

## **Research Week: Proposal**

**Title** – The Manichean Mindset In Augustinian Theology: Dualism, Evil, And The Solution

**Program of Study** – History

**Presentation Type** – PowerPoint

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**Category** – Textual or Investigative

**Abstract:** This paper explores the ideological origins of one of Christianity's most intellectual saints. Former Manichee St. Augustine is a man that is often studied, in both classical and Christian circles, as his life work represents one of the first moments in history in which pagan philosophy mingled with Christian theology to create an explosion in intellectual musings. However, much of the research that focuses on St. Augustine does not properly investigate his ideological origins. While focusing on Augustine's theology is a necessity, delving into his intellectual roots helps provide clarity to the whole man, and therefore the structure of his theology, in a way few other studies can yield. Thus, this research explores the origins of Manicheanism, its core dualistic mindset, and the correlations between these and Augustine's dualistic theological ideologies, especially evidenced in the problem of evil. Within this paper, therefore, one can inspect not only Augustine's mindset, but how this mindset is seen in Christian theology at large.

By examining primary sources such as Augustine's *City of God*, *Confessions*, and *Free Choice of the Will*, as well as premier secondary sources like Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, Eric Gregory's *Politics & the Order of Love*, and Johannes van Oort's, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study of Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, this research synthesizes the Christian and the pagan, the Greco-Roman and the Medieval,

in order to research in full the man behind the theology: St. Augustine. Although often-overlooked in intellectual history, understanding ideological origins of giants of the faith such as St. Augustine prove to be worthwhile and profitable endeavors as these origins explain more completely in Augustine's pagan beginnings that would later influence his Christian theology.