edification of the church. In *Sermo* 339, he related to the people of Hippo: ‘I feed you on what I am fed on myself. . . I set food before you from the pantry which I too live on.’⁹³⁴ Similarly, he wrote to Jerome in *Epistula* 73: ‘And if I have some ability in this area, I use it completely for the people of God. But on account of my work for the church I cannot

⁹²⁹ *Praedicare, arguere, corripere, aedificare, pro unoquoque satagere magnum onus.* s. 339.4, PL 38, 1481.

⁹³⁰ Cf. A. Mandouze, *L’aventure de la raison et la grâce*, p. 145.

⁹³¹ *Quando autem sufficio lingua calami enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua et omnes terrores tuos et consolationes et gubernationes, quibus me perduxisti praedicare uerbum et sacramentum tuum dispensare populo tuo? conf.* 11.2.2, PL 32, 809. All English trans. of *Confessiones* are from M. Boulding, *Confessions*. See also *epp.* 21.3; 261.

⁹³² For a thorough survey, see G. Lawless, ‘Preaching,’ *ATTA*, 675-7; and M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, pp. 90-104.

⁹³³ *Doc. Chr.* 1.1.1; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 155.

⁹³⁴ *Inde pasco, unde pascorum . . . inde uobis appono, unde et ego uiuo.* s. 339.3.3, PL 38, 1481.

at all have the leisure of training scholars in more details than the people will listen to.⁹³⁵

During his career, Augustine preached over 500 various sermons, 124 on John's gospel, another ten on John's first epistle, as well as an undetermined number of homilies on the Psalms.⁹³⁶ Like his mentor Ambrose, Augustine was known for unraveling difficult texts with the aid of allegory. His *De doctrina Christiana* not only revealed his thoughts on how to interpret Scripture, but the fourth book was essentially an early homiletic manual for delivering sermons.⁹³⁷ Augustine primarily preached to his congregation in Hippo but he also delivered sermons in Carthage and other cities in North Africa while traveling.⁹³⁸ His sermons were routinely transcribed by a stenographer and often circulated to other churches as well as sent to resource preachers of lesser ability.⁹³⁹

A liturgical assembly in North Africa in Augustine's day could tend to be a rowdy affair as the audience often shouted and expressed emotion throughout the sermon.⁹⁴⁰ Augustine, seated on his *cathedra*, spoke rather extemporaneously though his preparation was indeed thorough.⁹⁴¹ Though Augustine did not condemn the use of the rules of rhetoric in speaking, he was more concerned with the substance of a

⁹³⁵ *Et si quid in hac re habeo facultatis, utcumque impendo populo Dei. Vacare autem studiis diligentius quam quae populi audiunt instruendis, propter ecclesiasticas occupationes omnino non possum. ep. 73.2.5, PL 33, 247.*

⁹³⁶ The number of homilies on Psalms have not been determined as some of them were only dictated. For a helpful summary of Augustine's sermons see: D. Doyle, 'The Bishop as Teacher,' D. Doyle and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 85; and L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 10-12.

⁹³⁷ Book four was of course penned in 426 and 427 at the time of his *Retractiones* after a lengthy preaching career. Books 1-3.25, 37 were written in 396. See 'Augustine's Works (Dates and Explanations),' *ATTA*, xlv.

⁹³⁸ Cf. O. Perler, 'Les Voyages de Saint Augustin,' *RechAug* 1, (1958), 10-20.

⁹³⁹ *Doc. Chr.* 4.29.63; *ep.* 16*.1; cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 145; and G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: l'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 209.

⁹⁴⁰ Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, pp. 169-70, 394.

⁹⁴¹ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 9.

message than its form of delivery.⁹⁴² Yet, like Ambrose, he communicated eloquently but not at the expense of nourishing content.

(2) Overseeing with Authority

A second role for Augustine as bishop was overseeing the church. Joncas writes that Augustine ‘refers to bishops as *praepositi, rectores, custodes* and *pastores*.’⁹⁴³ He adds that ‘they bear the *episcopalis auctoritas* which equips them to exercise *praepositura, gubernatio, praesse, regere* and *superintendere* in the church.’⁹⁴⁴ Why did a bishop need such authority? Bacchi answers that it was on account of the *sarcina* that the bishop bore. That is, bishops would give an even greater account of their ministries on the Day of Judgment than other spiritual leaders.⁹⁴⁵ Some of their burdens included dealing with troublemakers in the church⁹⁴⁶ or seeking to reform unholy practices such as the *laetitia* festival that led many astray.⁹⁴⁷ Another burden for the bishop requiring an authoritative response was the challenge of heresy.⁹⁴⁸ In Augustine’s day, the church was besieged by the Manichean, Donatist, Pelagian, and Arian controversies. Augustine was personally involved in defending the church against such thinking through his participation in church councils as well as meeting heretics in public debate.⁹⁴⁹ Finally, the bishop was also charged with the spiritual oversight of other clergy associated with his church and parish.

⁹⁴² *Doc. Chr.* 4.2.3; 12.28.

⁹⁴³ Cf. J. Joncas, ‘Clergy, North African,’ *ATTA*, 215. See also *civ. Dei.* 20.9.2; *s.* 46-7; *en Ps.* 126; 132; *exc. urb.* 1.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. J. Joncas, ‘Clergy, North African,’ *ATTA*, 215. See also *ep.* 186.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ep.* 31.4; *s.* 339.1; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 80.

⁹⁴⁶ *Mor.* 1.32.69; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 200. Some of the ‘troublemakers’ included members of the clergy themselves. See *epp.* 78; 85; 209; *s.* 355-6.

⁹⁴⁷ Augustine’s correspondence with Aurelius of Carthage is recorded in *ep.* 22 while Augustine was still a priest. He later appealed to his authority as bishop to stop the festivals in *s.* 129. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 202.

⁹⁴⁸ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 80-1.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid*; see also *ep.* 105.13.

(3) Presiding Over the Sacred Mysteries

In *Epistula* 228, Augustine wrote to his colleague Honoratus describing his ongoing sacerdotal ministry even in the midst of the Vandal siege:

. . . an extraordinary crowd of persons, of both sexes and of all ages, is wont to assemble in the church — some urgently asking for baptism, others reconciliation, others even the doing of penance, and all calling for consolation and strengthening through the administration of sacraments.⁹⁵⁰

Hence, a third significant responsibility for Augustine was presiding over the sacred mysteries.⁹⁵¹ Though van der Meer has correctly asserted that Augustine used the

term *sacramentum* to refer to a rather large number of sacerdotal ministries,⁹⁵²

Augustine seemed to make a special distinction in his use of *sacramentum* or *mysterium* when he referred to the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist. In *Epistula* 54, a reply to the layman Januarius' general questions about the sacraments,

Augustine wrote:

. . . sacraments, which are in number very few, in observance most easy, and in significance most excellent, as baptism solemnized in the name of the Trinity, the communion of His body and blood, and such other things as are prescribed in the canonical Scriptures.⁹⁵³

Like Ambrose, Augustine was personally involved in initiating new believers, both adults and children, into the church through baptism.⁹⁵⁴ The period preceding Lent was a key evangelistic period for Augustine as he pleaded with the unbaptized who frequented the church at Hippo to submit their names for baptism. During Lent, Augustine instructed these catechumens in the Scriptures, taught them the Lord's

⁹⁵⁰ . . . *quantus in Ecclesia fieri solet ab utroque sexu, atque ab omni aetate concursus; aliis Baptismum flagitantibus, aliis reconciliationem, aliis etiam poenitentiae ipsius actionem, omnibus consolationem et sacramentorum confectionem et erogationem?* ep. 228.8, PL 33, 1016. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of *epp.* 150-269 are from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102.htm>. Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 41.

⁹⁵¹ Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 38; and L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 73. See also *epp.* 69.1; 261.2; 259.2.

⁹⁵² Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 280.

⁹⁵³ . . . *unde sacramentis numero paucissimis, obseruatione facillimis, significatione praestantissimis, societatem noui populi colligauit, sicuti est Baptismus Trinitatis nomine consecratus, communicatio corporis et sanguinis ipsius, et si quid aliud in Scripturis canonicis commendatur.* ep. 54.1, PL 33, 200.

⁹⁵⁴ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 16; and J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 215. See also *s.* 227-9; 272; *ep.* 98.5.10.

Prayer, and handed over the creed — a preparation which culminated in their baptism at Easter.⁹⁵⁵ Once baptized, these believers were allowed to join the rest of the baptized faithful in Hippo in the celebration of the Eucharist. While Augustine presided over the Eucharist for the Hippo faithful on Sunday,⁹⁵⁶ there was also a daily celebration primarily for clergy, monks, and *serui Dei*, though it was also open to the laity.⁹⁵⁷ Finally, Augustine's sacerdotal ministry also included ordaining clergy to the ministry as well as offering penance to those who had fallen into sin.⁹⁵⁸

(4) Serving as a Judge

The *Codex Theodosius* gave power to bishops to render judgments in Roman civil courts and the *Codex Iustinianus* allowed them to serve as mediators in other cases.⁹⁵⁹ Like Ambrose, Augustine functioned in this role of judge and mediator, though not without complaint as he could spend an entire morning waiting to speak to an official about a case.⁹⁶⁰ Serving in this capacity indeed took him away from other ministries like study and writing until he was able to delegate this responsibility to his successor Eraclius in the final years of his ministry.⁹⁶¹ Though Augustine did not prefer this aspect of the ministry, he still did it and allowed other bishops to serve in this way in the hopes that they might influence the civil court with principles from the Scriptures.⁹⁶²

⁹⁵⁵ For a thorough treatment of the stages in preparation for baptism in Ambrose and Augustine's day, see E. Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, pp. 1-33. See also: O. Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, pp. 9-49; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, pp. 347-87.

⁹⁵⁶ Cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, pp. 40-54.

⁹⁵⁷ *Ep.* 54.3.4; cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 215; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 294.

⁹⁵⁸ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 215.

⁹⁵⁹ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 32.

⁹⁶⁰ *Epp.* 33.5; 24*.1; *Vita* 19.2-4; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 32; F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 260; H. Chadwick, 'The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society,' *Protocol of the Thirty-Fifth Colloquy*, 6; and M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 52.

⁹⁶¹ *Ep.* 213.5; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 32.

⁹⁶² *Vita* 19; *ep.* 133; cf. L. Bacchi, *op. cit.*

(5) Administering Church Property

It was not uncommon in Augustine's day for the wealthy to donate or will property to the church and the responsibility for administering the newly acquired funds or property fell on the bishop.⁹⁶³ This was another task that Augustine particularly loathed and also delegated to Eraclius.⁹⁶⁴ For Augustine, administering church property not only meant assimilating a gift into the church's treasury, but also distributing resources where there was need. During his ministry, the needy included the poor as well as those who had been kidnapped and were in need of ransom. Hence, like Cyprian, Basil, and Ambrose, Augustine played an active role in meeting the material needs of the church and community.⁹⁶⁵

(6) Participation in Church Councils

Augustine also continued in the tradition of Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil and other bishops through his participation in church councils. Beginning around the time of Augustine's ordination as presbyter in 391, Aurelius, the metropolitan bishop of Carthage sought to convene the bishops annually 'where doctrinal, liturgical, and disciplinary questions could be resolved and a renewed sense of purpose instilled in the episcopate.'⁹⁶⁶ After 407, however, the African bishops concluded that meeting once a year was too difficult and they decided to only meet when there were issues that affected the entire African church.⁹⁶⁷ Like Cyprian, Augustine saw the church councils as an important means of maintaining the unity of the church. That is, the assembled bishops came together to agree on points of doctrine and practice in the church that they would then uphold in the different churches throughout the region.

⁹⁶³ *Epp.* 125-6; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: l'homme et l'œuvre*, pp. 208-09.

⁹⁶⁴ *Ep.* 213.5; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 39.

⁹⁶⁵ *Vita* 24; s. 339.4; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 39; G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: l'homme et l'œuvre*, pp. 208-09; and A. Mandouze, 'L'Évêque et le Corps Presbytéral au Service du Peuple Fidèle Selon Saint Augustin,' in H. Bouëssé et al., *L'Évêque Dans L'Église du Christ*, p. 136.

⁹⁶⁶ Cf. J. Merdinger, 'Councils of North African Bishops,' *ATTA*, 249.

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The most common reason for convening a council was to deal with heresy. As we will explore further in this chapter, the main heretical groups addressed by the church councils of Augustine's day were the Donatists and Pelagians. As noted, a council was a collective way in which a group of bishops demonstrated spiritual authority.

(7) Summary

The key responsibilities of a bishop for Augustine were preaching, overseeing the church with authority, presiding over the sacred mysteries, serving as a judge and mediator, and participating in the church councils. While these were the expectations that Augustine seemed to have for bishops in general, his expectations for his personal ministry were much higher. In addition to the duties listed, Augustine kept up a significant correspondence ministry; he wrote books and treatises; and he traveled for the purpose of preaching, participating in church councils, as well as dealing with other church business.⁹⁶⁸

2. Duties of Presbyters

As a presbyter existed primarily to assist the bishop, his duties could vary according to the needs of the bishop he was serving.⁹⁶⁹ This also meant that the presbyter ended up fulfilling many of the same roles of the bishop. Lienhard asserts that due to the growth and increasing needs of the North African church in Augustine's day, presbyters were often sent to minister in churches where there was no bishop. In these cases, especially, the presbyter essentially functioned as a bishop.⁹⁷⁰ Thus, presbyters also presided over the mysteries,⁹⁷¹ were involved in church administrative functions,⁹⁷² counseled, and preached. As noted, this final duty was not commonly performed by presbyters in the North Africa until Valerius

⁹⁶⁸ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 41-8.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ep.* 22.1; cf. L. Bacchi, *op. cit.*, p. 72; J. Lienhard, 'Ministry,' *ATTA*, 569; and M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 72.

⁹⁷⁰ Cf. J. Lienhard, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷¹ *Ep.* 21.3; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 72.

involved Augustine in preaching at Hippo.⁹⁷³ Soon others, such as Aurelius, followed suit and released their presbyters to preach which helped to meet the needs of the growing church.⁹⁷⁴

3. Duties of Deacons

Deacons also served under a particular bishop and were *adiunctus* (attached) to the bishop's ministry.⁹⁷⁵ They were responsible for leading congregational prayer, reading the Scripture during the liturgy,⁹⁷⁶ serving the wine during the Eucharist,⁹⁷⁷ and instructing catechumens prior to baptism.⁹⁷⁸ This last responsibility was the subject of Augustine's book, *De catechizandis rudibus*, addressed to Deogratias when he was serving as a deacon in the church at Carthage.

4. Duties of Sub-deacons, Acolytes, and *Lectores*

Finally, let us summarize the roles of the minor orders of clergy that existed in Augustine's day. Augustine indicated that some sub-deacons lived with him in the *monasterium clericorum* at Hippo and that their main responsibility was carrying letters.⁹⁷⁹ This was also the primary role of the acolytes.⁹⁸⁰

Lectores read the Scriptures and lead the singing of Psalms during the liturgical assembly.⁹⁸¹ Augustine probably incorporated the Psalms into the liturgy due to the influence of Ambrose's practice in Milan.⁹⁸² As was the case with Cyprian, Ambrose, and Basil, the *lectores* who served with Augustine were youth whose voices

⁹⁷² Cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry,' *ATTA*, 569.

⁹⁷³ *S.* 196.4.4; cf. J. Lienhard, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷⁴ *Ep.* 41.1; see also *s.* 20.5; 137.11.13; *ep.* 105.4; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry,' *ATTA*, 569.

⁹⁷⁵ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 215. *Adiunctus* was used to describe the deacon Deogratias of Carthage in *cat. rud.* 1.1. See also: C. Hefele, *A History of the Councils*, 2.413.

⁹⁷⁶ *Ep.* 55.31; *s.* 356.1; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. 71.

⁹⁷⁷ *S.* 304; cf. C. Hefele, *A History of the Councils*, 2.414; and J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 215.

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry' *ATTA*, 569.

⁹⁷⁹ *S.* 256; *ep.* 39.1; 222.3; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry' *ATTA*, 569; J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 216; and L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 66-7.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ep.* 191.1; 192.1; 193.1; 194.1; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry,' *ATTA*, 568.

⁹⁸¹ *S.* 17.1.1; *en. Ps.* 32.2.1.5; 138.1; *ep.* 64.3; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry,' *ATTA*, 568.

⁹⁸² Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 326.

were clear for reading and singing.⁹⁸³ Though the office of *lector* is generally regarded as a minor office and one occupied by young men, this did not diminish Augustine's high regard for it. As noted at the end of chapter two, the clergy needed a certain level of education in order to read the Scriptures for themselves and to make them accessible for others.⁹⁸⁴ Thus, the *lector* was not merely selected for his clear voice or spiritual qualifications; he was also required to have a good level of reading to perform his ministry. Finally, like Cyprian,⁹⁸⁵ Augustine placed great value on Scripture reading in the church. This is apparent in *Sermo* 356 when Augustine took the Scriptures, which had already been read by a deacon and said: 'I too want to read. It gives me more pleasure, you see, to be reading these words than to be arguing my case with my own words.'⁹⁸⁶

II. Augustine's Forms of Mentoring

In light of Augustine's perspective on ministry and the roles of the clergy in his day, the argument that Augustine was a mentor of spiritual leaders will be further pursued through highlighting and discussing his most prominent forms of mentoring. The most instructive primary sources in this aspect of the inquiry are his *Confessiones*, *sermones*, *epistulae*, *Regula*, as well as Possidius' *Vita*. From a survey of these works as well as others, Augustine's most significant forms of mentoring spiritual leaders included: the monastery; letters; books; church councils; and personal visits.

1. The Monastery

As we have shown, Augustine, since his youth, demonstrated a strong need for others. As a professor of rhetoric in Milan, he seriously pursued forming a community

⁹⁸³ Cf. J. Joncas, 'Clergy, North African,' *ATTA*, 216.

⁹⁸⁴ Cf. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, pp. 9-10; and P. Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,' *JBL* 109/1 (1990), 15-16.

⁹⁸⁵ Cyprian, *Epp.* 38-9.

⁹⁸⁶ *Et ego legere uolo. Plus enim me delectat huius uerbi esse lectorem, quam uerbi mei disputatorem.*

of philosophically minded friends in pursuit of the *uita beata*, while his journey to Christian faith was also aided by friends. It is no surprise that once Augustine became a Christian he would also want to pursue his faith in the context of friends. Ladner writes:

For Augustine's whole life since his conversion was in once sense a 'monastic itinerary' and the monastic impulse of his nature must have been a very personal one. A good deal of it was due to Augustine's strong need for friendship, for the sharing of the deepest interests of his soul with like-minded friends.⁹⁸⁷

Besides his personal bent toward friendship and community, Augustine was further influenced toward a monastic way of life during his time in Italy. As noted in *Confessiones*, one aspect that appealed to Augustine as he approached his conversion was the lifestyle of Antony. Also, he was exposed to a community of monks living under Ambrose's supervision on the outskirts of Milan as well as another community in Rome that he visited in 388 while in transit to Africa.⁹⁸⁸ It is also evident from *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* that Augustine was drawn to Christian monasticism because of his repulsion to the false asceticism of the Manicheans that he observed firsthand during his nine year involvement with the sect.⁹⁸⁹ Finally, in addition to Augustine's exposure to Ambrose's monks in Milan, it seems quite plausible that Ambrose would have told Augustine about Eusebius of Vercelli (d. 371); his friend and cohort in the Italian church who initiated the practice of having clergy live together in a monastic community.⁹⁹⁰

We will now explore the stages in Augustine's monastic itinerary beginning with Cassiciacum (386-387) as he prepared for baptism in the company of friends;

s. 356.1, PL 38, 1574.

⁹⁸⁷ Cf. G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 353.

⁹⁸⁸ *Conf.* 8.6.15; *mor.* 1.33.70; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 119.

⁹⁸⁹ *Mor.* 1.18.34; 2.19.68; cf. E. Clark, 'Asceticism,' *ATTA*, 68; and J. Coyle, '*Moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manicheorum, De,*' *ATTA*, 571.

followed by the community of *serui Dei* at Tagaste (388-391); the garden monastery in Hippo (391-395); and finally the *monasterium clericorum* in Hippo (395-430). At each period, we will consider the members of the respective community; the daily activities and values of the group; as well as the forms of spiritual mentoring that were employed. As a result, the development of Augustine's understanding of the role of community from that of an *otium sanctum* to a monastery focused on serving the church will become clear. Finally, we will also observe how Augustine developed toward being a mentor of spiritual leaders at each stage.

(1) Cassiciacum

Following his conversion in 386 and just prior to the period of vacation, Augustine retired to the country estate of his friend Verecundus at Cassiciacum.⁹⁹¹ Augustine wrote that there he 'found rest . . . from the hurly-burly of the world'⁹⁹² and sought to attain 'knowledge of God and soul.'⁹⁹³ He was joined at Cassiciacum by Monica, his son Adeodatus, his brother Navigius, his cousins Lastidianus and Rusticus, his students Licentius and Trygetius, as well as Alypius.⁹⁹⁴ In all, the group of family and friends spent seven months together in the fall and winter of 386 and 387 before returning to Milan at Easter where Augustine was baptized along with Adeodatus and Alypius.⁹⁹⁵

What was the purpose of Cassiciacum? Was it simply a philosophical school or should it be regarded as Augustine's first monastery? To best answer these questions, we should consider the daily routine and activities of the group. Overall,

⁹⁹⁰ Ambrose, *ep.* 63.66; 66; 71; cf. G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, pp. 352-3; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 45; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 199.

⁹⁹¹ The location of Cassiciacum is probably modern day Cassiago di Brianza located twenty-one miles (34 km) northeast of Milan. See A. Di Berardino, 'Cassiciacum,' *ATTA*, 135.

⁹⁹² *Ubi ab aestu saeculi requieimus in te. conf.* 9.3.5, PL 32, 765.

⁹⁹³ *Deum et animam scire cupio. sol.* 1.2.7, PL 32, 872. English trans. cite in A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 8

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 9.

the daily schedule was rather flexible as the group rose each day at day break, began the day with corporate prayer while also ending the day in prayer.⁹⁹⁶ Augustine wrote that he personally spent time each day reading the Psalms and seeking God.⁹⁹⁷ As Cassiciacum was a country estate on a farm, the group also worked in the fields during harvest time and performed other duties on the farm.⁹⁹⁸ Living together as a family, they took meals together which were facilitated by Monica who functioned as a mother (*mater nostra*) to the entire group.⁹⁹⁹ Though Augustine had decided to retire from teaching, he did, however accept the job of tutoring the two boys Licentius and Trygetius during the vacation period.¹⁰⁰⁰ We know that their curriculum included reading Vergil and his *Aeneid*.¹⁰⁰¹ Though it seems erroneous to assert that the other members of the group joined the two boys in their course of study as Kevane has suggested,¹⁰⁰² Augustine did naturally take on the role of teacher for the group as he encouraged them toward the disciplines of reading and study.¹⁰⁰³ The most significant form of learning at Cassiciacum was dialogue. During their leisure time in the mid-morning or later afternoon, the group met for dialogues which have been preserved under the titles *Contra Academicos*, *De beata uita*, and *De ordine*.¹⁰⁰⁴ Hence, Lawless properly summarizes the daily schedule at Cassiciacum with: ‘Work (both physical and intellectual), contemplation (both philosophical and Christian), prayer

⁹⁹⁵ *Conf.* 9.6.14.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ord.* 1.8.25; *ep.* 3.4; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 30; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 9.

⁹⁹⁷ *Conf.* 9.4.8; cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 94.

⁹⁹⁸ *C. Acad.* 1.5.15; 2.4.10; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 30; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 9; and G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 93.

⁹⁹⁹ *C. Acad.* 1.9.25; 2.5.13; cf. J. McWilliam, ‘*Academicos, Contra,*’ *ATTA*, 2-3; and G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ord.* 1.8.26; 2.4.10; cf. S. MacCormack, ‘Vergil,’ *ATTA*, 865; and G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰² Cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, pp. 60-1.

¹⁰⁰³ *C. Acad.* 1.1.4; 1.3.6; 3.1.1; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 10. Augustine’s *Soliloquia* was also recorded at Cassiciacum but I have not grouped it with the others as it is a monologue.

and serious dialogue on a variety of themes — these were the happy notes which sounded in this lovely place of retreat.¹⁰⁰⁵

Though Augustine's time at Cassiciacum and the recorded dialogues are most often studied by scholars through philosophical lenses, it would be short sighted to merely regard Cassiciacum as a philosophical *otium* in the classical Roman sense.¹⁰⁰⁶ While the dialogues were certainly characterized by the pursuit of truth via philosophy and regular reference is made to the likes of Vergil and Cicero, the dialogues also reveal a group of friends who believed that answers were found in Christ, the church, and the Scriptures.¹⁰⁰⁷ Furthermore, as the day was composed of prayer, reading the Scriptures, and work, this also distinguished the experience from a mere philosophical retreat. Finally, the fact that the attempt at a philosophical community in search of the *beata uita* had failed only a few months prior to the gathering at Cassiciacum showed that the latter had greater purposes than just philosophical speculation.¹⁰⁰⁸

While Cassiciacum was not simply about philosophy, it would also be unfounded to regard it as Augustine's first monastery.¹⁰⁰⁹ Though the monastic tendencies of communal living, prayer, Scripture reading, and manual labor were present, the group still lacked the theological foundations and long-term commitment that we observe in Augustine's future monastic involvement. Augustine, reflecting on

¹⁰⁰⁵ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, pp. 36-7.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *C. Acad.* 3.20.43; *b. vita.* 4.34-5; *sol.* 1.2.7; cf. J. McWilliam, 'Academicos, Contra,' *ATTA*, 4; J. McWilliam, 'Beata uita, De,' *ATTA*, 94-5; J. McWilliam, 'Ordine, De,' *ATTA*, 602-03; and J. McWilliam, 'Soliloquia,' *ATTA*, 806-07.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 195-6.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Bardy (G. Bardy, 'Les origines des écoles monastiques en Occident,' *Sacris Erudiri* 5 (1953), 94) has strongly written: '... il ne faut pas s'y tromper. Cassiciacum n'est pas un monastère. On y prie sans doute, on y chante des psaumes; on y parle souvent de Dieu et du Seigneur Jésus Christ... Seulement l'amitié humaine tient trop de place; et aussi surtout les questions intellectuelles... Cassiciacum est une étape: ce ne peut pas être une terme.' See also R. J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement: The Retreat of Cassiciacum and the "Monastery" of Tagaste,' *SP* 5 (TU 80) (1962), 329-40; and A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 201.

the experience in *Confessiones* some ten years later admitted that his work and writing at Cassiciacum had a ‘whiff of scholastic pride about it.’¹⁰¹⁰ Toward the end of his life in his *Retractationes*, he utterly recanted some of his philosophical thought expressed in the Cassiciacum dialogues.¹⁰¹¹ Hence, Zumkeller summarizes the Cassiciacum experience as a ‘time of transition’ for Augustine¹⁰¹²; while Bonner regards it as an appropriate time of reflection and preparation for baptism.¹⁰¹³ Zumkeller adds: ‘Certainly, the circle of friends at Cassiciacum was not yet a monastic community, but the groundwork had been laid for the new way of life which was to be established at Tagaste and Hippo.’¹⁰¹⁴

In the context of this pre-monastic gathering at Cassiciacum, how did Augustine function as a mentor? First, he was clearly the natural leader of the group. His vision, charisma, initiative, and natural disposition to friendship made him the catalyst that initially brought the group together and kept it going for seven months. Secondly, he mentored the group by serving as its primary teacher. At times, his teaching methods included basic lecture in which the content was taken from a philosophical text or from the Scriptures.¹⁰¹⁵ Yet Augustine’s key method of teaching was initiating and facilitating group dialogue.¹⁰¹⁶ Hence, his teaching philosophy was student centered and discussion topics were driven by their interests as he believed that the external dialogue served to encourage the internal dialogue that was going on

¹⁰¹⁰ *Sed adhuc superbiae scholam tamquam. conf.* 9.4.7, PL 32, 766.

¹⁰¹¹ *Retr.* 1.1-3; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 10.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*.

¹⁰¹³ Cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 94.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 13. Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l’aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 193) calls Cassiciacum a ‘prototype’ of a monastery.

¹⁰¹⁵ *C. Acad.* 2.10.28; cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, pp. 63, 98. Regarding Scripture being the content of his teaching, Jerphagnon (L. Jerphagnon, *Saint Augustin, le pédagogue de Dieu*, p. 66) writes: ‘Il sait que Dieu a quelque chose à dire à ces hommes . . . Or, ce message divin est tout entier contenu dans les Écritures.’

¹⁰¹⁶ Cf. G. Howie, *St. Augustine on Education*, pp. 4-5; and E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 93.

inside of each person.¹⁰¹⁷ Howie writes that despite the fact that dialogue had fallen out of vogue in the Roman world in Augustine's day, he still valued the form and the dialogues have a distinct Ciceronian flavor to them.¹⁰¹⁸ In his *Soliloquia*, Augustine affirmed that 'there is no better way of seeking truth than by the method of question and answer.'¹⁰¹⁹ While Augustine's key role was to inspire thought and facilitate the process of discussion, he would at times exercise some authority by bringing closure to a discussion while offering a conclusion.¹⁰²⁰ Augustine probably preferred the mode of dialogue partly as a reaction to his own negative experience as a student in which rote learning was the key method and eloquent communication — not necessarily accompanied by knowledge — was the primary goal.¹⁰²¹

In summary, after seven months at Cassiciacum, Augustine was baptized, renounced his career as a teacher of rhetoric, and committed to becoming a *seruus Dei*; a baptized layman pursuing spiritual perfection, intellectual growth, and a general vision to serve the church or kingdom of God.¹⁰²² As he departed for Tagaste in the company of friends and family with the goal of pursuing a *placitum sanctum* (holy enterprise) in the form of a community of *serui Dei*, the experience at Cassiciacum would serve as a significant milestone on his monastic itinerary and in his development as a mentor.¹⁰²³

¹⁰¹⁷ Cf. G. Howie, op. cit.; and G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 121.

¹⁰¹⁸ Cf. G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in Saint Augustine*, p. 164.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Cum enim neque melius quaeri ueritas possit, quam interrogando et respondendo. sol. 2.7.14, PL 32, 891. English trans. from G. Howie, op. cit., p. 170.*

¹⁰²⁰ *C. Acad. 1.3.7; cf. E. Kevane, Augustine the Educator, p. 93; and G. Bardy, Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre, p. 119.*

¹⁰²¹ *Conf. 1.18; 3.4; cf. E. Kevane, Augustine the Educator, pp. 38, 41, 46.*

¹⁰²² Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 125.

¹⁰²³ The members of the group that were definitely moving from Milan to Tagaste were Augustine, Monica, Adeodatus, Alypius and Evodius (who had not been at Cassiciacum). See *conf. 9.8.17*; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 24.

(2) Tagaste

As Augustine and company traveled to Rome in 387 to set sail for Carthage, they were unexpectedly held up by Maximus' invasion of Italy and the subsequent closure of the Roman ports.¹⁰²⁴ Thus, the group decided to wait out the events in neighboring Ostia — the little town where Augustine and Monica experienced their famous vision together and where Monica was laid to rest.¹⁰²⁵ Hence, Augustine returned home to Africa no longer in the company of his mother and mentor.

As noted, the delay in Rome allowed Augustine the opportunity to visit and observe the inner-workings of several monasteries in the city.¹⁰²⁶ He related in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*, written in 388 or 389 upon his return to Africa, that he encountered groups of holy men living together in houses, in a structured way of life, and focused on God. They shared their possessions in common, adhered to discipline in their diet, and followed a daily plan of prayer, Scripture reading, and dialogue.¹⁰²⁷ Augustine's interaction with the monasteries in Rome not only solidified his conviction that monasticism was an acceptable way of life, but it also gave him some clear ideas and principles to apply in Tagaste.¹⁰²⁸

Upon their arrival in Tagaste in 388, Augustine, Adeodatus, Alypius, and Evodius were joined by Severus and they moved in together to Augustine's family estate in what would become the second phase of Augustine's monastic itinerary.¹⁰²⁹ In order to analyze the purpose of the community, we should again consider the daily activities and values of the community of *serui Dei*.

¹⁰²⁴ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 121.

¹⁰²⁵ *Conf.* 10.23-11.28.

¹⁰²⁶ *Mor.* 1.33.70.

¹⁰²⁷ *Mor.* 1.31.67-8; 71-3; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 40.

¹⁰²⁸ Cf. M. Clark, *Augustine*, p. 85.

¹⁰²⁹ *Vita* 3.1; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustine: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 142. Severus was also a native of Tagaste.

Possidius recorded that the three years that they spent in Tagaste were ‘lived for God in fasting, prayer, and good works and in meditating day and night on the law of the Lord.’¹⁰³⁰ Like at Cassiciacum, there was no apparent fixed daily schedule although Bardy has argued that they were following a rule called the *Disciplina monasterii*, which dictated monastic values such as poverty and obedience as well as providing a daily schedule for reading and work.¹⁰³¹ Although Bardy’s claim lacks support in Augustine’s works, it is nevertheless true that a day in the Tagaste community was characterized by prayer, fasting, good works, and reading Scripture as Possidius indicated. Also, time was spent singing Psalms as well as reading other spiritually oriented books.¹⁰³² As at Cassiciacum, the group valued learning together through discussion. *De magistro*, Augustine’s recorded dialogue with Adeodatus, illustrates the group learning that went on at Tagaste while *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, a resource written for other spiritual leaders, was initially inspired through Augustine’s conversations with the group.¹⁰³³ As Possidius noted, the group also spent part of their day working. Unlike the manual labor performed at Cassiciacum or by Pachomius’ monks, the *serui Dei* of Tagaste carried out intellectual labor which included reading, study, and teaching.¹⁰³⁴

The Tagaste community was united around the common goal of progressing toward spiritual perfection, which was evidenced by the daily regimen of spiritual disciplines.¹⁰³⁵ They also demonstrated the conviction that the community itself brought about spiritual growth and thus they were constantly together.¹⁰³⁶ Spiritual

¹⁰³⁰ *Deo uiuebat, ieiuniss, orationibus, bonis operibus, in lege Domini meditans die ac nocte. Vita* 3.2, PL 32, 36. All English trans. of *Vita* are taken from J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*. See also Ps. 1:2; Lk. 2:37.

¹⁰³¹ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L’homme et l’œuvre*, pp. 145, 161.

¹⁰³² Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 48.

¹⁰³³ *Conf.* 9.6.14; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 25.

¹⁰³⁴ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 50.

¹⁰³⁵ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L’homme et l’œuvre*, p. 145.

¹⁰³⁶ *Ep.* 5; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 29.

community was further facilitated by each member renouncing private property and sharing their possessions in common.¹⁰³⁷ While Bardy notes the Egyptian monastic influence here, we should also note the more immediate influence from Augustine's experience in Rome.¹⁰³⁸ Finally, the community valued having a spiritual superior — a role that was of course fulfilled by Augustine.

Brown, commenting on Augustine's return to Tagaste, writes: 'The center of gravity of Augustine's thought had begun to shift. He had returned to Africa without his textbooks, and his schemes for an intellectual program based on the liberal arts now seems distant.'¹⁰³⁹ After making contact with the monasteries in Milan and Rome, the goals for philosophical understanding that characterized Cassiciacum seemed to fade as the Tagaste group became much more concerned with spiritual growth.¹⁰⁴⁰ Yet can we conclude that the Tagaste experiment was a monastery? While I do not intend to fully join the debate over this question that has gone on for some time,¹⁰⁴¹ it is, however, important to clarify the role of Tagaste on Augustine's monastic itinerary and his development toward becoming a mentor of spiritual leaders.

Though Augustine never referred to the experiment at Tagaste as a *monasterium*,¹⁰⁴² the activities and values of prayer, fasting, reading, dialogue, service, shared possessions, and spiritual growth via community do very much

¹⁰³⁷ *Ep.* 83.2; cf. A. Zumkeller, op. cit., p. 30; and A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 209.

¹⁰³⁸ Cf. G. Bardy, 'Les origines des écoles monastiques en Occident,' *Sacris Erudiri* 5 (1953), 95.

¹⁰³⁹ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 127; see also *ep.* 15.1.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴¹ For more on this question see: G. Lawless, 'Augustine's First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo,' *Augustinianum* 25, (1985), 65-78; L. J. van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine,' *AugStud* 12 (1981), 43-59. R. Halliburton, 'Augustine's Inclination to Retirement,' *SP* 5 (TU 80) (1962), 329-40; W. Frend, *The Early Church*, p. 202; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 24-32; A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 201-09; and M. Mellet, *L'itinéraire et l'idéal monastiques de saint Augustin*, p. 19.

resemble the coenobitic monastic activity demonstrated by Pachomius and Basil. Lawless, arguing for Tagaste as a legitimate monastery, writes: ‘Experience comes first, its articulation afterwards. Conceptualizations ordinarily represent an attempt to encapsulate an experience after it has crystallized.’¹⁰⁴³

Though Lawless’ argument is convincing, I am still hesitant to assert that Tagaste was a monastery because the group seemed to lack a complete Christian monastic focus due to its ongoing philosophical speculation. This is most apparent in Augustine’s ‘good works’ — his writings that were often inspired by group dialogue. His *De musica*, begun after his baptism in 387 and completed at Tagaste, closely resembles the Cassiciacum dialogues and focused on the philosophical themes of ‘particularity, connection, motion, and time.’¹⁰⁴⁴ *De magistro*, Augustine’s dialogue with Adeodatus that was initiated and completed at Tagaste by 389, dealt with the philosophical issues of signs, the meaning of signs, and signs representing reality.¹⁰⁴⁵ Augustine’s *De diuersus quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, in which he treated various questions of philosophy, theology, and Scriptural exegesis, was initiated in Tagaste in 388 and completed in Hippo in 396. The questions that Augustine answered during the Tagaste period were almost entirely of a philosophical nature.¹⁰⁴⁶ Augustine’s last work from Tagaste, *De uera religione*, was written to Romanianus with the goal of helping his friend completely depart from Manichean thinking and accept the Christian faith. Though the work was by nature an apologetic and Augustine bridged

¹⁰⁴² Cf. L. van der Lof, ‘The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine,’ *AugStud* 12 (1981), 54.

¹⁰⁴³ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Cf. N. van Deusen, ‘*Musica, De*,’ *ATTA*, 574.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cf. D. Kries, ‘*Magistro, De*,’ *ATTA*, 520.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Cf. E. Plumer, ‘*Diuersus quaestionibus octoginta tribus, De*,’ *ATTA*, 276-7.

from what Romanianus knew to Christianity, he nevertheless maintained a high regard for Plato.¹⁰⁴⁷

On the other hand, two of Augustine's six works completed at Tagaste do seem to be more concerned with purely Christian teaching. Both are also apologetic works against the Manicheans. In *De Genesi aduersus Manicheos*, he offered an exegesis of the account of creation from Genesis to counter the maligned teaching of the Manicheans.¹⁰⁴⁸ In *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*, he defended the Hebrew Scriptures against the Manichean attacks, showed the superiority of Christian ascetism, and presented the cardinal virtues of Christianity.¹⁰⁴⁹

Augustine's correspondence from Tagaste also gives some insight into his focus. In his correspondence with Nebridius, which speak of 'Christ, of Plato, of Plotinus,'¹⁰⁵⁰ four letters clearly dealt with philosophical questions¹⁰⁵¹; while two were theological in nature.¹⁰⁵² His final letters from Tagaste were more spiritually oriented as he wrote an apologetic for Christianity to the pagan Maximus of Madaura, resourced Caelestinus with some theological understanding on the nature of God and Christ, invited Gaius to the truth that accords with the church, and congratulated Antoninus on his new Christian faith and encouraged him to read the Scriptures.¹⁰⁵³

The divided interests of the Tagaste group that kept them from completely being a Christian monastery also became clear when Augustine was ordained by Valerius in 391. If the Tagaste group was a functioning monastery where the reading

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ep.* 15; cf. F. van Fleteren, 'Vera religione, De,' *ATTA*, 864.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Cf. J. Coyle, 'Genesi aduersus Manicheos, De,' *ATTA*, 378-9.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Cf. J. Coyle, 'Moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum, De,' *ATTA*, 571.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Illae mihi Christum, illae Platonem, illae Plotinum sonabunt. ep.* 6.1, PL 33, 67.

¹⁰⁵¹ In *ep.* 7, he wrote on the relationship of images and memory; in *ep.* 9, he gave his thoughts on the cause of dreams; in *ep.* 13, he discussed the body and soul; and in *ep.* 14, he replied to questions on the relationship of bodies, the sun, planets, Christ, and God in the universe. See *epp.* 5-6; 8 for Nebridius' questions and responses.

¹⁰⁵² In *ep.* 11, he wrote on how the Son only had a body and his relationship to the Godhead; while in *ep.* 12, he followed up to the previous letter with more thoughts on the incarnation.

¹⁰⁵³ *Epp.* 17-20.

and study of Scripture were a primary focus, why did Augustine ask for a period of study before assuming his duties as presbyter? Though Augustine had left his philosophy books behind in Italy, he continued to be occupied with philosophical speculation that characterized the majority of his writings at Tagaste. The result was that he felt ill prepared in his knowledge of the Scriptures when called upon by Valerius to be ordained. Nevertheless, his later writings and letters from Tagaste do show an increased emphasis on theology and Scriptural exegesis. It was Augustine's reputation as an emerging apologist and teacher in Augustine's final year in Tagaste that probably caught the attention of the bishop of Hippo.

A final reason that I have difficulty considering Tagaste a monastery is that it lacked the focus of a community existing to serve the church and function under its authority. A consistent element of the monasteries of Pachomius, Basil, Ambrose, and those that Augustine observed in Rome, was that they submitted to the authority of the church and were normally supervised by a bishop or presbyter.¹⁰⁵⁴ There is no evidence that when Augustine and friends set up the Tagaste community, that they aligned themselves in any way to the church. Rather, as noted, Augustine at this time did not hold the African clergy in very high regard.¹⁰⁵⁵ Further, while the majority of the intellectual activity of Tagaste as recorded in Augustine's writings and letters served to benefit the members of the group, it did little to resource the members of the local church in Tagaste.

Hence, Tagaste, though more spiritually inclined than Cassiciacum, still resembled an *otium sanctum* more than a Christian monastery for much of its existence. Yet, as noted, Augustine's later writings and letters from Tagaste do

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Mor.* 1.33.70. Though the Pachomian *koinonia* was not directly supervised by a clergy, Pachomius nevertheless maintained a submissive posture toward the church and Athanasius. Cf. W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Vita* 4.3.

become more concerned with Scriptural exegesis and Christian apologetics.¹⁰⁵⁶ In the final year at Tagaste, Augustine, through his writings and teaching, seemed to have become a resource for the wider Christian community, which kept him quite busy.¹⁰⁵⁷ Thus, Tagaste was also a period of transition in Augustine's monastic itinerary between the more contemplative gathering at Cassiciacum and the full-fledged church focused monastery at Hippo. Therefore, I would tend to agree with those who regard Tagaste as 'proto-monastic' or a 'pre-monastery' due to the transitional nature of its focus.¹⁰⁵⁸

In light of this summary of the Tagaste community, how did Augustine function as a mentor? First, as at Cassiciacum, he continued to act like a mentor by being the catalyst for the group in both its inception and continuation. Secondly, Augustine emerged more and more at Tagaste as the superior for the group meaning that he not only gave direction to the daily spiritual activities, but he also seemed to have authority over the group. Third, Augustine continued his practice from Cassiciacum of teaching through the means dialogue. Fourth, through writing books and letters, he began to resource Christians and spiritual leaders outside of the Tagaste community especially in his final year. Finally, through apologetic material written and perhaps delivered orally against the Manicheans and pagans, Augustine began to develop a conviction for orthodox doctrine and the primacy of Scripture.

(3) The Garden Monastery at Hippo

In early 391, Augustine made the 100 kilometer trip to Hippo to see about setting up a community of *serui Dei* in that city while also visiting a man who might

¹⁰⁵⁶ *De Genesi aduersus Manicheos; De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*, and to some extent *De uera religione*. See also *epp.* 11-12; 17-20.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Epp.* 13-14.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Cf. C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 95; C. Mohrman, *Etudes sur le latin des chrétiens*, 4.300; and G. Lawless, 'Augustine's First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo,' *Augustinianum* 25, (1985), 66-7.

join them.¹⁰⁵⁹ Because Hippo had a bishop, Augustine felt safe enough to attend the church in that city. Yet, when Valerius selected Augustine for ministry that day, he also consequently set a new course for Augustine's monastic itinerary. As we have shown, Valerius was happy that his new presbyter would continue to practice a monastic lifestyle and resourced him to that end by giving him a plot of land in the church garden to build a house for his community.¹⁰⁶⁰ Along with becoming a monk-presbyter, Augustine's community would break with Tagaste and become a veritable monastery that existed under the authority of the church and functioned for its benefit.¹⁰⁶¹

While the Tagaste community continued, we know that Alypius, Severus, and Evodius moved to Hippo to join Augustine in this new endeavor.¹⁰⁶² Kevane writes that the new Hippo monastery attracted 'members in considerable numbers' of 'various ages and levels of education.'¹⁰⁶³ These new monks included youth, former slaves, peasants, common laborers, as well as those from wealthy and distinguished backgrounds.¹⁰⁶⁴ While some were natives of Hippo, others came from other parts of Africa to join the community.¹⁰⁶⁵ Though most of the members of the monastery were laymen that even included catechumen, Augustine was joined by ordained clergy as well.¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁵⁹ *S.* 355.2; *Vita* 3.1; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *S.* 355.2.

¹⁰⁶¹ Mandouze (A. Mandouze, 'L'Évêque et le Corps Presbytéral au Service du Peuple Fidèle Selon Saint Augustin,' in H. Bouëssé et al., *L'Évêque Dans L'Église du Christ*, p. 145) writes that at this stages Augustine 'réussit une synthèse qui plaçait tout à la fois le monastère au centre de la vie ecclésiale et le peuple chrétien au centre des préoccupations du monastère.'

¹⁰⁶² *Epp.* 31; 33.2; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁶³ Cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Ep.* 209.3; *op. mon.* 22.25; 25.33; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ep.* 64.3; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶⁶ *S.* 356.4; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*

Unlike Cassiciacum and Tagaste, the Hippo community followed a strict schedule.¹⁰⁶⁷ As the daily routine included personal and corporate prayer, the garden monastery probably contained a cell for each monk to facilitate personal prayer while there was an oratory for group prayer.¹⁰⁶⁸ The day also consisted of Scripture reading as well as reading from other spiritually nourishing books facilitated by a library in the house.¹⁰⁶⁹ Everyone in the monastery also had work to do each day. While the clergy were occupied with the work of the church, the laymen were involved in physical labor which may have included working as copyists.¹⁰⁷⁰ Finally, the entire monastery took each meal together.¹⁰⁷¹

What values characterized the Hippo monastery? First, as noted, Hippo distinguished itself from Tagaste because it was focused on the church. Like Ambrose in Milan and the unnamed presbyter in Rome, Augustine presided over the community through his authority as presbyter of the church of Hippo. Also, the labor performed by the monks, whether large or small, was focused on the needs of the church.¹⁰⁷² It was this value of serving the church that Augustine sought to impress upon the monks of Capraria in his letter to them in 398.¹⁰⁷³ Zumkeller nicely summarizes: ‘Thus more and more he recognized that service to the church was a task pleasing to the will of God, to which the comfortable tranquility of monastic communities must always give place.’¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Op. mon.* 18.21; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Reg.* 2.2; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Reg.* 5.10; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Reg.* 5.8-9; *op. mon.* 29.37; *en. Ps.* 99.12; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁷¹ *Reg.* 3.2; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁷² *Op. mon.* 29.37; cf. C. Brockwell, ‘Augustine’s Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,’ *AugStud* 8 (1977), 105; and G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁷³ *Ep.* 48; see also his thoughts in *epp.* 130; 147; 217; 231.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 35.

A second value of the Hippo monastery, very related to its church focused nature, was training clergy. When Augustine returned to Africa, he found the church besieged by the Manicheans, Donatists, Arians, and pagans. Even worse, he discovered that the majority of the African clergy were significantly lacking in their ability to teach the Scriptures or mount an apologetic against the church's rivals.¹⁰⁷⁵ As noted, one of the reasons that Augustine taught on the creed at the council of Hippo in 393 was to educate bishops and clergy who were weak in their theological understanding.¹⁰⁷⁶ Thus, Trapé concludes: 'He saw this form of life not only as a significant way to live out the gospel . . . but equally an efficient means for giving renewed vigor to the church in Africa.'¹⁰⁷⁷ The daily disciplines of prayer, studying the Scriptures, and reading as well as regular interaction with Augustine's teaching prepared many monks for a possible future in church ministry. As a result, some members of the Hippo monastery began to be ordained and serve the needs of the church.¹⁰⁷⁸ Alypius was actually ordained a bishop before Augustine as he was set apart to serve the church of his native Tagaste in 394.¹⁰⁷⁹

Finally, Augustine brought with him from Tagaste the conviction that all personal property should be renounced and everything shared in common. Possidius described the Hippo monastery as 'following the way of life and rule that had been established under the holy apostles. The most important provision was that no one in that community was to have any property of his own, but rather they were to have all

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cf. A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin, l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 119; and A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 276.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Trapé (A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin, l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 119) writes: 'Il voyait dans cette forme de vie non seulement un haut idéal évangélique . . . mais également un moyen efficace pour redonner vigueur à l'Église d'Afrique.' Trans. my own.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Augustine was not opposed to qualified monks being ordained to the ministry as he indicated in *epp.* 48; 60.1; *Vita* 11; *civ. Dei.* 10.19. See also: A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 219; and A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin, l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ep.* 24; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 209.

things in common.¹⁰⁸⁰ Thus, as Augustine invited men to join him in the monastery, they were not admitted until they had renounced their property, taken a vow of poverty, and committed themselves to simplicity.¹⁰⁸¹ Therefore, prior to any articulation of a monastic *regula*, Augustine and his community followed the basic principles of the apostles as articulated in Acts 4:31-35.

In the four years that he spent as a monk-presbyter overseeing the monastery in Hippo, how did Augustine serve as a mentor? First, as at Cassiciacum and Tagaste, his initiative and leadership drew men to himself and to his vision. In *Sermo* 355, he made references to the beginning of the monastery: ‘I began to gather together brothers of good will, my companions in poverty, having nothing just like me and imitating me.’¹⁰⁸² Secondly, it is clear that he began to select men to join him. Instead of accepting just anyone who was drawn to the idea of monastic living, he received only those who agreed to follow the rule of the apostles and who were committed to living a holy life.¹⁰⁸³ Third, as a presbyter, he mentored from a position of clear spiritual authority over the men. Fourth, he mentored the monks through his teaching from the Scriptures. Possidius wrote: ‘at home and in the church Augustine was preaching and teaching the word of salvation.’¹⁰⁸⁴ For Augustine, to be preaching ‘at home’ (*in domo*) meant teaching the brothers in the garden monastery. It also seems plausible that he continued to employ dialogue as a teaching tool as he had done at Cassiciacum and Tagaste. This probably included discussion during meals. Fifth, through apologetic discourses delivered against the Donatists, Manicheans, and

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Et cum Dei seruis uiuere coepit secundum modum et regulam sub sanctis Apostolis constitutam: maxime ut nemo quidquam proprium in illa societate haberet, sed eis essent omnia communia. Vita* 5.1, PL 32, 37.

¹⁰⁸¹ *S.* 355.2; *en. Ps.* 75.16; *ep.* 243; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 37-9.

¹⁰⁸² *Coepi boni propositi fratres colligere, compauperes meos, nihil habentes, sicut habebam, et imitantes me. s.* 355.2, PL 38, 1570.

¹⁰⁸³ *Epp.* 243; 78.9.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Et docebat ac praedicabat ille priuatim et publice, in domo et in ecclesia, salutis uerbum. Vita* 7.1, PL 32, 38-9.

pagans,¹⁰⁸⁵ as well as books and sermons ‘based on the authority of the sacred Scriptures,’¹⁰⁸⁶ Augustine modeled for his monks the importance of sound teaching and the primacy of Scripture. Indeed, the ‘outstanding doctrine and the sweet fragrance of Christ’ that ‘were diffused and made known throughout Africa’ certainly had its primary impact on the men who shared his house.¹⁰⁸⁷ Finally, as Hippo gained the reputation as a training center for North African clergy, Augustine began to set apart some monks to serve in the ordained ministry.

(4) *The Monasterium Clericorum*

When Valerius succeeded in ordaining Augustine as his co-bishop in 395, he also directed Augustine to the next stage of his monastic itinerary. Mandouze suggests that Augustine had been a ‘monk-presbyter’ following his ordination in 391, a ‘monk-bishop’ in 395, and finally a ‘bishop-monk’ upon Valerius’ death in 396 or 397.¹⁰⁸⁸ That is, Augustine’s monastic and ecclesiastical lives became increasingly intertwined to the point that his *sarcina* for the ministry and *uita actiua* (active life) took complete precedent over the *uita comtemplatiua* (contemplative life) of the monastery.¹⁰⁸⁹ He would wrestle with this tension for the duration of his ministry as a bishop-monk. Hence, like Athanasius and Basil before him, he was a monk living in the city and occupied with the work of the church. This transition is perhaps best illustrated by his establishment of a *monasterium clericorum* in the bishop’s house when Valerius

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Vita* 7.1.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Atque auctoritate sanctorum Scripturarum. Vita* 7.3, PL 32, 39.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Et inde iam per totum Africae corpus praeclara doctrina odorque suavissimus Christi diffusa et manifestata est. Vita* 7.4, PL 32, 39.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l’aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Civ. Dei*, 19.19; cf. L. Verheijen, ‘Saint Augustin: Un Moine devenu Prêtre et Evêque,’ *EstAug* 12 (1977), 285; L. van der Lof, ‘The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine,’ *AugStud* 12 (1981), 50; and G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, pp. 334, 398.

passed away.¹⁰⁹⁰ It was a new monastery where the door was open to visitors and those in need. Augustine described this in *Sermo* 355:

I arrived at the episcopate. I saw that the bishop is under the necessity of showing hospitable kindness to all visitors and travelers; indeed, if a bishop didn't do that he would be said to be lacking in humanity. But if this custom were transferred to the monastery it would not be fitting. And that's why I wanted to have a monastery of clergy in the bishop's residence.¹⁰⁹¹

Thus, Augustine invited clergy and probably some of his closest companions from the garden monastery to accept ordination and join him in the *monasterium clericorum*.¹⁰⁹² Though Alypius had already departed for Tagaste when the new monastery began, Augustine was joined by Severus, Evodius, and Possidius as well as ordained ministers from every rank of clerical office.¹⁰⁹³

Generally speaking, the daily schedule of the *monasterium clericorum* resembled that of the garden monastery. They rose early for morning vigils and there were set hours throughout the day for personal and corporate prayer.¹⁰⁹⁴ While the monks of the garden monastery prayed in the oratory in their house, the clergy probably met for prayer and chanting of the Psalms in the *Basilica Pacis* — a church located beside the bishop's house.¹⁰⁹⁵ In addition to the corporate prayer service, they celebrated the Eucharist each day and were often joined by the faithful of Hippo.¹⁰⁹⁶ The clergy also spent time each day reading the Scriptures as well as other spiritually

¹⁰⁹⁰ For a physical description of the church grounds and bishop's house in Hippo, see: F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Perueni ad episcopatum: uidi necesse habere episcopum exhibere humanitatem assiduam quibusque uenientibus siue transeuntibus: quod si non fecisset episcopus, inhumanus diceretur. Si autem ista consuetudo in monasterio missa esset, indecens esset. Et uolui habere in domo ista episcopi monasterium clericorum.* s. 355.2, PL 38, 1570.

¹⁰⁹² *Ep.* 60.1; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁹³ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 209. A complete list of those who were living with Augustine in 425-426 at the outbreak of the clerical scandal is given in s. 356.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *En. Ps.* 118.29.4; *reg.* 2.1; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 46, 182.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ep.* 55.18.34; *en. Ps.* 46.1; *conf.* 9.7.15; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 47-9.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ep.* 54; *c. Faust.* 19.11; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.

oriented books as they also had access to a library.¹⁰⁹⁷ As well, the members of the *monasterium clericorum* worked each day serving the needs of the church according to the roles of their clerical office, which were described at the outset of this chapter.¹⁰⁹⁸ Finally, they took two meals together each day with the exception of days dedicated to fasting.¹⁰⁹⁹

Within the *monasterium clericorum*, quite a few of the values that characterized the previous stages of the monastic itinerary continued to be present. First, they continued to believe that the group itself was the key to intellectual and spiritual growth. Secondly, the rule of the apostles — the renunciation of private property, commitment to sharing everything in common, and commitment to poverty and simplicity — continued to be true of the *monasterium clericorum* as it had been in the garden monastery and to some degree in Tagaste.¹¹⁰⁰ Lawless maintains: ‘Lack of evidence for a monastic code to guide the bishop’s clerical community from the date of his episcopal ordination in 395-396 suggests that Acts 4:32-35 is, in effect, its basic rule of life.’¹¹⁰¹ Third, like the garden monastery, the *monasterium clericorum* demonstrated the value of training clergy for ministry both in Hippo and in the African church.

Two final monastic values seemed unique to the *monasterium clericorum*. First, Augustine required that each of his men practice celibacy, a rule that applied to those who were married as well as those who had previously been married.¹¹⁰² Following in the coenobitic tradition, it was believed that celibacy was among the best

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Epp.* 55.21, 39; 132; *s.* 219; *op. mon.* 17.20; 29.37; *Vita* 31; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 195; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 46, 187-8.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Op. mon.* 27.35; 29.37; *civ. Dei.* 19.19; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *S.* 356.13; cf. A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ep.* 243; *s.* 355-6; *Vita* 5.1; 22; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L’homme et l’œuvre*, p. 163; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 38, 43.

¹¹⁰¹ Augustine did not publish his *Regula* until 399. Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 160.

means of making progress toward the perfect life.¹¹⁰³ Secondly, and related to the first, a chief value of the *monasterium clericorum* was holiness. Augustine insisted on personal holiness and integrity for his men. Crespin correctly asserts: ‘Holiness was, in his eyes, inseparable from the clerical state.’¹¹⁰⁴ One simple way that Augustine required holiness of his men was through his absolute intolerance of gossip during meal times. Possidius wrote that to remind the men of this conviction, ‘he had these words inscribed on the table: “Let those who like to slander the lives of the absent know that their own are not worthy of this table.”’¹¹⁰⁵ Augustine also demanded holiness by forbidding women entering or even coming near the monastery.¹¹⁰⁶ When a woman needed to see Augustine, he would arrange the meeting in the presence of other clergy.¹¹⁰⁷ Like Ambrose, he exhorted his men to avoid entanglements with the world by refusing all invitations to dinner in the city.¹¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the greatest example of Augustine’s commitment to holiness was his transparency in handling the scandal in the *monasterium clericorum* in 425-426, recorded in *Sermones* 355 and 356.¹¹⁰⁹ Not only did he expose the sin of his clergy before the congregation,¹¹¹⁰ he reaffirmed

¹¹⁰² Cf. C. Brockwell, ‘Augustine’s Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,’ *AugStud* 8 (1977), 102.

¹¹⁰³ *Epp.* 210-11; *adul. conjug.* 2.20.22; cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l’aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 176; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 41.

¹¹⁰⁴ Crespin (R. Crespin, *Ministère et Sainteté*, p. 183) writes: ‘La sainteté est, à ses yeux, inséparable de l’état clérical.’ English trans. my own. For more on Augustine’s views on the holiness of the clergy see: *en. Ps.* 126.3; 132.4; *s.* 46.2; 49.2; 179.7; 270.1; 340.1.

¹¹⁰⁵ *In ea scriptum ita habebat: ‘Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere uitam, Hanc mensam indignam nouerit esse suam.’ Vita* 22.6, PL, 32, 52.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Vita* 26.1-3; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 43.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Vita* 26.3.

¹¹⁰⁸ See *Vita* 27.4-5 and Ambrose, *De officiis*, 1.86. Augustine also forbid them to arrange marriages and to recommend men for military service.

¹¹⁰⁹ According to *s.* 355.3, the scandal began when it was discovered that the presbyter Januarius had violated the rule of the apostles by concealing property and then trying to will it to the church while disinheriting his children in the process. Augustine then investigated the affairs of every member of the monastery and gave a full report to the congregation in *s.* 356.2-11, 15.

¹¹¹⁰ *S.* 355.3; 356.2, 6.

the standards of the apostolic rule,¹¹¹¹ called upon the unholy clergy to repent, and promised expulsion to those who refused.¹¹¹²

The *monasterium clericorum* provides us with the clearest form of Augustine interacting in community with the clergy. How did Augustine go about mentoring spiritual leaders in this final stage of his monastic itinerary? First, in light of the daily Scripture reading program as well as the opportunities the men had to hear Augustine preach and teach, Augustine trained them in how to interpret the Scriptures and teach them to others. Possidius' reference to Augustine's 'divine teachings' being heard by 'men who were serving God in the monastery with and under the direction of holy Augustine' gives evidence for Augustine's regular teaching program.¹¹¹³ Possidius further described Augustine's disciples who left Hippo for other places of service as 'venerable men of continence and learning'¹¹¹⁴ who went to serve in various places as 'zeal for the spread of God's word increased.'¹¹¹⁵ These descriptions not only give us an idea of their level of training in the Scriptures, but also their convictions for teaching them. As Augustine's first request of Valerius had been a period of concentrated study in the Scriptures, Augustine would also impress upon his men this value and make the study of Scripture the primary focus of their monastic training program.¹¹¹⁶

Secondly, Augustine mentored the clergy by providing training of an intellectual nature. As noted, the African church leadership in Augustine's day was not only ill prepared to teach the Scriptures, but also quite inept at defending

¹¹¹¹ S. 356.1.

¹¹¹² S. 355.6; 356.14; cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, pp. 203-06.

¹¹¹³ *Proficiente porro doctrina diuina, sub sancto et cum sancto Augustino in monasterio Deo seruientes. Vita* 11.1. PL, 32, 42.

¹¹¹⁴ *Venerabiles uiros continentes et doctos. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42.

¹¹¹⁵ *Studio crescente aedificationis uerbi Dei. Vita* 11.4, PL, 32, 42. Cf. T. Martin, 'Clericatus sarcina (ep. 126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' 2, *The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>.

Christianity against the heretics and pagans. As Ambrose and Simplicianus convinced Augustine that he could be a thinking Christian, Augustine also imparted to his men the necessity of developing intellectually in light of the hostile and difficult situations in which they would serve.¹¹¹⁷ Through a program of reading facilitated by a private library,¹¹¹⁸ as well as through observing Augustine engage regularly with the enemies of the church,¹¹¹⁹ his men progressed toward becoming defenders of the faith.

Possidius reported that Augustine's ministry of apologetics and debate led to renewal in the African church: 'The result was that by the grace of God the catholic church of Africa began to lift its head after having long been prostrated, led astray, weighed down and oppressed.'¹¹²⁰ Yet we can also infer from Possidius that the church was strengthened by Augustine's disciples — a corps of men thoroughly trained in apologetics, theology, and even aspects of the liberal arts.¹¹²¹

Third, Augustine mentored his men by continuing the practice of dialogue. Dialogue had characterized Augustine's relationships with Alypius in the villa near Milan leading up to his conversion, with Simplicianus in Milan, at Cassiciacum, with Evodius in Rome, at Tagaste, and initially at Hippo. Possidius described his dialogue with the clergy in the *monasterium clericorum* by writing: 'his real delight was to speak of the things of God . . . at home in familiar converse with his brothers.'¹¹²²

Augustine also made special use of the two common meals that the clergy took

¹¹¹⁶ Cf. T. Martin, 'Clericatus sarcina (ep. 126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' 2, *The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>.

¹¹¹⁷ *Ep.* 60.1; cf. L. Jerphagnon, *Saint Augustin, le pédagogue de Dieu*, p. 68; F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 200; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 137.

¹¹¹⁸ *Op. mon.* 29.37; *Vita* 31; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 187; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 195; and H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, pp. 165-7.

¹¹¹⁹ *Vita* 6; 7; 9; 11; 13; 14; 16-18.

¹¹²⁰ *Atque Dei dono leuare in Africa Ecclesia catholica exorsa est caput . . . seducta et pressa et oppressa iacebat. Vita* 7.2, PL, 32, 39.

¹¹²¹ *Vita* 11.4-5; 13.

¹¹²² *Suauem semper habens de iis quae Dei sunt . . . colloquutionem fraternae ac domesticae familiaritatis. Vita* 19.6, PL, 32, 50.

together and instituted a form of ‘table talk.’ Possidius wrote: ‘Even at table he found more delight in reading and conversation than in eating and drinking.’¹¹²³ The mealtime discussions included at least a few aspects. First, following in the tradition of Basil, the clergy read spiritually nourishing books.¹¹²⁴ This meant, of course, that one person read aloud and then a discussion about the book would follow. Brown suggests that the reading list included books devoted to the lives of figures such as Perpetua, Felicitas, and Cyprian and that the ensuing discussion dealt with imitating their examples.¹¹²⁵ Secondly, in their discussions, they would at times address a philosophical, theological, or exegetical question. Bardy argues that such discussions helped to clarify Augustine’s thought on some issues and that the table talk served as the inspiration for several of his books.¹¹²⁶ Finally, at table, Augustine and his clergy discussed what they had experienced during the day in their ministries in the church. Possidius recorded on one occasion that the group discussed Augustine’s sermon given that day and specifically why he had digressed from his topic.¹¹²⁷ Hence, this third aspect of table talk allowed the group to reflect on the day through sharing victories and failures while finding renewed courage and vision to carry on in the work of ministry. Practically speaking, we could also consider this time a ‘help session’ of sorts as they wrestled with church related issues, engaged in problem solving, and collectively shared wisdom.

Augustine continued the practice of table talk throughout his career as bishop of Hippo and head of the *monasterium clericorum*. Some of the men, like Possidius,

¹¹²³ *Et in ipsa mensa magis lectionem uel disputationem, quam epulationem potationemque diligebat. Vita* 22.6, PL, 32, 52.

¹¹²⁴ *Ibid*; *reg.* 3.2; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 42. Basil’s practice of reading at table is recorded in John Cassian’s, *De institutes coenobiorum*, 4.17. See also Pellegrino’s commentary on *Vita* 22.6 in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 93.

¹¹²⁵ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 151-2.

¹¹²⁶ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L’homme et l’œuvre*, p. 196; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 42.

¹¹²⁷ *Vita* 15.

who were sent out from the monastery to serve as bishops in other towns and cities returned to Hippo as refugees during the Vandal siege. Ironically, they would find themselves once again around Augustine's table and find solace in their discussions.

Possidius concluded:

Therefore we talked together very frequently and would and would say, as we reflected on the fearful judgments of God that were displayed before our eyes: You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is equitable. In our common sorrow we groaned and wept as we prayed to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation that he would deign to assist us in our trials.¹¹²⁸

Fourth, Augustine not only made use of meal times to promote discussion with his clergy, he also mentored by opening his door and demonstrating hospitality to visitors.¹¹²⁹ Cassian recorded that this had also been a practice of Basil in the *Basileiados*.¹¹³⁰ One of Augustine's guests was the Spanish presbyter Paul Orosius who had come to study under him in 414 while fleeing the Vandal conquest in Spain.¹¹³¹ Others included the Bishops Paul and Eutropius who came to Hippo to learn more about the heresies that challenged the church.¹¹³² While aware of the risk of welcoming an unworthy or disruptive visitor into the monastery, Augustine maintained the conviction of showing hospitality. He wrote to Profuturus: 'In receiving unknown guests, after all, we usually say that it is much better to put up with an evil man than perhaps to turn away a good man through ignorance.'¹¹³³

¹¹²⁸ *Unde nobiscum saepissime colloquebamur, et Dei tremenda iudicia prae oculis nostris posita considerabamus, dicentes: Iustus es, Domine, et rectum iudicium tuum. Pariterque dolentes, gementes et flentes orabamus miserationum Patrem et Deum omnis consolationis, ut in eadem nos tribulatione subleuare dignaretur. Vita* 28.13, PL, 32, 59. See also *Vita* 29.1-2; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 409.

¹¹²⁹ S. 356.10; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 195.

¹¹³⁰ Cf. John Cassian, *Conlationes*, 14.4.2; and G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 332.

¹¹³¹ *Epp.* 166.1; 169.13; cf. W. Friend, 'Orosius, Paulus,' *ATTA*, 615-17; and G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 295.

¹¹³² Cf. S. de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique*, 13.650; and G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 295.

¹¹³³ *In recipiendis enim hospitibus ignotis, solemus dicere, multo esse melius malum hominem perpeti, quam forsitan per ignorantiam excludi bonum, dum cauemus ne recipiatur malus: sed in affectibus animi contra est. ep.* 38.2, PL 33, 153. Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 43.

Augustine not only ministered to travelers who visited the monastery, he also modeled the importance of hospitality to his disciples.

A fifth way that Augustine mentored the clergy in the monastery was through correction and discipline. If the men did something as seemingly insignificant as swear an oath while at table, they were penalized one of their allotted glasses of wine.¹¹³⁴ As already noted, once Januarius' dishonest activity came to his attention, he thoroughly investigated the matter and exposed the sin of his clergy to the congregation.¹¹³⁵ Further, he maintained the apostolic standard of the monastery and threatened expulsion to those who would not repent.

Sixth, Augustine mentored through the *monasterium clericorum* by involving his clergy in the work of ministry related to the monastery. Each year Augustine assigned a different clergy to serve as provost of the bishop's house (*praepositus domus ecclesiae*) giving the clergy responsibility over the administration and finances of the monastery. Possidius wrote:

The administration of the house attached to the church and of all its possessions he used to delegate to the more capable among the clergy, letting each of them have the task in turn. He never kept the key or wore the ring. Instead, those in charge of the house kept a record of all income and expenditures and gave an account to him at the end of the year.¹¹³⁶

Augustine not only entrusted the *praepositus* with the task but also empowered him for it by giving him the necessary tools of administrative authority — the signet ring and key to the house. Indeed, he demonstrated great trust in the provost by reviewing the financial records only once a year. Finally, Augustine involved many different clergy in this ministry as a new *praepositus* was appointed each year. We know from

¹¹³⁴ *Vita* 25.1; s. 180.10; 307.5.

¹¹³⁵ *S.* 355-6.

¹¹³⁶ *Domus Ecclesiae curam omnemque substantiam ad uices ualentioribus clericis delegabat et credebat. Numquam clauem, numquam annulum in manu habens: sed ab eisdem domus praepositis cuncta et accepta et erogata notabantur. Vita* 24.1, PL 32, 53. Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 43.

Augustine's correspondence that he did not enjoy the administrative aspects of ministry and considered them areas of weakness. Hence, like his mentor Valerius, he was happy to entrust such tasks to other more qualified clergy.¹¹³⁷

Finally, Augustine served as a mentor by releasing many of his men to serve the church throughout North Africa. Possidius said that these were men that 'Augustine gave upon request to the various churches.'¹¹³⁸ In this respect, Augustine broke with Valerius in that he did not try to detain any of his clergy in Hippo from serving elsewhere. While Valerius was committed to resourcing the Hippo church by setting apart Augustine as his co-bishop in 395, Augustine had more of a vision to resource the universal church in Africa.

Though Eusebius of Vercelli and Basil of Caesarea had certainly embraced the lifestyle of a monk-bishop and invited other clergy to form some sort of a community, Augustine's *monasterium clericorum* had no precedent in the history of the Christian movement. Lawless asserts that Augustine culminated his monastic itinerary by effectively clericalizing the monk and monasticizing the cleric.¹¹³⁹

(5) Outcomes of Augustine's *Monasterium Clericorum*

Augustine's monastic itinerary began at Cassiciacum as a sort of Christian *otium* characterized by philosophical and spiritual pursuits. Though philosophical speculation continued at Tagaste, the community was much more focused on the Scriptures and spiritual growth. It was not until Augustine's ordination that he truly established a monastery as the garden monastery at Hippo existed for the church and under the authority of the church. Finally, Augustine's monastic itinerary found its

¹¹³⁷ *Ep.* 213.5.

¹¹³⁸ *Augustinus diuersis Ecclesiis, nonnullis quoque eminentioribus, rogatus dedit. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42.

¹¹³⁹ See G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 62; and A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 168-9.

fulfillment in the *monasterium clericorum*, a monastery of clergy dedicated to serving the church.

What were the specific outcomes of Augustine's work as a mentor of spiritual leaders especially in the *monasterium clericorum*? As alluded to already, his most significant legacy was 'numerous clergy'¹¹⁴⁰ — the men that he sent out as leaders for the North African church. Possidius wrote:

Other churches therefore began eagerly to ask and obtain bishops and clerics from the monastery that owed its origin and growth to this memorable man . . . I myself know of about ten holy and venerable men of continence and learning, some of them quite outstanding, whom blessed Augustine gave upon request to the various churches.¹¹⁴¹

Aside from Possidius himself who was ordained bishop of Calama in 400,¹¹⁴² the group included Alypius who left the garden monastery in 394 to become bishop of Tagaste. The other nine included: Profuturus, who was ordained bishop of Cirta in 395¹¹⁴³; Severus, who became bishop of Milevus in 397¹¹⁴⁴; Evodius, who was ordained bishop of Uzalis before 401¹¹⁴⁵; Peregrinus, who was set apart as a deacon in Thenae¹¹⁴⁶; Urbanus, who was ordained bishop of Sicca¹¹⁴⁷; Paul, who was

¹¹⁴⁰ *Clerum sufficientissimum . . . Ecclesiae dimisit. Vita* 31.8, PL 32, 64.

¹¹⁴¹ *Ex monasterio quod per illum memorabilem uirum et esse et crescere coeperat, magno desiderio poscere atque accipere episcopos et clericos . . . Nam ferme decem, quos ipse noui, sanctos ac uenerabiles uiros continentes et doctos, beatissimus Augustinus diuersis Ecclesiis, nonnullis quoque eminentioribus, rogatus dedit. Vita* 11.2-3, PL, 32, 42.

¹¹⁴² *Ep.* 101; cf. M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60.

¹¹⁴³ Profuturus experienced a premature death in 400 and was succeeded by Fortunatus, another monk from the Hippo monastery. See *epp.* 32.1; 158.9; cf. M. Pellegrino, *op. cit.*; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 928-30; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 156.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Ep.* 31.9; cf. M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 1070-5.

¹¹⁴⁵ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 209; J. O'Donnell, 'Evodius of Uzalis,' *ATTA*, 344; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 367.

¹¹⁴⁶ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 209; and A. Mandouze, *op. cit.*, pp. 852-3.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Ep.* 149.34; cf. M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 1232-3.

consecrated bishop of Cataqua¹¹⁴⁸; Servilius and Privatus¹¹⁴⁹; and Antoninus, who became bishop of Fussala.¹¹⁵⁰

In reality, only half of the men continued in ministry in a long-term capacity as Profuturus, Servilius, and Privatus died prematurely while Paul and Antoninus were removed from their places of ministry due to immoral behavior. So how could Possidius, writing years after Augustine's death, mention 'numerous clergy' as part of Augustine's legacy? The answer seems to be that the men who remained faithful in ministry also invested time mentoring other potential leaders. Possidius added that Augustine's men 'founded monasteries in their turn.'¹¹⁵¹ We know of two monasteries, one for women and one for lay monks, which grew out of the garden monastery in Hippo.¹¹⁵² Sometime after 410, two more monasteries were founded at Tagaste under Alypius' direction.¹¹⁵³ Prior to becoming bishop of Uzalius, Evodius was involved in setting up a monastery in Carthage.¹¹⁵⁴ Another monastery was apparently initiated at Carthage though it is unclear whether it was founded by Augustine or Aurelius. This may have been the famous community of monks who refused to work, which prompted Aurelius to ask for Augustine's intervention through his work *De opere monachorum*. Zumkeller claims that by the end of the fifth century, there were thirty-eight monasteries in North Africa.¹¹⁵⁵ Some of these were

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ep.* 85.1; cf. M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 842.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ep.* 158.9, 11; cf. M. Pellegrino, in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60. Servilius and Privatus also experienced premature deaths; see also A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 920, 1063.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ep.* 209.3; cf. M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 60; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 73-5.

¹¹⁵¹ *Et monasteria instituerunt. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42. See also *ep.* 157.4.39; cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 238.

¹¹⁵² *S.* 356.10; cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 62.

¹¹⁵³ Cf. A. Trapé, *Saint Augustin, l'homme, le pasteur, le mystique*, p. 25.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ep.* 24.3; see commentary in WSA, 2.1.71.

¹¹⁵⁵ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 58, 84-5.

certainly founded by Augustine's clerical monks sent out from Carthage, while the rest were surely influenced by Augustine's monastic contribution.

The monasteries that Augustine's men founded also seemed to value training and releasing leaders for the work of the church. In the same phrase in which he mentioned their establishment of monasteries, Possidius wrote that 'they prepared brothers for the priesthood and then advanced them to other churches.'¹¹⁵⁶ Though only half of the men that Augustine sent from the Hippo monastery served for a long period, those who did wisely dedicated some of their ministry to mentoring new leaders for the work of the church via the monastery.

2. Letters

Augustine continued the practice of Cyprian, Basil and Ambrose by equipping and edifying the clergy through a significant corpus of *epistulae*. Hamman writes that Augustine, 'on account of his letters and writings, becomes a mentor of the clergy and the bishops through correspondence. He is the most consulted man in the western church.'¹¹⁵⁷ Augustine's surviving letters total 252,¹¹⁵⁸ which includes the general collection of 224 as well as a group twenty-eight letters discovered by Johannes Divjak and published in 1981.¹¹⁵⁹ The vast majority of Augustine's correspondence was written after his ordination as presbyter in 391, yet up to sixteen letters do survive from the five years prior to his move to Hippo.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Ceteris Ecclesiis promotos fratres ad suscipiendum sacerdotium praestiterunt. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42.

¹¹⁵⁷ Hamman (A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 277) writes: 'Il devient un formateur du clergé et de l'épiscopat par correspondance, grâce à ses lettres et à ses écrits. Il est l'homme le plus consulté de l'Occident.' Trans. my own.

¹¹⁵⁸ Augustine's *epistulae* also include an additional fifty letters written to him and seven others that are neither from him or to him but most refer to Augustine.

¹¹⁵⁹ I am following the argument of Robert Eno and others (R. Eno in FC, 81.3) that the Divjak letters include twenty-eight letters from Augustine as *epp.* 23* and 23*A seem to be addressed to two different people. Chadwick (H. Chadwick, 'New Letters of St. Augustine,' *JTS* 34.2 (1983), 425), on the other hand, only counts twenty-seven.

Augustine's *epistulae* provide a good picture of church life in the fourth and fifth centuries as well as the challenges that he faced as a bishop. The Pelagian controversy, the Donatist schism, church councils, and the problems of unworthy clergy come to life in Augustine's correspondence. A deeply warm and personal individual, Augustine regarded letters as a conversation between friends who were separated by distance.¹¹⁶⁰ He met some of these friends, particularly Paulinus of Nola and Jerome, only through correspondence. In Augustine's letters, we also meet someone committed to thoroughly resourcing his correspondents according to their needs. Though Augustine wrote fewer letters than Basil, his letters are generally much longer while some are essentially short books or treatises.¹¹⁶¹

Of the 236 letters written during his ministry as presbyter and bishop of Hippo,¹¹⁶² 105 were addressed to spiritual leaders who were ordained clergy.¹¹⁶³ One hundred of these letters contain a definite quality of mentoring about them.¹¹⁶⁴ Twenty-one letters were written to spiritual leaders who were either presently serving in Hippo or who had left the *monasterium clericorum* to serve the church elsewhere in Africa.¹¹⁶⁵ The clergy who received the most correspondence from Augustine were Jerome, who received nine letters¹¹⁶⁶; and Paulinus of Nola, who received seven.¹¹⁶⁷

¹¹⁶⁰ See for example: *epp.* 29.1; 40.1.1; 48.4; 138.1; 166.1; 194.2; cf. R. Eno, 'Epistulae,' *ATTA*, 298.

¹¹⁶¹ See for example: *epp.* 54-5; 128; 140; 146-7; 166-7; 174-6; 185; 187; 211.

¹¹⁶² Augustine probably only wrote five letters while serving as presbyter (*epp.* 21-3; 26; 28).

¹¹⁶³ Though it is unclear whether the abbot Valentinus of Hadrumetum was ordained, I have included Augustine's letters to him (*epp.* 214-15; 215A) in this study because: (1) As an abbot, it is quite likely that he was also ordained (*ep.* 48), (2) Augustine's role as a mentor to Valentinus and his monks is significant in the context of the Pelagian controversy.

¹¹⁶⁴ Aside from *ep.* 21 written to his mentor Valerius, *epp.* 212; 227; 269; and 25* are not included in our study as they are basically short notes of information.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Epp.* 29; 38; 62-3; 83; 85; 110; 122; 125; 159; 162; 164; 169; 213; 245; 7*; 9*; 10*; 15*; 22*; 23A*.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Epp.* 28; 40; 67; 71; 73; 82; 166-7; 19*.

¹¹⁶⁷ *Epp.* 27; 31; 42; 45; 80; 95; 186. All but *epp.* 27 and 186 were addressed to Paulinus and his wife Theresia.

While Augustine primarily wrote to clergy serving in the western Latin speaking church, there were a few cases when he wrote to leaders of the eastern church.¹¹⁶⁸

How did Augustine mentor spiritual leaders through his *epistulae*? Like Basil, a large number of Augustine's letters demonstrated a clear sense of peer mentoring. Also, Augustine wrote letters in which he served as a theological and exegetical resource, while other letters were written to influence spiritual leaders toward maintaining sound teaching. In other letters, we observe Augustine giving direction in practical ministry and in dealing with various church issues. Finally, he wrote a smaller number of letters offering his perspective on ministry, exhorting some leaders to spiritual growth, encouraging others, and initiating reconciliation. In many cases, Augustine used the same letter to fulfill multiple mentoring purposes.

(1) Peer Mentoring

Augustine wrote twenty-three letters to five different leaders in which we observe him mentoring and being mentored by those we would regard as his peers. One very interesting letter in this group is *Epistula 37*, in which Augustine responded to a set of theological questions posed by his former mentor Simplicianus in 396 around the time that he succeeded Ambrose as bishop of Milan. Though he served Simplicianus as an exegetical resource through his responses,¹¹⁶⁹ Augustine, continuing to regard Simplicianus as a mentor, invited his feedback on his responses asking him to 'assume the role of censor to correct them.'¹¹⁷⁰ Hence, *Epistula 37* illustrated a relationship that had shifted from being purely mentor-disciple to more peer in nature.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Epp.* 179; 4*, 6*.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Ep.* 37 was probably accompanied by the work *Ad Simplicianum* which addressed several passages in Kings and Romans. Cf. J. Wetzel, 'Simplicianum, Ad,' *ATTA*, 798-9.

¹¹⁷⁰ *Sed etiam censuram corrigentis assumas. ep.* 37.3, PL 33, 152.

Augustine wrote four letters to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage that also reflected peer mentoring. In *Epistula 22*, written while still a presbyter, Augustine discussed with Aurelius a strategy for reforming the drunken excesses related to the *laetitia* festival. Hence, the two men were collectively working on a solution to this issue facing the church. In *Epistula 41*, penned around 396, Augustine affirmed Aurelius for his decision to allow the presbyters of Carthage to preach in the church under his supervision. Augustine, who had personally been involved in Valerius' innovation in this area, did not conceal his enthusiasm or influence on the subject:

Let those go first, and let these follow, having become imitators of them as they are in Christ. May the route of the holy ants be fervent; may the activity of the holy bees spread its perfume; may their fruit be borne in patience with salutary perseverance up to the end.¹¹⁷¹

While providing Aurelius with input in this letter, Augustine asked for prayer as well as feedback on the initial drafts of *De doctrina Christiana*.¹¹⁷² In *Epistula 60*, written in 401, Augustine rather persuasively advised Aurelius on the issue of ordaining monks who had quit the monastery prior to seeking ordination.¹¹⁷³ Though he does not withhold his thoughts on the matter, Augustine clearly communicated a humble posture toward the bishop of Carthage: 'I do not dare speak in opposition to your Wisdom, your Honor, and your Charity, and I, of course, hope that you will do what you see will be salutary for the members of the church.'¹¹⁷⁴ Finally, in *Epistula 16**, written around 419, Augustine asked Aurelius for news regarding Alypius' trip to Rome, inquired of Aurelius' encyclical letter to the Numidian bishops following the

¹¹⁷¹ *Praecedant illi, et sequantur isti, imitatores facti eorum, sicut et illi Christi. Ferueat iter sanctarum formicarum, fragrent opera sanctarum apum, feratur fructus intolerantia cum salute perseuerando usque in finem.* ep. 41.1, PL 33, 158.

¹¹⁷² *Ep.* 41.2.

¹¹⁷³ *Ep.* 60.1.

¹¹⁷⁴ *Contradicere tamen prudentiae, honori, caritativae tuae non audeo; et sane spero id te facturum quod membris Ecclesiae salubre perspexeris.* ep. 60.2, PL 33, 228.

419 council of Carthage, and indicated that he had sent a copy of two sermons to resource Aurelius.¹¹⁷⁵

Augustine's seven letters to Paulinus of Nola reveal a growing, intimate friendship between two spiritual leaders desperate to learn from one another. In *Epistula 27*, written in 396, Augustine responded to Paulinus' initial letter expressing how he had been encouraged by it and that he desired to get to know this new friend in Christ.¹¹⁷⁶ In *Epistula 31*, written the following year, Augustine wrote that he was so excited to get to know Paulinus that he questioned the letter carriers at length about his new friend. Augustine was also so encouraged by Paulinus' previous letter that he had shared it with the men in the Hippo monastery.¹¹⁷⁷ Finally, Augustine communicated that he had sent the three books, *De libero arbitrio*, to resource Paulinus while requesting Paulinus' book, *Contra paganos*.¹¹⁷⁸ In *Epistulae 42* and *45*, written in 398, Augustine lamented that he had heard nothing from Paulinus and re-iterated his request for *Contra paganos*.¹¹⁷⁹ Around 404, he wrote *Epistula 80* inquiring from Paulinus about how to discern God's will.¹¹⁸⁰ In *Epistula 95*, penned around 408, Augustine dialogued with Paulinus over the notion of eternal life while also responding to Paulinus' questions about the nature of the resurrection body.¹¹⁸¹ Also, Augustine posed once again a question about Christian leisure that Paulinus had apparently failed to address.¹¹⁸² Finally, *Epistula 149*, written in 415, was purely an exegetical resource as he responded to Paulinus' questions on passages in the

¹¹⁷⁵ *Ep.* 16*.1, 3.

¹¹⁷⁶ *Ep.* 27.1-3. In *ep.* 25.1, Paulinus acknowledged receipt of Augustine's 'Pentateuchus contra Manichaeos' that he had sent via Alypius. According to Paulinus' *ep.* 6.2, it was actually Aurelius that originally told Paulinus about Augustine's works. Cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 107.

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ep.* 31.2-3.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ep.* 31.7-8.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Ep.* 45 was co-authored by Alypius.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ep.* 80.2.

¹¹⁸¹ *Ep.* 95.2, 5, 7-8.

¹¹⁸² *Ep.* 95.9.

Psalms,¹¹⁸³ in Paul,¹¹⁸⁴ and in the Gospels.¹¹⁸⁵ Augustine concluded the letter by conceding his own to need learn as well as affirming Paulinus for his desire to grow.¹¹⁸⁶

While much attention has been given to Augustine's relationship with Jerome because of their famous feuds, Augustine's nine letters to the monk-presbyter of Bethlehem also provide evidence for a peer mentoring relationship.¹¹⁸⁷ Augustine sent *Epistula* 28 to Jerome via his disciple Profuturus in 394 or 395, though Profuturus was unable to fulfill the mission because he was ordained bishop of Circa in 395.¹¹⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the letter took nine years to get to Bethlehem, having taken a detour in Rome, which led Jerome to believe that Augustine was waging a public campaign against him.¹¹⁸⁹ Augustine's main issue in *Epistula* 28 was his contention with Jerome's exegesis of Galatians in which he taught that Paul had lied about Peter's failure to live correctly according to the gospel.¹¹⁹⁰ Though Augustine was rather severe in his reproof of Jerome, he also invited the same scrutiny from Jerome toward his own writings.¹¹⁹¹ Hence, through this letter and others, Augustine valued doctrinal purity over personal feelings.

Epistula 40, also encountered difficulty making it to Bethlehem as it was discovered on an island in the Adriatic Sea in 398, a year after it had been written, before it was redirected to Jerome. Again, Augustine took up the issue of Jerome's

¹¹⁸³ *Ep.* 149.1.3-10.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Ep.* 149.2.11-30.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Ep.* 149.3.31-3.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ep.* 149.3.34.

¹¹⁸⁷ One of the key reasons for the misunderstandings between Augustine and Jerome was that the delivery of letters between Hippo and Bethlehem was often unreliable as Augustine pointed out in *ep.* 73.2.5. See also R. O'Connell, 'When Sainly Fathers Feuded: The Correspondence between Augustine and Jerome,' *Thought* 54 (1979), 344-64.

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ep.* 71.1.2.

¹¹⁸⁹ See commentary on *ep.* 28 in WSA, 2.1.90-1.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ep.* 28.3.3-5.

¹¹⁹¹ *Ep.* 28.4.6.

exegesis of Galatians and this time called on Jerome to recant of his views.¹¹⁹²

Despite this serious concern, Augustine wrote that he and his men had benefited from Jerome's book *De uiris illustribus* — a catalogue of Christian writers that also functioned as an apologetic against pagan opponents to Christianity.¹¹⁹³ Augustine went on to ask Jerome if he could resource them further with a book summarizing the heresies that existed.¹¹⁹⁴ Finally, in addition to the exegetical tangling in the letter, we should also note Augustine's warmth in communicating with Jerome: 'Hence, enter into this conversation by letter with us so that we do not allow bodily absence to do much to keep us apart, though we are united in the Lord by oneness of the Spirit.'¹¹⁹⁵

In 403, Augustine wrote *Epistula 67* though he still had not received a reply from Jerome to his two previous letters. However, he wrote to defend himself against a rumor that he had written a book against Jerome and sent it to Rome.¹¹⁹⁶ Finally, in the spirit of his mentor Simplicianus, Augustine communicated his desire to learn from Jerome even if the two disagreed. He wrote: 'I am not only fully prepared to hear as a brother what you hold to the contrary, if something disturbs you in my writings, but I also beg and demand this of you. For I will rejoice either over my correction or over your good will.'¹¹⁹⁷

Though Jerome finally replied in 402 to Augustine's initial letters, Augustine sent *Epistula 71* in 403. He raised the issue of Jerome's translation of Job from Hebrew into Latin and asked for a guide to determine the variant readings from

¹¹⁹² *Ep.* 40.3.3-4.7.

¹¹⁹³ *Ep.* 40.2.2; cf. S. Rebenich, *Jerome*, p. 97.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Ep.* 40.6.9.

¹¹⁹⁵ *Quare, aggredere, quaeso, istam nobiscum litterariam collocutionem, ne multum ad nos disiungendos liceat absentiae corporali: quanquam simus in Domino spiritus unitate coniuncti [Eph. 4:3]. ep.* 40.1.1, PL 33, 154.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ep.* 67.2.2.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ut ego non tantum paratissimus sim, si quid te in meis scriptis mouerit, fraterne accipere quid contra sentias, aut de correctione mea, aut de ipsa tua beneuolentia gauisurus; uerum etiam hoc a te postulem, et flagitem. ep.* 67.2.2, PL 33, 237.

Jerome's previous translation of the same book from Greek into Latin.¹¹⁹⁸ Augustine further shared his apprehensions about a direct Hebrew to Latin translation as he highly regarded the Septuagint.¹¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he asked Jerome to help him understand the variant passages that came as a result of a Hebrew-Latin translation. Finally, Augustine praised Jerome for his new translation of the Gospel from Greek into Latin.¹²⁰⁰

Following two rather strong letters from Jerome in 402 and 403, Augustine responded with *Epistula* 73.¹²⁰¹ At the outset of the letter, he complained about Jerome's harsh communication in the two previous letters. He wrote: 'when you reply so that you give offense, what room is left for us to enter upon the discussion of the Scriptures without rancor?'¹²⁰² Yet he continued to pursue the relationship with Jerome by calling him to decent and respectful dialogue: 'I ask you, if it is possible, that we investigate and discuss something between us in order that our hearts may be nourished without the bitterness of discord.'¹²⁰³ Augustine went on to humbly ask Jerome's forgiveness for any offense he may have caused while communicating a renewed desire to learn from him. He emphasized this commitment by expressing his intent to send one of his disciples to study under Jerome and then return to Hippo to enlighten Augustine and his clergy.¹²⁰⁴

In 404 or 405, Augustine responded in *Epistula* 82 to three significant letters from Jerome.¹²⁰⁵ Augustine began the letter with a very strong reproof to Jerome's

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ep.* 71.2.3.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ep.* 71.2.4.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ep.* 71.4.6.

¹²⁰¹ *Epp.* 68 and 71 in Augustine's *epistulae*.

¹²⁰² *Proinde cum ita rescribis, ut laedas, quis locus nobis relinquitur in disputatione Scripturarum sine ullo rancore uersandi? ep.* 73.1.1, PL 33, 246.

¹²⁰³ *Rogo te, si fieri potest, ut inter nos quaeramus et disseramus aliquid, quo sine amaritudine discordiae corda nostra pascantur, fiat. ep.* 73.3.9, PL 33, 249.

¹²⁰⁴ *Ep.* 73.1.1, 2.3-5.

¹²⁰⁵ *Epp.* 72; 75; 81 in Augustine's *epistulae*.

concluding words in *Epistula* 81 — ‘let us playfully exercise on the field of the Scriptures without causing injury to each other.’¹²⁰⁶ Augustine replied:

You ask or rather you command with the confidence of love that we playfully exercise on the field of the Scriptures without causing injury to one another. As far as I am concerned, I prefer to do this seriously rather than playfully . . . not like someone playing on the field of the Scriptures, but like someone gasping for air in the mountains.¹²⁰⁷

Augustine’s quote not only reveals the seriousness with which he regarded the Scriptures, but also his task to interpret and apply them in the context of his *sarcina* of the ministry in Hippo — far from the leisurely and contemplative situation Jerome enjoyed in Bethlehem. In the same letter, he also expressed his conviction that the writings of the philosophers were worthless compared to the revelation of Scripture, which certainly testified to Augustine’s intellectual and spiritual development from his days in Cassiciacum and Tagaste.¹²⁰⁸ Also, Augustine passionately continued his conversation with Jerome over his interpretation of Paul’s actions in Galatians — a dialogue that was at that point ten years old!¹²⁰⁹ Despite the intensity of this letter, Augustine began his remarks by asking whether Jerome had forgiven him for his offenses.¹²¹⁰ He renewed his appeal for loving dialogue and respectful disagreement especially as others were observing their behavior:

Hence, let us rather teach, with as much insistence as we can, our dearest friends who most sincerely foster our labors that they may know that it is possible that among friends one contradicts the words of another, though love is, nonetheless, not diminished and though the truth, which is owed to friendship, does not give birth to hatred.¹²¹¹

¹²⁰⁶ *In Scripturarum campo, si placet, sine nostro iniucem dolore ludamus. ep. 81, PL 33, 275.*

¹²⁰⁷ *Petis, uel potius fiducia charitatis iubes, ut in Scripturarum campo sine nostro iniucem dolore ludamus. Equidem quantum ad me attinet, serio nos ista, quam ludo, agere mallet . . . non tamquam ludentem in campo Scripturarum, sed in montibus anhelantem adiuues. ep. 82.1.2, PL 33, 276.*

¹²⁰⁸ *Ep. 82.2.13.*

¹²⁰⁹ *Ep. 82.2.4-3.29.*

¹²¹⁰ *Ep. 82.1.1.*

¹²¹¹ *Proinde charissimos nostros, qui nostris laboribus sincerissime fauent, hoc potius quanta possumus instantia doceamus, quo sciant fieri posse ut inter carissimos aliquid alterutro sermone contradicatur, nec tamen caritas ipsa minuat, nec ueritas odium pariat, quae debetur amicitiae. ep. 82.4.32, PL 33, 289.*

He added that if it were not possible to dialogue in a righteous manner then perhaps they ought to cease their interaction: ‘That is, may we do this in fraternal love with a spirit that is not displeasing in the eyes of God. But if you do not think that this is possible between us without a harmful offense to love itself, let us not do this.’¹²¹² Finally, Augustine thanked Jerome for warning him about the errors of the Ebionite and Nazarean heresies¹²¹³ and conceded that Jerome had convinced him of the importance of translating the Hebrew Scriptures directly into Latin as opposed to relying solely on the Septuagint.¹²¹⁴

Augustine’s final three letters to Jerome, written at the height of the Pelagian controversy in 415 and 416, indicate that the two men had made peace with one another and were strong allies in the fight against heresy. In *Epistula* 166, also listed as the treatise, *De origine animae*, Augustine responded to Jerome’s recommendation that he write something on the origin of the soul.¹²¹⁵ Though he acknowledged his limitations on addressing this question and invited Jerome’s input, Augustine nevertheless made a significant effort to treat the subject.¹²¹⁶ Similarly, in *Epistula* 167, also known as *De sententia Iacobi*, Augustine wrote to Jerome inviting his insights on the verse James 2:10 while providing his own thoughts.¹²¹⁷ Augustine argued that any violation of the law is a violation of love,¹²¹⁸ while challenging the two common beliefs that all sins were equal¹²¹⁹ and that one possesses all virtue if he has one virtue.¹²²⁰ Augustine concluded the letter by asking Jerome to reply and

¹²¹² *Eo scilicet animo qui oculis Dei in fraterna dilectione non displicet. Quod si inter nos fieri posse sine ipsius dilectionis perniciose offensione non putas; non fiat. ep. 82.5.36, PL 33, 291.*

¹²¹³ *Ep. 82.2.15.* This refers to Jerome’s assertions in *ep. 75.4.13.*

¹²¹⁴ *Ep. 82.5.34; see also civ. Dei 18.43.*

¹²¹⁵ In *Ep. 165*, Jerome had referred Marcellinus to Augustine on this question.

¹²¹⁶ *Ep. 166.1.1; 2.3; 9.28.*

¹²¹⁷ *Ep. 167.1.1.* ‘For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.’ (James 2:10).

¹²¹⁸ *Ep. 167.16-20.*

¹²¹⁹ *Ep. 167.4.14-15.*

¹²²⁰ *Ep. 167.2.4-3.12.*

correct any erroneous thinking he may have.¹²²¹ Jerome did reply briefly yet did not take issue with any points in order to maintain solidarity against the Pelagian opposition.¹²²² In his final letter to Jerome, *Epistula* 19*, Augustine shared some news about the ongoing Pelagian controversy and requested that Jerome confirm that he received his letter. Augustine also made a point to sign them in his own hand in order to avoid the previous problems of letters getting lost or being difficult to verify.¹²²³

Related to his correspondence with Jerome, Augustine sent *Epistula* 74 to Praesidius, a fellow Numidian bishop, asking him to forward Augustine's *Epistula* 73 onto Jerome.¹²²⁴ More than merely asking him to have the letter delivered, Augustine asked Praesidius to read the previous two letters exchanged between the feuding leaders and invited him to point out where Augustine may have been wrong.¹²²⁵ He wrote:

If I wrote something that I ought not to have or in a way in which I ought not to have, do not write to him about me, but rather write to me myself out of fraternal love in order that, having been corrected, I may ask his forgiveness if I myself recognize my fault.¹²²⁶

Hence, instead of looking for an ally in his conflict with Jerome, Augustine humbly invited another spiritual leader to provide him with objective feedback.

Augustine's final letters of a peer mentoring nature were *Epistulae* 190 and 202A written to Bishop Optatus in 417 and 418. In *Epistula* 190, Augustine resourced Optatus with his thoughts on the origin of the soul, as he had Jerome in *Epistula* 166, yet admitted his limited understanding on the subject and expressed his desire to read what Optatus had written on it.¹²²⁷ Augustine followed up with *Epistula* 202A with a

¹²²¹ *Ep.* 167.5.21.

¹²²² *Ep.* 172.

¹²²³ *Ep.* 19*.4.

¹²²⁴ *Ep.* 74.1.1.

¹²²⁵ *Epp.* 72-3.

¹²²⁶ *Aut si ego quod non debui, uel quomodo non debui, aliquid scripsi; non ad illum de me, sed ad me ipsum potius fraterna dilectione mitte sermonem, quo correctus petam ut ignoscat, si meam culpam ipse cognouero. ep.* 74.1, PL 33, 250-1.

¹²²⁷ *Ep.* 190.1-2, 20-1, 26.

long treatment of the question while complaining that he had still not heard anything from Jerome on the matter since he had written *Epistula* 167 some years prior.

(2) Theological and Exegetical Resource

Augustine wrote another thirty-one letters in which he resourced spiritual leaders by responding to their theological and exegetical questions.¹²²⁸ In 408, he wrote *Epistula* 92A to Cyprian, a presbyter serving with him in Hippo and who had apparently delivered letters for Augustine in the past.¹²²⁹ In fact, Augustine's main purpose in this letter was to give instructions to Cyprian on delivering *Epistula* 92 to a certain Italice — a letter addressing the issue of whether God could be perceived in bodily form. Though the issue was raised by Italice, Augustine took the time in *Epistula* 92A to educate his presbyter more on the issue which effectively equipped Cyprian in how to deal with the heresy himself. Finally, Augustine wanted Cyprian to let him know if others were holding this view. Augustine addressed the same issue in 410 in a letter to an unnamed bishop delivered by Fortunatianus of Sicca in *Epistula* 148.¹²³⁰ In *Epistula* 98, written between 408 and 414, Augustine responded to Boniface of Cataqua's queries on infant baptism. Augustine wrote that the faith of a baptized child may not be negatively affected by his parents' faith while also arguing in favor of the salvific efficacy of the sacrament.¹²³¹

Around 409, Augustine resourced the presbyter, Deogratias of Carthage, in *Epistula* 102 with answers to several exegetical questions that someone else had actually posed to Deogratias. Though writing a thorough response to each question, Augustine made a point to affirm Deogratias' own ability to handle these questions

¹²²⁸ Though I count *ep. 37; 149; 166-7; 190; and 202A* among Augustine's theological and exegetical letters, I will not treat them in this section as they were adequately discussed in the previous section.

¹²²⁹ *Epp.* 71.1.1; 73.1.1.

¹²³⁰ *Ep.* 148.1.1.

¹²³¹ *Ep.* 98.2, 10.

himself.¹²³² Augustine treated questions pertaining to the resurrection of both Christ and Lazarus, the time of Christ's appearing in history, the differences in the sacrifices found in the Scriptures, interpreting Matthew 7:2,¹²³³ the assertion that Solomon suggested that God did not have a son, and Jonah's experience in the belly of a whale.¹²³⁴ In 416, Augustine penned *Epistula* 173A to the Carthaginian presbyters Deogratias and Theodorus. The letter served as a brief explanation on the nature of the Trinity especially in light of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and Deuteronomy 6:13. For more in depth reading, Augustine referred them to his book *De Trinitate*.

Between 414 and 415, Augustine wrote four letters to his long time friend Evodius who had left the Hippo monastery to serve as the bishop of Uzalis. Evodius' theological questions were quite speculative in nature, reminiscent of his dialogues with Augustine in Rome in 388. Though Augustine had moved on to carry greater burdens and was not terribly excited about Evodius' questions, he did take time to respond to them.¹²³⁵ In *Epistula* 159, Augustine replied to Evodius' question about the soul taking on another bodily form at death. He wrote: 'I by no means believe that the soul in departing from the body is accompanied by another body of any kind.'¹²³⁶ In *Epistula* 162, Augustine reluctantly responded to Evodius' queries on the nature of reason and God, the incarnation of Christ, and the possibility of seeing God in bodily form. Though Augustine answered Evodius' questions on reason to some extent, he referred him to his books *De Trinitate*, *De uera religione*, his works on Genesis, as well as reminding him of their dialogues recorded in *De animae quantitate* and *De*

¹²³² *Ep.* 102.1

¹²³³ 'For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you' (Matt. 7:2).

¹²³⁴ *Ep.* 102.2-37.

¹²³⁵ *Epp.* 162.1; 169.1.1.

¹²³⁶ *Si autem breuiter uis audire quid mihi uideatur, nullo modo arbitror animam e corpore exire cum corpore. ep.* 159.1, PL 33, 699.

libero arbitrio.¹²³⁷ Finally, he concluded that God was spirit and could not be seen in bodily form.¹²³⁸ In *Epistula* 164, Augustine thoroughly responded to Evodius' request for an explanation of 1 Peter 3:18-20¹²³⁹ and particularly the meaning of Christ's descending.¹²⁴⁰ Finally, in *Epistula* 169, Augustine again reluctantly replied to Evodius' questions on the Trinity, the relationship of the dove present at Christ's baptism to the Trinity, as well as Paul's writings to the Corinthians and to Timothy.¹²⁴¹ He also followed up on Evodius' previous question about seeing God in bodily form by asserting that God is best perceived in a spiritual sense.¹²⁴² Augustine declined Evodius' request to revise *De Trinitate* citing the priority of other pressing ministry concerns. Nevertheless, he did agree to resource Evodius with copies of portions of *De ciuitate Dei* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos* given that Evodius could send someone to Hippo to copy them.¹²⁴³

Augustine's *Epistula* 174, written in 416, was a theological resource to Aurelius and his clergy at Carthage as the letter was accompanied by at least portions of *De Trinitate* that he had been working on since 399.¹²⁴⁴ In 418, Augustine responded with *Epistula* 196 to Donatius' request that Augustine write to a certain clergy named Asellicus who was captivated by Judaism. In his letter, Augustine resourced the misguided clergy by showing from the Scriptures that the dietary and ceremonial laws from the Hebrew Scriptures were now irrelevant for Christians. In

¹²³⁷ *Ep.* 162.2.

¹²³⁸ *Ep.* 162.8.

¹²³⁹ 'For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water' (1 Peter 3:18-20).

¹²⁴⁰ *Ep.* 164.1.2.

¹²⁴¹ *Ep.* 169.1.1-2.

¹²⁴² *Epp.* 162.8; 169.1.3-4.

¹²⁴³ *Ep.* 169.1.1.

¹²⁴⁴ Apparently, Evodius' prodding in the previous year or two proved effective in convincing Augustine to continue working on *De Trinitate*. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 328-

419, Augustine sent *Epistula 23** along with his book, *De anima et eius origine*, to Rhenanus of Caesarea.¹²⁴⁵

Augustine wrote two letters of an exegetical nature to Bishop Hesychius of Salome in 419. In *Epistula 197*, he wrote a short response to Hesychius' questions about the prophets and the end of the world. However, Augustine opted to send his letter with some books that Jerome had already written on the subject instead of addressing the matter entirely on his own.¹²⁴⁶ Hesychius responded with another letter asking for clarification as he was apparently dissatisfied with Jerome's answers.¹²⁴⁷ Thus, Augustine replied with *Epistula 199* in which he addressed some of the number theories found in the Scriptures related to the time of Christ's return while also commenting on the signs related to the end of the age.¹²⁴⁸ Yet, Augustine encouraged Hesychius to focus less on knowing the precise time of Christ's return, something that the apostles did not even know,¹²⁴⁹ and urged him to be prepared for Christ's return by living well in the present world.¹²⁵⁰

Around 420, Augustine wrote *Epistula 207* to Bishop Claudius in Italy. His letter was accompanied by books written to refute the heresy of Julian of Eclanum. Later around 428, while still in the midst of the battle with Julian, Augustine wrote two letters to Quodvultdeus, a deacon of Carthage who had asked Augustine for a book summarizing the heresies facing the church as well as a response for each one.¹²⁵¹ In *Epistula 222*, Augustine responded that such a task would be difficult in light of his present responsibilities; hence, he suggested a similar work written in

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¹²⁴⁵ Though Rhenanus was probably a non-ordained monk, he had inquired of Augustine about the nature of the soul on behalf of Bishop Optatus and other clergy in Mauretania Caesariensis. See *ep.* 190.1; cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 959-60.

¹²⁴⁶ *Ep.* 197.5.

¹²⁴⁷ *Ep.* 198.7.

¹²⁴⁸ *Ep.* 199.17-33. In particular, he addressed the meaning of the weeks in Dan. 9:22-7.

¹²⁴⁹ *Ep.* 199.4-6, 12.

¹²⁵⁰ *Ep.* 199.1-4, 9, 52-4.

Greek by a certain Philastrus. He invited Quodvultdeus to take the book and have it translated into Latin for his colleagues in Carthage. Yet, in response to the deacon's repeated request,¹²⁵² Augustine wrote *Epistula* 224 agreeing to write the book once he had finished with his latest books against Julian.¹²⁵³ Due to his death in 430, Augustine was only able to produce the incomplete *De haeresibus*.¹²⁵⁴

In the midst of the Pelagian controversy, Augustine penned a number of letters to clergy and spiritual leaders affected by Pelagius' teaching. In 418, Augustine sent *Epistula* 194 to Sixtus, a presbyter in Rome. In a significant portion of the letter, he resourced Sixtus with teaching on the errors of the Pelagians by providing a thorough theological treatise on the nature of man, original sin, and the gift of faith.¹²⁵⁵ Around 420, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 6* to Atticus of Constantinople refuting the Pelagian teaching on sex and marriage that was spreading in his area. Around 426, Augustine wrote three letters — *Epistulae* 214, 215 and 215A — to the abbot Valentinus and his monks at Hadrumetum. Each letter contained some teaching on the nature of the will in an effort to steer the monks away from the Pelagian heresy. More than simply mentoring through letter, Augustine received two of Valentinus' monks — Cresconius and Felix — at Hippo where they spent time with Augustine and his men and received teaching as well as some books to take back to their community at Hadrumetum.¹²⁵⁶ The result was that Valentinus responded to Augustine with a humble declaration of his orthodoxy as well as reverence for Augustine's position as bishop of Hippo.¹²⁵⁷

¹²⁵¹ *Ep.* 221.2-3.

¹²⁵² *Ep.* 223.

¹²⁵³ *Ep.* 224.1-2.

¹²⁵⁴ Cf. R. Teske, '*Haeresibus, De,*' *ATTA*, 412-13.

¹²⁵⁵ *Ep.* 194.3-46.

¹²⁵⁶ *Epp.* 214.1; 215.1. The books were *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De correptione et gratia*.

¹²⁵⁷ *Ep.* 216. *ep.* 215A was written uniquely to Valentinus.

Augustine sent three final letters in which he resourced the clergy in an exegetical or theological manner. In an undated letter, *Epistula* 249, Augustine wrote to a certain Restitutus referring him to the writings of Tyconius, the Donatist bishop who had developed a set of hermeneutical rules. Augustine was, of course, influenced by Tyconius in developing his rules for interpretation in *De doctrina christiana*. In *Epistula* 5*, written around 416, Augustine responded to two exegetical questions from a certain Bishop Valentianus. First, Valentianus asked why a newly baptized believer should recite the Lord's Prayer that contained a confession of sin. Augustine responded that ongoing confession was required due to man's continual struggle with sin even after baptism.¹²⁵⁸ Secondly, Valentianus inquired of the meaning of Genesis 6:3.¹²⁵⁹ Augustine answered by first providing a better translation of the verse compared to the bishop's poor Latin translation while giving some further commentary on the verse.¹²⁶⁰ Finally, in *Epistula* 29*, Augustine politely refused Paulinus of Milan's request that he write an account of the lives of the saints. Augustine's refusal was a bit ironic as it was Augustine who had asked Paulinus to write the *Vita Ambrosii*. Nevertheless, Augustine referred Paulinus to the work he had already done in commemorating the saint's lives through his sermons.

(3) Toward Maintaining Sound Teaching

In another eighteen letters, Augustine wrote influencing and urging his fellow clergy toward maintaining sound doctrine. The main contexts for these letters were the battles with the Priscillianists, Donatists, Julian, and the Pelgians. Two of Augustine's letters, however, do not seem to be related to any heresy or controversy in the church. In 401, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 64 to the presbyter Quintianus of

¹²⁵⁸ *Ep.* 5*.2.

¹²⁵⁹ "Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3).

¹²⁶⁰ *Ep.* 5*.3.

Carthage admonishing him to read only the canonical Scriptures in the church while reminding him of the canons of the councils of 393 and 397, which affirmed the books of canon.¹²⁶¹ In *Epistula* 148, which we cited in the last section, Augustine wrote to an unnamed bishop via Fortunatianus of Sicca, challenging his belief that God may be perceived in bodily form. Augustine made his appeal on the basis of the teachings of the church fathers as well as what was taught in the Scriptures.¹²⁶²

In *Epistula* 237, an undated letter to Ceretius of Gaul, Augustine denounced a certain Argirius who was caught up in the Priscillianist heresy.¹²⁶³ While condemning their claim that a certain hymn belonged in the Scriptures, Augustine himself appealed to the authority of the canonical Scriptures and chastised Argirius and his group for misusing them.¹²⁶⁴

Around 412, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 28* to support Novatus of Sitifis as his church was experiencing a reunion of catholics and Donatists in the aftermath of the council of Carthage in 411 — a council in which the Donatists were condemned and ordered to unite with the catholic church.¹²⁶⁵ Augustine encouraged Novatus to use this opportunity to teach his congregation about the nature of the church by reading the proceedings of the council of Carthage in church during Lent. This had also been the practice in Hippo, Carthage, Tagaste, Constantine, and probably Caesarea.¹²⁶⁶

Also noted in the previous section, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 207 to Bishop Claudius in Italy around 420. His letter was accompanied by books intended to refute the heresy of Julian that was spreading in Italy. While the letter and books may be

¹²⁶¹ In *ep.* 64.3, Augustine cited canon 38 of the council of Hippo of 393 and canon 47 of the council of Carthage of 397.

¹²⁶² *Ep.* 148.2.10-4.15.

¹²⁶³ *Ep.* 237.1. For a concise explanation of the Priscillianist heresy see R. Teske, 'Priscillianists, *Contra*,' *ATTA*, 684-5.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ep.* 237.2-3, 7, 9.

¹²⁶⁵ *Ep.* 28*.1.

¹²⁶⁶ *Ep.* 28*.2. See Robert Eno's comments in FC, 6.187.

regarded as a theological resource, they also served to encourage Claudius and the clergy toward maintaining sound doctrine.

Augustine's final thirteen letters related to maintaining sound doctrine were addressed to clergy affected by the Pelagian controversy.¹²⁶⁷ In 416, Augustine penned *Epistula* 178 to a certain Bishop Hilary simply warning him about Pelagian thinking while explaining some of its errors. In 417, Augustine wrote to Paulinus in *Epistula* 186 also with the purpose of recounting the heresy of Pelagius. This was probably difficult news for Paulinus as he apparently had some kind of relationship with Pelagius. Augustine demonstrated sensitivity by co-authoring the letter with Alypius who had personally spent time with Paulinus in Italy. In 418, Augustine encouraged Sixtus of Rome with two letters — *Epistulae* 191 and 194 — affirming him in his role as an apologist against the Pelagians.¹²⁶⁸ Apparently, Sixtus had been led astray by Pelagian thinking at some point but then renounced it and actively joined Augustine and others in the fight against the heresy. Finally, in *Epistula* 190, a letter we have already considered, Augustine not only theologically resourced Bishop Optatus from the posture of a peer in ministry, but also warned him about the dangers of falling into the Pelagian heresy.¹²⁶⁹

In two letters, Augustine communicated with bishops in the East investigating how Pelagius was acquitted by a church council in Palestine while endeavoring to influence them in their thinking about the heresy. In *Epistula* 179, written in 416, Augustine appealed to Bishop John of Jerusalem raising the issue of the teaching that Pelagius' disciples had been spreading while requesting a copy of the *gesta* from the

¹²⁶⁷ In the previous sections we treated *epp.* 190; 194; 6*; 214-15; 215A which were written to resource the clergy with theological instruction and also to steer them away from the errors of the Pelagians. To avoid being redundant, we will not consider *epp.* 6*; 214-15; 215A in this section.

¹²⁶⁸ *Ep.* 194 served the purpose of being a theological resource as well as an encouragement to fight heresy.

¹²⁶⁹ *Ep.* 190.22.

415 council of Diospolis that had acquitted Pelagius.¹²⁷⁰ Hence, there was a real vigilance on Augustine's part to gather all of the facts in order to pin down Pelagius in his heresy.¹²⁷¹ Augustine also took the opportunity to relate what he knew about Pelagius and essentially make an argument against Pelagius to John.¹²⁷² In *Epistula* 4*, written the following year to Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine acknowledged that he had received from Cyril a copy of the *gesta* that John had never sent.¹²⁷³ Augustine took the *gesta* and produced his *De gestis Pelagii*, an apologetic against Pelagius that he sent as a resource to Aurelius of Carthage while also sending a certified copy to Cyril via his courier Justus.¹²⁷⁴ Finally, Augustine urged Cyril to beware of Latin speakers in Alexandria propagating Pelagius' teaching while generally encouraging him to fight against heresy.¹²⁷⁵

Finally, in 416, Augustine wrote two letters in collaboration with other African bishops to influence Pope Innocent I on the matter of Pelagius. In *Epistula* 176, Augustine communicated the decision of the 416 council of Milevus in which Pelagius was condemned. While giving their theological position on man's sinful nature supported by numerous passages from the Scriptures, Augustine and the bishops of Numidia wrote to inform their chief shepherd of what was happening in the African church and to persuade him to their position.¹²⁷⁶ In *Epistula* 177, written the same year, Augustine wrote on behalf of bishops Aurelius, Evodius, Possidius, and Alypius. Again, by using arguments from the Scriptures and sending Pelagius' own book to Innocent, Augustine laid out the heart of the Pelagian issue — man's

¹²⁷⁰ *Ep.* 179.2, 7.

¹²⁷¹ *Ep.* 179.7, 9, 10.

¹²⁷² *Ep.* 179.3-6.

¹²⁷³ Apparently John had disregarded Augustine and his request in light of Augustine's association with his enemy Jerome.

¹²⁷⁴ *Ep.* 4*.2.

¹²⁷⁵ *Ep.* 4*.5.

¹²⁷⁶ *Ep.* 176.1-3.

nature.¹²⁷⁷ While it may seem odd to assert that Augustine, along with his fellow bishops, was mentoring the pope through his letters, he was nevertheless attempting to influence Innocent toward sound doctrine as he had done in letters to John and Cyril. Augustine's correspondence seemed effective as Innocent responded to each letter affirming the bishops for their commitment to sound teaching while condemning the errors of Pelagius.¹²⁷⁸

(4) Practical Church Matters

In thirty-five letters, Augustine mentored his fellow clergy by giving direction and insight into practical matters related to leading the church.¹²⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that ten of these letters were written to resource disciples who had left Hippo to serve the African church as bishops. Alypius was Augustine's key correspondent receiving six letters. In *Epistula* 29, written in 395 when Augustine was still a presbyter, he recounted to Alypius the ordeal of preaching to the crowds in the midst of the battle to reform the *laetitia* festival. Though the letter was very much one minister sharing with another minister about an experience, Augustine indirectly impressed upon Alypius the necessity of dealing with such church problems by holding up the Scriptures as the final authority for church practice.¹²⁸⁰

In *Epistula* 83, written around 404, Augustine wrote to Alypius regarding a certain Honoratus of Thiava, one of Augustine's monks at Hippo who died. The church at Thiava, a congregation under Alypius' responsibility, was demanding that Honoratus' possessions be returned to the church. While responding to Alypius' request for help in the matter, Augustine certainly honored Alypius and his

¹²⁷⁷ *Ep.* 177.1, 7-8.

¹²⁷⁸ *Epp.* 182-3.

¹²⁷⁹ Augustine's *epp.* 41 and 60 to Aurelius of Carthage deal with practical church matters. Since they were adequately treated in the section on peer mentoring, they will not be discussed in the present section.

¹²⁸⁰ *Ep.* 29.2-11. Augustine's repetition of 'taking up the book' (*codicem etiam accipi statimque . . .*

jurisdiction over the Thiava church by dealing with the problem in cooperation with Alypius.¹²⁸¹ As the matter was apparently pressing, Augustine asked Alypius to sign a letter that he had already written to the church given that Alypius was in agreement with its contents. Aside from helping Alypius practically in the matter, Augustine took the opportunity to discuss some principles related to the issue — that a monk should settle his estate before entering a monastery and that clergy should avoid the appearance of evil with regard to money matters.¹²⁸²

Between 419 and 423, Augustine wrote two letters, *Epistula* 15* and 9*, to resource Alypius in his role as a judge and leader of the clergy.¹²⁸³ A man in Tagaste had raped one of the nuns from the convent and Alypius' clergy responded by beating the man. The man appealed to Pope Caelestinus who demanded that the clergy be judged and punished for their actions.¹²⁸⁴ As Alypius was preparing to deal with this awkward situation, his long-time friend wrote to support and encourage him as well as to give him some direction. Though Augustine did not seem too concerned about the actions of the clergy except for the possibility that they used excessive force, he urged Alypius to investigate the facts before rendering a judgment — a principle that can be observed repeatedly throughout his own ministry.¹²⁸⁵

In *Epistula* 22*, written around 420, Augustine mentored Alypius by involving him in a specific ministry related to his previous training as a lawyer — sending him to Rome to intercede before the pope on church matters.¹²⁸⁶ On this journey, Augustine asked him to speak with the pope about the problem of recruiting clergy from certain classes, the possible need for a secular defender for the church,

accepto codice recitauit) in *ep.* 29.4, 10 is significant. PL 33, 116, 119.

¹²⁸¹ *Ep.* 83.1.

¹²⁸² *Ep.* 83.2-4.

¹²⁸³ *Ep.* 15* was also written to the clergy serving with Alypius in Tagaste.

¹²⁸⁴ *Ep.* 9*.1-2.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ep.* 9*.3.

and the appointment of the unworthy Honorius as bishop of Caesarea.¹²⁸⁷ While Alypius was still in Rome, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 10* asking him to also appeal to the secular leaders over the crisis of abduction and slavery that was happening in Africa. In maintaining his practice of thoroughly investigating a matter, Augustine supplied Alypius with a statute to help him in his efforts.¹²⁸⁸

In *Epistulae* 62 and 63, written in 402, Augustine wrote to Severus of Milevus about a deacon named Timothy who had been dishonest with Augustine, Alypius, and Samsucius of Turrus.¹²⁸⁹ Timothy had begun as a *lector* in the church at Subsanna near Hippo, left to go to Milevus to serve with Severus, and then wanted to return to Subsanna.¹²⁹⁰ In *Epistula* 63, Augustine endeavored to work through the awkward situation involving his close friend by sharing that he had corrected Timothy through ‘reprimands, by admonitions and by prayers.’¹²⁹¹ Though he left the decision to Severus, he asked him to free Timothy from his commitment to the Milevus church and allow him to return to Subsanna.¹²⁹²

Around 401, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 245 to his friend and eventual biographer Possidius. In the letter, he responded to Possidius’ request about how to deal with church members wearing gold, expensive dress, using skin pigments, and wearing amulet earrings. Augustine encouraged Possidius not to prohibit people from presenting themselves in a certain way, but to have them consider what the Scriptures taught about true beauty and what was honorable between husbands and wives. However, regarding amulets, Augustine reminded Possidius that he had a strong

¹²⁸⁶ The letter was also addressed to Bishop Peregrinus of Thanae.

¹²⁸⁷ *Ep.* 22*.1-2, 4, 6-7.

¹²⁸⁸ *Ep.* 10*.2-4, 6.

¹²⁸⁹ The three bishops co-authored *ep.* 62.

¹²⁹⁰ *Epp.* 62.2; 63.1.

¹²⁹¹ Two times in the same paragraph Augustine repeated: *quid obiurgando, quid monendo, quid orando correxerimus . . . partim obiurgando, partim monendo, partim orando correxeramus.* *ep.* 63.2, PL 33, 231.

¹²⁹² *Ep.* 63.4.

warrant from Scripture to denounce such superstitions. Finally, Augustine advised Possidius against ordaining a man who had been baptized as a Donatist.¹²⁹³ In *Epistula* 23A*, probably written to Possidius around 419, Augustine inquired about the travels of Alypius regarding decisions affecting the African church.¹²⁹⁴ In other church business, Augustine affirmed a certain Bishop Donatianus while sending a copy of the *gesta* that acquitted the Bishop Maurentius. Finally, Augustine shared with his friend about his recent writing projects.¹²⁹⁵

Augustine wrote eleven letters to the clergy specifically dealing with issues of church leadership. Around 402, Augustine penned *Epistula* 59 to Bishop Victorinus who had waged something of a campaign against Xantippus for the position of primate of Numidia. While encouraging Victorinus to resolve the issue directly with Xantippus, he also rebuked him for the inappropriate manner in which he had pursued the office.¹²⁹⁶ Augustine wrote *Epistula* 65 to the same Xantippus who ended up being named primate in 402. In his letter, Augustine was actually making the primate aware of what had transpired with a clergy named Abundantianus who had been found guilty of embezzlement and sexual immorality. While informing Xantippus of the affair, Augustine indirectly modeled dealing with an immoral clergy as he took his time to investigate the matter thoroughly, removed him from his place of ministry, and dealt with the fallen clergy in a compassionate manner.¹²⁹⁷

In 422, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 209 to Pope Caelestinus regarding the fallen Bishop Antoninus of Fussala — who had been removed from his position by

¹²⁹³ *Ep.* 245.1-2.

¹²⁹⁴ For arguments on authorship of this letter, see H. Chadwick, 'New Letters of St. Augustine,' *JTS* 34.2 (1983), 448-9.

¹²⁹⁵ *Ep.* 23A*.1, 3-4.

¹²⁹⁶ *Ep.* 59.1.

¹²⁹⁷ *Ep.* 65.1.

Augustine and then appealed to Pope Boniface.¹²⁹⁸ In the letter, Augustine recounted the affair by first relating the great burden he had had for the region of Fussala, an area strongly influenced by the Donatists.¹²⁹⁹ As Fussala was primarily composed of Punic speakers, Augustine, surely influenced by Valerius, was convinced of the need to set apart a Punic speaking bishop linguistically capable of communicating with the people.¹³⁰⁰ When his first choice of bishop refused to be ordained, Augustine made a hasty decision in ordaining Antoninus — a *lector* who had grown up in the Hippo monastery. Though the purpose of this letter was to inform Caelestinus of what had gone on, Augustine did indirectly influence the pope in how he handled the affair.

First, Augustine responded to Antoninus with both discipline and grace. He wrote:

We so mixed clemency with severity in our sentence, that while reserving to him his office of bishop, we did not leave altogether unpunished offenses which behoved neither to be repeated again by himself, nor held forth to the imitation of others. We therefore, in correcting him, reserved to the young man the rank of his office unimpaired, but at the same time, as a punishment, we took away his power, appointing that he should not any longer rule over those with whom he had dealt in such a manner that with just resentment they could not submit to his authority.¹³⁰¹

While Antoninus' authority as bishop was taken away, he was not actually stripped of his title. In fact, Augustine wondered if he and the other Numidian bishops had been too lenient.¹³⁰² Secondly, it is clear that, despite Antoninus' behavior, Augustine still loved him as a son and longed to treat him with compassion. In fact, Augustine was actually appealing to Caelestinus for compassionate treatment for both Antoninus and the people of Fussala.¹³⁰³ Finally, Augustine took responsibility for his poor choice in

¹²⁹⁸ *Ep.* 209.6-9.

¹²⁹⁹ *Ep.* 209.2.

¹³⁰⁰ *Ep.* 209.3.

¹³⁰¹ *Denique sententias nostras sic temperauimus, ut saluo episcopatu, non tamen omnino impunita relinquerentur quae non deberent uel eidem ipsi deinceps iterumque facienda, uel caeteris imitanda proponi. Honorem itaque integrum seruauimus iuueni corrigendo; sed corripiendo minuius potestatem, ne scilicet eis praeesset ulterius, cum quibus sic egerat, ut dolore iusto eum sibi praeesse ferre omnino non possent.* *ep.* 209.5, PL 33, 954.

¹³⁰² *Ep.* 209.7.

¹³⁰³ *Ep.* 209.9.

Antoninus. He admitted that he hastily selected Antoninus under the pressure of inconveniencing the aging primate of Numidia who was already en route to Fussala.¹³⁰⁴ Perhaps he also feared embarrassment from the rival Donatist party that was active in Fussala. Augustine was willing to take responsibility to the point of resigning from his own office over his mistake.¹³⁰⁵

In *Epistula* 78, written prior to 408 to the people and clergy of Hippo, Augustine openly related the case of a priest named Boniface who had accused a monk of immorality and then was accused by the same monk in return. Augustine again modeled to the clergy how to deal with potential immorality by being completely transparent about the issue and by considering the accused innocent until proven guilty.¹³⁰⁶ Similarly, in the undated *Epistula* 13* to the presbyter Restitutus, Augustine gave advice on dealing with a particular deacon who had shared his bed with a nun. Again, as Augustine was investigating the matter, he encouraged Restitutus to consider the deacon innocent until found guilty. Yet, if the congregation became agitated, Augustine urged Restitutus to read *Epistula* 13* to the church.¹³⁰⁷

In *Epistula* 85, written before 408, Augustine wrote to Paul of Cataqua confronting him about his sin of worldliness that had injured the church. This letter must have been difficult for Augustine who regarded Paul, an alumnus of the *monasterium clericorum*, as ‘not only my brother, but my colleague.’¹³⁰⁸ Though Paul’s offense was not explicitly mentioned in the letter, Augustine hinted that his lack of repentance would lead to his removal as bishop: ‘unless the Lord delivers you

¹³⁰⁴ *Ep.* 209.3.

¹³⁰⁵ *Ep.* 209.10.

¹³⁰⁶ *Ep.* 78.2, 8.

¹³⁰⁷ *Ep.* 13*.2-3. In *ep.* 18*.1-2 we learn that the deacon was found guilty.

¹³⁰⁸ *Non tantum te esse fratrem meum, sed etiam collegam meum. ep.* 85.1, PL 33, 205.

from all your worldly concerns and burdens and calls you back to a genuine episcopal manner of life, such a wound cannot be healed.’¹³⁰⁹

In *Epistula* 236, written to Deuterius of Caesarea, Augustine indicated that he was sending back to Caesarea a sub-deacon who had been serving in the region of Hippo, yet who had become involved in the Manichean sect.¹³¹⁰ Augustine, acting on his convictions for sound doctrine, demonstrated absolutely no tolerance for heresy. However, in *Epistula* 219, written to Bishops Proculus of Marseille and Cillenius of Gaul in 426, Augustine commended a monk named Leporius to them. Apparently, Leporius had fled Gaul over his heretical views on the incarnation. Augustine received him in Hippo and spent time mentoring him toward an orthodox understanding of the incarnation before sending him back to Gaul with a statement recanting his heresy and embracing orthodoxy.¹³¹¹ Through this letter, Augustine modeled restorative grace to the two Gallic clergy. Finally, in the undated *Epistula* 26* to Honoratus, Augustine does not recommend the unworthy and unreliable Donantius to be named deacon in Suppa.¹³¹²

In *Epistula* 84, written prior to 411 to Novatus of Sitifis, Augustine denied Novatus’ request for his brother Lucillus, a deacon serving in Hippo, to be transferred back to Sitifis.¹³¹³ First, Augustine appealed to the priority of the *sarcina* of the ministry and the needs of the church over any personal desires. He wrote: ‘for the sake of the world to come . . . we set the needs of our mother, the church, before the needs of our own time.’¹³¹⁴ Secondly, Lucillus was a Punic speaker and his language

¹³⁰⁹ *Ut nisi te Dominus omnibus curis et sarcinis saecularibus expeditum, ad ueram episcopalem uitam uictumque reuocauerit, tale uulnus sanari non possit. ep. 85.1, PL 33, 205.*

¹³¹⁰ This letter is dated sometime after 395.

¹³¹¹ His declaration of orthodoxy happened in the context of the council of Carthage in 418. Cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.215-16; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 123.

¹³¹² *Ep. 26*.1-2.*

¹³¹³ *Ep. 84.1.*

¹³¹⁴ *Sed dum matris Ecclesiae necessitates, propter futurum saeculum, quo nobiscum inseparabiliter*

ability was greatly needed in the region of Hippo. Again, following the influence of Valerius, Augustine valued overcoming language barriers in ministry by finding capable communicators. In *Epistula 28**, a letter treated in the previous section, Augustine resourced the same Novatus in his role as a judge in an upcoming case.¹³¹⁵

Epistula 213, written on September 9, 426, contains the proceedings of Augustine's nomination of the presbyter Eraclius to succeed him as bishop. Augustine purposefully employed notaries to record the event so as to avoid the confusion and disputes that had occurred in other churches during a change of leadership. Augustine clearly wanted to leave the Hippo church in good hands after he passed away. He wrote: 'I know that churches are wont to be disturbed after the decease of their bishops by ambitious or contentious parties, and I feel it to be my duty to take measures to prevent this community from suffering.'¹³¹⁶ Hence, the record of the transfer of leadership in Hippo served as a good model for other churches to follow. Two aspects of Augustine's ordination of Eraclius are noteworthy. First, Augustine made sure that the clergy and congregation of Hippo were behind the decision to have Eraclius as their new bishop.¹³¹⁷ Secondly, he broke with Valerius and upheld the canons of Nicea by not ordaining Eraclius as his co-bishop.¹³¹⁸ Instead, Eraclius continued serving as a presbyter until Augustine's death focusing on administrative tasks and serving as a judge, which allowed Augustine the freedom to study and write more.¹³¹⁹

conuiuemus, ep. 84.1, PL 33, 294.

¹³¹⁵ *Ep. 28*.7.*

¹³¹⁶ *Scio post obitus episcoporum, per ambitiosos aut contentiosos solere Ecclesias perturbari; et quod saepe expertus sum et dolui, debeo quantum ad me attinet, ne contingat, huic prospicere ciuitati.* ep. 213.1, PL 33, 966.

¹³¹⁷ *Ep. 213.1.*

¹³¹⁸ *Ep. 213.4.*

¹³¹⁹ *Ep. 213.5-6.*

In other practical church matters, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 36 in 397 to the African presbyter Casulanus responding to his question of whether believers should fast on the Sabbath or not. Though providing an answer, Augustine encouraged Casulanus to use his own ‘fine mind’ (*ingenio*) to find solutions to such matters.¹³²⁰ Following the teaching of Ambrose, Augustine advised Casulanus that in situations where there was no direct command from Scripture, it was acceptable to follow the traditions of one’s church.¹³²¹ In *Epistula* 61, written in 401, Augustine gave advice to the deacon Theodorus of Carthage on the issue of receiving former Donatist clergy into the communion of the church.¹³²² Before 423, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 115 to Fortunatus of Cirta asking him to deliver a letter on his behalf to the governor regarding a certain Faventius who had sought refuge in the church of Hippo and then was arrested. Through his letter, Augustine essentially involved Fortunatus in this ministry of interceding for a refugee and appealing to the secular authorities. In *Epistula* 191 to the presbyter Sixtus, a letter previously treated, Augustine gave some insights for dealing with heresy in the church. He urged a balance between being gentle with those needing to be taught while disciplining those who intentionally propagated false teaching.¹³²³

Augustine addressed one his last letters, *Epistula* 228, to Honoratus in 429. Honoratus, like Quodvultdeus, had written asking how the clergy should respond to the danger posed by the Vandal invasion and if it was acceptable for them to flee if necessary.¹³²⁴ Augustine responded quite decisively that, while personal safety was important, a shepherd should never abandon his flock. When church members were in

¹³²⁰ *Ep.* 36.2.3, PL 33, 137.

¹³²¹ *Ep.* 36.1.2, 14.32.

¹³²² *Ep.* 61.1.

¹³²³ *Ep.* 191.2.

¹³²⁴ *Ep.* 228.1.

need of ministry, especially during volatile times, a minister must be present.¹³²⁵

Finally, Augustine encouraged Honoratus not to fear mortal death because he possessed eternal life.¹³²⁶

In *Epistula* 250, written before 420, Augustine confronted the young Bishop Auxilius for excommunicating a man along with his entire family.¹³²⁷ While pressing the bishop for a Scriptural basis for his decision, he encouraged him to pardon the excommunicated man. Finally, the aging Augustine related to Auxilius that bishops also made mistakes and should admit them and move on.¹³²⁸ In *Epistulae* 253 and 254, written sometime after 395, Augustine wrote to Benenatus who had hastily arranged a marriage for a young girl who was a ward of the church. While discussing the issue in *Epistula* 254, Augustine concluded that the girl was too young to be married. Augustine sent the undated *Epistula* 3* to the deacon Felix counseling him over the issue of a woman who had committed her daughter to virginity during a time of illness and later wanted to have her released from the vow.¹³²⁹ Augustine advised Felix that the woman should keep the oath and that her daughter ought to become a nun.¹³³⁰

In 426, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 7* to Faustinus, a deacon serving with him in Hippo. Briefly, Augustine sent Faustinus to Novatus of Sitifis to make him aware of a financial gift previously pledged by Count Boniface that had been withdrawn by his widow. Augustine wanted Novatus to appeal directly to the higher secular authority, Count Sebastian.¹³³¹ Though Faustinus was involved in this work of the church by communicating to Novatus on the matter, Augustine provided clear

¹³²⁵ *Ep.* 228.8.

¹³²⁶ *Ep.* 228.11.

¹³²⁷ *Ep.* 250.1. See also *ep.* 1*.

¹³²⁸ *Ep.* 250.3.

¹³²⁹ *Ep.* 3*.1.

¹³³⁰ *Ep.* 3*.3; cf. H. Chadwick, 'New Letters of St. Augustine,' *JTS* 34.2 (1983), 428.

instructions in the letter for how to proceed. Hence, Augustine entrusted him with an assignment and then wrote providing support and direction.¹³³² Augustine also wrote the undated *Epistula* 8* to Bishop Victor regarding a church financial matter.

Apparently Victor had purchased land for the church from an elderly woman who did not legally own it and her son responded by demanding back his property from the church.¹³³³ Though Victor had initially refused the man's request, Augustine encouraged him to return the man's land and to be careful about entangling the church in any potential legal problems.

(5) Perspective on Ministry

Augustine wrote two letters in which he shared his perspective on ministry. As noted, Augustine's motivation for the ministry was encapsulated in the word *sarcina*. Hence, it should come as no surprise that the two letters in question also communicated this value. Earlier in the present chapter, we cited Augustine's *Epistula* 48 to the presbyter and abbot Eudoxius and his monks of Capraria. Augustine exhorted the men toward serving the church and achieving a proper balance between the *uita actiua* and *uita comtemplatiua*.¹³³⁴ Augustine indirectly communicated the same idea to Bishop Memorius of Apulia around 408 in *Epistula* 101. Augustine was writing to apologize for being unable to send Memorius a corrected copy of *De Musica*, a set of books that he had authored nearly twenty years beforehand.¹³³⁵ He described the period of his life when he was writing *De Musica* as being 'the beginning of our leisure, when my mind was free from greater and more important cares.'¹³³⁶ Yet after nearly two decades as a presbyter and bishop of Hippo, he

¹³³¹ *Ep.* 7*.1.

¹³³² *Ep.* 7*.2.

¹³³³ *Ep.* 8*.1.

¹³³⁴ *Ep.* 48.3.

¹³³⁵ *Ep.* 101.1.

¹³³⁶ *Initio nostri otii cum a curis maioribus magisque necessariis uacabat animus. ep.* 101.3, PL 33,

admitted: ‘after the burden of the cares about the church was imposed on me, all those trifles fled from my hands so that I can now scarcely find the manuscript.’¹³³⁷ While excusing himself for being unable to fulfill a request, Augustine actually communicated more of his ministry philosophy than anything else.

(6) Toward Spiritual Growth

Three of Augustine’s letters show him mentoring members of the clergy toward their own spiritual growth. In 397, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 38 to Profuturus in which he followed up on a previous conversation and exhorted Profuturus to guard against being carried off by anger and hatred.¹³³⁸ In *Epistula* 64 to Quintianus, a letter that we have already treated in part, Augustine wrote to this Carthaginian presbyter following an apparent conflict with Bishop Aurelius. While not usurping the authority of his friend Aurelius, Augustine sought to encourage Quintianus — especially urging him toward patience.¹³³⁹ Finally, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 125 to Alypius in 411 in the aftermath of the Pinian controversy in Hippo.¹³⁴⁰ In response to the jeering and false accusations made by the Hippo faithful, Augustine urged his friend to model a life of integrity before his accusers. He further encouraged Alypius through his good example to heal the suspicion of Albina, Pinian’s mother, that the church was greedy and only interested in her son’s money.¹³⁴¹

(7) Encouragement

Augustine sent another five letters to various clergy for the purpose of encouraging them in their faith and ministry. He addressed *Epistula* 110 to Severus of

369.

¹³³⁷ *Sed posteaquam mihi curarum ecclesiasticarum sarcina imposita est, omnes illae deliciae fugere de manibus, ita ut uix nunc ipsum codicem inueniam.* ep.101.3, PL 33, 369.

¹³³⁸ *Ep.* 38.2.

¹³³⁹ *Ep.* 64.1.

¹³⁴⁰ Pinian was a wealthy layman whom the faithful at Hippo unsuccessfully attempted to ordain by force. In the aftermath, they accused Alypius of taking Pinian from them to Tagaste.

¹³⁴¹ *Ep.* 125.1-2. Albina was of course Pinian’s mother.

Milevus thanking his long-time friend for his letter of encouragement as well as affirming Severus in their continuing friendship.¹³⁴² Similarly, Augustine's purpose in *Epistula* 192 to Caelestinus in 418 was simply to express warmth and friendship to his co-worker in ministry.¹³⁴³

In 409, Augustine wrote *Epistula* 111 to Victorianus in order to encourage this presbyter who was troubled by the violence resulting from the Vandal invasion. Augustine began the letter by empathizing with Victorianus in his grief while reminding him that the Scriptures taught that one should not be surprised by such events.¹³⁴⁴ He went on to encourage Victorianus with two holy models who stood strong during suffering — the prophet Daniel and the niece of Severus of Milevus.¹³⁴⁵ In light of the models from Scripture, Augustine exhorted Victorianus to believe the Scriptures, teach them, and resist murmuring while continuing steadfast in prayer and believing that God will deliver him from harm.¹³⁴⁶

In 410, Augustine sent *Epistula* 122 to the faithful of Hippo, which included the clergy. While apologizing for his absence from Hippo, he simply wrote to encourage them to persevere through any temporal difficulty they might face in light of the eternal glory that awaited them. He concluded the letter by exhorting them to continue in good works especially caring for the needs of the poor.¹³⁴⁷ Finally, in 412, Augustine addressed *Epistula* 142 to Saturninus, Eufrates, and a group of clergy who had returned to the catholic church from the Donatist party.¹³⁴⁸ Augustine rejoiced

¹³⁴² *Ep.* 110.1. The date of *ep.* 110 is not certain and has been dated between 401 and 426.

¹³⁴³ *Ep.* 192.

¹³⁴⁴ *Ep.* 111.1-2.

¹³⁴⁵ *Ep.* 111.3-4, 7.

¹³⁴⁶ *Ep.* 111.6, 9.

¹³⁴⁷ *Ep.* 122.1-2.

¹³⁴⁸ The letter also addressed laymen associated with these clergy.

with them in their good decision, exhorted them to carry out their ministries in the church, and encouraged them to pray for those still in Donatism.¹³⁴⁹

(8) Reconciliation

In Augustine's final two mentoring letters to the clergy, he modeled humility and Christian fellowship by initiating reconciliation with two individuals that he had apparently offended. In *Epistula* 148, a letter that we have previously considered for its theological value, Augustine wrote through the intermediary of Fortunatianus of Sicca to reach out to a bishop that he had offended. Though Augustine does not hedge from his theological position, he repeatedly asked the bishop's forgiveness for the manner in which he communicated while demonstrating a desire to learn from this man.¹³⁵⁰ Similarly, sometime after 418, Augustine and Alypius wrote *Epistula* 171 to their former colleague from Hippo, Peregrinus, asking him to send their apologies to a doctor named Maximus whose letter they were unable to answer because of other commitments. While there is no indication that Maximus was offended, Augustine was sensitive enough to inquire through the intermediary of Peregrinus.

(9) Summary

Augustine's correspondence provides us with invaluable insight into his personal relationships with other clergy, the issues that he was facing as a bishop, as well as theological and exegetical leanings. The majority of his letters, sixty-six, were dedicated to practical ministry issues as well as theological and exegetical queries. Yet, it is significant that Augustine, highly regarded as a theologian, actually wrote more letters about practical issues than theological ones.¹³⁵¹ Augustine's twenty-three letters in which he mentored and received mentoring from his peers reveal a humble

¹³⁴⁹ *Ep.* 142.1, 4.

¹³⁵⁰ *Ep.* 148.1.1, 4; 148.5.18.

¹³⁵¹ As noted, thirty-five letters addressed practical issues while thirty-one focused on theological and exegetical questions.

man committed to continual growth in the context of Christian friendship. His eighteen letters encouraging and influencing his colleagues toward upholding sound doctrine tell us much about the ideas and teaching that threatened the church's doctrinal purity in Augustine's day while also testifying to Augustine's commitment to engage in the battle on the side of orthodoxy. His ten letters dedicated to spiritual mentoring, encouragement, and reconciliation also reveal much about his heart to shepherd his friends and colleagues in ministry. Finally, his two letters relating to his perspective on ministry merely reflect his conviction that the needs of the church must have priority over any desire for leisure.

3. Books

Possidius affirmed that Augustine, through the aid of stenographers, resourced spiritual leaders in Africa and beyond through his books and treatises.¹³⁵² His writings became known in his lifetime to the entire Latin speaking church, while some were translated in Greek, and were ultimately preserved in the library at Hippo.¹³⁵³ As previously noted, some of Augustine's writings were inspired by theological and exegetical dialogue during mealtime discussions in the Hippo monastery¹³⁵⁴; while Pellegrino notes that others were: 'written at the request (often repeated and insistent) of persons who wished to be enlightened on various points of doctrine; or they arose out of the urgent demands of polemical controversy with heretics and pagans.'¹³⁵⁵

Augustine clearly believed that books were an invaluable resource for mentoring the clergy as well as the laity. As we noted in our survey of Augustine's *epistulae*, there were some cases in which he responded to a question by sending a

¹³⁵² *Vita* 7.3-4.

¹³⁵³ *Ibid.* 11.4; 18.10; 31.6; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 212.

¹³⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 196; cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 121.

¹³⁵⁵ Cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 46.

relevant book written by another author.¹³⁵⁶ Yet, in light of the time that he gave to writing and the amount of material that he managed to produce, even in the midst of a busy pastoral ministry, Augustine believed that his books could also have a mentoring impact on his audience. He summarized this conviction in *Epistula* 151:

In so far as leisure is granted me from the work imperatively demanded by the church, which my office specially binds me to serve, I have resolved to devote the time entirely, if the Lord will, to the labor of studies pertaining to ecclesiastical learning; in doing which I think that I may, if it please the mercy of God, be of some service even to future generations.¹³⁵⁷

Not including his *sermones* and *epistulae*, Augustine's surviving works are listed under 117 titles.¹³⁵⁸ While the argument could be made that all of Augustine's writings could have served to edify the clergy, our focus in this section will be to consider the books that were written expressly to ministers to resource them in their ministries. In nineteen books, Augustine resourced clergy in areas of theology and exegesis; apologetics toward maintaining sound doctrine; practical church matters; and toward spiritual growth. In response to some of his correspondents' questions, Augustine included another ten books, not originally intended for the clergy, to also resource them regarding theological and exegetical issues as well as in apologetics toward upholding sound doctrine.

(1) Theological and Exegetical Works

Augustine sent eight works of a theological and exegetical nature to clergy who had written him letters. In *Epistula* 16*, we learn that he sent two *sermones* to Aurelius in what seemed to be a regular practice of resourcing the bishop of Carthage

¹³⁵⁶ *Epp.* 197; 222; 240.

¹³⁵⁷ *Si Dominus uelit, quantum mihi ex illis occupationibus, quas Ecclesiae, cui proprio munere seruiο, necessitas flagitat, datur temporis, id totum impendere labori studiorum ad ecclesiasticas scientias pertinentium; ubi me arbitror, si Dei misericordiae placet, etiam posteris aliquid profuturum. ep.* 151.13, PL 33, 652.

¹³⁵⁸ This number is taken from 'Augustine's Works,' *ATTA*, xxxv-il.

with his messages.¹³⁵⁹ As noted in the last section, in *Epistula 29**, he refused the request of Paulinus of Milan to write a *Vita* commemorating some saints. However, Augustine referred him to the body of *sermones* that he had already preached on the martyrs. As noted in our treatment of his *epistulae*, Augustine's *Epistula 162* to Evodius included copies of *De uera religione*, his works on Genesis,¹³⁶⁰ as well as their Roman dialogues *De animae quantitate* and *De libero arbitrio*.¹³⁶¹ In *Epistula 169*, Augustine also offered Evodius a copy of a finished portion of *De ciuitate Dei* and some of his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Finally, in *Epistula 23**, Augustine sent a letter to Renatus with his book *De anima et eius origine* resourcing Renatus and other clergy in Mauretania Caesariensis on the nature and origin of the soul.¹³⁶² Again, while none of these works were originally intended to mentor the clergy, Augustine chose to send them or make them available in response to the needs of these leaders.

During his ministry in Hippo, Augustine wrote eight theological or exegetical works for the express purpose of resourcing members of the clergy. His first work, *De fide et symbolo*, was actually a written revision of his address to the African bishops at the council of Hippo in 393. As one of the aims of this council was to adopt a Latin translation of the Nicene Creed, Augustine's work was essentially a commentary on the creed.¹³⁶³ While taking time to attack the thought of heretics, most likely the Manicheans, Augustine suggested that an understanding of the creed was the initial step toward understanding the Scriptures.¹³⁶⁴ He concluded his work by writing:

This is the faith which in few words is given in the creed to Christian novices, to be held by them. And these few words are known to the faithful, to the end

¹³⁵⁹ *Ep.* 16*.1.

¹³⁶⁰ It was probably *De Genesi ad litteram* which he completed around 415.

¹³⁶¹ *Ep.* 162.2.

¹³⁶² *Ep.* 190; cf. G. Bonner, 'Anima et eius origine, De,' *ATTA*, 22.

¹³⁶³ As Clancy notes, Augustine's creed was a mixture of the Nicene, Roman and Milanese Creeds. For further works related to the creed by Augustine, see s. 212-15; cf. F. Clancy, 'Fide et symbolo, De,' *ATTA*, 360-1.

¹³⁶⁴ *F. et symb.* 1.1; 2.2; 4.8, 9; 6.13; 9.17, 20; 10.22.

that in believing they may be made subject to God; that being made subject, they may rightly live; that in rightly living, they may make the heart pure; that with the heart made pure, they may understand that which they believe.¹³⁶⁵

As many of the North African bishops were uneducated and ill-equipped at teaching, it was important that they first be resourced with teaching on the creed in order to properly teach their congregations.

Augustine's exegetical work, *Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos*, was basically the record of his question and answer session with some clergy in Carthage during a reading of Romans in 394 or 395.¹³⁶⁶ While continuing to teach against the Manichees, Augustine put forth his initial thoughts on grace, faith, free will, and conversion while also discussing the four stages of the history of redemption.

Less than two years later, in 396, Augustine replied to Simplicianus' theological questions with *Ad Simplicianum*, in which he addressed several passages from Romans and Kings. The most remarkable aspect of this book is that from the first part of book one to the second part, Augustine completely shifted his view of grace from a high regard for human freedom to a stronger belief in God's sovereignty.¹³⁶⁷ Augustine, commenting on this development in his thinking in his *Retractationes*, wrote: 'In resolving this question, I really worked for the free choice of human will, but the grace of God won out.'¹³⁶⁸

Augustine began *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* around 388 upon his return to Tagaste. As previously noted, during his pre-ordination years, he largely

¹³⁶⁵ *Haec est fides quae paucis uerbis tenenda in Symbolo nouellis christianis datur. Quae pauca uerba fidelibus nota sunt, ut credendo subiugentur Deo, subiugati recte uiuant, recte uiuendo cor mundent, corde mundato quod credunt intellegant. f. et symb. 10.25, PL 40, 196. English trans. from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1304.htm>.*

¹³⁶⁶ *Retr.* 1.23.1; cf. P. Fredriksen, 'Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos,' *ATTA*, 345-6.

¹³⁶⁷ Cf. J. Wetzel, 'Simplicianum, Ad,' *ATTA*, 798.

¹³⁶⁸ *In cuius quaestionis solutione laboratum est quidem pro libero arbitrio uoluntatis humanae, sed uicit Dei gratia. retr.* 2.1, PL, 32, 629. English trans. from J. Wetzel, 'Simplicianum, Ad,' *ATTA*, 798.

dealt with anti-Manichean or philosophical themes.¹³⁶⁹ Yet, from 391 to 396, he resourced spiritual leaders by treating exegetical questions related to Scripture in general¹³⁷⁰ as well as Paul's letters.¹³⁷¹

In 422, Augustine wrote *De cura mortuis gerenda* in reply to Paulinus of Nola's question about the value of burying someone near the body of a saint. Though Augustine acknowledged the benefits of praying for the dead, he related that one's soul was ultimately in the hands of God and was not really affected by the place of burial.¹³⁷²

Around 428, Augustine addressed *De praedestinatione sanctorum* to Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary, two Gallic monks who were probably ordained clergy involved in the monastic movement in Gaul led by John Cassian and Vincent of Lérins.¹³⁷³ Reflecting what has come to be known as a semi-Pelagian position, the men took issue with Augustine's teaching on sovereign grace in his book, *De correptione et gratia*, through appealing to his earlier works that gave more freedom to the human will.¹³⁷⁴ Though Augustine did not hedge on his position of divine sovereignty, he explained that prior to writing *Ad Simplicianum*; he simply did not understand the concept of election by grace, which allowed him to maintain his new position.¹³⁷⁵

Around 426, Augustine completed his fifteen books, *De Trinitate* that he dedicated to Aurelius of Carthage. Augustine began writing this work around 399 probably as the outcome of table talks in the Hippo monastery. *De Trinitate* was

¹³⁶⁹ Cf. E. Plumer, 'Diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus, De,' *ATTA*, 276-7.

¹³⁷⁰ *Div. qu.* 51-65.

¹³⁷¹ *Div. qu.* 66-75; 82; cf. E. Plumer, 'Diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus, De,' *ATTA*, 276-7.

¹³⁷² *Cura mort.* 1.3; 2.4; 18.22; cf. E. Plumer, 'Cura mortuis gerenda, De,' *ATTA*, 259.

¹³⁷³ Cf. G. Bonner, 'Praedestinatione sanctorum, De,' *ATTA*, 669.

¹³⁷⁴ *Epp.* 225-6. They were referring to his works *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos numero sex* and *Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos*. Cf. G. Bonner, 'Praedestinatione sanctorum, De,' *ATTA*, 669.

¹³⁷⁵ *Praed. sanct.* 3.7; 4.8.

composed as a prayer and meditation that also sounded the depths of the theology of the Godhead. Williams writes: ‘The genius of *De Trinitate* is its fusion of speculation and prayer, its presentation of trinitarian theology as, ultimately, nothing other than a teasing out of what it is to be converted and to come to live in Christ.’¹³⁷⁶ In the first four books, Augustine exegeted passages related to the incarnation while treating Scriptural terms related to the Trinity.¹³⁷⁷ Books five to seven were more apologetic in nature and addressed Arian claims.¹³⁷⁸ In the final eight books, Augustine, admitting the inadequacy of language, considered the analogies relevant to the Trinity.¹³⁷⁹ He was also careful to assert the equality of the members of the Godhead.¹³⁸⁰ Finally, in the concluding books of this work, he showed the relation of the Trinity to the process of sanctification in the believer. Williams adds: ‘We are not here thinking about an image that is simply an aid to more accurate conceptualizing: the realizing of the image is inseparable from the whole process of sanctification.’¹³⁸¹ Hence, Augustine, through *De Trinitate*, resourced Aurelius and the African clergy with a theological work that ministered to them intellectually and spiritually. While dedicating the work to Aurelius, Augustine also referred it Evodius, Deogratias, and Theodorus in reply to their questions.¹³⁸²

Augustine’s final resource to the clergy of an exegetical nature was *De doctrina Christiana*. Begun in 396 shortly after his consecration as co-bishop of Hippo, Augustine completed the final portion in 426 while writing *Retractationes*.¹³⁸³ Kevane suggests that the work may have originated at the request of Aurelius and was

¹³⁷⁶ Cf. R. Williams, ‘*Trinitate, De*,’ *ATTA*, 850.

¹³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 846.

¹³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷⁹ *Trin.* 15.19.33; cf. R. Williams, *op. cit.*, 846, 850.

¹³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 847.

¹³⁸¹ *Ibid.* 850.

¹³⁸² *Epp.* 174; 162; 173A.

¹³⁸³ *Retr.* 2.4; cf. J. O’Donnell, ‘*Doctrina Christiana, De*,’ *ATTA*, 278.

designed to serve the clergy, monks, as well other Christians.¹³⁸⁴ This work, like *De fide et symbolo* was especially needed in the North African church, which lacked trained men skilled in interpreting the Scriptures.¹³⁸⁵ While van der Meer refers to *De doctrina Christiana* as a manual for preachers and Kevane argues that it was essentially a Christian *paideia* intended to reform classical education, let us consider this work as a mentoring resource to clergy charged with the task of communicating the Christian faith.¹³⁸⁶ Working from the foundational presupposition that the Scriptures were authoritative¹³⁸⁷ and that the teacher must have a pious heart,¹³⁸⁸ the work was comprised of four books intended to teach hermeneutics for the benefit of the church as opposed to satisfying the speculation of scholars.¹³⁸⁹ Augustine expressly wrote that his intention for writing was to serve this aim:

So the man who is in possession of the rules which I here attempt to lay down, if he meet with an obscure passage in the books which he reads, will not need an interpreter to lay open the secret to him, but, holding fast by certain rules, and following up certain indications, will arrive at the hidden sense without any error, or at least without falling into any gross absurdity. And so although it will sufficiently appear in the course of the work itself that no one can justly object to this undertaking of mine, which has no other object than to be of service.¹³⁹⁰

In the first book, Augustine treated Christian doctrine itself in a style similar to *De fide et symbolo*.¹³⁹¹ In the second, he addressed resolving the apparent ambiguities of Scripture through such tools as language (Greek and Hebrew), science, and

¹³⁸⁴ Cf. E. Kevane, 'Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*: A Treatise on Christian Education,' *RechAug* 4 (1966), 100-01, 128; and G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 373.

¹³⁸⁵ Cf. E. Kevane, op. cit., 132; and J. O'Donnell, '*Doctrina Christiana, De*,' *ATTA*, 280.

¹³⁸⁶ Cf. E. Kevane, op. cit., 137.

¹³⁸⁷ *Doc. Chr.* 2.8.31; 2.37.41.

¹³⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 2.7.9-11; 2.41.62; 3.1.1; 4.15.32; 4.30.63.

¹³⁸⁹ *Ibid. prol.* 1, 9; 1.35.39; 4.31.64.

¹³⁹⁰ *Sic iste qui praecepta quae conamur tradere acceperit, cum in libris aliquid obscuritatis inuenerit, quasdam regulas uelut litteras tenens intellectorem alium non requirat, per quem sibi quod opertum est retegatur, sed quibusdam uestigiis indagatis ad occultum sensum sine ullo errore ipse perueniat aut certe in absurditatem prauae sententiae non incidat. Quapropter, quamquam et in ipso opere satis apparere possit huic officioso labori nostro non recte aliquem contradicere. doc. Chr. prol.* 9, PL 34, 19-20. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. *doc. Chr.* are from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1202.htm>.

¹³⁹¹ Cf. J. O'Donnell, '*Doctrina Christiana, De*,' *ATTA*, 279.

philosophy.¹³⁹² In the following book, Augustine moved closer to the text of Scripture by giving some instruction on how to discern the literal or figurative meaning of a given passage. Also, working off of the rules of Tyconius the Donatist, Augustine articulated his own hermeneutical rules. In the final book, he instructed spiritual leaders in actually delivering a message. Clearly influenced by Ambrose's example and instruction on preaching in *De officiis*, the former professor of rhetoric would not sacrifice the nourishing content of a message for its flashy form.¹³⁹³ He wrote: 'But we must beware of the man who abounds in eloquent nonsense, and so much the more if the hearer is pleased with what is not worth listening to, and thinks that because the speaker is eloquent what he says must be true.'¹³⁹⁴ Yet given the pious heart of the interpreter and speaker, Augustine did not prohibit a preacher from using elements of rhetoric:

Since, then, the faculty of eloquence is available for both sides, and is of very great service in the enforcing either of wrong or right, why do not good men study to engage it on the side of truth, when bad men use it to obtain the triumph of wicked and worthless causes, and to further injustice and error?¹³⁹⁵

Hence, through *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine mentored spiritual leaders with some teaching on doctrine, with tools for interpreting the Scriptures for themselves, and with instruction on delivering a message.

(2) Doctrinal Apologetic Resources

In Augustine's *epistulae*, we observe that he also sent four works of a theological nature, not originally intended for the clergy, which were included as a

¹³⁹² Cf. J. O'Donnell, 'Doctrina Christiana, De,' *ATTA*, 279.

¹³⁹³ See *De officiis*, 1.101. Augustine referred to Ambrose's example in *doc. Chr.* 4.21.46, 48, 50.

¹³⁹⁴ *Qui uero affluit insipienti eloquentia, tanto magis cauendus est quanto magis ab eo in his quae audire inutile est, delectatur auditor et eum quoniam diserte dicere audit, etiam uere dicere existimat.* *doc. Chr.* 4.5.7, PL 34, 91-2. See also *doc. Chr.* 2.36.54; 4.9.23; 4.10.24; 4.11.26; 4.12.28.

¹³⁹⁵ *Cum ergo sit in medio posita facultas eloquii, quae ad persuadenda seu praua seu recta ualet plurimum, cur non bonorum studio comparatur, ut militet ueritati, si eam mali ad obtinendas peruersas uanasque causas in usus iniquitatis et erroris usurpant?* *doc. Chr.* 4.2.3, PL 34, 89-90. See also *doc. Chr.* 4.4.6; 4.13.29; 4.18.37.

resource in the fight against heresy.¹³⁹⁶ In *Epistulae* 24 and 25, Paulinus of Nola thanked Augustine for sending him copies of *De uera religione*, *De Genesi aduersus Manicheos*, and *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* to aid him in his struggle against the Manichees.¹³⁹⁷ Paulinus remarked that these books were helpful ‘not for our instruction only, but also for the benefit of the church in many cities.’¹³⁹⁸ Also, along with *Epistula* 31, Augustine sent Paulinus a copy of *De libero arbitrio* that also seemed intended to resource Paulinus in his theological challenges.¹³⁹⁹

Augustine wrote another seven apologetic works intended to resource spiritual leaders who were seeking to uphold orthodoxy. In 414, Paul Orosius, a Spanish presbyter came to Hippo seeking Augustine’s help in the battle against Priscillianism and Origenism that was raging back in his homeland. The following year, as Paul was returning to Spain, Augustine sent with him *Contra Priscillianistas*, a thorough refutation of these heresies.¹⁴⁰⁰ In 416 or 417, after receiving the *gesta* of the council of Diospolis from Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine wrote *De gestis*, an apologetic against the teachings of Pelagius and sent it as a resource to Aurelius as well as Cyril.¹⁴⁰¹ In 420, Augustine, replying to letters from Julian of Eclanum and some Pelagians in Rome, wrote *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* to Pope Boniface to inform and influence the pope regarding this heresy.¹⁴⁰² As previously noted, in 421

¹³⁹⁶ We have already noted that Augustine sent *De uera religione* and *De libero arbitrio* to Evodius with *ep.* 162 as a theological resource to satisfy Evodius’ speculation. Yet he seems to have sent them to Paulinus to resource him more specifically in the fight against heresy.

¹³⁹⁷ *Ep.* 24.2; 25.2; 30.2.

¹³⁹⁸ *Non pro nostra instructione tantum, sed etiam pro Ecclesiae multarum urbium utilitate suscepimus.* *ep.* 25.1, PL 33, 101.

¹³⁹⁹ *Ep.* 31.7.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Cf. R. Teske, ‘*Priscillianistas, Contra,*’ *ATTA*, 684.

¹⁴⁰¹ Cf. G. Bonner, ‘*Gestis Pelagii, De,*’ *ATTA*, 382-3.

¹⁴⁰² Cf. G. Bonner, ‘*Duas epistulas Pelagianorum, Contra,*’ *ATTA*, 288-9.

Augustine sent his six volume, *Contra Iulianum*, along with *Epistula 207* to Bishop Claudius to resource this Italian church leader with a reply to Julian's teaching.¹⁴⁰³

In addition to his letters to Valentinus and the monks of Hadrumetum, Augustine, around 426-427, resourced the men with *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De correptione et gratia*.¹⁴⁰⁴ A theological resource on man's nature and will, it also served to persuade Valentinus and the monks to abandon Pelagianism. Finally, in 428 or 429, Augustine wrote *De haeresibus*, a catalogue of heresies prompted by the repeated requests of Quodvultdeus of Carthage.¹⁴⁰⁵ As noted, due to Augustine's death in 430, the work was never fully finished.¹⁴⁰⁶

(3) Practical Church Resources

Augustine dedicated another three works to resourcing spiritual leaders in practical church matters. Though they surely enjoyed a broader influence, all three books were initially written to resource church leaders in Carthage. In the early years of his episcopate in 399, Augustine responded to the deacon Deogratias and his request for help in preparing new believers for baptism with his book *De catechizandis rudibus*.¹⁴⁰⁷ Unlike his response to some theological or philosophical questions,¹⁴⁰⁸ Augustine was quite content to accommodate Deogratias and his needs.

He wrote:

I feel constrained not only by that love and service which is due from me to you on the terms of familiar friendship, but also by that which I owe universally to my mother the church, by no means to refuse the task, but rather to take it up with a prompt and devoted willingness. For the more extensively I desire to see the treasure of the Lord distributed, the more does it become my duty, if I ascertain that the stewards, who are my fellow-servants, find any difficulty in laying it out, to do all that lies in my power to the end that they may be able to accomplish easily and expeditiously what they sedulously and

¹⁴⁰³ Cf. G. Bonner, '*Julianum, Contra*,' *ATTA*, 480.

¹⁴⁰⁴ *Epp.* 214-15; 215A; cf. G. Bonner, '*Gratia et libero arbitrio, De*,' *ATTA*, 400-01.

¹⁴⁰⁵ *Epp.* 221; 223.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Cf. R. Teske, '*Haeresibus, De*,' *ATTA*, 412-13.

¹⁴⁰⁷ *Cat. rud.* 1.1.

¹⁴⁰⁸ See for example: *epp.* 118; 159; 162; 164; 169.

earnestly aim at.¹⁴⁰⁹ Similar to his thoughts in *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine taught that the content of instruction should begin with a thorough summary of the Scriptures; while the Scriptures should act as the final authority for spiritual understanding.¹⁴¹⁰ Believing that the catechizer was an agent of God's grace, Augustine emphasized the need for the teacher to instruct from a heart stirred by faith, hope, and love as well as from a contagious, loving communion with Christ.¹⁴¹¹ The teacher must also be humble and even willing to learn from his catechumen¹⁴¹²; he must cultivate friendship with his disciple¹⁴¹³; as well as care for the disciple's personal and physical needs.¹⁴¹⁴ Also, the teacher should not teach everyone in the same manner but take into account the educational background of the catechumen.¹⁴¹⁵ Augustine recommended interviewing baptismal candidates prior to beginning their instruction period because 'although the same charity is due to all, yet the same medicine is not to be administered to all.'¹⁴¹⁶ Finally, in the last half of the work, Augustine practically demonstrated teaching catechumens by furnishing Deogratias with two model discourses.¹⁴¹⁷

The two remaining practical works were meant to aid Aurelius in his ministry of overseeing the monasteries in Carthage. Probably between 397 and 399 Augustine wrote the *Regula ad seruos Dei* — a guide for how monks must live together in

¹⁴⁰⁹ *Caritate ac seruitute compellor, si quid per operam meam, quam Domini nostri largitate possum exhibere, idem eos Dominus quos mihi fratres fecit, adiuuari iubet, nullo modo recusare, sed potius prompta et deuota uoluntate suscipere. Quanto enim cupio latius erogari pecuniam dominicam, tanto magis me oportet, si quam dispensatores conseruos meos difficultatem in erogando sentire cognosco, agere quantum in me est, ut facile atque expedite possint, quod impigre ac studiose uolunt. cat. rud. 1.2, PL 40, 311. All English trans. are from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1303.htm>.*

¹⁴¹⁰ For instance, Augustine argued for the supremacy of the Scriptures over dreams. See *cat. rud.* 3.6; 6.10.

¹⁴¹¹ *Ibid.* 3.6; 4.8; 5.9.

¹⁴¹² *Ibid.* 11.16.

¹⁴¹³ *Ibid.* 12.17.

¹⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.* 13.19.

¹⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.* 8.12; 9.13.

¹⁴¹⁶ *Et quia cum eadem omnibus debeatur caritas, non eadem est omnibus adhibenda medicina. cat. rud.* 15.23, PL 40, 328.

¹⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.* 16-27.

community as well as how superiors should lead.¹⁴¹⁸ While the Hippo monastery had no such written *regula*, as it seemed to function around the simple rule of the apostles, it was necessary for Augustine to articulate in writing a set of principles to resource the other monastic communities in Africa. Around 400, Augustine resourced Aurelius and the monks at Carthage during a time of crisis with his book *De opere monachorum*.¹⁴¹⁹ Essentially the monks wanted to cease with manual labor, spend their time reading, and live off the offerings of the church while adopting the practice of growing long hair.¹⁴²⁰ In his book, Augustine rebuked the men for their laziness, strange practices, and for twisting the Scriptures to support their proposed lifestyle.¹⁴²¹ While arguing that not everyone in the monastery ought to be set apart full-time to teach the Scriptures, he admonished the men to a work ethic that conformed to the Scriptures.¹⁴²² With his exhortation, he also shared his own commitment to work:

We are not binding heavy burdens and laying them upon your shoulders, while we with a finger will not touch them. Seek out, and acknowledge the labor of our occupations, and in some of us the infirmities of our bodies also, and in the churches which we serve, that custom now grown up, that they do not suffer us to have time ourselves for those works to which we exhort you.¹⁴²³

In summary, Augustine advocated a balance between a contemplative and active life.¹⁴²⁴ Through the *Regula* and *De opere monachorum*, Augustine mentored Aurelius as the bishop overseeing the monasteries of Carthage as well as the monks themselves.

¹⁴¹⁸ Cf. G. Lawless, 'Regula,' *ATTA*, 707-08.

¹⁴¹⁹ *Op. mon.* 1.1.

¹⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* 17.20; 3.4; 16.19; 33.41; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 317.

¹⁴²¹ *Op. mon.* 30.38; 31.39; 33.41.

¹⁴²² *Ibid.* 18.21; 3.4; 8.9; 13.14; 19.22; 22.6, 25.

¹⁴²³ *Non alligamus onera grauiā; et uestris humeris imponimus quae nos digito attingere nolumus. Quaerite, et cognoscite labores occupationum nostrarum, et in aliquibus nostrorum etiam corporum infirmitates, et Ecclesiarum quibus seruimus talem iam consuetudinem, ut nos ad illa opera, ad quae uos hortamur, uacare non sinant.* *op. mon.* 29.37, PL 40, 576. All English trans. of *op. mon.* are from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1314>.

¹⁴²⁴ *Ibid.* 17.20.

(4) Spiritual Encouragement

It would be impossible to consider Augustine's mentoring works without acknowledging the importance of his *Confessiones*. Though it was read widely in Augustine's day by the laity as well as the clergy, we must remember that the work probably originated at the request of Paulinus of Nola, who wanted to know more about Augustine's spiritual journey. Thus, through this significant work, which essentially grew out of his *epistulae*, Augustine through his testimony and example, influenced Paulinus and other clergy toward intimacy with God, humility, transparency, and embracing the life-long journey in the progress of faith.

(5) Summary

The nineteen books that Augustine wrote specifically for members of the clergy as well as the ten others that he sent as replies to letters testify to the mentoring value he placed on written works. His theological and exegetical works resourced spiritual leaders in their ministries of interpreting and communicating the Scriptures as well as helping them develop in their grasp of theology. His apologetic works of a doctrinal nature not only give us insight into the fifth century battle for orthodoxy against the likes of the Priscillianists, Pelagians, and Julian of Eclanum, but they also help us to understand how Augustine equipped church leaders to engage in this battle. Though only three works were devoted to practical church matters, they nevertheless reveal how much Augustine valued training new believers and the importance he assigned to the ecclesiastical oversight of the monasteries. His *Confessiones* show how he valued authenticity and sincere faith in addition to sound doctrine and attentiveness to practical church matters.

Augustine's five books to Aurelius make his peer and fellow bishop the key recipient of his works.¹⁴²⁵ As bishop of Carthage, Aurelius certainly influenced other spiritual leaders with what he gained from Augustine's writings. It is also interesting to note that three other works were written as a resource to Aurelius' Carthaginian clergy.¹⁴²⁶ Twelve of the nineteen books were written to edify the clergy in Africa; while the other seven were intended to resource leaders in Italy, Gaul, and Egypt.¹⁴²⁷ Hence, Augustine's mentoring impact through writing was felt in Africa and beyond especially toward the end of his life. The influence that he enjoyed was especially significant in light of the fact that he was not a metropolitan bishop as Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, and Aurelius had been.¹⁴²⁸

4. Church Councils

Following the examples of Cyprian, Basil, and Ambrose, Augustine 'took part whenever he could in the councils which the holy bishops held in various provinces.'¹⁴²⁹ In collaboration with Aurelius, Augustine firmly believed that councils were authoritative and necessary to transform the African church.¹⁴³⁰ Two times in *Epistula 22*, a letter written to Aurelius at the outset of his ministry, Augustine wrote of challenges in the church that needed to be 'healed . . . by the authority of a council'¹⁴³¹ and 'by the heavy sword of councils.'¹⁴³² The letter also seems to suggest that Augustine was strongly encouraging the bishop of Carthage to use the full mantle

¹⁴²⁵ *De Trinitate, De gestis, Regula, and De opera monachorum* and probably *De doctrina Christiana*. These works do not include the *sermones* included in *ep. 16**.

¹⁴²⁶ *Expositio quarandam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos, De Haeresibus, and De catechizandis rudibus*. In *ep. 173A*, Theodorus and Deogratias are referred to *De Trinitate*.

¹⁴²⁷ While *De gestis* was primarily dedicated to Aurelius, Augustine also sent it as a resource to Cyril of Alexandria.

¹⁴²⁸ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 212.

¹⁴²⁹ *Sanctorum concilia sacerdotum per diuersas prouincias celebrate, cum potuit, frequentauit. Vita 21.1, PL 32, 51.*

¹⁴³⁰ Cf. D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian*, p. 249; and F. Cross, 'History and Fiction in the African Canons,' *JTS* 12 (1961), 229.

¹⁴³¹ *Ut sanari prorsus . . . nisi concilii auctoritate nonpossit. ep. 22.1.4, PL 33, 92.*

of his leadership to convene these gatherings. While Augustine believed that the councils could change the church, I will argue in this section that Augustine also enjoyed a mentoring influence on the bishops of North Africa through his participation in the councils; which, in turn had a transforming effect on the church. Between 393 and 427, the evidence suggests that Augustine participated in twenty-two gatherings of bishops; most of which were convened by Aurelius in Carthage,¹⁴³³ though a handful of others took place locally in Numidia.¹⁴³⁴ Let us briefly summarize the councils that Augustine attended considering the issues addressed, the actions taken, followed by a discussion on how Augustine mentored through the councils.¹⁴³⁵

We have repeatedly mentioned Augustine's presence at the council of Hippo in October of 393.¹⁴³⁶ Having been a presbyter for a little more than two years, Augustine resourced the clergy in an exegetical manner with his commentary on the creed that later took the form of the book, *De fide et symbolo*. In a similar vein, Augustine surely gave support to canon 38 of the council, which affirmed the books of the canonical Scriptures.¹⁴³⁷ Finally, in light of his correspondence with Aurelius and Alypius, Augustine seems to have had an influential role in the council's adoption of a canon prohibiting banquets in the church facility effectively reforming the *laetitia* festival.¹⁴³⁸

¹⁴³² *Conciliorum graui ense et tua possit sanare. ep. 22.1.2*, PL 33, 91. Cf. F. Cross, 'History and Fiction in the African Canons,' *JTS* 12 (1961), 229.

¹⁴³³ In the period mentioned, Aurelius presided over twenty-five councils in 393-4, 397 (two meetings), 399, 401 (two meetings), 402-05, 407, 408 (two meetings), 409-10, 411 (two meetings), 416, 418-19, 421, 423-24, 427. Apart from the councils of 393 and 427 (both held in Hippo) as well as 402 (Milevus), the rest convened in Carthage. Augustine was present for every council except those of 408 (both meetings), 409, 411 (second meeting), 416, and possibly 421. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 430-76.

¹⁴³⁴ The local Numidian councils took place in 412 (Zerta), 416 (Milevus), and 422 (Fussala).

¹⁴³⁵ Due to a lack of evidence, we are unable to discuss the councils of June 397, April 399, and 427 (Hippo). Cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.99-100.

¹⁴³⁶ Cross (F. Cross, 'History and Fiction in the African Canons,' *JTS* 12 (1961), 229) suggests that the choice of Hippo as a meeting place testified to Augustine's influence to make the gathering happen.

¹⁴³⁷ *Ep.* 64.3; see commentary in WSA, 2.1.258 and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.89.

¹⁴³⁸ *Epp.* 22; 29; cf. G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 117; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.88.

The following year, in June of 394, the African bishops gathered for a council in Carthage. Little is known about this meeting, as the *gesta* have not survived.¹⁴³⁹ However, Augustine seems to have had yet another occasion to instruct the bishops from the Scriptures by responding to their questions on Romans, which later took the form of *Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos*. Though Perler argues that this discussion probably did not take place within the council itself, Augustine was nevertheless engaged in equipping a group of gathered church leaders in a theological and exegetical manner.¹⁴⁴⁰

In the second council of 397, which met in August, the bishop of Hippo once again joined with his colleagues in upholding the books of the canonical Scriptures.¹⁴⁴¹ As noted, Augustine made reference to canon 47 of this council as well as canon 38 of the 393 council in admonishing the presbyter Quintianus for having read non-canonical books in the liturgical assembly.¹⁴⁴²

Two councils were convened in Carthage in 401 — the first in June and the second in September. The main issues at the June meeting included the concern over a lack of clergy in the North African church, which prompted a letter being sent to the pope and some Italian bishops seeking their accord to ordain clergy who had come from Donatism.¹⁴⁴³ The second issue addressed was the removal of Bishop Equitius of Hippo Diarrhytus.¹⁴⁴⁴ After a three-month break, the bishops met again in September. Conforming to the wishes of the Italian bishops, they decided that former Donatists should not be ordained except in extreme cases.¹⁴⁴⁵ Regarding the church at Hippo

¹⁴³⁹ Cf. O. Peler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 162; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.97.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Cf. O. Perler, op. cit..

¹⁴⁴¹ Ibid. p. 222.

¹⁴⁴² *Ep.* 64.3

¹⁴⁴³ Cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 234-5; C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.126; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 111.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Cf. C. Hefele, op. cit.; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 237.

¹⁴⁴⁵ *Epp.* 61; 245.2; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 235-6; and W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 252.

Diarrhytus, a group of twenty bishops, including Augustine and Alypius, were commissioned to go immediately following the council to restore order in the church and set apart a new bishop.¹⁴⁴⁶ Two significant canons pertaining to church leadership were also drafted in this meeting. Canon 13 allowed an accused clergy up to one year to appeal his charges¹⁴⁴⁷; while canon 14 forbade a monk from one diocese from being ordained or named the head of a monastery in another diocese.¹⁴⁴⁸ Augustine's *Epistula* 60 to Aurelius, which addressed the issue of a monk leaving a monastery in one diocese and then being ordained in another, effectively served as a reminder of canon 14.¹⁴⁴⁹ The final significant resolution of the second council of 401 was the implementation of a missionary strategy to convert the predominantly Donatist countryside.¹⁴⁵⁰

The council of Milevus met in August of 402 and began with a reading of the *gesta* from the councils of 393 and the last council of 401.¹⁴⁵¹ The key issue facing the council was resolving the power struggle between Xantippus and Victorinus over who should become the primate of Numidia. Augustine certainly had already influenced this process through *Epistula* 59, written to Victorinus prior to the council.¹⁴⁵² Finally, Perler suggests that the case of the deacon Timothy, a thorny issue involving Augustine and Severus of Milevus, was also raised at this council.¹⁴⁵³

¹⁴⁴⁶ *Ep.* 59; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 233; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 111.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Augustine's *ep.* 65 in 401-02 was an application of this canon. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 237; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.128-9.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*.

¹⁴⁴⁹ *Ep.* 60; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 239; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.129.

¹⁴⁵⁰ *Cresc.* 3.60.66; cf. W. Friend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 252; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.127.

¹⁴⁵¹ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 243; and C. Hefele, *op. cit.*, 2.1.135.

¹⁴⁵² *Ep.* 59; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*.

¹⁴⁵³ As previously noted, the issue of Timothy was the subject of Augustine's *epp.* 62-3 to Severus and what prompted his visit (with Alypius) to resolve the matter. Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*; C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.135; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 1073.

Between 403 and 411, Augustine participated in six councils in Carthage that were largely consumed with the Donatist schism. In 403, Augustine's disciple and friend Alypius began to take more of an active role by speaking on behalf of the Numidian delegation of which Augustine was a delegate.¹⁴⁵⁴ The main issue was the drafting of a document, probably prepared by Augustine, inviting the Donatist bishops in every town to a local conference aimed at drawing the Donatists into the unity of the church.¹⁴⁵⁵ Augustine put this decision of the council into practice by reaching out to Proculeianus, his Donatist counterpart in Hippo.¹⁴⁵⁶ Augustine surely influenced the gathering of bishops in this way as he had been initiating toward the Donatists for seven years leading up to the council of 403.¹⁴⁵⁷

In June of 404, the African bishops met again to try to find a solution to the Donatist problem. As the majority were frustrated that the initiative from the previous conference had failed,¹⁴⁵⁸ they decided to appeal to the Roman authorities for a forced edict of unity.¹⁴⁵⁹ Augustine and a minority of bishops managed to persuade the council to ask simply for protection for the Catholics while requesting punishment only for the violent elements of the Donatist party.¹⁴⁶⁰ Finally, Augustine's disciple Evodius as well as Theasis were sent to the Roman court at Ravenna to present the requests of the council of 404.¹⁴⁶¹

Before Evodius and Theasis arrived, Maximianus of Bagai, a bishop who had been beaten badly by the Donatists in his church, traveled to Ravenna and appealed

¹⁴⁵⁴ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 246.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.; cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.155; and W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 252.

¹⁴⁵⁶ *Epp.* 88.7; 76; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin* p. 249.

¹⁴⁵⁷ *Epp.* 33; 43-4; 49.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Augustine himself was refused by Proculeianus (*ep.* 88.7) as was Possidius who reached out to his Donatist counterpart Crispinus in Calama and received a rather violent response from Crispinus' followers. See *Vita* 12.3-8; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, pp. 890-1.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 251; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.156.

¹⁴⁶⁰ *Epp.* 93.5, 17; 185.7; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 251

¹⁴⁶¹ Ibid. p. 252; cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.155.

directly to the Emperor Honorius.¹⁴⁶² Honorius responded in February of 405 with an edict forcing the Donatists to return to unity with the catholic church effectively rendering Augustine's influence and the decision of the council of 404 null and void. A council of bishops met in 405 and responded to Honorius' decree by sending two clergy from Carthage to thank the emperor in person for his action.¹⁴⁶³ Though it was not his preference, Augustine nevertheless actively carried out the order for unity. Yet, he chose to appeal to the Donatists as he had before — through persuasion, teaching from the Scriptures, and thoroughly documenting the history of the schism in his book *Liber probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas*, which he had placed on the walls of the Donatist basilica in Hippo. As well, many of his *sermones* in 406 and 407, following the edict, served as an apologetic against the Donatist cause.¹⁴⁶⁴

The surviving evidence from the council of 407, which met in June, does not mention the Donatists. Rather, the main item of business was the appointment of seven bishops, including Augustine and Possidius, who were sent following the council to render a judgment in an unspecified issue regarding Bishop Maurentius of Thubursicu Numidarum.¹⁴⁶⁵

In June of 410, Augustine was present at the council of bishops in which the main issue was once again the Donatists.¹⁴⁶⁶ In response to an edict of toleration granting more freedom to religions in the Roman Empire, the bishops decided to send four bishops, including Possidius, to Ravenna to lobby for the decree to be repealed. Not only were the four envoys successful in their mission, Honorius also granted their

¹⁴⁶² *Cresc.* 3.43, 47; *epp.* 88.7; 185.7, 27-8; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 254-6.

¹⁴⁶³ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁴⁶⁴ *Ep.* 43; *retr.* 2.27; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

¹⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 265; cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.158.

¹⁴⁶⁶ As noted, Augustine most likely did not participate in the councils of 408-09.

request for a mandatory face to face conference with the Donatists.¹⁴⁶⁷ Surely, Augustine had a significant influence on the decision of this council and on the delegation sent to Honorius as his efforts for some time had been geared toward securing a meeting with the Donatists.

From the outset of the council of 411, it was evident that the Donatist party would be defeated.¹⁴⁶⁸ Though the gathering was called a conference, Marcellinus, the catholic layman and friend of Augustine who presided over the meeting, announced that the purpose of the council was ‘to confirm the catholic faith.’¹⁴⁶⁹ While the catholics surely had the advantage, the Donatist leaders proved to be quite defiant. Though Marcellinus had prescribed that each side would be represented by seven of its leaders, the entire Donatist delegation marched into the meeting place for the opening session.¹⁴⁷⁰ As well, the Donatist Bishop Petilian demanded a roll call for each catholic and Donatist bishop claiming that the catholics had conjured up bishops that did not exist.¹⁴⁷¹ Following the second day of meeting, the Donatists petitioned for a recess to verify the records of the roll call. Further, Petilian attempted to slander Augustine by referring to him as a Manichean.¹⁴⁷² Unlike Alypius and Possidius, who at certain points lost their composure,¹⁴⁷³ Augustine refused to fall into Petilian’s trap of personal accusation and he graciously encouraged the Donatists to take their time and verify the record as well as to think about their arguments.¹⁴⁷⁴ When the meeting re-convened five days later, Augustine’s prowess as an apologist and rhetor were put on display as he masterfully defeated the Donatist leaders in debate by continually

¹⁴⁶⁷ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 277-8.

¹⁴⁶⁸ For a thorough treatment of the council of 411, see W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, pp. 275-89.

¹⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 275, 280.

¹⁴⁷⁰ The conference met on June 1, 3, and 8. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 332-3.

¹⁴⁷¹ In the end the catholic bishops (both present and absent) numbered 286 while the Donatists contingency numbered 284. Cf. P. Brown, *op. cit.* and W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 277.

¹⁴⁷² *Ibid.* p. 286; cf. P. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

¹⁴⁷³ *Ibid.* pp. 333-4; cf. W. Frend, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

¹⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 286; cf. P. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

focusing on the core issue — the origins of the schism.¹⁴⁷⁵ Though Marcellinus had clearly favored the catholics in the conference, Augustine's keen theological and rhetorical abilities only strengthened the verdict against the Donatists. As a result, the Donatists were ordered to give up their church buildings and to unify with the catholic church.

Following the council of 411, Augustine worked to put into effect Marcellinus' decision. Apart from encouraging the seizure of Donatist property and consenting to a modest punishment for the Circumcellions, Augustine's primary aim was to educate the Donatists.¹⁴⁷⁶ Copies of the conference's *gesta* were placed on the walls of the Donatist basilica in Carthage and sent to the capitals of each African province while Augustine had them read in the church at Hippo during Lent and encouraged other leaders to do so as well.¹⁴⁷⁷ To make the *gesta* more accessible to the less educated, Augustine wrote a more simplified account of the council in his *Breivulus conlationis cum Donatistis*. His other post-council writings directed toward the Donatists included *Contra partem Donati post gesta* as well as *Epistulae* 141 and 173.¹⁴⁷⁸ In *Epistula* 141, in particular, Augustine responded to the Donatist charges that Marcellinus had received money from the catholics in exchange for his verdict by reiterating in writing a very clear summary of the origins of the schism. Perler makes the point that Augustine's preaching in the year following the conference also served to instruct the laity on the catholic position.¹⁴⁷⁹ Finally, on at least two occasions, Augustine preached to the former Donatist congregations in Hippo and Cirta.¹⁴⁸⁰

¹⁴⁷⁵ Cf. W. Frend, op. cit.; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 291.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Cf. W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, pp. 292, 294.

¹⁴⁷⁷ *Ep.* 28*.2; cf. W. Frend, op. cit., p. 290.

¹⁴⁷⁸ *Ep.* 139.3; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 287, 305.

¹⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 287-9, 293-8.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Though the *gesta* are lost, Augustine apparently participated in a local Numidian council in Zerta in

Between 416 and 418, Augustine took part in two significant councils as well as some other informal gatherings of bishops related to the Pelagian controversy. Though he was not present for the council of Carthage in September of 416, a meeting provoked by Paul Orosius' arrival and news about Pelagius, the bishops suggested asking Augustine to research the theological issues related to Pelagius' teaching toward developing an apologetic.¹⁴⁸¹ Shortly following the council at Carthage, the Numidian bishops also gathered for a local council in Milevus for the purpose of discussing Pelagius. Writing on behalf of the council, Augustine addressed *Epistula* 176 to Pope Innocent presenting him with the African position regarding the error of Pelagius' teaching. In addition to the letter, Augustine included a copy of his *De natura et gratia*, which was a reply to Pelagius' *De natura*.¹⁴⁸² In the summer of 416, Augustine met with Aurelius, Alypius, Evodius, and Possidius in Carthage to discuss further the controversy. As noted, Augustine most likely drafted *Epistula* 177 to Innocent on behalf of this group.¹⁴⁸³

The African councils and meetings of 416 were effective in influencing Innocent as he condemned both Pelagius and his disciple Caelestius.¹⁴⁸⁴ Yet, Innocent died shortly thereafter and was replaced by Zosimus who rather rashly reversed the decision of his predecessor and acquitted Caelestius. The African bishops responded with an informal meeting in 417 in Carthage to discuss their response to Zosimus' decision.¹⁴⁸⁵ This set the stage for the council of Carthage in May of 418 — a gathering attended by at least 200 bishops.¹⁴⁸⁶ The council produced nine canons

412, which met to discuss the Donatist reaction to the council of 411. See *epp.* 139.2; 144; W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, pp. 290-1; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 306-07.

¹⁴⁸¹ *Ep.* 213.5; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 331.

¹⁴⁸² Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 332; and J. McSwain, 'Milevus, Council of,' *ATTA*, 562.

¹⁴⁸³ Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

¹⁴⁸⁴ *Epp.* 181-3; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 282.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 339; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.189-90.

¹⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 2.1.191.

dealing with original sin, baptism, and grace, which were surely based on the work and thought of Augustine, who had already published books dealing with these issues. The canons were sent to Pope Zosimus along with a letter reminding him of Innocent's decision to condemn Pelagius and Caelestius.¹⁴⁸⁷ The council succeeded in convincing Zosimus as he ultimately reversed his decision on the matter.¹⁴⁸⁸

The council of 418 also commissioned a group, which included Augustine Alypius, and Possidius to keep track of the Donatist movements in North Africa. One task given to the group was traveling to Mauretania Caesariensis in 418 to reach out to the Donatist Bishop Emeritus who had refused to join the catholic church.¹⁴⁸⁹ Augustine not only preached to the congregation in Emeritus' basilica, but he publicly met with the Donatist holdout endeavoring to convert him. Augustine's unsuccessful efforts were nevertheless recorded in his *Gestis cum Emerito*.¹⁴⁹⁰

A final task of the council of 418 was dealing with the Gallic monk Leporius. As mentioned previously, Leporius fled Gaul over his heretical views on the incarnation. Yet, after spending time with Augustine, he recanted his heresy and probably made a public statement of his orthodoxy at this council. It was with the blessing of this gathering of bishops that Augustine sent him back to Gaul to return to his place in the monastery.¹⁴⁹¹

The African bishops met again in May of 419 primarily to deal with the case of Apiarus, a presbyter from Sicca who had been excommunicated by Urbanus, one of Augustine's disciples from the *monasterium clericorum*. Apiarus responded by appealing his excommunication directly to Pope Zosimus, a violation of canon 17 of

¹⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. 2.1.192-4; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 342.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 344-5.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 62. For more on the region of Mauretania Caesariensis, see Map 101 in R. Talbert, ed., *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 295-6.

the council of 418, which prohibited disciplined clergy from taking their grievances overseas. Unfortunately, for the African bishops, Zosimus took the side of Apiarius defending the presbyter's right to appeal on the basis of two canons from the council of Nicea.¹⁴⁹² Augustine and Alypius seemed willing to accept Zosimus' verdict in the affair given that these Nicene canons, absent from their copy in Carthage, could be verified.¹⁴⁹³ Hence, Alypius wrote to the bishops of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch requesting a more faithful copy of the canons while a followup committee that included Alypius, Augustine, and Possidius remained in Carthage awaiting the results of the investigation.¹⁴⁹⁴ Five months later, two copies of the canons arrived in Carthage — one from Cyril of Alexandria and the other from Atticus of Constantinople. Neither contained the canons that Zosimus had cited in defending Apiarius.¹⁴⁹⁵ Hence, through their patient and thorough inquiry, Augustine and two disciples gave direction to this important council and helped influence the policies of how the church in Africa and Rome ought to deal with disciplined leaders and their appeals.¹⁴⁹⁶

In 422, Augustine and a local council of Numidian bishops met in Fussala to render a judgment in the case of the immoral Bishop Antoninus. As previously noted, Augustine modeled for his colleagues a gracious yet firm approach to disciplining a fallen leader. Yet, Augustine also took responsibility for his poor choice in setting

¹⁴⁹¹ *Ep.* 219; cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.215-16.

¹⁴⁹² Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 351.

¹⁴⁹³ We should also note the respect that Augustine, Alypius, and the African bishops had for Zosimus and his office as the pope had passed away in late 418. Thus, their report and findings would be addressed to his successor, Boniface.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Possidius also contributed to the discussion regarding Apiarius. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 354-5; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 894.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

¹⁴⁹⁶ According to the council of Carthage in 424, Apiarius who had been transferred to the church of Thabraca, was once again disciplined locally but then appealed to Pope Celestinus who supported him. In the end, Apiarius confessed to his misdeeds and the African bishops wrote to Rome expressing once again their concerns about the overseas appeal of disciplined leaders. Cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.215; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 379.

apart Antoninus for this ministry while making it a priority to care for the abused flock at Fussala.¹⁴⁹⁷

Though we know little of the council of Hippo of 427, it was probably Augustine's final church council and it probably convened in Hippo because of Augustine's poor health.¹⁴⁹⁸ This gesture alone demonstrated the great respect that Aurelius and the African bishops had for Augustine.

The African councils that Augustine attended were largely occupied with: addressing theological and exegetical questions (393-394, August 397); confronting schism and heresy (403-405, 410-411, 416, 418); reforming church practice (393); and dealing with problems involving church leaders (June/September 401, 402, 418-419, 422, 424). How did Augustine mentor the clergy in the context of the African church councils?

First, he served as a theological and exegetical resource for bishops in need of teaching. Augustine most clearly functioned in this role in his first two councils in 393 and 394 in which he taught on the Nicene Creed and responded to questions on Romans.

Secondly, he served as an effective model for resolving doctrinal controversies. In the council of 403, he led the way in initiating local conferences with Donatist clergy with the aim of winning them to the catholic church. Through the council of 410, Augustine's influence was felt as the catholic bishops were granted a compulsory conference with the Donatists. As noted, in the council of 411, Augustine's superior skills in debate and apologetics were not only the key to defeating the Donatist contingency in the council, but they served as a model for his colleagues to do the same. Finally, Augustine's impact was strongly felt in the

¹⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 372-3.

articulation of the canons of the council of 418, which helped to defeat the Pelagian movement.

Third, Augustine mentored the North African clergy by conducting himself with wisdom, patience, and focus. At the council of 404 when the frustrated majority of bishops were calling for a forced edict of unity for the Donatists, Augustine prevailed upon them to ask the Roman authorities for protection only. Even after Honorius' forceful edict in 405, Augustine still appealed to the Donatists through persuasion and teaching rather than compulsion. When Augustine stood face to face with Petilian and his brash delegation in 411, he refused to respond to their accusations or be affected by their maneuvering. Rather, he demonstrated patience and waited for the opportunity to hammer away at the core issues of the schism. In this respect, Augustine acted in a similar manner as Ambrose at the council of Aquileia in 381. Augustine also demonstrated focus at the council of 419 as he and Alypius patiently called for a more reliable copy of the canons of Nicea in order to respond effectively to Zosimus' defense of Apiarius. Finally, Augustine modeled grace and kindness for his fellow clergy in affirming the orthodoxy of the reformed heretic Leporius in 418.

Fourth, Augustine influenced the clergy through his letters, books, sermons, and actions that followed up the work or decisions of a council. After the 393 and 394 gatherings, Augustine published *De fide et symbolo* and *Expositio quarandum propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos* to serve as a lasting resource for the bishops. Following the meeting of 401, Augustine's *Epistula* 60 to Aurelius essentially reminded the bishop of Carthage of the decision made about monks being

¹⁴⁹⁸ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 385.

ordained.¹⁴⁹⁹ After the Donatist focused councils from 403 to 411, Augustine produced a significant number of letters, books, and sermons, which supported the decisions of the councils.¹⁵⁰⁰ As noted, Augustine had the *gesta* of the 411 council placed on the walls of the Donatist basilicas in the provincial capitals of North Africa while also encouraging his colleagues in several cities to read the *gesta* in their churches during Lent.¹⁵⁰¹ Augustine's drafting of *Epistulae* 176 and 177 following the council of Milevus in 416 and the informal gathering of bishops in Carthage later that same year served to articulate the African position against Pelagius and to influence Pope Innocent in this matter.¹⁵⁰² Augustine's efforts to carry out the decisions of the councils also included traveling on sight as a member of a followup commission to deal with certain issues. He traveled to Hippo Diarrhytus in 401, to Thubursicu Numidarum in 407, and to Fussala in 422 to deal with church leadership problems. Finally, following the council of 418, Augustine traveled with a team of bishops to Mauretania Caesariensis to seek to convert the Donatist Bishop Emeritus.

A final way that Augustine seemed to have a mentoring influence through the church councils was by involving his personal disciples in the work of the gatherings. Beginning at the council of 403, Alypius began to have more of a voice.¹⁵⁰³ At the council of 411, he was the key orator for the catholic position next to Augustine.¹⁵⁰⁴ In 418, Alypius traveled with Augustine and the team of bishops to meet Emeritus. In 419, he demonstrated his legal training by requesting more reliable copies of the canons of Nicea. Possidius, as well, accompanied Augustine to Thubursicu

¹⁴⁹⁹ Augustine also referred to the authoritative decisions of councils in the following mentoring letters: *epp.* 63.2; 64.3; 65.2; 78.4; 215.2; 1*; 26*.1.

¹⁵⁰⁰ *Epp.* 88 and 76 were written after 403. *Liber probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas* was written after 405. *Breuculus conlationis cum Donatistis, Contra partem Donati post gesta, epp.* 141 and 173 were written after 411.

¹⁵⁰¹ *Epp.* 139; 185; 28*.2; cf. W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, p. 290; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 496.

¹⁵⁰² Augustine included *De natura* along with *ep.* 176.

¹⁵⁰³ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 56.

Numidarum in 407, was sent to lobby at Ravenna on behalf of the African bishops in 410, participated in the debate with the Donatists in 411, and joined Augustine and Alypius in Mauretania Caesariensis in 418. He also contributed to the discussion at the council of 419 and stayed on in Carthage with Augustine and Alypius to finish up the work of that meeting. Evodius was also sent by the African bishops to represent their wishes at Ravenna following the council of 404. Finally, it is worth noting that following the councils of 416, the informal group of bishops that met with Aurelius and Augustine to further discuss the Pelagian issue included Evodius, Possidius, and Alypius. All three disciples were also listed in the salutation of *Epistulae* 176 and 177 to Pope Innocent.

Though Augustine never became the primate of Carthage or even the primate of Numidia, he was without a doubt the most influential African bishop of his day. Indeed, Aurelius, unthreatened by Augustine, used his position as bishop of Carthage to convene the African church councils and to provide his friend with a platform to exercise his gifts.¹⁵⁰⁵ Hence, through influence and persuasion more than position, Augustine mentored the African bishops in the context of the councils through his abilities as a brilliant theologian and as a patient and kind apologist. In the followup to the councils, his influence continued through writing, teaching, and personal visits. Finally, Augustine seemed to have multiplied his influence by increasingly involving his disciples, who had become church leaders, in the work of the councils.

5. Personal Visits

Augustine is well known for his dislike of travel, particularly by sea. He wrote to Paulinus of Nola in 408: 'For we do not love the causes and necessities by which one is forced to undertake voyages across the sea; on the contrary, we hate them and

¹⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 59-60.

try to avoid them as much as we can.¹⁵⁰⁶ Hence, after Augustine's return to Africa in 388, he never traveled again by sea in his lifetime.¹⁵⁰⁷ Yet, the conditions of land travel also left little to be desired. Though the Romans built some excellent roads even in Africa, a traveler in Augustine's day would be fortunate to cover seventy-four kilometers in a day's time.¹⁵⁰⁸ While horses, a horse drawn carriage, and a type of carriage seat were available, it seems more likely that Augustine and other clergy most often traveled by donkey. Land travel was made more difficult by extreme weather conditions, routes that were not well marked, and by the dangerous presence of bandits, thieves, and the violent Donatist group called the Circumcellions.¹⁵⁰⁹ From this brief description, Augustine probably did not enjoy this mode of travel either.

Yet, during his tenure as presbyter and bishop of Hippo, Augustine logged thousands of kilometers across the provinces of North Africa. If Augustine did not enjoy traveling, then why did he spend so much time on the road? Simply put, one aspect of his *sarcina* of the ministry was leaving his church in Hippo to help meet the needs of the broader church in North Africa. As noted in the last section, he not only participated in the African church councils, but he also traveled in order to carry out the decisions of the councils. Possidius added that Augustine also traveled to resource various churches in North Africa through his preaching: 'when he happened to be going by invitation to visit, exhort, and instruct catholic congregations — something he did quite frequently.'¹⁵¹⁰ As Perler records, Augustine preached at least 153

¹⁵⁰⁵ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁰⁶ *Nam ipsas causas et necessitates, et quantum ualemus, deuitare conamur, et tamen, nescio quomodo, credo pro meritis nostris, deesse non possunt.* ep. 95.1, PL 33, 352. See also epp. 122.1; 124.1.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Some of Augustine's trips as bishop to other African provinces could have been accomplished by sea. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Thus, Augustine's journey from Carthage to Mauretania Caesariensis in 418, a distance of nearly 1100km, probably took at least fifteen days. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 31, 347.

¹⁵⁰⁹ *Vita* 12.1-2; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 32-40; 48-53.

¹⁵¹⁰ *Dum forte iret rogatus ad uisitandas, instruendas et exhortandas catholicas plebes; quod ipse frequentissime faciebat.* *Vita* 12.1, PL 32,

sermons in eight other cities outside of Hippo between 393 and 424.¹⁵¹¹ While most of these sermons were preached around the time of a council, others were delivered during trips involving church business and during visits with friends and disciples. Canon 33 of the second council of Carthage of 397 stipulated that when a bishop visited the church of a colleague, he should be invited to preach and preside over the Eucharist.¹⁵¹² Augustine's colleagues, including Aurelius, Alypius, Florentius, Severus, Antoninus, and possibly Possidius, Paul, Profuturus, Evodius, Urbanus, took full advantage of this canon by having the visiting bishop of Hippo preach in their churches. While stopping over in Bulla Regia in 399, Augustine began his sermon by recounting how the bishop invited him to preach: 'my brother retained me, ordered me, pleaded with me, and forced me to speak to you.'¹⁵¹³

While sacrificing his personal preferences by traveling for the needs of the church, I suggest that Augustine continued a ministry of mentoring, especially to his Hippo alumni, through traveling with them and stopping over and visiting them during his travels. Augustine communicated in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119 that it was meeting a friend on the other side of a journey that made the hardship of it worthwhile.¹⁵¹⁴ Also, Augustine's comments to Bishop Novatus in *Epistula* 84 about the pain of being separated from his friend Severus also suggested that personal visits served as an edifying time for Augustine.¹⁵¹⁵ In order to appreciate the contact Augustine had with his disciples from Hippo, we will briefly summarize the journeys

¹⁵¹¹ He preached in Bulla Regia (399); Milevus (409); Utica (410, 412, 417); Hippo Diarrhytus (410-11, 419); Fussala (411); Tagaste (414 or 415); and Mauretania Caesariensis (418). 134 of his dated sermons were preached in Carthage (397, 399, 401, 403-05, 410-11, 413, 416-19, 423). Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 438-77.

¹⁵¹² Cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.115.

¹⁵¹³ *Frater meus tenuit me, iussit, rogauit, compulit, ut uerbum uobis facerem. s. 301A.9 (s. Denis 17)*, MA, 1.89. Trans. my own. Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 108.

¹⁵¹⁴ *En. Ps.* 119.6; Cf. O. Perler, 'Les Voyages de Saint Augustin,' *RechAug* 1 (1958), 35.

¹⁵¹⁵ *Ep.* 84.1; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 14, 55.

he made with some of these friends as well as his probable visits to their places of ministry.

(1) Alypius and Possidius

In 395, Augustine and Alypius made the journey westward to Cirta for the consecration of Profuturus.¹⁵¹⁶ The journey must have taken several days and included a stopover in Thuburiscu Numidarum to meet the Donatist Bishop Fortunius.¹⁵¹⁷ In 400, Augustine and Alypius again traveled to Cirta together on unspecified church business.¹⁵¹⁸ As previously noted, Augustine and Alypius were among the twenty bishops who went to Hippo Diarrhytus following the council of 401 to restore order and set apart a new bishop.¹⁵¹⁹ In 402, following the misunderstanding between Augustine and Severus over the deacon Timothy, Augustine and Alypius went to Subsanna, where Timothy had previously been serving, to investigate the matter thoroughly.¹⁵²⁰ As noted, in 407, Alypius and Possidius traveled with Augustine from Carthage to Thuburiscu Numidarum to investigate the issues surrounding Bishop Maurentius.¹⁵²¹ In 418, the two also made the significant journey with Augustine and others to Mauretania Caesariensis.¹⁵²² Finally, in 421, Augustine and Alypius traveled to Tubunae to meet the Roman official, count Boniface.¹⁵²³

As Alypius accompanied Augustine to Cirta in 395 and 400, it seems quite likely that Augustine would have stayed over for some time in his native Tagaste with his disciple either on the journey to Cirta or on the return before returning to

¹⁵¹⁶ *Ep.* 44.1; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-10.

¹⁵¹⁷ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 208-10.

¹⁵¹⁸ Mandouze (A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 57) suggests that it was another encounter with the Donatists. See *ep.* 53; and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 231.

¹⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 86.

¹⁵²⁰ *Epp.* 62-3; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 242-3; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 58.

¹⁵²¹ Cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹⁵²² *Vita* 14.3; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 346.

¹⁵²³ *Epp.* 44.3.6; 220.3; cf. O. Perler, *op. cit.*, p. 86, 472.

Hippo.¹⁵²⁴ In 402, Augustine visited Alypius to sort out the issue of Honoratus, a monk in Hippo who was from the church in Thiava near Tagaste. As the issue was delicate, Augustine not only advised Alypius on the issue by letter, but he made a personal visit.¹⁵²⁵ In 407, it seems also likely that Augustine and Possidius stopped over in Tagaste to spend some time with Alypius either before or after the three had traveled to Thubursicu Numidarum.¹⁵²⁶ Finally, in 414 Augustine journeyed to Tagaste to participate in a local Numidian church council where he surely stayed with Alypius while also preaching at least four sermons in the Tagaste church.¹⁵²⁷

As Augustine likely stopped in Tagaste in 400 on the way to Cirta, it also seems likely that Alypius and Augustine would have stopped and spent some time with Possidius in Calama either before continuing on to Cirta or on their return.¹⁵²⁸ Augustine's most significant visit to Possidius in Calama was in 408 following the violent attack that Possidius suffered in the church at the hands of the pagans in his city.¹⁵²⁹ As the local authorities did not defend Possidius in the attack, Augustine advised him to personally travel to Ravenna and appeal to the emperor.¹⁵³⁰ Though Augustine did provide Possidius with advice, it seems that his trip to Calama was primarily to encourage his friend and disciple through this time. Augustine gave such priority to this visit with Possidius that it was probably the reason that he was absent from the councils of Carthage in 408 and 409.

¹⁵²⁴ Ibid. p. 231.

¹⁵²⁵ *Ep.* 83; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 241-2; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 58.

¹⁵²⁶ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 265.

¹⁵²⁷ Ibid. pp. 325-6, 462-3.

¹⁵²⁸ Ibid. p. 232.

¹⁵²⁹ *Ep.* 91; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 266-9; and G. Bonner, *St. Augustine: His Life and Controversies*, p. 125.

¹⁵³⁰ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 891.

(2) Severus

While attending the council of 402 in Milevus, Augustine probably stayed with Severus. A few months prior, Augustine had been to Subsanna to deal with the issue of the deacon Timothy, which was a delicate issue with Severus as Augustine's *Epistulae* 62 and 63 attested. Hence, the timing of the council of Milevus and Augustine's opportunity to visit his friend seemed crucial to their ongoing relationship.¹⁵³¹ The evidence suggests that Augustine and Severus did remain close as Augustine visited Milevus again in 408 or 409 and delivered two sermons to the congregation of that city.¹⁵³² Finally, Augustine probably stayed with Severus during the council of 416, which met in Milevus.

(3) Profuturus and Fortunatus

As previously noted, Augustine, along with Alypius, traveled to be with Profuturus in Cirta in 395 when he was ordained bishop.¹⁵³³ The following year, Augustine and Profuturus traveled together through Numidia possibly meeting with Donatist leaders, although the reason is ultimately unclear. It was during this journey that the two discussed the issue of anger, which Augustine brought up again in his letter to Profuturus in 397.¹⁵³⁴ In 400, probably shortly before Profuturus' premature passing, Augustine and Alypius once again visited their friend from Hippo. In 402, probably on his return from Thiava, Augustine visited Fortunatus, another disciple from Hippo, who was ordained bishop of Cirta after Profuturus' death.¹⁵³⁵ Augustine probably stopped through Cirta to visit Fortunatus on the way home from Milevus in 409¹⁵³⁶ as well as on the return from the council of Zerta in 412.¹⁵³⁷

¹⁵³¹ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 242-3.

¹⁵³² Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 272-3

¹⁵³³ *Ep.* 53; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 210, 231.

¹⁵³⁴ *Ep.* 38.2; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., p. 86; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 930.

¹⁵³⁵ *Ep.* 78; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 245.

¹⁵³⁶ *Ep.* 144; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., pp. 273-4.

(4) Evodius, Boniface, and Antoninus

In 410, it seems quite possible that Augustine stopped over in Uzalis to spend some time with Evodius while traveling between Hippo and Hippo Diarrhytus.¹⁵³⁸ Around 424, we can be certain that Augustine spent time with Evodius while investigating miracle claims involving the relics of the martyr Stephen.¹⁵³⁹ Though the reason for the visit is not clear, Augustine visited Boniface in Cataqua in 414 or 415.¹⁵⁴⁰ Finally, in 422, Augustine traveled to Fussala for the unfortunate reason of removing his Hippo disciple Antoninus from his place of ministry and seeking to minister to the wounded congregation at Fussala.¹⁵⁴¹

(5) Summary

Though Augustine did not like to travel, he did a great deal of it for the sake of the church as well as visiting his disciples and friends who had lived with him in Hippo. Pellegrino suggests that the reason Augustine did not write many letters to Possidius was because the two saw each other on a fairly regular basis.¹⁵⁴² As Augustine had modeled hospitality in the monastery, he probably received it during visits to his disciples at this stage of his ministry.¹⁵⁴³

How did Augustine continue to mentor these spiritual leaders through his travels and visits? First, as previously noted, while traveling with men like Alypius and Possidius on church business, he labored along side of them and involved them in the work of ministry. Secondly, he gave them advice and helped them with problem solving in their ministries.¹⁵⁴⁴ Third, Augustine gave spiritual encouragement and

¹⁵³⁷ Ibid. p. 309.

¹⁵³⁸ Ibid. p. 280.

¹⁵³⁹ *Civ. Dei*, 22.8; cf. O. Perler, op. cit., p. 380.

¹⁵⁴⁰ *Ep.* 149; cf. O. Perler, O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, p. 326-8; and A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, p. 150.

¹⁵⁴¹ *Epp.* 209; 20*; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 369-73.

¹⁵⁴² See M. Pellegrino in J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁴³ Cf. O. Perler, 'Les Voyages de Saint Augustin,' *RechAug* 1 (1958), 30.

¹⁵⁴⁴ This would be true of his interaction with Severus and the issue of Timothy in 402; with Alypius

support to Profuturus at his ordination in 395, during their trip together the following year, as well as to Possidius in the aftermath of the events in Calama in 408. Finally, we can confidently assert that the time Augustine spent with these disciples on the road and in their homes during visits was in many ways a continuation of the mentoring relationship that they knew in the monastery in Hippo and would have probably included dialogue about theological, exegetical, doctrinal, and practical church issues.

6. Summary of Augustine's Forms of Mentoring

For nearly forty years, Augustine was actively involved in mentoring spiritual leaders in Hippo, throughout Africa, and at times beyond. As we have argued in this chapter, his primary forms of mentoring included: the monastery; letters; books and writings; participation in church councils; and personal visits. What general conclusions may be made about Augustine's mentoring forms? First, regardless of whether Augustine had personal contact with a spiritual leader or not, his mentoring influence was very warm and personal. The tone of his books and letters seemed to be consistent with how he was portrayed in the monastery, in a church council, or on a personal visit. Letters, as noted, merely facilitated a conversation that could not take place face to face. Secondly, we observed Augustine making use of all six forms of mentoring from the earliest stages of his ministry until his death. Finally, it is quite interesting to note how Augustine combined two and sometimes three forms of mentoring within the same mentoring context. We have already noted how Augustine sent several letters that were accompanied by books intended to resource the clergy.¹⁵⁴⁵ Also, we have shown how he wrote letters to spiritual leaders prior to

and the issue of Honoratus in 402; as well as the issue of Possidius and the secular authorities in Calama in 408.

¹⁵⁴⁵ *Epp.* 24-5; 31; 162; 169; 173A; 174; 207; 214-15; 215A; 16*; 23*; 29*.

church councils giving his thoughts on a pending subject¹⁵⁴⁶; while he also followed up councils with letters affirming or putting into practice the decisions that were made.¹⁵⁴⁷ In our treatment of Augustine's involvement in the church councils, we mentioned several times how he traveled and made personal visits carrying out the will of the council. Often, these visits were in the company of disciples or they included a stopover to visit a disciple. We also showed that in the two delicate cases of church business involving Alypius and Severus, Augustine not only wrote a letter about the matter but he also made a personal visit to these disciples.¹⁵⁴⁸ Following Augustine's visit to Profuturus in 396, he wrote a letter the next year reminding him of their discussion.¹⁵⁴⁹ Finally, Augustine resourced those who had personally come to spend time with him in the Hippo monastery with books and letters upon their departure. This was the case of two monks from Hadrumetum as well as Paul Orosius.¹⁵⁵⁰

Through Augustine's multi-faceted approach to mentoring, he provided spiritual direction and encouragement; rebuke and discipline; practical advice for dealing with church matters; exhortation toward maintaining sound doctrine; as well as theological and exegetical help to teach the Scriptures and fight heresy. In many cases, Augustine was personally available and worked alongside leaders of every rank of clerical office resourcing them toward fulfilling their ministries to the church.

¹⁵⁴⁶ *Epp.* 22; 59.

¹⁵⁴⁷ *Epp.* 60; 139; 141; 173; 176-7; 185; 219; 28*.

¹⁵⁴⁸ *Epp.* 83; 62-3.

¹⁵⁴⁹ *Ep.* 38.2.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Augustine sent the monks off with *epp.* 214-15; 215A as well as *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De correptione et gratia*; while Paul left Hippo with *Contra Priscillianistas* in his possession.

Chapter 5: Principles of Mentoring in Augustine

Building on Augustine's forms of mentoring spiritual leaders as outlined in the previous chapter, we should now move toward articulating his principles for mentoring. As has been our practice, his principles will be drawn from clearly observable and repeated behavior evident in his mentoring forms. In addition, his thoughts and beliefs about mentoring, taken from his writings and *sermones*, will serve to complement his behavior and enable us to make an argument for a set of principles for mentoring leaders. While considering Augustine's principles of mentoring in light of the early Christian model presented in the first chapter, I will show that they were largely consistent, though to varying degrees, with this model. Thus, his principles for mentoring included: the group context; the mentor is a disciple; selection; the nature of the mentor-disciple relationship; sound doctrine; modeling and involving in ministry; releasing leaders; and resourcing leaders. Finally, I will assert that Augustine left a legacy that impacted the church in the generation following his death as well as down to the present day.

I. The Group Context

Augustine's entire life was characterized by the need for friendship and the constant presence of companions. While friends like Alypius, Nebridius, and Evodius played a key role in his spiritual journey, his experience as a Christian and a leader in the church included a community of brothers pursuing spiritual progress together. As Augustine mentored spiritual leaders, he was undoubtedly committed to the necessity of the group context.

1. Augustine's Example in the Group Context

In the previous chapter, we showed how Augustine went about mentoring men in a group context — the most evident form being of course the monastery. We gave consideration to the progress of Augustine's monastic itinerary from being more philosophical and contemplative at Cassiciacum and Tagaste to being church focused and concerned with the *sarcina* of the ministry at Hippo. Nevertheless, at each stage, Augustine was the prime mover in bringing men together to pursue spiritual growth through disciplines such as prayer, singing the Psalms, reading the Scriptures and other spiritual books, dialogue, work and service. For over forty years, Augustine lived daily in a community of spiritually like-minded men. For the vast majority of this time, from 395-430, he served as a bishop-monk mentoring other spiritual leaders in the context of an ongoing ministry to the church.

We also showed in chapter four how Augustine mentored in a group manner through his participation and influence in the African church councils between 393 and 427. He influenced the gathered church leaders by articulating sound doctrine; through winsome arguments delivered to the church's enemies with patience and wisdom; as well as through serving on task forces following several councils, which carried out the will of the council.

Augustine also mentored in a community during his travels. Whether traveling to or from a church council, serving on a follow-up task force for a council, or simply visiting one of his Hippo alumni, Augustine was at each recorded instance in the company of at least a small group of disciples or church leaders.

Augustine's mentoring epistles also provide evidence for mentoring in a group context. No less than twenty-five of Augustine's letters to the clergy were addressed

to two or more recipients.¹⁵⁵¹ Thus, his encouragement, exhortations, and resourcing were intended for groups of spiritual leaders. In addition to the named recipients, his letters were also copied and surely enjoyed a wider influence upon other clergy and groups of clergy. Augustine also co-authored at least twenty-three letters with fellow clergy. With addressees including the clergy, the pope, Donatist leaders, as well as secular authorities, Augustine penned ten letters with Alypius¹⁵⁵²; one with Possidius¹⁵⁵³; five with the ‘brothers with him’ (*et qui mecum sunt fratres*)¹⁵⁵⁴; and seven with other clergy.¹⁵⁵⁵ Through involving these groups of spiritual leaders in his ministry of writing letters, Augustine was indirectly mentoring them. Finally, Augustine indicated in his correspondence with Paulinus of Nola that he took Paulinus’ letters and shared them with the clergy and monks that lived with him.¹⁵⁵⁶ Hence, the letters that Augustine received also benefited the community that he was mentoring.

Finally, Augustine mentored in a group context through his books. As noted, the theological and philosophical dialogues at table in Tagaste and Hippo aided him in clarifying his thought toward the writing of such works as *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* and *De Trinitate*.¹⁵⁵⁷ While the fellow clergy and monks aided Augustine in developing his thoughts on these subjects, they surely benefited greatly from his input in these discussions as well! A final indication of group mentoring

¹⁵⁵¹ *Epp.* 31; 42; 45; 80; 95 (Paulinus and Theresia); *ep.* 48 (Eudoxius and monks of Capararia); *ep.* 62 (Severus and brothers); *epp.* 78; 122 (clergy and faithful at Hippo); *epp.* 83; 15*; 22* (Alypius and others); *epp.* 84; 28* (Novatus and brothers); *ep.* 115 (Fortunatus and brothers); *ep.* 142 (Saturninus and Efrata); *epp.* 159; 162 (Evodius and brothers); *ep.* 173A; 25* (Deogratias, Theodore, and others); *epp.* 214-15 (Valentinus and monks of Hadrumetum); *ep.* 219 (Proculus and Cillenius); *epp.* 253-4 (Benenatus and brothers).

¹⁵⁵² *Epp.* 41; 53; 62-3; 69-70; 170-1; 186; 188.

¹⁵⁵³ *Ep.* 137.

¹⁵⁵⁴ *Ep.* 110, PL 33, 419. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of *epp.* 1-149 are from WSA. See also *epp.* 125; 159; 162; 254.

¹⁵⁵⁵ *Epp.* 88; 128-9; 141; 176-7; 219. Possidius and Alypius were among the clergy are listed in the greeting of *ep.* 176-7 to Pope Innocent.

¹⁵⁵⁶ *Epp.* 31.2; 42.2.2.

regarding his books is found in Alypius' contribution to the writing of the *Regula*. As the two worked together on this project, Augustine probably influenced Alypius' monastic thought while gleaning insights from his friend as well.

2. Augustine's Teaching on the Group Context

Given Augustine's observed commitment to spiritual growth through community, what did he believe about the need for the group in mentoring spiritual leaders? From his *sermones*, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, and other writings, four key themes seem to emerge: the group must live together in unity; the community itself is a means of spiritual growth; growth is facilitated by Christian friendship; and the group is a model for the church. While much of what Augustine prescribed about spiritual growth in community relates to the monastery, my goal is not to analyze his monastic theology as others have aptly done¹⁵⁵⁸; rather, I prefer to glean from his monastic thoughts that provide insight into his mentoring of spiritual leaders.

(1) Living Together

In establishing the *monasterium clericorum* in particular, Augustine made the conscious choice to live among the people of the church, its clergy, as well as monks.¹⁵⁵⁹ In *Epistula* 95, he communicated to Paulinus his desire to live among citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem for their benefit.¹⁵⁶⁰ In *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, he

¹⁵⁵⁷ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 196.

¹⁵⁵⁸ See C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 91-109; A. Fiske, 'St. Augustine and Friendship,' *MonStud* 2, (1964), 127-35; G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*; G. Lawless, 'Augustine's First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo?' *Augustinianum* 25, (1985), 65-78; B. McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250*; M. Mellet, *L'Itinéraire et L'Ideale Monastique de Saint Augustin*; A. Sage, *La Regle de Saint Augustin Commenté par ses Ecrits*; A. Sage, 'La contemplation dans les communautés de vie fraternelle,' *RechAug* 8, (1971), 245-302; T. van Bavel, *La communauté selon Augustin: Une grâce pour notre temps*; L. Verheijen, 'Saint Augustin: Un Moine devenu Prêtre et Evêque,' *EstAug* 12 (1977), 281-334; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*.

¹⁵⁵⁹ S. 355.1; cf. A. Mandouze, 'L'évêque et le corps presbytéral au service du peuple fidèle selon Saint Augustin,' in H. Bouësse, ed. *L'évêque dans L'Eglise du Christ*, p. 138.

¹⁵⁶⁰ *Ep.* 95.5-6.

referred to the monastery as a ‘common life’ (*uita communis*)¹⁵⁶¹ and that ‘you cannot be separated from the human kind, as long as you live among men.’¹⁵⁶² Ladner asserts that Augustine’s commitment to living with a community of men in the context of serving the church defined his monastic stance. He writes: ‘For Augustine true monasticism is coenobitical, not hermitical, and also that it is apostolic or, in modern terminology, mixed rather than purely contemplative.’¹⁵⁶³

Augustine’s inspiration for such a common life was the example of the early apostles. As noted, before there was an articulated monastic *regula*, Augustine and his companions simply lived according to the precepts of Acts 4:31-35.¹⁵⁶⁴ An important aspect of the apostolic model was that brothers dwell together in unity. In his sermon on Psalm 132 and this notion of unity, Augustine wrote: ‘And what does “in unity” mean? He says “and they had one soul and one heart toward God.”’¹⁵⁶⁵ In the same teaching, he attempted to clarify the meaning of a monk living in a community. He wrote:

For *monos* means ‘one,’ and not just ‘one’ in any sense . . . They therefore live in unity so as to make up one man, so that they really have what has been written ‘one soul and one heart’ . . . They have many bodies, but not many souls; they have many bodies, but not many hearts. They are rightly called *monos*, that is, ‘one alone.’¹⁵⁶⁶

Augustine further illustrated this oneness of mind and heart by referring to the group as the temple of God. In *De ciuitate Dei*, he wrote: ‘We are all together his temple, as

¹⁵⁶¹ *En. Ps.* 99.12, PL 36, 1278. Cf. G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 340.

¹⁵⁶² *Si bene illis esset inter homines, recederent ab hominibus?* *en. Ps.* 54.9, PL 36, 634. English trans. cited in G. Ladner, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

¹⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶⁴ *Vita 5; op. mon.* 17.20, 25, 32, 38; *en. Ps.* 132.2; s. 356.1; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁶⁵ *Et quid est, ‘in unum? Et erat illis,’ inquit, ‘anima una et cor unum in Deum’ [Acts 4:32]. en. Ps.* 132.2, PL 36, 1729. English trans. cited in A. Zumkeller, *op. cit.*, p. 398. See also M. Clark, *Augustine*, p. 88.

¹⁵⁶⁶ *Monos enim unus dicitur: et non unus quomodocumque . . . Qui ergo sic uiuunt in unum, ut unum hominem faciant, ut sit illis uere quod scriptum est, ‘una anima et unum cor’; multa corpora, sed non multae animae; multa corpora, sed non multa corda; recte dicitur, monos id est unus solus. en. Ps.*

each one is by himself, for God deigns to dwell in the community of all men as he does in us one by one.¹⁵⁶⁷

As a mentor of spiritual leaders, Augustine believed that it was imperative that the group live together not merely in close proximity but through sharing a common life. Following the rule of the apostles, an important characteristic of the community was unity in mind and heart.

(2) The Group is a Means of Growth

As Augustine lived with his disciples, he, like Basil, believed that the group itself was a vital means of spiritual growth. In fact, the only vow prescribed in Augustine's *Regula* was the commitment to live a common life.¹⁵⁶⁸ How did Augustine regard the community as a means of spiritual growth? First, he believed that ascetic disciplines were essential for the Christian and especially a monk to make progress toward spiritual perfection. With that, he believed that ascetic life was best accomplished in a monastic environment.¹⁵⁶⁹ The individual was strengthened in the disciplines of prayer, fasting, reading, study, work, and service on account of the support and accountability of the group. Members of the community did not simply pray, for example, near one another or ask one another if they had prayed that day; rather, they were in the habit of performing this and other spiritual disciplines corporately. Hence, the group provided strength to do what the individual member was too weak to do on his own. For this reason, Augustine pleaded with the monks to bear with those who were younger and weaker in their faith and not to abandon them. He wrote:

132.6, PL 36, 1732-3. English trans. cited in A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 400.

¹⁵⁶⁷ *Huius enim templum simul omnes et singuli templa sumus, quia et omnium concordiam et singulos inhabitare dignatur. civ. Dei*, 10.3.2, PL 41, 280. English trans. cited in Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 130. See also *ep.* 187.13.38; *s.* 336.1.1; 337.1.1; *reg.* 1.8.

¹⁵⁶⁸ *Reg.* 1.2-4, 8; cf. M. Clark, *Augustine*, p. 89.

Will he who makes good progress retreat so that he permits no human company at all? What if before he made progress no one wished to suffer him at all? . . . Let your love then pay attention. The apostle says ‘bearing with each other in love, eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’¹⁵⁷⁰

Secondly, the group nurtured its members in pursuing intimacy with God. Clark asserts that the monastic enterprise was founded on the individual’s yearning for connection with God. Hence, the community became a collective, contemplative soul hungering for God while sharing the joys and sorrows of the experience with one another.¹⁵⁷¹

Finally, the group context enabled each of its members to be sharpened not only spiritually but also intellectually especially toward a solid grasp of theology. As noted, Augustine was the catalyst in their theological formation through his regular teaching in the monastery. The spiritual leaders and monks in the community were even further developed through the discipline of dialogue and mealtime discussions. While Augustine’s lectures were certainly important and imparted much to the community, the members were challenged to reason, articulate, and debate through dialogue rendering them more capable thinkers and theologians.

Not only did Augustine insist that he live together with his men, but he fostered a community that was itself a means of spiritual growth. He encouraged this through the corporate practice of spiritual disciplines, the shared pursuit of intimacy with God, and the intellectual and theological sharpening that came through teaching and dialogue.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l’aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 167-8.

¹⁵⁷⁰ *Separaturus est se qui bene proficit, ut nullum omnino hominem patiatur? Quid si et ipsum, antequam proficeret, nemo uellet pati? . . . Intendat Caritas uestra: ‘Sustinentes inuicem,’ ait Apostolus, ‘in dilectione, satagentes seruare unitatem spiritus in uinculo pacis’ [Eph. 4:3]. en. Ps. 99.9, PL 36, 1276. English trans. cited in Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 388.*

¹⁵⁷¹ *En. Ps. 99.5*; cf. M. Clark, *Augustine*, pp. 88-9.

(3) The Role of Christian Friendship

A third significant aspect of Augustine's thought on spiritual growth in the group context was the importance of Christian friendship. In *Sermo* 299D, he declared that two things in life were essential — health and friendship with the latter being the most important.¹⁵⁷² While Augustine was personally motivated by friendship, his thoughts on the subject were certainly influenced by the preoccupation with friendship in the Roman world in the fourth and fifth century.¹⁵⁷³ Though a thorough body of scholarship has been dedicated to Augustine's thoughts on friendship,¹⁵⁷⁴ my interest is to consider Augustine's views on friendship as they relate to spiritual growth in the group context.

Prior to Augustine's conversion and into his initial years as a Christian, he largely held to a classical Roman idea of friendship. Generally described by the term *amicitia*, this type of friendship was founded upon common interest and experience.¹⁵⁷⁵ Often this included some pursuit of wisdom or a shared understanding of virtue.¹⁵⁷⁶ Augustine's involvement as a hearer in the Manichean sect and his attempted communal experiment with friends seeking the *uita beata* both seem to

¹⁵⁷² S. 299D.1; cf. D. Burt, *Friendship and Society*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁷³ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷⁴ See C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 91-109; D. Burt, *Friendship and Society*; W. Collinge, 'The Role of Christian Community Life in Augustine's Apologetics,' *AugStud* 14 (1983), 63-73; E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 127-40; A. Fiske, 'St. Augustine and Friendship,' *MonStud* 2, (1964), 127-35; G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*. J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 279-96; B. McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250*; M. McNamara, *Friendship in St. Augustine*; J. Monagle, 'Friendship in St. Augustine's Biography. Classical Notion of Friendship,' *AugStud* 2 (1971), 81-92; T. van Bavel, *La communauté selon Augustin: Une grâce pour notre temps*; C. White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century*; and A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Cf. E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 129; and G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Cf. E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 129; and J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 291.

testify to his commitment to *amicitia*.¹⁵⁷⁷ As classical friendship was further defined by affection and human sympathy, it was also initiated by the individual's choice of a like-minded companion.¹⁵⁷⁸

As Augustine matured as a Christian and spiritual leader, his later writings reveal a break with the classical notion of friendship as he began to use the term *caritas* to describe Christian friendship.¹⁵⁷⁹ *Caritas* referred to love for God and neighbor — a love ultimately modeled by the Trinity.¹⁵⁸⁰ Brockwell asserts that as it related to Augustine's common life among monks and spiritual leaders, *caritas* was the 'motivational core of monastic community.'¹⁵⁸¹

Given this brief definition of *caritas*, how was Christian friendship distinct from classical friendship? First, for Augustine *caritas* was based on *agapē* love in which a friend was loved for his own sake and because God or Christ dwelt in him.¹⁵⁸² Secondly, instead of human sympathy or common interest providing the basis for friendship, *caritas* was a bond that was a gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁸³ As God brought about the bond of Christian friendship, individual choice played a lesser role in its initiation.¹⁵⁸⁴ Third, *caritas* was completely focused on God and was not a goal in and of itself. It was also a love that longed for others to find God and experience

¹⁵⁷⁷ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Cf. J. Lienhard, op. cit., p. 290 and E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 129.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. 132, 134.

¹⁵⁸⁰ *Mor.* 1.33.73; *div. qu.* 83.71.1; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 104, 127.

¹⁵⁸¹ Cf. C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 97.

¹⁵⁸² *Conf.* 6.16.26; s. 336; 349; *Trin.* 8.10; cf. D. Burt, *Friendship and Society*, p. 57; E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 138; and J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 292.

¹⁵⁸³ Cf. J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 291, 293. See also *civ. Dei*, 19.8.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Cf. E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 129.

salvation.¹⁵⁸⁵ Fourth, while *amicitia* was driven by common interest, *caritas* was characterized by a common faith and an agreement between believers on divine things.¹⁵⁸⁶ Finally, some observed characteristics of Christian friendship included trust, service, carrying one another's burdens, and spurring one another on toward good deeds.¹⁵⁸⁷

What were the outcomes of Christian friendship? First, *caritas* resulted in unity, the 'one heart in God' (*cor unum in Deum*), which was the primary goal of the common life in the monastery.¹⁵⁸⁸ Secondly, Christian friendship was in general a wonderful experience and had a blessed outcome for believers.¹⁵⁸⁹ In his sermon on Psalm 132, Augustine said: 'There He has ordered his blessing; there those who live in harmony praise the Lord.'¹⁵⁹⁰ Finally, *caritas* resulted in spiritual growth for the members of the community. Brockwell writes: 'The more one placed the good of the community before his personal interests, the more rapidly he would progress in the spiritual life.'¹⁵⁹¹

Though Augustine did not fully abandon the classical notion of friendship that characterized his earlier life, the idea of *caritas* nevertheless transformed his reasons

¹⁵⁸⁵ *Conf.* 4.9.14; *doc. Chr.* 1.27.28; cf. D. Burt, *Friendship and Society*, p. 62; and E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 130, 133, 137.

¹⁵⁸⁶ *Ep.* 258; cf. J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 292.

¹⁵⁸⁷ *Civ. Dei*, 10.3.2; *s.* 34.4; 358.4; *Trin.* 9.4.6; cf. D. Burt, *Friendship and Society*, p. 62-3, 66; and E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 132, 137, 139.

¹⁵⁸⁸ *Reg.* 1.1, PL 32, 1378. See also *ep.* 258.1; A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 124; and E. Cassidy, 'The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine's Portrayal of *Caritas*,' in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 139.

¹⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 138.

¹⁵⁹⁰ *Ibi praecepit benedictionem, ibi benedicunt Dominum qui habitant concorditer. en. Ps.* 132.13, PL 36, 1736. English trans. cited in A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 404. See also *civ. Dei*, 19.13.1.

¹⁵⁹¹ Cf. C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 100.

and purpose for friendship.¹⁵⁹² With the relationship of the members of the Trinity as his model, Augustine believed that *caritas* brought unity and oneness of mind and heart to the group, which facilitated the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Brown is correct in asserting that Augustine enjoyed more personal fellowship with his friends and disciples in the initial years of his ministry in Hippo as later many were set apart to serve the church Africa.¹⁵⁹³ Nevertheless, Augustine continued to cultivate *caritas* with these men through letters and visits as well as with new monks who were joining him in Hippo.

(4) The Group is a Model for the Church

As the Trinity served as the model for *caritas* for the monastic community, Augustine also believed that the testimony of the group in the monastery was a model for the church. Though the members of the monastery chose a rather secluded lifestyle in order to be protected from the sinful influences of the world, they were still very much integrated into the life of the church, which meant that they were not sheltered from its problems.¹⁵⁹⁴ Regarding the church as the mother of the monastery, Augustine believed that the monastery ultimately existed to serve the church.¹⁵⁹⁵

What did the monks model for the members of the church? Though regarded as a more consecrated group,¹⁵⁹⁶ the monks and clergy in the monastery were simply modeling the common life of a believer — a citizen of the New Jerusalem.¹⁵⁹⁷ As they lived and served in plain view of the church, Augustine wanted to impress upon the laity that this life was not reserved for the super spiritual but was quite accessible to

¹⁵⁹² Cf. J. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine,' *Augustiniana* 1 (1990), 293.

¹⁵⁹³ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 467.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Cf. C. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church,' *AugStud* 8 (1977), 108.

¹⁵⁹⁵ *Jo. ev. tr.* 13.12; cf. L. J. van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine,' *AugStud* 12 (1981), 57.

¹⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 58.

¹⁵⁹⁷ *S.* 355.1; 356.1; cf. L. J. van der Lof, *op. cit.*.

the average church member.¹⁵⁹⁸ The church, like the monastery, could also be a community built on Christian friendship having one heart and one mind.¹⁵⁹⁹ Cassidy writes: ‘The realization of true friendship is nothing other than the bringing to fruition the body of Christ.’¹⁶⁰⁰ Though not without its problems and shortcomings, the monastic group provided the church with a viable model of Christian community.¹⁶⁰¹

3. Summary

Augustine’s life was about friendship. Yet when his life became about following Christ and leading the church, his predisposition to friendship matured into a commitment to trinitarian community and spiritual growth within the context of the group. We have seen that he mentored spiritual leaders in a *monasterium clericorum* and influenced the *collegium* of African bishops in church councils for nearly forty years. Even after friends departed the monastery in Hippo to serve the church elsewhere, he regularly visited them very often in the company of other disciples. He wrote letters to groups of leaders, composed letters with other leaders, and read letters from leaders to his men in the monastery. Finally, he developed his thoughts for books partly through dialogue and table talk in the monastery.

Augustine believed that men must live in close proximity sharing a common life and living in Christian unity. He believed that the group itself was a significant means of spiritual growth. Life together and spiritual progress were aided by the reality of Christian friendship (*caritas*). Finally, the group, following the model of the Trinity, also served as a model for the church. In summary, Augustine’s ministry of mentoring spiritual leaders was clearly characterized by the necessity of the group

¹⁵⁹⁸ Cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l’aventure de la raison et la grace*, p. 238.

¹⁵⁹⁹ *Jo. ev. tr.* 10.7; cf. E. Cassidy, ‘The Recovery of the Classical Ideal of Friendship in Augustine’s Portrayal of *Caritas*,’ in T. Finan and V. Twomey, eds., *The Relationship between NeoPlatonism and Christianity*, 135.

¹⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 140.

¹⁶⁰¹ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 53.

context. His community, which followed the rule of the apostles and actively served the needs of the church bore resemblance to the missionary band mentored by Paul as well as the *mathētai* who apprenticed under Jesus.

II. A Mentor is a Disciple

Augustine demonstrated a personal commitment to growing spiritually from the time of his conversion to the very end of his life. Hence, he mentored other spiritual leaders by inspiring them from his own example and providing a model for them to imitate. In arguing for this second principle of mentoring in Augustine, we will consider how Augustine demonstrated a continual desire to grow spiritually as well as what he believed and taught about a mentor being a disciple.

1. Augustine's Example of a Mentor as a Disciple

The first way that we observed Augustine as a disciple was in his commitment to ascetic living in the context of a community. As noted, he believed that an ascetic lifestyle was the most strategic approach to achieving perfection and that the community of monks provided the needed accountability and support.¹⁶⁰² Despite the fact that his books were widely circulated, that he was in great demand as a preacher, and that he was the most influential African bishop of his day, Augustine never grew beyond the point of needing a group of men living under the rule of the apostles. In this sense, his posture as a continual disciple resembled that of Pachomius.

Secondly, like Simplicianus, Augustine continued to grow by being humble about what he did not know or understand and by actively inviting the input of others. We noted in his famous correspondence with Jerome that Augustine invited Jerome's input on his arguments while acknowledging the benefit he received from Jerome's

¹⁶⁰² *Ep.* 211.12; cf. A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et la grace*, pp. 167-8.

books.¹⁶⁰³ Even during times of significant disagreement, Augustine maintained the humble posture of a learner toward his contemporary in Bethlehem.¹⁶⁰⁴ This was further illustrated by his desire to send a disciple to study under Jerome and then return to Hippo to share what had been learned.¹⁶⁰⁵ Finally, though the younger Augustine outranked the presbyter of Bethlehem in the clerical hierarchy, he did not allow the pride of a position to be an obstacle toward his learning and growth.¹⁶⁰⁶

In his correspondence with Paulinus of Nola, Augustine also requested books, posed numerous theological questions, and generally communicated with the posture of a learner.¹⁶⁰⁷ Though responding to Simplicianus' theological questions, Augustine also asked for his former mentor's input on what he had written. Finally, he requested Aurelius' feedback on an initial draft of *De doctrina Christiana*.¹⁶⁰⁸

Augustine's commitment to learning was not limited to his interaction with other spiritual leaders. In his letters to the layman Januarius, which dealt with various subjects, Augustine admitted the limitations of his understanding.¹⁶⁰⁹ In *De catechizandis rudibus*, Augustine advised Deogratias that a spiritual leader need not have an answer for every question to be able to effectively teach a catechumen. In fact, he urged the catechizer to be open to learn from his students!¹⁶¹⁰ Finally, Augustine showed great humility as a learner by drawing from the hermeneutical rules of the Donatist Bishop Tyconius in articulating his ideas for Scriptural

¹⁶⁰³ *Epp.* 28.4.6; 40.2.2; 71.

¹⁶⁰⁴ *Epp.* 67.2; 82.2.15; 82.5.34.

¹⁶⁰⁵ *Ep.* 73.2.2.

¹⁶⁰⁶ *Ep.* 82.33.

¹⁶⁰⁷ *Epp.* 31.7-8; 80; 95; 149.3.34.

¹⁶⁰⁸ *Epp.* 37.3; 41.2.

¹⁶⁰⁹ *Ep.* 55.35; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 103-05.

¹⁶¹⁰ *Cat. rud.* 11.16; cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 8.

interpretation in *De doctrina Christiana*.¹⁶¹¹ Though he spent much of his ministry battling with the Donatists, there was still something to be learned from their scholars.

A third observable way in which Augustine was a growing disciple was in his theological development. As noted, within the course of his book *Ad Simplicianum*, he changed his views on grace moving from a position of favoring man's free will to assigning more importance to God's sovereignty.¹⁶¹² He humbly related this theological journey to the Gallic clergy Prosper and Hilary in *De Praedestinatione sanctorum*.¹⁶¹³ Finally, toward the end of his life, Augustine seems to have developed in his views on miracles as well as the role of relics in Christian worship.¹⁶¹⁴

A fourth way that Augustine grew spiritually was through writing books. In *Epistula* 143, he declared to Marcellinus: 'I freely confess, accordingly, that I endeavor to be one of those who write because they have made some progress, and who, by means of writing, make further progress.'¹⁶¹⁵ Similarly, in *De Trinitate* he added: 'I myself confess that I have by writing learned many things which I did not know.'¹⁶¹⁶ As a growing disciple putting the fruits of his study into published form, he regarded a finished work as merely one stage of the ongoing conversation toward understanding divine things. As he had invited feedback from Jerome, Simplicianus, and Aurelius, he made the same appeal to all of his readers: 'Assuredly, as in all my writings I desire not only a pious reader, but also a free corrector.'¹⁶¹⁷ According to

¹⁶¹¹ *Doc. Chr.* 3.1.30.42-37.56; cf. D. Doyle, 'The Bishop as Teacher,' D. Doyle and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 91.

¹⁶¹² *Retr.* 2.1; cf. J. Wetzel, '*Simplicianum, Ad*,' *ATTA*, 798.

¹⁶¹³ *Praed. sanct.* 3.7; 4.8.

¹⁶¹⁴ *Civ. Dei*, 22.8; *ep.* 227; 29*; *retr.* 1.13.7; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 418-19; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 544.

¹⁶¹⁵ *Ego proinde fateor me ex eorum numero esse conari, qui proficiendo scribunt, et scribendo proficiunt. ep.* 143.2, PL 33, 585. English trans. from <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102.htm>. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 354.

¹⁶¹⁶ *Egoque ipse multa quae nesciebam scribendo me didicisse confitear. Trin.* 3.1.1, PL 42, 869. All English trans. of *De Trinitate* are from <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1301.htm>.

¹⁶¹⁷ *Sane cum in omnibus litteris meis non solum pium lectorem sed etiam liberum correctorem desiderem. Trin.* 3.1.2, PL 42, 869. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 270.

Possidius, Augustine continued to grow spiritually through writing even to the end of his life:

Not long before his death, he reviewed the books he had dictated and published whether in the early days of his conversion when he was still a layman or in his years as a priest and then bishop. He revised and corrected anything he found to be at odds with the church's rule.¹⁶¹⁸

While taking time to edit his books and categorize them for the library at Hippo, Augustine published his *Retractationes*, a book that carefully reconsidered and clarified his positions on an array of subjects.

Finally, Augustine showed a life long commitment to growing as a disciple through demonstrating humility and transparency. His humility was quite evident in his correspondence as well as in his conduct during church councils. Though a highly revered bishop, his transparency as one continuing to struggle with sin was a resounding theme of *Confessiones*. This humility continued to the very end of his life as in his final ten days, he 'had the very few Davidic Psalms on repentance written out and the sheets attached to the wall opposite his bed; then, while he lay ill, he looked at them, read them, and wept continually and copiously.'¹⁶¹⁹ Breaking with his normal practice of receiving visitors, he spent his final days in prayer.¹⁶²⁰

2. Augustine's Teaching on a Mentor as Disciple

In addition to his observed behavior, Augustine prescribed in his writings that a mentor should continually be a growing disciple. In his reply to the questions of Dulcitis, written toward the end of his life in 424, he expressed his preference for

¹⁶¹⁸ *Ante proximum uero diem obitus sui a se dictatos et editos recensuit libros, siue eos quos primo tempore conuersionis suae adhuc laicus, siue quos presbyter, siue quos episcopus dictauerat: et quaecumque in his recognouit aliter quam sese habet ecclesiastica regula a se fuisse dictata et scripta, cum adhuc ecclesiasticum usum minus sciret, minusque sapuisset, a semetipso et reprehensa et correctata sunt. Vita 28.1, PL 32, 57. All English trans. of Vita are taken from J. Rotelle, ed., *The Life of Saint Augustine*.*

¹⁶¹⁹ *Nam sibi iusserat Psalmos Davidicos, qui sunt paucissimi de poenitentia, scribi, ipsosque quaterniones iacens in lecto contra parietem positos diebus suae infirmitatis intuebatur, et legebat, et iugiter ac ubertim flebat. Vita 31.2, PL 32, 63.*

¹⁶²⁰ *Ibid.* 31.3.

learning over teaching: ‘I for my part . . . like it better to learn than to teach . . . the sweetness of truth then should invite us to learn, the necessities of charity should force us to teach.’¹⁶²¹ Content to remain a learner, as Cyprian and Ambrose had also been, Augustine was motivated to teach out of love for the church. As Augustine grew in stature as a bishop and preacher, he asserted that a minister should always be a student in the school of Christ.¹⁶²² Around 415, he wrote to Jerome in *Epistula* 166: ‘Although it is more fitting that old men should be teachers than learners, it is nevertheless more fitting for them to learn than to continue ignorant of that which they should teach to others.’¹⁶²³ Finally, Augustine insisted that for a spiritual leader to be effective in his preaching, he must be experiencing the reality of the faith that he is advocating. He wrote: ‘For if the minister [of God] is not on fire when he preaches he does not set afire him to whom he preaches.’¹⁶²⁴

(1) ‘Making Progress’ (*Proficere*)

Zumkeller writes: ‘The inner life of the Christian consists, according to Augustine, in the ever-progressing renewal of God’s image in man.’¹⁶²⁵ The result is ‘perfection in love . . . that is, love of God, and in God, of one’s neighbor.’¹⁶²⁶ In his *De symbolo ad catechumenos*, Augustine emphasized man’s need for spiritual growth by comparing him to the perfect example of Christ.¹⁶²⁷ Yet, in another work, he

¹⁶²¹ *Amo discere quam docere . . . Ut ergo discamus, inuitare nos debet suauitas ueritatis; ut autem doceamus, cogere necessitas charitatis. Dulc. qu.* 2.6, PL 40, 160-1. English trans. cited in G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 338.

¹⁶²² *S.* 49.2; 91.5; 101.4; 137.13-14; 179.7; 270.1; 340.1; 355.2; *en. Ps.* 66.10; 126.3; *civ. Dei*, 19.19; cf. R. Crespín, *Ministère et Sainteté*, pp. 183-184; G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in Saint Augustine*, p. 221; and L. Verjeijen, ‘Saint Augustin: Un Moine devenu Prêtre et Evêque,’ *EstAug* 12 (1977), 307.

¹⁶²³ *Quia etsi senes magis decet docere quam discere, magis tamen discere quam quid doceant ignorare. ep.* 166.1.1, PL 32, 720. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of *epp.* 150-269 are from <www.newadvent.org/1102.htm>.

¹⁶²⁴ *Nisi enim ardeat minister praedicans, non accendit eum cui praedicat. en. Ps.* 103.2.4, PL 36, 1353. English trans. cited in G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, p. 338.

¹⁶²⁵ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 103.

¹⁶²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 104.

¹⁶²⁷ *Symb. cat.* 3.8.

exhorts the Christian to make progress because Jesus himself had grown in wisdom and favor with God during his life in the body.¹⁶²⁸ Finally, in *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, he argued that in light of man’s imperfection and ongoing struggle with sin, the purpose of this life was to strive continually toward perfection.¹⁶²⁹ To support his argument, Augustine made reference to Philippians 3:12-15 — the passage referenced in our early Christian model of mentoring to illustrate that a mentor is a disciple.¹⁶³⁰ Hence, when Augustine wrote of the need for himself, spiritual leaders, and Christians in general to be continually growing as disciples, he often described this by using the term ‘progress’ (*proficere*).

In *Confessiones*, Augustine remarked that baptized believers needed to continue to grow spiritually after their initiation:

For even though people have been baptized and initiated, and have submitted to these material sacraments, they would proceed no further, did their souls not rise to a new level of spiritual life, and move on from elementary doctrine toward maturity.¹⁶³¹

Augustine was also deliberate in his *sermones* to challenge the faithful to daily progress in their faith.¹⁶³² He recounted in *Sermo* 82 that it delighted his heart as a minister to see people experiencing life change as a result of his preaching.¹⁶³³ Similarly, in *De catechizandis rudibus*, he wrote that a new convert’s desire to grow

¹⁶²⁸ *Div. qu.* 75.2. Lk. 2:40.

¹⁶²⁹ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 105.

¹⁶³⁰ *Perf. just.* 8.19. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you. (Phil. 3:12-15)

¹⁶³¹ *Quibus imbuti et initiati homines corporalibus sacramentis subditi non ultra proficerent, nisi spiritualiter uiuesceret anima gradu alio et post initii uerbum in consummationem respiceret. conf.* 13.20.28, PL 32, 856. All English trans. from *Confessiones* are from M. Boulding, *Confessions*. Heb. 6:1-3.

¹⁶³² *S.* 16A.1; 22.8; 169.15.18.

¹⁶³³ *S.* 82.12.15; see also *doc. Chr.* 4.6.9; 4.53; cf. D. Doyle, ‘The Bishop as Teacher,’ D. Doyle and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 85.

gave the minister hope, which outweighed the disappointment of others who turned away from the faith.¹⁶³⁴

For Augustine, how did a believer experience progress in his spiritual life? First, Christians advanced in their faith through observing bad and evil examples that were contrary to the Christian life. In *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine wrote that God in his sovereignty used such bad examples to encourage believers to pursue spiritual growth.¹⁶³⁵ Sometimes such wicked examples were even present within the church!¹⁶³⁶

Secondly, Augustine affirmed that progress came through God's work and grace in the life of the believer.¹⁶³⁷ In one of his homilies on 1 John, he argued that man naturally lacks the ability to love his neighbor. Rather, as love comes from God, the believer must depend on God to realize this love in his life.¹⁶³⁸ Similarly, the monk, cleric or *seruus Dei* must also rely upon God who gives strength to maintain an ascetic lifestyle.¹⁶³⁹ In *Sermo 227*, Augustine added that growth also came as a result of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of a believer.¹⁶⁴⁰ Though progress was ultimately dependant upon God's grace and work, Augustine urged the Christian to respond actively by placing his confidence in God's power to see spiritual growth realized in his life.¹⁶⁴¹

Third, Augustine believed that spiritual growth happened through obedience to the Scriptures taught in the community of faith.¹⁶⁴² As noted, it brought Augustine great joy to see the members of the church abandoning sinful tendencies due to their

¹⁶³⁴ *Cat. rud.* 14.21.

¹⁶³⁵ *Gn. litt.* 11.14.

¹⁶³⁶ *S.* 5.8.

¹⁶³⁷ *Spir. et litt.* 2.4; *s.* 156.12.13; *ep. Jo.* 9.2; *nat. et gr.* 58.68.

¹⁶³⁸ *Ep. Jo.* 9.2.

¹⁶³⁹ *Conf.* 10.31.45.

¹⁶⁴⁰ *S.* 227.1.

¹⁶⁴¹ *En. Ps.* 45.12; *ep.* 214.7; *ep. Jo.* 9.2; *s.* 34.8; *doc. Chr.* 3.10.14.

obedience to the Scriptures. In *Epistula* 36, Augustine affirmed the presbyter Casulanus for his growth in the Scriptures, which enabled him to teach and be a blessing to the church. He wrote: ‘For I am very pleased by your studies and by your words themselves, and I desire that you make progress at this young age and abound in the word of God in order to build up the church, and I exhort you in this.’¹⁶⁴³ Though Augustine did not enjoy his role as a judge, Possidius indicated that he faithfully carried out this ministry in order to influence the involved parties from the Scriptures, which would help them to achieve spiritual progress. He wrote:

He always examined the facts and passed judgment with an eye on the movements of Christians souls, that is, considering how each party was advancing or falling off in morals. He took the opportunity of teaching both parties the truth of God’s law and bringing it home to them and of reminding them of the means of obtaining eternal life.¹⁶⁴⁴

Fourth, Augustine, like Pachomius, taught that spiritual progress occurred through an ascetic lifestyle pursued in community. While individual spiritual disciplines were important, the group itself, as we have argued, was also a significant means of growth.¹⁶⁴⁵ Augustine also commended celibacy — particularly in the case of virgins and widows — and manual labor as acetic disciplines that aided progress.¹⁶⁴⁶

Fifth, as Augustine believed that suffering led to the best of all possible worlds, spiritual progress was realized through pain, suffering, and difficulty.¹⁶⁴⁷ In a sermon on Psalm 29, he reminded his listeners of the promise of 2 Timothy 3:12 that

¹⁶⁴² *S.* 82.12.15; 227.1; *ep.* 36.1.1; *en. Ps.* 69.6; *ep. Jo.* 3.1; *cat. rud.* 7.11; *Vita* 19.3-4; *doc. Chr.* 4.6.9; 4.53.

¹⁶⁴³ *Nam et studiis tuis et ipso sermone delector, teque in ista aetate iuuenili proficere in uerbo Dei et abundare ad aedificationem Ecclesiae, et opto et exhortor.* *ep.* 36.1.1, PL 33, 136.

¹⁶⁴⁴ *Semper tamen noscebat et dirimebat: intendens in eis christianorum momenta animorum, quantum quisque uel in fide bonisque moribus proficeret, uel ab iis deficeret. Atque compertis rerum opportunitatibus, diuinae legis ueritatem partes docebat, eamque illis inculcabat, et eas quo adipiscerentur uitam aeternam.* *Vita* 19.3-4, PL 32, 50.

¹⁶⁴⁵ *En. Ps.* 99.9, 12; *praed. sanct.* 4.8.

¹⁶⁴⁶ *B. vid.* 18.22; *virg.* 22.22; *op. mon.* 17.20.

¹⁶⁴⁷ *En. Ps.* 29.2.8; 118.20.1; 123.6; *ep.* 167.3.12.

‘all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.’¹⁶⁴⁸ While suffering and hardship indeed came through atrocities such as the Vandal invasion, it also occurred on a personal level as the growing believer was scorned or even discounted for his spiritual progress.¹⁶⁴⁹

Finally, a believer made progress in his faith through maintaining a future hope. The promise of the resurrection, heaven, and eternal life encouraged the sojourner in the earthly city to deal with life’s hardships and to persevere in the walk of faith.¹⁶⁵⁰ Progress was further realized by renouncing the things of this world and meditating on heavenly and eternal things.¹⁶⁵¹

(2) Imitation

As Augustine believed and advocated through his example that a mentor should be a disciple, he was consequently regarded by others as a model for the Christian life and ministry. In this sense, he joined Jesus, Paul, Pachomius, Cyprian, Basil, and Ambrose as leaders who mentored their disciples through having their examples imitated.

Possidius stated that even though Augustine was wonderfully gifted in preaching, teaching, and defending the faith, his greatest impact was actually on those who saw his life up close. He wrote: ‘I believe, however, that they profited even more who were able to hear him speaking in church and see him there present, especially if they were familiar with his manner of life among his fellow human beings.’¹⁶⁵² Possidius concluded the *Vita* with a vow to ‘emulate and imitate him in the present

¹⁶⁴⁸ *En. Ps.* 29.2.8.

¹⁶⁴⁹ *En. Ps.* 123.6; *ep.* 167.3.12.

¹⁶⁵⁰ *S.* 170.11; *ep.* 2*.6; *virg.* 22.22.

¹⁶⁵¹ *En. Ps.* 119.3; 122.3.

¹⁶⁵² *Sed ego arbitror plus ex eo proficere potuisse, qui eum et loquentem in ecclesia praesentem audire et uidere potuerunt, et eius praesertim inter homines conuersationem non ignorauerunt. Vita* 31.9, PL 32, 99.

world and enjoy the promises of almighty God with him in the world to come.¹⁶⁵³ Paulinus referred to Augustine's disciples at Hippo as his 'imitators in faith and virtue in the monasteries.'¹⁶⁵⁴ Though Augustine resourced his friend with letters, on one occasion Paulinus sent some of his disciples to Hippo to receive another kind of letter — the opportunity to observe firsthand Augustine's faith and example.¹⁶⁵⁵ Finally, Severus wrote that Augustine had taught him how to love God and neighbor through his example: 'I have already made some progress by imitating you, so that I desire to be that sort of man you are . . . you bring us to a love of our neighbor, which for us is the first step toward the love of God.'¹⁶⁵⁶

In addition to these testimonies of Augustine's co-laborers and disciples, how did Augustine mentor through his example? First, he practiced what he preached to others. We noted in *De opere monachorum* that he not only exhorted the monks to work but he reminded them of his own work: 'We are not binding heavy burdens and laying them upon your shoulders, while we with a finger will not touch them.'¹⁶⁵⁷ Secondly, he was a model of service to the clergy. In the greeting of *Epistula* 217, a letter written toward the end of his life, Augustine referred to himself as a 'servant of the servants of Christ.'¹⁶⁵⁸ Third, he left a mentoring example through his *Regula*. Though articulated well into his monastic itinerary in 399, Augustine's *Regula*, like that of Pachomius, encapsulated much of who he was as a monk and spiritual leader. Monceaux rightly asserts: 'Justly, Augustine's *Rule* has been called his legacy to

¹⁶⁵³ *Et in hoc saeculo aemulator et imitator existam, et in futuro omnipotentis Dei promissis cum eodem perfruar.* *Vita* 31.11, PL 32, 99.

¹⁶⁵⁴ *In monasteriis fidei ac uirtutis tuae aemulatores.* *ep.* 24.2, PL 33, 99.

¹⁶⁵⁵ *Ep.* 31.2; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 152.

¹⁶⁵⁶ *Cuius imitatione non nihil iam profeci, ut talis esse desiderem . . . quam nos rapias in amorem proximi, qui nobis primus ad dilectionem Dei.* *ep.* 109.2, PL 33, 419.

¹⁶⁵⁷ *Non alligamus onera grauiā; et uestris humeris imponimus quae nos digito attingere nolumus.* *op. mon.* 29.37, PL 40, 576. English trans. from <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1314.htm>.

¹⁶⁵⁸ *Augustinus episcopus seruus Christi, et per ipsum seruus seruorum ipsius.* *ep.* 217, PL 33, 978. See also s. 340.1; cf. M. Jourjon, 'L'évêque et le peuple de Dieu selon saint Augustin,' M. Jourjon et al, eds., *Saint Augustin Parmi Nous*, pp. 157-8.

those who would imitate him in that life.¹⁶⁵⁹ Finally, Augustine modeled transparency, humility, and the life long walk of faith of a spiritual leader through his *Confessiones*.

Aside from his own example, it seems quite evident that Augustine believed that imitating holy examples resulted in spiritual growth. He preached that the foundation of the Christian life was imitating Christ; that is, loving, following, and becoming like Christ.¹⁶⁶⁰ In *Sermo* 304, he said: ‘If we truly love him, let us imitate him. For we can yield no better fruit of love than the example of our imitation.’¹⁶⁶¹ This imitation of Christ certainly did not exclude the possibility of suffering and even martyrdom.¹⁶⁶² Augustine’s thoughts on life together in the monastery were also driven by the imitation of Christ.¹⁶⁶³ In addressing the monastic ideal of celibacy, he urged the monks and nuns to imitate the examples of Christ and Mary.¹⁶⁶⁴ Through his preaching, Augustine also held up the examples of saints and martyrs as models for imitation. As noted, Augustine refused Paulinus of Milan’s request that he write a *Vita* of the martyrs because he had already preached over 100 sermons commemorating the testimony of many who had suffered and died for their faith.¹⁶⁶⁵

We have previously argued that Augustine viewed the monastic community as a model for the church. It is clear from *Sermo* 355 that he desired that the church imitate the members of the monastery at Hippo: ‘I think our way of life is plain for you to see; so that I too may perhaps make bold to say what the apostle said, though I

¹⁶⁵⁹ Cf. P. Monceaux, ‘Saint Augustin et Saint Antoine: Contribution à l’histoire du monachisme,’ MA, 2.61-89 cited in A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, pp. 114-16.

¹⁶⁶¹ *Et nos ergo, fratres, si ueraciter amamus, imitemur. Non enim meliorem reddere poterimus dilectionis fructum, quam imitationis exemplum.* s. 304.2.2, PL 38, 1395-6. English trans. from A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 114. See also s. 96.7.9.

¹⁶⁶² *Ep.* 228; *Jo. ev. tr.* 123.3; cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁶³ A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁶⁴ *Virg.* 26-7.

¹⁶⁶⁵ *Ep.* 29*.1; s. 46.9; *en. Ps.* 36.3.20; *Jo. ev.* 123.5; *c. Faust.* 20.21; cf. L. Hamilton, ‘Possidius’ Augustine and Post-Augustinian Africa,’ *JECs* 12.1 (2004), 92.

can't of course be compared with him: "Be imitators of me as I too am of Christ."¹⁶⁶⁶ In *Epistula* 41, Augustine also indicated to Aurelius that it was good for the members of the church to imitate the clergy, particularly those who preached.¹⁶⁶⁷ While Augustine desired that the church imitate the clergy who were imitating Christ, he also indicated that the monastic community at Hippo began with 'brothers of good will, my companions in poverty, having nothing just like me, and imitating me.'¹⁶⁶⁸ While responding to Augustine's initiative as a teacher and spiritual leader at the outset of the Hippo experiment, there is no indication that the members of the garden monastery or *monasterium clericorum* ever ceased imitating Augustine. Though leading with humility and transparency, Augustine seemed to want his men to imitate him.¹⁶⁶⁹ Hence, as the church at Hippo imitated the monastic community, they were also imitating Augustine.¹⁶⁷⁰

Like Pachomius, Antony, Basil, and Ambrose, Augustine's life and example was preserved through a *Vita*. While departing somewhat from the 'holy man' genre that characterized the depictions of Antony and Ambrose, Possidius' *Vita* seems to have been a deliberate mentoring tool for the clergy. It was set in Augustine's daily ministry context of dealing with heretics, participating in church councils, living in a monastery, and carrying out the duties of church ministry. Also, Possidius chose to include the full text of Augustine's *Epistula* 228 Bishop Honoratus, a practical resource for leading the church during persecution. The letter made up one-fifth of the

¹⁶⁶⁶ *Credo autem ante oculos uestros esse conuersationem nostram; ut et nos dicere fortassis audeamus, quamuis multum illi impares, quod dixit Apostolus: 'Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi' [1 Cor. 11:1].* s. 355.1, PL 39, 1569. Unless otherwise indicated, all English trans. of *sermones* are from WSA. Cf. R. Crespín, *Ministère et Sainteté*, p. 187.

¹⁶⁶⁷ *Ep.* 41.1; cf. P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 159.

¹⁶⁶⁸ *Coepi boni propositi fratres colligere, compauperes meos, nihil habentes, sicut habebam, et imitantes me.* s. 355.2, PL 38, 1570.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Cf. L. Verheijen, 'Saint Augustin: Un Moine devenu Prêtre et Evêque,' *EstAug* 12 (1977), 315.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Cf. P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 159.

entire *Vita*.¹⁶⁷¹ Hamilton writes: ‘The uniqueness of the *Vita* stems from its intended clerical and African audience and from its practical (as distinct from devotional or liturgical) purpose.’¹⁶⁷² As Possidius had lived with Augustine, observed the quality of his life, and desired to imitate his example, he offered the same opportunity to the clergy of Africa and beyond through the *Vita*.

3. Summary

The evidence from Augustine’s repeated and observable behavior provides a great deal of evidence for his commitment to continually growing as a disciple while mentoring other spiritual leaders. His teaching and admonition that a Christian must make spiritual progress only strengthens the argument. As a result of this conviction to continually be a disciple, he became a model for others to imitate, which increased his impact on the spiritual leaders of his day. Finally, Possidius purposefully sought to preserve Augustine’s example for imitation through the *Vita*. Perhaps the best way to summarize Augustine’s belief that a mentor should be a disciple is to once again recall his famous words to the Hippo faithful in *Sermo* 340: ‘For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian’ (*Vobis enim sum episcopus, uobiscum sum Christianus*).¹⁶⁷³

III. Selection

Though scores of spiritual leaders joined Augustine in the monastery and church during his forty years in Hippo, the evidence for how he selected men as well as his thoughts on selection is rather limited. It seems, however, that his manner of selecting disciples paralleled the development of his thought on Christian friendship.

¹⁶⁷¹ *Ep.* 228; cf. L. Hamilton, ‘Possidius’ Augustine and Post-Augustinian Africa,’ *J ECS* 12.1 (2004), 92-7.

¹⁶⁷² Cf. L. Hamilton, ‘Possidius’ Augustine and Post-Augustinian Africa,’ *J ECS* 12.1 (2004), 96.

¹⁶⁷³ *S.* 340.1, PL 38, 1483. See also *en. Ps.* 126.3.44.

Prior to his conversion, Augustine, due to his charisma and personality, managed to influence like-minded friends to join him in the Manichean sect, to seriously consider an attempt at a community seeking the *uita beata*, and to join him for a retreat in the country on Verecundus' estate. Augustine was not only naturally inclined to friendship (*amicitia*) but he was also quite gifted at rallying friends who shared the same interests.

Upon his conversion, Possidius wrote that Augustine 'resolved with his companions, to serve God.'¹⁶⁷⁴ At this point, his natural charisma coupled with the zeal of newfound faith continued to attract others. Lawless writes:

Meanwhile, this monastic impulse in the young Augustine manifested itself in his indefatigable desire for God and the intensely personal character of his experiences to such a pitch that his proselytizing temperament attracted others to share their lives with him.¹⁶⁷⁵

Later, the decision to return to Africa and establish a community of *serui Dei* at Tagaste was one that Augustine made with friends.¹⁶⁷⁶ Hence, the selection of disciples at Cassiciacum and Tagaste was in many respects nothing more than Augustine inspiring a group of like-minded friends to pursue a common interest.

Though the garden monastery at Hippo initially reflected the values of Christian *amicitia* present at Cassiciacum and Tagaste, Augustine's manner of selecting men seemed to change upon his ordination as bishop and the establishment of the *monasterium clericorum*.¹⁶⁷⁷ As many of his friends who had followed him to Cassiciacum, Tagaste, or Hippo were being sent out to serve other churches in Africa, Augustine seemed willing to receive new monks and clergy who initiated toward him. Certainly within this group there were men with whom Augustine did not naturally bond, which made *caritas* an even greater value in Augustine's selection. As

¹⁶⁷⁴ *Sed Deo cum suis seruire statuit. Vita* 2.1, PL 32, 35.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, p. 34.

¹⁶⁷⁶ *Vita* 3.1.

Augustine received the likes of Paulinus of Nola's disciples, monks from Hadrumetum, Paul Orosius, Bishops Paul and Eutropius, as well as others who joined the monastery indefinitely, his manner of selection resembles the precedent established by Pachomius.

Indeed, Augustine had high standards of holiness for his disciples as *Sermones* 355 and 356 testify. Yet, the only outward condition that he required for a potential monk or clergy was the renunciation of property and the vow to live a common life. Unable to predict how the disciple would turn out, Augustine, like Valerius, preferred to believe the best and give the potential disciple the benefit of the doubt. In his teaching on Psalm 99, he related: 'To recognize a man as evil, you must first test him within the monastery. So how do you shut out the man who is about to enter and who is to be tested afterward, but cannot be tested unless he has entered? Will you send all the wicked men away?'¹⁶⁷⁸

In summary, Augustine's initial selection of disciples for the monastic experiment at Cassiciacum, Tagaste, and the beginning of his time at Hippo, demonstrated the values of *amicitia* — friends coming together because of a common interest. Yet, as his friends departed for ministry assignments and other disciples approached him for mentoring, including those who would bring problems, Augustine's selection became more based upon the concept of *caritas*.

IV. Nature of the Mentor-Disciple Relationship

As friendship was paramount for Augustine, it logically follows that the relationship between mentor and disciple was an important aspect of Augustine's mentoring of spiritual leaders. To be sure, the notion of neighbor love (*caritas*) was apparent in his

¹⁶⁷⁷ S. 355.1.

¹⁶⁷⁸ *Ut cognoscatur malus, intus probandus est: quomodo ergo excludis intraturum, qui postea probandus est, et probari nisi intraverit non potest? Repelles omnes malos? en. Ps. 99.11, PL 36, 1277. English trans. from A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 389.*

ministry of mentoring disciples in the monastery, through correspondence, during church councils, and during personal visits. Thus, Augustine's relationships were characterized by his demonstration of discipline and spiritual authority, through his posture as a shepherd, as well as through peer mentoring.

1. Discipline and Authority

As we have shown, Augustine cultivated an atmosphere of discipline and holiness in the *monasterium clericorum*. He demanded that the men renounce personal property and commit to living a common life before joining the monastery.¹⁶⁷⁹ Women were not allowed near the monastery nor were the monks allowed to venture out into places of temptation.¹⁶⁸⁰ Gossip was not tolerated, especially at meals,¹⁶⁸¹ and the daily schedule was characterized by a rigorous program of spiritual disciplines and ascetic living.¹⁶⁸² For Augustine, the superior gave spiritual direction to the monks on the basis of his spiritual authority. He wrote:

The superior should be obeyed as a father with the respect due him so as not to offend God in his person, and, even more so, the priest who bears responsibility for you all. But it shall pertain chiefly to the superior to see that these precepts are all observed and, if any point has been neglected, to take care that the transgression is not carelessly overlooked but is punished and corrected.¹⁶⁸³

Though Augustine's letters were generally kind in their tone, he regularly used this means of mentoring to encourage leaders toward a position of sound doctrine, to exhort them to spiritual growth, or to admonish them to be faithful in their ministries.

¹⁶⁷⁹ *Vita* 5.1; s. 355.2; *reg.* 1.2-4, 8.

¹⁶⁸⁰ *Vita* 26.1-3; *reg.* 4.4-5.

¹⁶⁸¹ *Vita* 22.6.

¹⁶⁸² *Reg.* 2-4.

¹⁶⁸³ *Praeposito tamquam patri oboediatur, honore seruato, ne in illo offendatur Deus; multo magis presbytero, qui omnium uestrum curam gerit. Ut ergo cuncta ista seruentur et, si quid seruatum non fuerit, non neglegenter praetereatur, sed emendandum corrigendumque curetur, ad praepositum praecipue pertinebit.* *reg.* 7.1-2, PL 32, 1384. All English trans. of *Regula* are from *Early Christian Internet Resources* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine/ruleaug.html>>.

Hence, through his *epistulae*, Augustine also wrote from a posture of spiritual authority with the intent to influence or persuade.

As noted, Augustine believed that a bishop should have spiritual authority over the church, its clergy, as well as its monks. As one who would give a greater account on the Day of Judgment than other clergy, the bishop needed to exercise his authority to aid those in need of spiritual healing while also protecting the church from evil influences.¹⁶⁸⁴ Augustine was not opposed to using this authority when it came to dealing with spiritual leaders, especially those who had failed morally. During his ministry as bishop, he dealt with such issues with his own clergy in Hippo as well as with leaders in his sphere of influence in Numidia. Following a thorough investigation in which the accused were presumed innocent until proven guilty, Augustine exposed the sin to the entire church, invited the offending parties to repent, and excommunicated those clergy who refused.¹⁶⁸⁵

2. A Shepherd

While relating to his disciples from the authority of his position as bishop, his true effectiveness as a leader came through his example — which Possidius testified was a model for imitation.¹⁶⁸⁶ Thus, he also related to spiritual leaders from the posture of a shepherd or pastor. In his letters to the clergy that dealt with practical church matters, exhortation to spiritual growth, and general encouragement, Augustine's tone reflected the care of a shepherd. This was also evident in his references to Paul Orosius and Quodvultdeus as 'my dear son'¹⁶⁸⁷ as 'my holy son'¹⁶⁸⁸

¹⁶⁸⁴ *Mor.* 1.32.69; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 200; and L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 80-2.

¹⁶⁸⁵ *S.* 355.6; 356.14-15; *c. litt. Pet.* 3.43-4; *ep.* 65; 78; 82-3; 85; 209; 236; 248; 251; 267; cf. R. Battenhouse, *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, p. 75; R. Crespin, *Ministère et Sainteté*, pp. 190-5; and D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine*, pp. 277, 310.

¹⁶⁸⁶ *Vita* 24.2.

¹⁶⁸⁷ *Dilectissime fili Orosi. c. Prisc.* 1.1, PL 42, 669.

¹⁶⁸⁸ *Sancte fili Quodvultdeus, haer.praef.*1, PL 42, 21. See also *ep.* 222.

respectively in the introduction of works that resourced these disciples against heresy. Finally, in *Epistula* 213, he indicated that he had been a father figure to Eraclius.¹⁶⁸⁹

Augustine also shepherded spiritual leaders through serving them. As a servant to the church and Christ,¹⁶⁹⁰ he ministered to both by being a ‘servant to the servants of Christ.’¹⁶⁹¹ Though Augustine’s superior had spiritual authority within the monastic context, personal happiness and the need to be served by others did not figure into this authority. Rather, the superior used his position to serve the brothers.¹⁶⁹² In the *Regula*, Augustine wrote:

The superior, for his part, must not think himself fortunate in his exercise of authority but in his role as one serving you in love. In your eyes he shall hold the first place among you by the dignity of his office, but in fear before God he shall be as the least among you. He must show himself as an example of good works toward all . . . he should strive to be loved by you rather than feared.¹⁶⁹³

We have shown that Augustine mentored men in the monastery through regular teaching and through facilitating dialogue. Yet, viewing himself as simply an aid to the ‘inner truth’ (*interior ueritas*) at work inside the disciple, Augustine regarded the mentor as a servant to the process of learning and discipleship.¹⁶⁹⁴ Paffenroth writes that for Augustine: ‘A teacher is there only as an occasion, not a condition.’¹⁶⁹⁵

Augustine also demonstrated the posture of a shepherd by extending grace to the clergy. In some instances, this grace was almost shocking in the case of immoral clergy and heretics. We have noted the leniency and compassion shown to Antoninus

¹⁶⁸⁹ *Ep.* 213.6.

¹⁶⁹⁰ *Ep.* 134.1; *c. Faust.* 22.56; *s.* 3.9.63; 46.2; 339; 340.1; *op. mon.* 29.37.

¹⁶⁹¹ *Ep.* 217; cf. A. Mandouze, ‘L’évêque et le corps presbytéral au service du peuple fidèle selon Saint Augustin’ in H. Bouësse, ed. *L’évêque dans L’Eglise du Christ*, p. 139.

¹⁶⁹² *Conf.* 10.4.6; *op. mon.* 29.37; *ep.* 23.1; cf. L. Verheijen, ‘Saint Augustin: Un Moine devenu Prêtre et Evêque,’ *EstAug* 12 (1977), 315.

¹⁶⁹³ *Ipse uero qui uobis praeest, non se existimet potestate dominantem, sed caritate seruientem felicem. Honore coram uobis praelatus sit uobis, timore coram Deo substratus sit pedibus uestris. Circa omnes se ipsum bonorum operum praebeat exemplum . . . tamen plus a uobis amari appetat quam timeri. reg.* 7.3, PL 32, 1384.

¹⁶⁹⁴ . . . *interiorem scilicet illam ueritatem pro uiribus intuentes. mag.* 14.45, PL 32, 1220.

in the aftermath of his abusive treatment of the flock at Fussala.¹⁶⁹⁶ As the Pelagian controversy heated up, Augustine's convictions on grace and free will did not keep him from loving his theological adversary. In *Epistula* 146 he wrote to Pelagius: 'May the Lord recompense you with those blessings by the possession of which you may be good for ever, and may live eternally with Him who is eternal, my lord greatly beloved, and brother greatly longed for.'¹⁶⁹⁷ We learn from *Epistula* 219 as well as the *gesta* of the council of Carthage in 418 that Augustine extended grace to the reformed heretic Leporius. Through encouraging the church leaders in Gaul to receive him back into fellowship, Augustine also modeled restorative grace for these clergy.¹⁶⁹⁸ Finally, in *Epistula* 250, written to the young Bishop Auxilius, Augustine graciously confronted his colleague over his harsh excommunication of a family. While his intervention was gracious and humble, Augustine also taught Auxilius about grace in articulating his principles for excommunication.¹⁶⁹⁹

A final way in which Augustine mentored as a shepherd was through patiently teaching his disciples. In *Sermo* 47, he advocated that a pastor should patiently instruct his flock from the Scriptures.¹⁷⁰⁰ Yet, Augustine's books and letters, which thoroughly treated the questions of spiritual leaders, also testified that Augustine was committed to this principle in his relationships with spiritual leaders. Finally, as the *monasterium clericorum* was characterized by hospitality and an open door to visitors, Augustine also generously gave of his time to patiently instruct men like Paul Orosius, Leporius, and the monks of Hadrumetum, who came to study with him.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Cf. K. Paffenroth, 'Bad Habits and Bad Company: Education and Evil in the *Confessions*,' in K. Paffenroth and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁹⁶ *Ep.* 209.5, 9.

¹⁶⁹⁷ *Retribuatur tibi Dominus bona, quibus semper sis bonus, et cum illo aeterno uiuas in aeternum, domine dilectissime, et desideratissime frater. ep.* 146, PL 33, 596. English trans. from <www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102.htm>. See also *ep.* 43.1; cf. D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine*, p. 277.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.215-16.

¹⁶⁹⁹ *Epp.* 250.1-3; 1*.

3. Peer Mentoring

While Augustine mentored from a posture of authority as well as that of a shepherd, he was also committed to peer mentoring. This was evident as he collaborated with men like Aurelius during the African church councils. We have also noted Augustine's peer mentoring letters exchanged with men like Paulinus, Simplicianus, Aurelius, and Jerome. Finally, we have shown how Augustine facilitated mealtime dialogue in the monastery in which he was challenged by the men to develop his thoughts on various theological subjects while also imparting much to them.

Even in relationships in which he was clearly in the role of an authority figure or a shepherd, Augustine's language in communicating with other spiritual leaders was still quite fraternal. This was most evident in the greetings of his *epistulae* and in the dedications of certain works. While it is not surprising that Augustine addressed peers like Paulinus,¹⁷⁰¹ Jerome,¹⁷⁰² and Aurelius¹⁷⁰³ as 'brother' (*frater*), it is remarkable that he would greet a whole host of other clergy in the same manner.¹⁷⁰⁴ For instance, in *Epistula* 142 he greeted Saturninus and Eufrates as 'brother priests' (*fratribus presbyteris*).¹⁷⁰⁵ This posture of fraternity is especially remarkable because these men were former Donatists who had joined the catholic church and had been set apart as leaders. Finally, Augustine addressed Jerome¹⁷⁰⁶ and Aurelius¹⁷⁰⁷ along with

¹⁷⁰⁰ S. 47.9; cf. G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in Saint Augustine*, p. 145.

¹⁷⁰¹ *Epp.* 27; 31; 42; 45; 95. Augustine actually addressed Paulinus and his wife as *fratribus*. In *ep.* 95, he also calls them 'fellow disciples' (*condiscipulis*).

¹⁷⁰² *Epp.* 28; 40; 67; 71; 73; 82; 19*.

¹⁷⁰³ *Epp.* 41; 60; 174; 16*; *Trin.prol.*; *op. mon.* 1.1.

¹⁷⁰⁴ *Epp.* 36; 38; 48; 61-4; 74; 78; 80; 83-5; 92A; 101-02; 110-11; 115; 122; 125; 142 (*fratribus presbyteris*); 148-9; 159; 162; 164; 171; 173A (*fratribus*); 177-9; 186; 190-2; 194; 196; 202A; 207; 212; 214-15; 215A; 219 (*fratribus*); 224; 228; 236-7; 245; 249; 250; 252-4; 269; 3*-6*; 8*-10*; 15*; 22*-3*; 25* (*fratribus*); 26*; 28*-9*; *cat. rud.* 1.1; *corrupt.* 1.1.

¹⁷⁰⁵ *Ep.* 142, PL 33, 583.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Augustine referred to Jerome as *compresbytero* in *epp.* 28; 40; 67; 71; 73; 82; 19*. Other clergy were addressed in the same manner in *epp.* 36; 38; 64; 92A; 102; 111; 173A (*compresbyteris*); 191; 194; 25* (*compresbyteris*). In *ep.* 13*, Restitus was referred to as *presbytero*.

a large number of other clergy as ‘fellow priests’ (*compresbytero/consacerdoti*); Alypius and others were addressed as ‘fellow bishop’ (*coepiscopo*)¹⁷⁰⁸; while a handful of leaders were called ‘fellow deacon’ (*condiacono*).¹⁷⁰⁹

4. Summary

The nature of the mentor-disciple relationship was an important aspect of Augustine’s approach to mentoring spiritual leaders. Not unlike what we observed in the relationships of Jesus and the Twelve or Paul and his men, Augustine related to his disciples with a posture of discipline and spiritual authority, from the posture of shepherd, as well as the posture of a brother. Though Augustine did possess spiritual authority as a bishop and monastic superior, he seemed to exercise that authority primarily when the church was threatened. Though other clergy and particularly his peers highly regarded his abilities and position as a bishop,¹⁷¹⁰ Augustine’s greatest impact came from being a shepherd and servant leader who related to his fellow clergy from a fraternal posture.

V. Sound Teaching

As noted, when Augustine was ordained to the priesthood in 391, his first request of Valerius was a period of study in which he could immerse himself in the Scriptures.¹⁷¹¹ As we have shown, Augustine’s primary role in his ministry as bishop of Hippo was preaching.¹⁷¹² He also expected that other bishops and presbyters should

¹⁷⁰⁷ Augustine called Aurelius *consacerdoti* in *epp.* 41; 60; 174; 16*; *Trin.prol.* Other clergy were addressed in the same manner in *epp.* 59; 62-3; 65; 74; 84-5; 110; 115; 125; 159; 178; 219 (*consacerdotibus*); 245; 250; 254; 269; 4*; 6*; 28*.

¹⁷⁰⁸ *Epp.* 83; 98; 101; 149; 162; 164; 171; 179; 186; 190; 196; 202A; 207; 212; 228; 236-7; 5*; 26*. In *ep.* 29, Alypius was simply called *episcopum*.

¹⁷⁰⁹ *Epp.* 192; 222; 224; 249; 3*; 29*. In *ep.* 7*, Faustinus was referred to as *diacono*.

¹⁷¹⁰ Paulinus, in *ep.* 94, referred to Augustine as ‘lord, father, brother, teacher, bishop’ (*domini, patri, fratri, magistro . . . episcopo*). Jerome (*epp.* 39; 68; 72; 75; 81; 172; 27*) and Valentinus (*ep.* 216) called him ‘pope’ (*papae*). Quodvultdeus (*epp.* 221; 223) and Prosper (*ep.* 225) called him ‘father’ (*patri*). Finally, Quodvultdeus (*ep.* 221), Severus (*ep.* 109), and Evodius (*ep.* 160; 163) referred to Augustine as ‘bishop’ (*episcopo*).

¹⁷¹¹ *Ep.* 21.

¹⁷¹² *Conf.* 11.2.2.

be adept at preaching — a skill developed through thorough training in the Scriptures.¹⁷¹³ Possidius largely depicted Augustine as a teacher of the Scriptures who carried out his ministry in the context of an ongoing battle with the likes of the pagans, Manicheans, Donatists, Pelagians, and Arians.¹⁷¹⁴ Hence, Augustine regarded the Scriptures as authoritative for Christian belief and practice and he held the firm conviction that teaching them was his most important contribution as a minister. This resolve for upholding sound teaching as a bishop as well as a mentor to spiritual leaders was only quickened with the challenges brought on by heresy.

1. Augustine's Example of Upholding Sound Teaching

How did Augustine demonstrate the value of maintaining sound teaching as a mentor to spiritual leaders? First, we noted his involvement in the African church councils between 393 and 427 in which he mentored the clergy by providing much needed teaching from the Scriptures; by modeling how to shrewdly yet graciously deal with heretics; and by carrying out the decisions of councils through making follow-up visits as well as writing letters and books. Secondly, he wrote thirty-one letters resourcing spiritual leaders on theological issues and another eighteen encouraging other leaders toward maintaining sound doctrine. Third, Augustine wrote eight theologically oriented books specifically intended for certain clergy while including another eight already completed books with letters replying to the questions of other clergy. Similarly, he authored seven apologetic and doctrinal works specifically for spiritual leaders while sending four other completed works along with letters. Fourth, through his public debates and correspondence with heretics, he

¹⁷¹³ *Doc. Chr.* 4.4.6; cf. E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, pp. 117, 212; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 405.

¹⁷¹⁴ *Vita* 1-18; cf. L. Hamilton, 'Possidius' Augustine and Post-Augustinian Africa,' *J ECS* 12.1 (2004), 88.

modeled defending sound doctrine for his colleagues in ministry.¹⁷¹⁵ Finally, Augustine's sermons, whether preached in Hippo or in another city, were often directed against the Manicheans, Donatists, or Pelagians, and thus provided a model to other spiritual leaders for how to uphold sound doctrine in their preaching.¹⁷¹⁶

2. Augustine's Thought on Sound Teaching (*sana doctrina*)

In Augustine's writings, he made use of the term *sana doctrina* nearly thirty times. Not surprisingly, he often used it in his communication with the Manicheans, Pelagians, or those affected by such heresies. What did Augustine believe about sound teaching? First, he taught that *sana doctrina* exposed mere opinions and wrong ideas about God while at the same time making the attributes of God clear. In *Epistula* 188, Augustine and Alypius urged Juliana to avoid holding opinions contrary to the grace of God or sound doctrine.¹⁷¹⁷ In his commentary on John's Gospel, Augustine asserted that spiritual lust and an unhealthy fascination with words and ideas carried men off into unsound teaching.¹⁷¹⁸ Certainly, his personal journey as a rhetor who spent nine years among the Manicheans caused him to be extra sensitive to eloquent words that lacked the substance of spiritual truth. Finally, in his debate with Faustus the Manichean, he argued that it was sound teaching that affirmed and supported the existence of the Son of God as well as the Son's divine partnership in the Trinity.¹⁷¹⁹

Secondly, Augustine believed that there was a necessary and natural link between sound teaching and holy living. In *De fide et operibus*, he asserted that because of sound teaching, a believer could live out the holiness associated with his

¹⁷¹⁵ *Vita* 6; 7.1; 9; 12-14; 16-18.

¹⁷¹⁶ *Vita* 9.2; cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 252.

¹⁷¹⁷ *Ep.* 188.1.1. For similar thoughts, see also *ep.* 92.4.

¹⁷¹⁸ *Jo. ev. tr.* 97.3. See also *c. Faust.* 21.16; *c. Sec.* 26.2.

¹⁷¹⁹ *C. Faust.* 15.6. For more on how *sana doctrina* clarifies the attributes of God, see *c. Faust.* 15.5; *nat. b.*; 40; *c. Jul. imp.* 2.217; *Gn. adv. Man.* 2.8.11.

baptism.¹⁷²⁰ In the same work, he taught that sound teaching implied one conforming his thoughts and actions to the teachings of Scripture.¹⁷²¹ In his replies to questions on Matthew's Gospel, Augustine affirmed that it was the word of God transmitted through sound teaching that transformed the heart and conduct of a hypocrite.¹⁷²² Finally, in *Epistula* 208, Augustine wrote about the integrity of a good shepherd leading his flock through teaching sound doctrine and living a holy life worthy of imitation.¹⁷²³

Third, Augustine taught that sound teaching provided a guide for proper practice in the Christian life. In *Epistula* 262, he wrote to a certain woman who had chosen to adopt a celibate life without the consent of her husband. Augustine pointed out that she had ignored sound teaching on the matter by not consulting what the Scripture taught on celibacy.¹⁷²⁴ Similarly, in *De bono uiduitatis*, he urged that decisions about perpetual virginity and widowhood be directed by an understanding of sound doctrine.¹⁷²⁵ Finally, Augustine replied to Faustus' allegation that Christians sacrifice to martyrs by asserting that such a practice was not Christian at all because it was contradictory to sound teaching.¹⁷²⁶

Finally, Augustine affirmed that sound teaching was the teaching of Scripture itself. In this regard, Augustine's definition of *sana doctrina* seems to closely follow the notion of *hugiainousē didaskalia* discussed in the early Christian model of mentoring. In *De haeresibus*, Augustine considered a group called the Severiani to be heretics in part because of their denial of the Old Testament.¹⁷²⁷ Augustine also

¹⁷²⁰ *F. et. op.* 26.48.

¹⁷²¹ *Ibid.* 5.7.

¹⁷²² *Qu. Ev.* 1.8.

¹⁷²³ *Quos autem bonos uident, non solum audiunt bona quae dicunt; sed etiam imitantur bona quae faciunt.* ep. 208.5, PL 33, 952.

¹⁷²⁴ *Ep.* 262.2; 1 Cor. 8:1-5.

¹⁷²⁵ *B. vid.* 6.9; 15.19.

¹⁷²⁶ *C. Faust.* 20.21.

¹⁷²⁷ *Haer.* 24.

communicated to Faustus that what made him unsound in his teaching was his rejection of the Scriptures:

Hence you leave sound doctrine, and turn to impious fables; and in your perversity and estrangement from the society of saints, you reject the instruction of the New Testament, which, as we have shown, contains statements similar to those which you condemn in the Old Testament.¹⁷²⁸

In the same debate, Augustine affirmed that sound teaching was based on the Scriptures as opposed to Faustus' fables.¹⁷²⁹

3. Augustine's View of the Scriptures

Given that Augustine considered sound teaching to be that which conformed to the teachings of Scripture, what else may we conclude about Augustine's views on the Scriptures as well as their role in mentoring the clergy? First, we should qualify that Augustine only accepted the canonical Scriptures (*Scripturas canonicas*) — the 'authoritative list of books belonging to the Old Testament or New Testament' that were affirmed at the council of Hippo in 393 and the second council of Carthage in 397.¹⁷³⁰ In *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine made a point of listing the canonical books before proceeding to the primary teaching on interpreting Scripture.¹⁷³¹

Implicit in their distinction as canonical, the Scriptures had authority over all other expressions of truth. First, they were superior to the writings of the philosophers. In *Epistula* 82, Augustine compared the works of the philosophers to the Scriptures: 'They are worthless, not because everything they say is false, but because they have put their trust in many false theories and, when they are found to

¹⁷²⁸ *Ac sic relicta sana doctrina, conuersi ad sacrilegas fabulas, nimiumque peruersi et alienati a societate sanctorum, nec ex Novo Testamento corrigi uultis, unde talia proferimus, qualia in Vetere arguitis, c. Faust. 22.21, PL 42, 412. English trans. from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/140622.htm>.*

¹⁷²⁹ *C. Faust. 12.27; 15.5.* Augustine expresses similar thoughts in *adul. conjug. 4.4; c. Jul. imp. 2.217; Gn. adv. Man. 2.8.11.*

¹⁷³⁰ Cf. R. Beckwith, 'Canon of the Old Testament,' *New Bible Dictionary*, 166; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.89. See also *ep. 64.3.*

¹⁷³¹ *Doc. Chr. 2.8.12-13.* See also *cath. 19.51.*

speak the truth, they are strangers to the grace of Christ, who is the truth itself.¹⁷³² This letter, written to Jerome in 404 or 405, is significant because it shows Augustine's clear break with the philosophical speculation that characterized his thinking at Cassiciacum and for much of his time at Tagaste.

Secondly, Augustine affirmed that the canonical Scriptures held precedent over the writings of even the most upright Christian leaders. Despite making positive reference to the works of Ambrose, Jerome, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nazianus in *Epistula* 148, Augustine wrote to Fortunatianus: 'After all, we ought not to regard the writings of any people, though catholic and highly praised, as being on a par with the canonical Scriptures.'¹⁷³³ Similarly, in *De baptismo*, Augustine warned the Donatist leaders about looking to the writings of Cyprian of Carthage as an authoritative basis for their schism. Though Augustine held Cyprian in high regard, he wrote: 'But who can fail to be aware that the sacred canon of Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, is confined within its own limits, and that it stands so absolutely in a superior position to all later letters of the bishops.'¹⁷³⁴

Third, Augustine believed that the Scriptures had authority over the words of any Christian leader or the actions of a council. In *Ad catholicas fratres*, he quickly dismissed the schismatic teaching of the Donatist bishops by simply comparing their teaching to the teaching of Scripture.¹⁷³⁵ This principle was also at work in Augustine's famous exegetical dispute with Jerome over whether Paul lied in Galatians about Peter's actions. He wrote: 'For I regard it as absolutely disastrous to

¹⁷³² *Qui non propterea uani sunt, quia omnia falsa dicunt; sed quia et falsis plerisque confidunt, et ubi uera inueniuntur dicere, a Christi gratia, qui est ipsa ueritas, alieni sunt?* ep. 82.2.13, PL 33, 281. See also ep. 101.2; civ. Dei, 19.19; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 265.

¹⁷³³ *Neque enim quorumlibet disputationes, quamuis catholicorum et laudatorum hominum, uelut Scripturas canonicas habere debemus.* ep. 148.4.15, PL 33, 628.

¹⁷³⁴ *Quis autem nesciat sanctam Scripturam canonicam, tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, certis suis terminis contineri, eamque omnibus posterioribus episcoporum litteris ita praeponi.* bapt. 2.3.4, PL 43, 128. English trans. taken from *New Advent* <www.newadvent.org/fathers/14082.htm>.

¹⁷³⁵ *Cath.* 11.28.

believe that there is a lie in the holy books, that is, that those men who gave us and put into writing that Scripture lied in their books.¹⁷³⁶ In response to Jerome's assertion that there was a lie in the Scriptures, Augustine charged him with elevating Peter's authority over that of the Scriptures.¹⁷³⁷ Finally, in *De baptismo*, Augustine argued that the Scriptures had authority over the decisions of church councils¹⁷³⁸; while in *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*, he wrote that the Scriptures clarified the erroneous decisions made by a council of bishops that supported Pelagius.¹⁷³⁹

Similarly, the Scriptures were authoritative in that they served to settle doctrinal disputes, especially in the face of heretical ideas. Augustine urged the Donatists that a proper understanding of the nature of the church as well as a basis for why re-baptism was unnecessary could be found in the Scriptures.¹⁷⁴⁰ He also communicated to the Pelagians that the question of original sin could be resolved through the Scriptures.¹⁷⁴¹ Finally, in his *Contra Maximinum Arianum*, Augustine related to his Arian counterpart that a proper understanding of the nature of God could also be found in the Scriptures.¹⁷⁴²

As Augustine viewed the canonical Scriptures as the highest authority for Christian teaching and practice, he demonstrated that conviction by using them as his primary source for his writings and preaching. Possidius wrote of Augustine's 'books and sermons, which flowed from the marvelous grace of God who inspired him, were filled with abundant arguments and based on the authority of the sacred

¹⁷³⁶ *Mihi enim uidetur exitiosissime credi, aliquod in Libris sanctis haberi mendacium; id est eos homines, per quos nobis illa Scriptura ministrata est atque conscripta, aliquod in libris suis fuisse mentitos.* ep. 28.3.3, PL 33, 112.

¹⁷³⁷ Cf. D. Doyle, 'The Bishop as Teacher,' D. Doyle and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 85.

¹⁷³⁸ *Bapt.* 2.3.4.

¹⁷³⁹ *C. ep. Pel.* 4.8.20.

¹⁷⁴⁰ *Cath.* 3.6; 18.47; 20.56; 24.69.

¹⁷⁴¹ *Pecc. mer.* 3.6.12.

¹⁷⁴² *C. Max.* 2.22.2.

Scriptures.’¹⁷⁴³ Just as Augustine warned Christians about assigning too much importance to the words of a bishop, Augustine urged his own congregation to consider the Scriptures as superior to his own words.¹⁷⁴⁴ In *Sermo* 356, he illustrated this conviction by reading again the passage already read by the deacon prior to his sermon. He explained: ‘It gives me more pleasure, you see, to be reading these words than to be arguing my case with my own words.’¹⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, Augustine’s sermons and writings were saturated with the words of Scripture. Hamman notes that some 40,000 references to Scripture have been counted in the works of Augustine while neither a chapter or book from either Testament have failed to be cited. He concludes that ‘the Scripture had become his thought, his life, and his teaching.’¹⁷⁴⁶

Like Ambrose, Augustine did not attribute authority to the canonical books alone; rather, they needed to be interpreted properly by a bishop or presbyter walking in the way of holiness. Both Ambrose and Augustine were drawn into theological battles in their day because of heretical groups misusing or ignoring the Scriptures. As noted, Augustine labored greatly in providing his fellow clergy with *De doctrina Christiana*, a resource largely concerned with principles and tools for precisely interpreting Scripture. As we learn from Augustine’s rather heated exchange with Jerome, the task of interpreting the canonical books was ‘not like someone playing on the field of the Scriptures, but like someone gasping for air in the mountains.’¹⁷⁴⁷ In

¹⁷⁴³ *Et hos eius libros atque tractatus mirabili Dei gratia procedentes ac profluentes, instructos rationis copia, atque auctoritate sanctorum Scripturarum. Vita* 7.3, PL 32, 39.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 451.

¹⁷⁴⁵ *Plus enim me delectat huius uerbi esse lectorem, quam uerbi mei disputatorem. s. 356.1, PL 39, 1574.*

¹⁷⁴⁶ Hamman’s (A. Hamman, *Etudes Patristiques*, p. 274) entire quote reads: ‘Les doctes ont pu comptabiliser de 40,000 citations de l’Écriture, dans l’œuvre augustinienne. Toute la Bible y passé, tous les livres de l’Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, sans aucune exception. Il n’est pas un livre, il n’est pas un chapitre qui ne soit pas cite. L’Écriture est devenue sa pensée, sa vie, son enseignement.’ Trans. my own. See also F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 343; and E. Kevane, *Augustine the Educator*, p. 117, 233.

¹⁷⁴⁷ *Non tamquam ludentem in campo Scripturarum, sed in montibus anhelantem adiuues. ep. 82.1.2, PL 33, 276.*

short, understanding and teaching the truth of Scripture was a serious matter for Augustine and it was very much a part of his *sarcina episcopati*.

While Augustine's initial request of Valerius was a period of time to study the Scriptures, his hunger to grow in his knowledge of the Scriptures never ceased during the span of his ministry.¹⁷⁴⁸ Hence, the Scriptures were authoritative for Augustine for his own spiritual growth as well as that of the spiritual leaders that he mentored. As noted, the Scriptures were the main course of study in the monasteries at Hippo.¹⁷⁴⁹ In *Epistula* 101, Augustine described how Possidius had been discipled through the teaching of Scripture: 'For he was nourished through our ministry, not in that literature that those enslaved to various desires call liberal, but with the bread of the Lord.'¹⁷⁵⁰ As Augustine insisted that his disciples in the monastery be thoroughly trained in the Scriptures, the result, as we have noted, was that 'venerable men of continence and learning'¹⁷⁵¹ whose 'zeal for the spread of God's word increased'¹⁷⁵² were sent to serve the churches of North Africa.

4. Summary

Augustine demonstrated a commitment to sound teaching as a Christian and bishop and through his ministry as a mentor to spiritual leaders. His conviction was evident through his involvement in the African church councils; through his letters and books that treated theological and doctrinal issues; through his personal meetings with heretics; and through his preaching. His writings reflect that he was concerned with safeguarding sound teaching — the necessary guide for Christian belief, practice,

¹⁷⁴⁸ *Dulc. qu.* 2.6; *s.* 49.2; 91.5; 101.4; 137.13-14; 179.7; 270.1; 340.1; 355.2; *en. Ps.* 66.10; 126.3; *civ. Dei*, 19.19; *ep.* 166.1.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 129-30; and P. Rousseau, 'Augustine and Ambrose: The Loyalty and Single-Mindedness of a Disciple,' *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 156-8.

¹⁷⁵⁰ *Est enim per nostrum ministerium non litteris illis, quas uariarum serui libidinum liberales uocant, sed dominico pane nutritus, quantus ei potuit per nostras angustias dispensari. ep.* 101.1, PL 33, 368.

¹⁷⁵¹ *Venerabiles uiros continentes et doctos. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42.

and holy living. For Augustine *sana doctrina* and the *Scripturas canonicas* were one in the same. Taking precedent over the thoughts of the philosophers, the writings of Christian leaders, the words and actions of bishops and councils; the Scriptures, when properly interpreted, clarified any misunderstandings of doctrine. Augustine prized the *Scripturas canonicas* as the source of his writings and sermons and regarded them as the primary means of spiritual growth in the lives of his disciples. To summarize, Augustine's understanding of sound teaching and the Scriptures significantly resembled that of the author of the Pastoral Epistles, cited in the early Christian model of mentoring: 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.'¹⁷⁵³

VI. Modeling and Involving in Ministry

Augustine performed his duties as a presbyter and bishop while living in community in the *monasterium clericorum* at Hippo. Within the ministry of the church, he served alongside his clergy in Hippo as well as other African bishops during periods of travel. While Possidius argued that the quality of his life as a Christian was a worthy example for imitation, he also modeled to other clergy how to be an effective Christian leader. Hence, his colleagues in ministry observed him in the roles of preaching, leading the church with authority, presiding over the sacred mysteries, serving as a judge, administering church property, participating in church councils, writing, debating with the church's theological enemies, and traveling on behalf of the church. As we have shown, Augustine, following the example of Valerius, was committed to involving other spiritual leaders in the work of ministry.

¹⁷⁵² *Studio crescente aedificationis uerbi Dei. Vita* 11.4, PL, 32, 42. Cf. T. Martin, 'Clericatus sarcina (ep. 126.3): Augustine and the Care of the Clergy,' 2, *The Practice of Christianity in Roman Africa* <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>>.

¹⁷⁵³ 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

1. Augustine's Example of Involving in Ministry

How did Augustine mentor spiritual leaders by involving them in ministry?

First, he made use of all of the ranks of the clergy in leading the liturgical assembly. Like Valerius, he set apart presbyters to preach as well as to preside over the mysteries.¹⁷⁵⁴ At times, Augustine sent his presbyters to other churches to minister as the needs of the diocese were constantly increasing.¹⁷⁵⁵ Deacons also assisted during the Eucharist and instructed the catechumens; while *lectores* read the Scriptures and chanted the Psalms.¹⁷⁵⁶ Like Cyprian and Ambrose, many of Augustine's *lectores* were young men who were promoted to higher ranks of clergy given time and faithfulness on their part.¹⁷⁵⁷

Secondly, Augustine involved leaders in the work of the *monasterium clericorum*. As we noted in the previous chapter, each year Augustine set apart a *praepositus* who had administrative and financial authority over the monastery.¹⁷⁵⁸ In addition, other monks were entrusted with tasks such as dispersing gifts made to the monastery; looking after the community's clothes, shoes, and books; overseeing the kitchen; as well as caring for the sick.¹⁷⁵⁹ Like the church, the work of the monastery became so demanding that Augustine purposefully involved more monks in leading it so that he would not neglect other aspects of his ministry.¹⁷⁶⁰

Third, Augustine involved a great deal of clergy in his ministry of writing. As we have noted, twenty-three of Augustine's *epistulae* were co-authored by members of the clergy. More significantly, however, was the large number of clergy employed

¹⁷⁵⁴ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 193.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Cf. R. Crespin, *Ministère et Sainteté*, p. 180.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Cf. A. Zumkeller, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 196.

¹⁷⁵⁸ *Vita* 24.1.

¹⁷⁵⁹ *Reg.* 5.3-11.

¹⁷⁶⁰ *Div. qu.* 71.

to actually deliver the letters.¹⁷⁶¹ Acolytes,¹⁷⁶² sub-deacons,¹⁷⁶³ deacons,¹⁷⁶⁴ presbyters,¹⁷⁶⁵ and even bishops¹⁷⁶⁶ were among those who served as couriers. Through identifying and often commending the letter carrier within the body of the letter, Augustine, like Cyprian, not only showed how much he valued his correspondence being safely delivered, but he appreciated the ministry of these ‘colleagues.’¹⁷⁶⁷ Surely, Augustine’s appreciation for this ministry increased as his relationship with Jerome had suffered due to letters arriving very late.¹⁷⁶⁸

Fourth, Augustine involved his disciples, particularly Alypius, Possidius, and Evodius, in the African church councils. Through participating in the debates within the council, traveling to carry out the will of the council, or appealing to the pope or secular authorities on behalf of the African church, these leaders became increasingly influential in the North African church.

Finally, Augustine involved his men in some of his travels related to the business of the church. This business, unrelated to the African councils, at times included consecrating bishops, meeting with Donatist leaders, restoring order in churches plagued by leadership problems, and encouraging discouraged leaders.

2. Augustine’s Thought on Involving in Ministry

In light of Augustine’s example of involving disciples in the work of ministry, what did he believe or prescribe about this principle of mentoring? Continuing to demonstrate the posture of a servant leader, the bishop of Hippo communicated in *Sermo* 49: ‘I am a worker like you and with you; according to the strength that God

¹⁷⁶¹ Some *epistulae*, such as *epp.* 174 and 10* were accompanied by books as well.

¹⁷⁶² *Epp.* 191.1; 192.1; 194.1.

¹⁷⁶³ *Epp.* 68; 73.1.1; 82.1.1; 222.3.

¹⁷⁶⁴ *Epp.* 71.1.1; 73.1.1; 82.4.30; 110.1; 164; 174; 10*.1; 19*.1; 23*.5.

¹⁷⁶⁵ *Epp.* 80.1; 194.1; 197.1; 198.1; 202A.1; 224.1; 6*.1; 19*.1; 25*.1.

¹⁷⁶⁶ *Epp.* 10*.1; 19*.1.

¹⁷⁶⁷ In *ep.* 82.1.1; 82.4.30, Augustine referred to the sub-deacon Austerius and the deacon Cyprian as *collegam meum*. PL 33, 276, 288.

has given me, I work in this vineyard.¹⁷⁶⁹ Hence, he believed that he should model ministry by coming alongside and laboring beside his colleagues.

Augustine also believed that a spiritual leader should be apprenticed through practical involvement in ministry. While arguing that a preacher must learn to interpret Scripture, Augustine not only modeled this value through hundreds of sermons, but, like Valerius, he deliberately placed presbyters like Eraclius and probably others in the *cathedra* to apprentice as preachers.¹⁷⁷⁰ Similarly, in *De catechizandis rudibus*, Augustine shared with the clergy his principles for preparing believers for baptism as well as a set of model lessons to be used with catechumens.¹⁷⁷¹ After resourcing deacons like Deogratias with this work, the task of teaching new believers remained the work of deacons.¹⁷⁷²

Augustine seemed to be aware of own strengths in ministry as well as what aspects of ministry motivated him. We know that he was especially driven by study, teaching, writing, and debate.¹⁷⁷³ At the same time, he was aware of his weaknesses and disdain for ministries such as administration, serving as a judge, and traveling.¹⁷⁷⁴ Like Valerius, Augustine humbly involved other clergy in areas that compensated for his weaknesses. Eraclius, his eventual successor in Hippo, was initially challenged to relieve him of the burdens of administration and serving as a judge, which allowed Augustine more time to study and write.¹⁷⁷⁵ Surely, Augustine was pleased that disciples like Alypius, Evodius, and Possidius were willing to travel overseas to

¹⁷⁶⁸ *Epp.* 40.3.3-4.7; 71.1.2.

¹⁷⁶⁹ *Cooperarius uester sum. Pro uiribus quas ille donare dignatur, in uinea laboro. s.* 49.2, PL 38, 321. Cf. A. Mandouze, 'L'évêque et le corps presbytéral au service du peuple fidèle selon Saint Augustin' in H. Bouësse, ed. *L'évêque dans L'Eglise du Christ*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁷⁰ *Doc. Chr. prol.* 1-9.

¹⁷⁷¹ *Cat. rud.* 16-27.

¹⁷⁷² Cf. J. Lienhard, 'Ministry' *ATTA*, 569.

¹⁷⁷³ *Vita* 19.6

¹⁷⁷⁴ *Epp.* 33.5; 95.1; 122.1; 124.1; 213.5; 24*.1; *Vita* 19; cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, pp. 32, 39.

¹⁷⁷⁵ *Ep.* 213.5-6.

appeal to church or secular leaders on behalf of the African church. While relieving Augustine of such undesired ministries, these disciples were increasingly involved in the work of ministry and developing as leaders in their own right.

While Augustine allowed men to serve in areas of ministry where he was weak, he also seemed motivated, like Ambrose and Valerius, to encourage spiritual leaders to pursue ministries that corresponded with their gifts and abilities.¹⁷⁷⁶ Punic speakers like Lucillus, who served as a deacon in Hippo, and Antoninus, the infamous bishop of Fussala, were set apart for their respective ministries largely because of their linguistic abilities.¹⁷⁷⁷ Alypius, due to his background and training in law, seemed especially qualified to serve in the role of judge as part of his ministry in Tagaste. Also, his skills in communication and debate were put to use particularly during the councils of Carthage in 403, 411, and 419. Finally, his legal mind must have proved useful during various trips on church business in Africa as well as during appeals made to the Roman court and church leadership between 419 and 421.

Finally, Augustine demonstrated the value of involving spiritual leaders in ministry at increasing levels of responsibility over time. We have noted the clergy who lived with Augustine in the garden monastery or *monasterium clericorum* at Hippo, who were later sent out to serve as bishops and clergy in the churches of North Africa. As Augustine seemed to involve many monks in the work of the monastery as well as every rank of the clergy in the various ministries of the church, we can speculate that their responsibilities probably increased prior to being set apart as leaders in other churches. This was certainly the case with Eraclius — a presbyter and member of the *monasterium clericorum* who was entrusted with the roles of

¹⁷⁷⁶ *De officiis*, 1.215.

¹⁷⁷⁷ *Epp.* 84; 209; 20*.

administration, serving as a judge, and preaching, before assuming the role of bishop upon Augustine's death.

This value of increasingly involving disciples in ministry was also evident in the African church councils. Though Augustine was the predominant figure in the councils, we have noted the increased role played especially by Alypius, Possidius, and Evodius after 403. At the 411 council of Carthage, four of the seven speakers defending the catholic position included Augustine and the Hippo alumni of Alypius, Possidius, and Fortunatus.¹⁷⁷⁸ Following the councils of Milevus and Carthage in 416, the small group of bishops that met to discuss further the Pelagian included Augustine, Evodius, Possidius, and Alypius. All four were listed in the salutations of *Epistulae* 176 and 177, which explained the conclusions of the councils and meetings of 416 to Pope Innocent.

3. Summary

While modeling ministry for his disciples, Augustine was clearly interested in involving his monks and clergy in various aspects of ministry to meet the great needs of the church in Hippo and North Africa as well as to see the men further develop as spiritual leaders. Hence, every rank of the clergy was involved in the liturgical assembly. The work to sustain the monastery was distributed among the monks. Augustine involved other leaders in writing letters as well as delivering them. Finally, Augustine's disciples grew as leaders through their participation in the African church councils.

Augustine postured himself as a co-laborer coming alongside his disciples in their ministry. He definitely believed that leaders grew through apprenticeship and active participation in areas such as preaching. Finally, Augustine humbly welcomed

¹⁷⁷⁸ Cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 289-90.

the contribution of men who served where he was weak, encouraged men to pursue ministries that accorded with their strengths, and involved men in ministry with increasing responsibility over time. While this aspect of Augustine's mentoring resembles Jesus' model of apprenticing the Twelve, I argue that the greatest influence on Augustine in this area came from his own mentor Valerius.

VII. Releasing

A logical outcome of Augustine involving men in ministry with increasing responsibility was that he released them to be consecrated as bishops and leaders in other churches in which they assumed the responsibility and authority for that ministry. Having trained men in the garden monastery, *monasterium clericorum*, as well as the church at Hippo, Augustine was quite willing to deploy his disciples and friends to serve the needs of the church in Africa.¹⁷⁷⁹ Augustine was also committed to releasing leaders to ministry by participating in the ordination of bishops in Numidia. As noted, he played the definitive role in setting apart his own successor, Eraclius.

Through his actions and writings, what did Augustine believe and prescribe about releasing spiritual leaders to ministry? First, in breaking with the practice of Valerius and other fourth and fifth century bishops, he refused to ordain anyone by force. This was most evident in the case of Pinian¹⁷⁸⁰ as well as Augustine's first choice of bishop for Fussala. Unfortunately, as a result of accepting this candidate's withdrawal, Antoninus became Augustine's alternate for the position.

Secondly, Augustine valued ordaining men in a manner that honored both the universal and local church. As an active participant in the African church councils, Augustine highly regarded their authority and worked to uphold the decisions of these

¹⁷⁷⁹ *Vita* 11.2-3; 31.8.

councils as well as those of plenary councils. Hence, being aware of the canons of the council of Nicea of 325, which forbade two bishops serving in the same church, Augustine would not allow Eraclius to be ordained bishop of Hippo until after his death. While Possidius wrote that Valerius was unaware of these canons, Augustine essentially showed disapproval for his own ordination through the manner that he ordained Eraclius. Also, it seemed important to Augustine that the congregation be involved in the decision and give their approval for a new bishop.¹⁷⁸¹ Having observed the consequences of failing to do this in the churches of Milevus and Fussala, Augustine was careful to secure the blessing of the people of Hippo for his appointment of Eraclius.¹⁷⁸²

Third, despite the great needs in the African church for spiritual leadership, Augustine maintained very high standards for holiness, sound doctrine, and competence in the clergy that he ordained.¹⁷⁸³ According to *Epistula* 18*, he traveled to Membliba to promote a deacon named Gitta to the office of presbyter yet left the town without ordaining him due to the deacon's apparent moral failure. Also, Augustine seemed committed to following the canons of the council of Carthage in 397, which imposed stringent standards upon all candidates for the clergy. For instance, they were to be prudent and gentle in their conduct¹⁷⁸⁴; at least of twenty-five years of age; and their entire household needed to be catholic Christians.¹⁷⁸⁵ It was also imperative that they affirmed sound doctrine – especially regarding the

¹⁷⁸⁰ *Epp.* 124; 126.

¹⁷⁸¹ Hefele (C. Hefele, *A History of the Councils*, 2.410-11) records that canon 1 of the fourth council of Carthage indicated that the clergy and laity's consent ought to be sought before a bishop was consecrated.

¹⁷⁸² *Ep.* 213.1-6; *Vita* 8; cf. P. Zmire, 'Recherches sur la collégialité épiscopale dans l'église d'Afrique,' *RechAug* 7 (1971), 14; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 271.

¹⁷⁸³ *Ep.* 167.18; cf. D. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian*, p. 305.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Cf. C. Hefele, *A History of the Councils*, 2.410-11.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Doyle (D. Doyle, op. cit., pp. 181, 305) cites canons 11-19 of the 397 council of Carthage.

Trinity, the Scriptures, and salvation.¹⁷⁸⁶ Finally, along with being a man of upright character and sound doctrine, the candidate for ordination needed to be competent in his abilities to perform the required tasks. For this reason, he openly opposed a certain Donantius being named deacon in the church at Suppa because of his inability to even serve as an *ostiarius* (doorkeeper).¹⁷⁸⁷

Fourth, before ordaining a spiritual leader, Augustine valued personally knowing the candidate and his quality of life or at least having a credible reference to commend the candidate. The fact that Augustine shared a common life with the men in the monastery allowed him to know the character of his men and determine who was suitable for ordination.¹⁷⁸⁸ Men like Alypius, Severus, Profuturus, Possidius, Evodius and Urbanus — bishops, who from all accounts served the African church in an exemplary manner — testified to Augustine's ability to discern leadership ability. Yet, it would be incorrect to assert that Augustine was able to judge perfectly the character of even the most devoted monk.¹⁷⁸⁹ Setting apart leaders was not without risk as the accounts of Paul of Cataqua and Antoninus of Fussala illustrate. In the case of Antoninus, Augustine had known him since he had entered the monastery as a youth and had previously appointed him as a *lector*. Though Antoninus had previously been in some sort of trouble in the monastery, Augustine apparently relied heavily on the opinion of the *praepositus* Urbanus who recommended that Antoninus be ordained bishop of Fussala.¹⁷⁹⁰ Thus, despite his personal contact with Antoninus and Urbanus' recommendation, Antoninus' true character went undetected.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 181; cf. C. Hefele, *A History of the Councils*, 2.410-11.

¹⁷⁸⁷ *Ep.* 26*.1-2.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Cf. R. Crespín, *Ministère et Sainteté*, p. 180.

¹⁷⁸⁹ The scandal in the monastery recounted in *S.* 355-6 certainly shows that.

¹⁷⁹⁰ *Ep.* 20*.2; cf. H. Chadwick, 'The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society,' in E. Hobbs and W. Wuellner, eds., *The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society*, 441.

While we may firmly assert that it was impossible for Augustine or anyone else to discern a potential leader's character, it seems that in the case of Antoninus, Augustine was distracted by other factors, which impaired his judgment. As Fussala was dominated by the Donatists, Augustine was quite zealous about installing a catholic bishop to engage in that doctrinal battle. Also, as noted, Fussala was largely Punic speaking and Augustine desperately needed someone linguistically capable of serving there. It seems evident that the pool of Punic speaking catholic clergy was rather small. Thus, when his initial choice for bishop withdrew, Augustine must have been embarrassed by his inability to supply a bishop in the face of a mocking Donatist opposition. Also, as the primate of Numidia was already en route to ordain the new bishop in Fussala, Augustine probably felt great pressure to find a replacement.¹⁷⁹¹ Hence, though Augustine knew something about Antoninus, it seems that the pressure and circumstances in Fussala caused him to make a hasty and poor decision which he later regretted and took responsibility for even to the point of offering his own resignation.

Finally, Augustine, like Valerius, believed in allowing his released clergy to become their own type of minister. Possidius recorded that though Augustine did not accept property to be held in trust by the church, he did not forbid other clergy from doing so.¹⁷⁹² Also, though Augustine cared little for constructing buildings for the church, he allowed other bishops the freedom to make their own decisions in such matters.¹⁷⁹³ As noted, Augustine encouraged other bishops to exercise their own gifts in the context of their ministry. Hence, he seemed content that Alypius' episcopate in Tagaste would include traveling on behalf of the church and serving as an advocate for the church before secular authorities. Thus, as Augustine released spiritual leaders

¹⁷⁹¹ *Ep.* 20*.3; cf. H. Chadwick, 'New Letters of St. Augustine,' *JTS* 34.2 (1983), 441.

to ministry, he truly released them with authority and responsibility. As a continual mentor who certainly maintained an influence, he did not use that influence to give heavy-handed direction to the ministries of other bishops.

In summary, Augustine seemed to celebrate releasing spiritual leaders to ministry. While Valerius deeply desired a competent minister for the needs of his congregation in Hippo, Augustine was more concerned that spiritual leaders be raised up for needs of the African church. Augustine also broke with Valerius by refusing to ordain anyone by force and insisting that the canons of the church be followed. It was also important to Augustine that the local congregation agree with the choice of their bishop. Though committed to raising up leaders, Augustine held candidates to high standards of personal holiness, doctrine, and competence. In order to make a good decision, he valued personally knowing the candidate's character or at least having a good recommendation from a credible source. Finally, like Valerius, Augustine believed in truly releasing leaders with authority and responsibility toward becoming their own type of minister.

VIII. Resourcing

Having modeled and involved men in ministry and released them to their own ministries, Augustine continued to be available as a resource to spiritual leaders. Upon setting apart Eraclius as a 'bishop-elect,' he assured his successor as well as the congregation:

In any case in which he may think my advice necessary, I will not refuse it; far be it from me to withdraw this: nevertheless, let everything be brought to him which used to be brought to me. Let Eraclius himself, if in any case, perchance, he be at a loss as to what should be done, either consult me, or claim an assistant in me, whom he has known as a father.¹⁷⁹⁴

¹⁷⁹² *Vita* 24.9.

¹⁷⁹³ *Vita* 24.13.

¹⁷⁹⁴ *Ubi necessarium habuerit consilium, meum non negabo auxilium; absit ut subtraham. Tamen quidquid illud est quod ad me perferebatur, ad illum perferatur. Ipse me aut consulat, si forte non inuenerit quid facere debeat, aut poscat adiutorem quem nouit patrem. ep.* 213.6, PL 33, 968.

Augustine's availability extended to those spiritual leaders from Hippo and Numidia that he had personally released, as well as to other leaders from Africa and beyond who sought him out as a mentor.

As we have shown, Augustine's primary form of resourcing spiritual leaders was through his *epistulae*. He wrote thirty-one letters replying to theological or exegetical questions from the clergy; another eighteen influencing leaders to maintain sound teaching; while thirty-five letters contained instruction and advice related to practical church matters. Hence, Augustine, like the author of the Pastoral Epistles, Cyprian, Pachomius, Basil, and Ambrose, valued letters as a significant means of continually discipling and resourcing clergy in the course of their ministries.

In chapter four, we also showed that Augustine resourced clergy through books. In all, he wrote nineteen books to the clergy in Africa, Italy, Gaul, and Egypt; while sending another ten already completed works along with letters. Like his *epistulae*, his books resourced the clergy in theology and exegesis, in apologetics toward maintaining sound teaching, and in practical church matters. The key recipient of his books was Aurelius whom he also resourced with sermons.¹⁷⁹⁵ Though Aurelius did not exhibit strengths as a preacher or theologian, he was not threatened by Augustine but welcomed his input. More than that, he used his position as the primate of Africa and primary convener of the councils of the African church to provide Augustine with a platform to resource the church leaders in theology, exegesis, and sound teaching. Hence, Augustine was able to put his strengths as a thinker, writer, and teacher to work to resource clergy like Aurelius and others.

We also noted that Augustine resourced his Hippo alumni by visiting them. At times, he stopped through while en route to or from a church council or to another city

on church business. At other times, the visit was for the express purpose of encouragement. During visits, Augustine resourced his friends with spiritual encouragement, with practical help and problem solving related to church issues, while very likely engaging in spiritual or theological dialogue.

Finally, Augustine demonstrated humility in resourcing his own disciples at Hippo by encouraging them to visit and be resourced by other spiritual leaders. We know that Augustine encouraged Evodius and Possidius to visit Paulinus of Nola during their trips to Italy.¹⁷⁹⁶ Before being consecrated as bishop of Tagaste in 394, Alypius visited Jerome in Bethlehem.¹⁷⁹⁷ Augustine wrote to Jerome that he was sending Profuturus to Bethlehem not only to deliver a letter but to ‘be exposed to and nourished with your sweet and profitable conversations.’¹⁷⁹⁸ As noted, even in the midst of their disputes, Augustine desired to send a disciple from Hippo to learn from Jerome.¹⁷⁹⁹ Finally, after receiving Paul Orosius for a season of study and mentoring at Hippo and resourcing him with *Contra Priscillianistas*, Augustine encouraged him to visit Jerome in Bethlehem. He wrote to Jerome: ‘I have taught him all that I could, and, as for the things in which I could not teach him, I have told him from whom he may learn them, and have exhorted him to go on to you.’¹⁸⁰⁰ Through exposing his men to other spiritual leaders, Augustine humbly acknowledged his limitations as a teacher. Regarding himself as a servant to both the disciple and the disciple’s inner teacher, he was not threatened by the contribution of other servants like Paulinus and Jerome.

¹⁷⁹⁵ *Epp.* 16.*1; 23A*.3.

¹⁷⁹⁶ *Epp.* 80.1; 94-5.

¹⁷⁹⁷ *Ep.* 28.1.

¹⁷⁹⁸ *Quem miscendum et alendum dulcibus atque utilibus sermocinationibus tuis misisse me gaudeo. Ep.* 28.4.6, PL 33, 114.

¹⁷⁹⁹ *Ep.* 73.2.5; cf. M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁰⁰ *Deinde docui hominem quod potui; quod autem non potui, unde discere posset, admonui, atque ut ad te iret hortatus sum. ep.* 166.1.2, PL 33, 721. See also *ep.* 169.4.13; G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin:*

In summary, Augustine was quite available as a resource to men that he had ordained to ministry in Hippo and Numidia, as well as others who contacted him from other churches in Africa and overseas. His key forms of resourcing were letters, books, personal visits, and exposing his disciples to other spiritual leaders. While Augustine remained a growing disciple throughout his lifetime, he also remained a mentor as well through resourcing spiritual leaders.

IX. Augustine's Legacy

Brown writes that with the Vandal invasion, 'Augustine lived to see his life's work destroyed in Africa.'¹⁸⁰¹ Indeed, the horrific destruction that characterized the fall of Roman Africa dealt a severe blow to the church movement as church buildings were burned, nuns and consecrated virgins were violated, and church leaders were displaced. Yet, what was Augustine's life's work? Contrary to Brown's assertion, Augustine did leave a legacy to the African church in the period following his death including some aspects that continue to have an impact on the present day.

First, according to Possidius, 'his legacy to the church was a very numerous clergy.'¹⁸⁰² In the previous chapter, we listed the bishops and church leaders who left Hippo to serve the African church. Though half of the ten leaders only served a short period of time because of moral failure or untimely death, men like Alypius, Possidius, Evodius, Severus, and Urbanus seem to have had a significant role in the church during Augustine's lifetime. While Possidius was probably the only Hippo alumni to survive Augustine and continue in the ministry after 430, it is significant to note the continuing presence of catholic leaders in Africa amidst the Arian Vandal presence. In 484, when catholic worship was suppressed in Africa, 500 clergy in

L'homme et l'œuvre, p. 295; O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 329-30; and C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.176.

¹⁸⁰¹ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 429.

¹⁸⁰² *Clerum sufficientissimum . . . Ecclesiae dimisit. Vita* 31.8, PL 32, 62.

Carthage alone were sent into exile.¹⁸⁰³ Despite one hundred years of Vandal domination, a catholic bishop could still be found leading the church at Hippo when the Byzantines arrived in 533.¹⁸⁰⁴ Finally, 220 catholic bishops gathered for a church council in Carthage in 534.¹⁸⁰⁵

Though Augustine probably had a personal influence on many catholic clergy who endured the Vandal period, his legacy was probably felt more in the transformation of the priestly office itself. As a bishop-monk who had monasticized the clergy in Hippo, he certainly helped to solidify the prevailing value that priests should be celibate. Finally, his devotion to philosophy, exegesis, and theology inspired scholarship among future bishops and church leaders who were gifted in these areas.¹⁸⁰⁶ As Ambrose and Simplicianus had shown Augustine that he could be a thinker, a Christian, and a church leader, Augustine surely passed along this value to future generations of clergy.

Secondly, Augustine left a legacy of monasteries that existed to serve the church. Possidius recorded that as Augustine's disciples founded monasteries 'they prepared brothers for the priesthood and then advanced them to other churches.'¹⁸⁰⁷ That is, they held to the Augustinian value that a monastery was an excellent training center for clergy. Though it was not necessary or recommended that every monk be ordained to the ministry, the monasteries nevertheless existed to serve the church.

As noted, Zumkeller claims that by the end of the fifth century, thirty-eight monasteries existed in North Africa — most of which were begun by Augustine or his

¹⁸⁰³ This decision was largely reversed by 496. See F. Decret, *Le Christianisme en Afrique du Nord Ancienne*, p. 278.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Cf. F. Decret, op. cit., p. 279.

¹⁸⁰⁶ For a summary of such leaders in the period after his death, see: T. O'Loughlin, 'Fifth Century,' *ATTA*, 362. For a summary of Augustine's long-term influence as a thinker, see: G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine*, pp. 277-317.

¹⁸⁰⁷ *Ceteris Ecclesiis promotos fratres ad suscipiendum sacerdotium praestiterunt. Vita* 11.3, PL, 32, 42.

disciples or were at least influenced by him.¹⁸⁰⁸ Both Quodvultdeus, Augustine's correspondent who probably became bishop of Carthage in 437, and Bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe (467-533), who adopted a monastic lifestyle after reading Augustine, oversaw monasteries in their diocese. Yet, during the Vandal oppression, both men were expelled from Africa and effectively continued Augustine's legacy by establishing monastic communities abroad in Italy and Sardinia.¹⁸⁰⁹ Augustine's monastic influence continued to be felt eight hundred years after his death as Pope Innocent IV organized the monks of Tuscany (Italy) in 1244 into a monastic order patterned after his life and values.¹⁸¹⁰ Even to the present day, monasteries belonging to the Order of Saint Augustine can be found throughout the world.¹⁸¹¹

Finally, after investing much of his adult life writing works that in many cases resourced the clergy, Augustine left a lasting legacy through his books. Possidius recorded that during Augustine's lifetime:

The church's teaching on saving faith, hope, and love thus became known through many and among many, not only in all parts of Africa but also in regions overseas. By means of published books, which were translated into Greek, all this teaching was able with God's help to make its way from one man and through him to many.¹⁸¹²

While influencing the church of his day, Augustine continued to be read by church leaders and theologians in the century following his death¹⁸¹³; while his works impacted medieval thinkers like Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) as well as the Protestant reformers Luther (1483-1540) and Calvin (1509-1564). The curiosity of modern scholars continues to be aroused by Augustine's philosophical and theological

¹⁸⁰⁸ Cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, p. 84.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Quodvultdeus set up a monastery near Naples while Fulgentius did the same in Sardinia. Cf. T. Smith, 'Fulgentius of Ruspe,' *ATTA*, 373-4; and M. McHugh, 'Quodvultdeus,' *ATTA*, 693-4.

¹⁸¹⁰ Cf. K. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1.426-7.

¹⁸¹¹ For information on the OSA see *Order of Saint Augustine* [website] <www.osanet.org>.

¹⁸¹² *Unde per multos et in multis salubris fidei, spei, et caritatis Ecclesiae innotescere doctrina, non solum per omnes Africae partes, uerum etiam in transmarinis, et per libros editos atque in graecum sermonem translato, ab illo uno homine, et illum a multis, fauente Deo, cuncta innotescere meruerunt. Vita* 11.5, PL 32, 42.

works in particular, as the steady stream of scholarship testifies. Yet, his books, whether practical or doctrinal in nature, ought to also serve as a continual resource for today's spiritual leaders.

While Augustine invested much of his life in writing, he helped his own legacy by undertaking a project toward the end of his life to index, recopy, and preserve his books in the library at Hippo.¹⁸¹⁴ Though he did not have a will, Possidius wrote that 'he always intended that the library of the church and all the books in it should be carefully preserved for posterity.'¹⁸¹⁵ This was strategic in light of the imminent Vandal invasion, as history has proven that literature was often lost or destroyed with such conquests. Hence, Augustine's books served to strengthen the church in his day and they continue to be read and analyzed in the present day.

While Augustine left a legacy of spiritual leaders, monasteries, and books, in what ways did he fail to have a lasting impact? First, though he involved presbyters in the work of preaching and resourced spiritual leaders with *De doctrina Christiana*, none of Augustine's disciples from Hippo seemed to have come close to being the preacher that he was. In fact, the sermons of Possidius and Eraclius reveal that both men were rather weak in the ministry of preaching.¹⁸¹⁶ It seems especially surprising that Augustine would set apart someone for his own church whose abilities were lacking in the area that was clearly Augustine's primary ministry as bishop.

Secondly, despite the fine literary contribution of men like Fulgentius,¹⁸¹⁷ Prosper (c. 390-455),¹⁸¹⁸ Eugippius (c. 455-c. 535),¹⁸¹⁹ and Isidore (560-636)¹⁸²⁰ in

¹⁸¹³ Cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'Fifth Century,' *ATTA*, 362.

¹⁸¹⁴ Cf. G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin: L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 450.

¹⁸¹⁵ *Testamentum nullum fecit, quia unde faceret pauper Dei non habuit. Ecclesiae bibliothecam, omnesque codices diligenter posteris custodiendos semper iubebat. Vita* 31.6, PL 32, 62. Possidius (*Vita* 31.8) noted that the library contained Augustine's works as well as those of other men.

¹⁸¹⁶ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 266; H. Marou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, p. 528; and F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 413.

¹⁸¹⁷ Cf. T. Smith, 'Fulgentius of Ruspe,' *ATTA*, 373-4.

¹⁸¹⁸ Cf. M. McHugh, 'Prosper of Aquitaine,' *ATTA*, 685-6.

the period after Augustine's death; as well as the modest efforts of Quodvultdeus¹⁸²¹ and Possidius; none of Augustine's Hippo disciples took up a pen to defend the church against heresy or to resource it with theological or exegetical works. The most likely candidate to succeed Augustine in this manner would have been Evodius, especially after Augustine had resourced him with several letters and a small library in Uzalis.¹⁸²² Though he may have written one anti-Manichean work, Evodius failed to emerge as a writer.¹⁸²³

Despite these apparent problems with Augustine's legacy, which will be addressed in the concluding chapter, the outcomes of Augustine's mentoring of spiritual leaders were significant. In the generation after his death, Fulgentius could pick up his commentary on Psalm 36 and decide to become a monk-bishop.¹⁸²⁴ Spiritual leaders in Africa and beyond continued to be inspired by *Confessiones*, Possidius' *Vita*, as well as contemplate the theological issues that Augustine had raised.¹⁸²⁵ The monasteries that Augustine initiated or influenced would remain and even expand. Finally, ordained catholic clergy would carry on in a priesthood that Augustine had forever influenced. Hence, following Augustine's death and the Vandal siege of 430, his life's work continued through his legacy.

X. Summary of Augustine's Principles of Mentoring

Having treated Augustine's forms of mentoring spiritual leaders in the chapter four, the goal of the present chapter has been to articulate his principles of mentoring. We have endeavored to do this by drawing conclusions from repeated behavior observed

¹⁸¹⁹ Cf. J. O'Donnell, 'Eugippius,' *ATTA*, 338-9.

¹⁸²⁰ Cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'Isidore of Seville,' *ATTA*, 457-8.

¹⁸²¹ Cf. M. McHugh, 'Quodvultdeus,' *ATTA*, 693-4.

¹⁸²² *Epp.* 159; 162; 164; 169; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 270, 355.

¹⁸²³ Fitzgerald (A. Fitzgerald, 'Evodius of Uzalis,' *ATTA*, 344) credits Evodius with the work *De fide contra Manichaeos*.

¹⁸²⁴ Cf. T. Smith, 'Fulgentius of Ruspe,' *ATTA*, 373.

¹⁸²⁵ Cf. T. O'Loughlin, 'Fifth Century,' *ATTA*, 362.

in his mentoring forms while also considering what he taught or believed about mentoring. At appropriate points, we have shown influences on Augustine's mentoring from third and fourth century mentors presented in chapter two as well as from his own mentors treated in chapter three. To a large extent, Augustine's principles of mentoring follow the early Christian model of mentoring proposed in chapter one.

While naturally inclined to friendship, his Christian and monastic experience revealed him discipling spiritual leaders in a group context whose models were the Trinity and the church. Though a respected bishop, he continued to be a disciple pursuing spiritual progress which rendered him a model for imitation. Though we know little about what Augustine believed or practiced regarding selection, the fact remains that a steady flow of monks and clergy joined him in the church and monastery at Hippo for nearly forty years. In the initial years of his monastic itinerary, he probably attracted many like-minded friends; while in the later years, he demonstrated a clear commitment to *caritas* by receiving monks from all walks of life. Augustine's mentor-disciple relationships greatly resembled the early Christian model in that he related to his men with discipline and authority, as a shepherd, and as a friend; though he seemed to prefer the fraternal posture. His clear commitment to *sana doctrina* and the *Scripturas canonicas*, evident in both his teachings and actions as a bishop, showed clear conformity to the early Christian model. Following the example of Valerius, Augustine was also willing to involve leaders in ministry, allowing them to serve where he was weak as well as where they were gifted. Through sending out his own disciples and overseeing the consecration of other church leaders in Africa, Augustine, again like Valerius, was quite committed to releasing leaders to share in the *sarcina* of the ministry. Finally, through letters,

books, visits and even sending his disciples to be taught by other mentors, Augustine was actively involved in resourcing the spiritual leaders of his day.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Having presented Augustine's forms and principles of mentoring spiritual leaders in the two preceding chapters, the argument has been made that Augustine was actively and deliberately involved in mentoring the clergy of his day both in their spiritual lives and in their development as ministers serving the church. As we have shown, Augustine's mentoring principles do largely conform to the early Christian model presented in chapter one. In the present chapter, I will conclude the argument by evaluating Augustine's strengths and weaknesses as a mentor while mentioning other avenues of research related to the present work.

In the first chapter, I asserted that a mentor is a master, expert, or someone with a significant amount of experience imparting knowledge and skill to a novice in an atmosphere of discipline, commitment, and accountability. The context of mentoring spiritual leaders is of course the movement of the church and community of faith. Having considered the relationship of Augustine to the spiritual leaders of his day in light of the early Christian model of mentoring, he was clearly doing the work of a mentor and doing it in an exemplary manner. What were Augustine's strengths as a mentor? First, he was approachable, available, and intimately involved in the lives of his disciples. Through the *uita communis* of the monastery as well as the community of the church, his example of faith and ministry was lived out in close proximity to others. While taking time to give of himself to others through teaching the Scriptures, his instruction was authenticated through his life compelling men like Possidius to burn to imitate him. Hence, his mentoring was incarnational and thus, quite effective.

Secondly, his practical commitment to *caritas* — self-denying, neighbor preferring love — moved him to not only want the best for his disciples but to sacrifice on their behalf. Time and energy spent writing letters and books, personal visits on the treacherous African roads, and risks taken with potentially unworthy monks or visitors entering the monastery, testified to mentoring that was governed by *caritas*. Augustine not only loved his disciples, but he loved the church that they were serving. Hence, his mentoring was purposeful in that he was not merely equipping leaders for their own benefit, but for the blessing of the church.

Third, Augustine effectively mentored because he modeled the work of a bishop and involved men in ministry in the ‘real world’ of the church of Hippo and Africa. His men served with him in the liturgical assembly, amongst the poor and enslaved of Hippo, and in the councils of the African church that often dealt with viable threats to the health of the church. Augustine was a monk whose manual labor consisted of the *sarcina* of church work and he chose not to shield his disciples from it. In fact, he willfully sent some of his best friends to serve the needs of the church in Africa where they would be opposed by heretics, be forced to deal with immoral clergy, and even be physically attacked.

Finally, Augustine was an effective mentor because when he died, his legacy lived on. Not unlike *Abba* Pachomius, Augustine continued to live on through clergy and monastic communities that followed his example. Also, he continues to speak through his *Regula*, *Vita*, *Confessiones*, *epistulae*, and a library of theological, apologetic, and practical works that can be easily consulted today in a variety of languages in libraries in Tunis, London, or via the internet.

While I firmly argue that Augustine was an effective mentor, he was not without points of weakness. In his ambition to set apart a Punic speaking bishop in the

Donatist dominated region of Fussala, Augustine made a hasty, poor decision in ordaining Antoninus. This haste was probably driven by the fear of embarrassment in the face of a jeering Donatist contingency and to his superior — the aging primate of Numidia who was about to arrive in Fussala for the ordination. While the affair with Antoninus was certainly a blemish on Augustine's record, it does not seem to characterize his practice of releasing leaders to the ministry nor diminish the high standards he held for those in ordained ministry.

As noted, though Augustine's posture in the mentor-disciple relationship included a mixture of discipline, shepherding, and friendship, he definitely preferred a fraternal posture toward his disciples. Even the monastic superior who was in a position of authority, was encouraged to 'be loved . . . rather than feared.'¹⁸²⁶ We have shown that humility was probably the chief trait that characterized Augustine's episcopate and his mentoring of spiritual leaders.¹⁸²⁷ Yet, Augustine seems to contradict his thoughts on the mentor-disciple relationship in the *Regula* when the superior was exempted from ever having to ask forgiveness from his monks:

But whenever the good of discipline requires you to speak harshly in correcting your subjects, then, even if you think you have been unduly harsh in your language, you are not required to ask forgiveness lest, by practicing too great humility toward those who should be your subjects, the authority to rule is undermined. But you should still ask forgiveness from the Lord of all who knows with what deep affection you love even those whom you might happen to correct with undue severity.¹⁸²⁸

Augustine's humility, which included seeking the forgiveness of other spiritual leaders and even the church,¹⁸²⁹ was what made him an effective mentor and worthy

¹⁸²⁶ *Tamen plus a uobis amari appetat quam timeri. reg. 7.3, PL 32, 1384.*

¹⁸²⁷ Cf. L. Bacchi, *The Theology of the Ordained Ministry*, p. xiii; and M. Pellegrino, *The True Priest*, p. 156

¹⁸²⁸ *Quando autem necessitas disciplinae, minoribus cohercendis, dicere uos uerba dura compellit, si etiam in ipsis modum uos excessisse sentitis, non a uobis exigitur, ut ab eis ueniam postuletis, ne apud eos quos oportet esse subiectos, dum nimia seruat humilitas, regendi frangatur auctoritas. Sed tamen petenda uenia est ab omnium Domino, qui nouit etiam eos, quos plus iusto forte corripitis, quanta beneuolentia diligatis. reg. 6.3, PL 32, 1384.*

¹⁸²⁹ *Epp. 73.1.1; 82.1.1; 148; 171; 209; s. 355-6.*

of imitation. As this instruction in the *Regula* seems to depart from what Augustine taught about the posture of a mentor, it does not seem to represent Augustine's general thoughts on the mentor-disciple relationship.

In chapter five, we noted that Augustine failed to raise up spiritual leaders who could preach or write at his level. Was Augustine simply a brilliant individual living in the midst of average disciples?¹⁸³⁰ Though this explanation could be construed as arrogant, we should not forget that Augustine does rank among the greatest preachers and writers of the patristic era as well as the history of the entire Christian movement. Thus, to compare him to some fellow bishops in the first half of the fifth century would also show his greatness. Though plausible, this response is not fully satisfying.

A second possibility for why Augustine failed to realize a legacy of writers, in particular, from among his Hippo disciples was that he had inaugurated a 'paradigm shift.' That is, following Thomas Kuhn's thesis, his contribution as a theologian and thinker was so significant that those who followed in his wake needed initially to organize, summarize, and interpret his writings before there could be any meaningful interaction with his work.¹⁸³¹ Thus, theologians in fifth century were rendered a great service through Possidius' *Indiculus*, which through its organization functioned as an initial reaction to Augustine's works. As noted, in the period following Augustine's death, men like Prosper, Fulgentius, Eugippius, and Isidore, having been influenced by Augustine's paradigm, began to interact with it and contributed works of their own.¹⁸³²

¹⁸³⁰ Cf. D. Doyle, 'The Bishop as Teacher,' D. Doyle and K. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, p. 81, 90.

¹⁸³¹ See O'Loughlin's application of Kuhn's theory to Augustine: T. O'Loughlin, 'Fifth Century,' *ATA*, 365; Cf. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*.

¹⁸³² For more on those who wrote in the period after Augustine's death and interacted with his 'paradigm' see: T. O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers: The Latin Genesis Tradition, 430-800*.

Despite Augustine's brilliance and the impact that it had, I propose that his disciples were most hindered from developing as preachers, writers, and thinkers because he actually resourced them too much. We noted that Augustine preached 153 sermons in eight cities outside of Hippo and that he was in constant demand to preach in the African churches — including those of his Hippo alumni.¹⁸³³ Instead of giving in to the request of his colleagues to preach, what would have happened if he had refused to preach but given constructive feedback on his disciples' sermons instead? In his letters to Casulanus and Theodorus, we noted that Augustine encouraged his correspondents to put their own minds to work while affirming their abilities to answer the questions that were addressed to him.¹⁸³⁴ Yet, he still responded with a thorough response to their questions. In letters to Evodius, he expressed a bit of annoyance at his friend's philosophical questions yet he continued to put significant work into his responses.¹⁸³⁵ In response to Quodvultdeus' repeated requests for a book cataloging heresies, he wrote an incomplete *De haeresibus* shortly before his death.¹⁸³⁶ What if Augustine had refused to respond to his disciples' requests for these letters or books? Would they have responded to the challenge themselves? What if Augustine had been more like Valerius and put the men in positions where they felt pushed beyond their abilities only to rise to the occasion in the end? An important aspect of Jesus' apprenticeship of the Twelve was purposefully departing so that they would rise to the challenge of leadership. I am convinced that Augustine's careful resourcing of the clergy through preaching, letters, and books — a strong aspect of his mentoring — actually turned out to be a weakness as it stifled their development as preachers, writers, and thinkers.

¹⁸³³ S. 301A.9; cf. C. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, 2.1.115.

¹⁸³⁴ *Epp.* 36; 102.

¹⁸³⁵ *Epp.* 159; 162; 164; 169.

¹⁸³⁶ *Epp.* 221-4.

To be sure, Augustine's mentoring of spiritual leaders was not without weakness, inconsistency, or even failure. Yet, when we weigh the strengths of his mentoring ability against his shortcomings, the bishop of Hippo still prevails as a formidable mentor who has left a lasting legacy. In this inquiry, I have argued that Augustine was an exemplary mentor of spiritual leaders and I have sought to show his predominant forms and principles of mentoring. This study, I am persuaded, serves as an original contribution to the study of Augustine and a complement to existing scholarship concerning his pastoral ministry.

While the present study has been limited to Augustine's mentoring of men who were spiritual leaders occupying a position in the ordained ministry, it has nevertheless raised some other important questions worth pursuing. First, it would be interesting to consider Augustine's mentoring relationship with women including his relationship to the monasteries of women as well as his correspondence with a number of women in his *epistulae*. A second valuable study would be a more profound consideration of the notion of imitation as a mentoring principle beginning in the Scriptures, through the rise of the monastic movement, as well as in Augustine. Third, it would be profitable to research Augustine's efforts as a missionary to heretics giving consideration to his personal contact, correspondence, and treatises written to the Manicheans, Donatists, Pelagians, and Arians. A final worthwhile study would be to explore the notion of *disciplina*, particularly as it pertains to rebuke or confrontation, as a form of *caritas* in Augustine's *epistulae*.

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