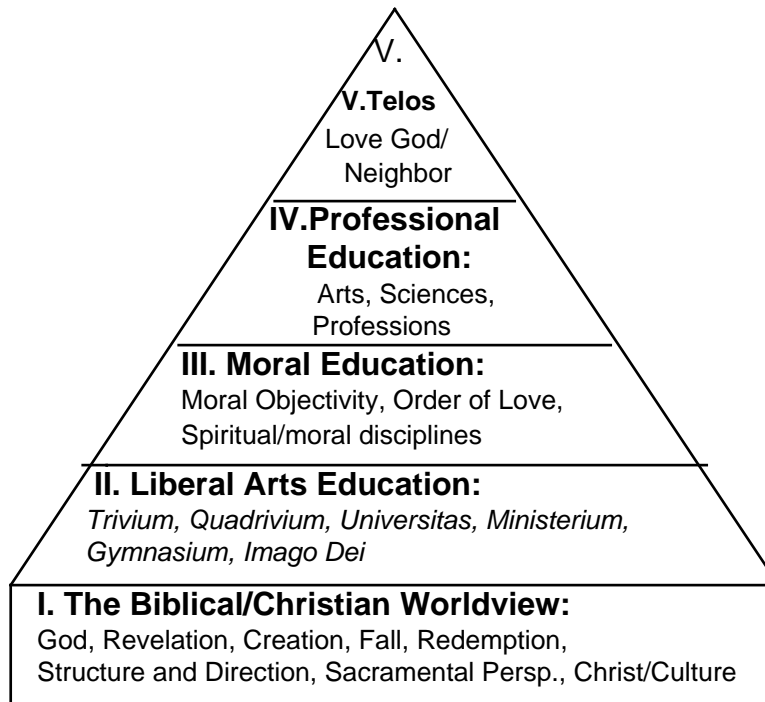


Dallas Baptist University as an
Augustinian University



Some Essential Tenets of Augustinianism

1. The chief theme and central principle of St. Augustine's theology/philosophy is the infinite, personal, triune, creator, redeemer God of Christian revelation. He fully embraces a God-centered worldview as the *foundation* of human existence and *ultimate principle of meaning and interpretation*.

For if he [a believer] ask whence is he, God created him; whence his wisdom, God enlightened him; whence his happiness, God has given him God to enjoy. As existent, he is fashioned, as spectator he is enlightened, as participant he is gladdened [by God]. . . . In God's eternity he thrives, in God's truth he shines, in God's goodness does he take delight (*City of God*, 11. 24. 41).

DBU does the same as an institution of Christian higher education by rooting and grounding its life and academic enterprise in the God of Scripture and its vision and explanatory themes of creation, fall, and redemption.

2. Augustine combines faith and reason in the closest possible unity. He neither pursues reason, knowledge or truth apart from faith, nor does he value faith apart from truth, knowledge or reason. Instead, as the gifts and blessings of God, he joins these two domains together in a marital-like union of indissoluble intimacy and love.

GOD

Theology and Philosophy
Piety and Learning
Salvation and Science
Reverence and Knowledge
Worship and Inquiry
Love and Logic
Faith and Reason

GOD

DBU does the same as an institution of Christian higher education that seeks not to *eliminate* faith from learning (the secular model), nor to *separate* faith from learning (the two spheres model), but rather to *integrate* faith and learning in the closest possible way (the biblical model).

3. For Augustine, however, *faith precedes reason* in the order of knowing (*ordo cognitio*). Truth and knowledge cannot be rightly known unless they be known in proper relation to (i.e., by means of a prior relationship with) the ultimate principle of explanation, that is, God. In the Bishop's own words, "Unless you believe, you will not understand." Genuine belief or authentic faith, therefore, is the very precondition of philosophic and academic understanding, the *sine qua non* (or bottom line) of all truth, goodness, beauty, and wisdom.

- Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"
- Ps. 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.
- Prov. 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Prov. 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- Prov. 15:33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.
- Col. 2:2 . . . that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, Col. 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

DBU does the same in rooting and grounding the entire academic enterprise, as well as the broader life of the institution, in a prior faith God and Scripture as the governing framework for all its thought and activity.

4. For Augustine, the unity of faith and reason is rooted not only in God, but also in the unified nature of human beings, for reason, including academic endeavor, is never exercised in isolation from other faculties, especially the human will (that is, affections, dispositions, and desires).

Consequently, for Augustine there is no such thing as pure, autonomous, objective reason unaffected by the moral condition, the religious commitment, the basic faith, and the fundamental loves of the human person.

Consequently, for Augustine the basic distinction in humankind is not the natural and supernatural (Thomist/RCC position), but rather the redeemed or unredeemed. Human beings are either in sin or grace, in Adam or in Christ.

Consequently, Augustine is unable and unwilling to develop a natural or purely rational philosophy separate and independent from God (though he does recognize and profit from the work of non-Christian thinkers on the basis of common grace as his famed Egyptian gold analogy clearly affirms).

Instead, Augustine is concerned to acquire and elaborate through a robust exercise of reason and all his cognitive powers a comprehensive Christian philosophy established upon the truth and wisdom of Scripture.

DBU does the same in eschewing non-Christian and humanistic approaches to life and thought, and in recognizing that the intellectual life and educational environment is a function of the spiritual and moral condition of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

5. For Augustine, the driving forces in human life are the loves of the human heart which can be rightly (*caritas*) or wrongly (*cupiditas*) ordered (*ordo amoris*). For love, and therefore, life to be rightly ordered, the greatest and second greatest commandments regarding the love of God and neighbor must be obeyed. They must also function as the *basis* of all human experience and activity, and serve as the final *goal* toward which life in all its aspects aspires. Even the interpretation of the Bible is to be measured by whether or not it fosters this dual love for God and others, Augustine's famed "hermeneutic of charity."

"Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror quocumque feror" — "My love is my weight: wherever I go my love is what brings me there" — *Confessions*, 13. 9. 10.).

"You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." — *Confessions* 1.1

Consequently, DBU should seek to ground the entire life of the institution in Christian charity, that is, in rightly ordered love for God and neighbor (and the creation), and also to aim at the very same target as the final end or *telos* of its overall educational endeavors, academic pursuits and scholarly activity (See number V. in chart above). "What does DBU and its administrators, faculty, staff and students love?" is the most important question it can ever ask and answer.