POINTING THE WAY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: THE PATERFAMILIAS AS PEACEBUILDER IN DE CIUITATE DEI, BOOK XIX

Señalando el camino de la paz y la justicia: el *Paterfamilias* como constructor de la paz en *De ciuitate Dei,* Libro XIX

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Abstract

Right from antique times, the family has always played a significant role in the life and wellbeing of communities and societies. This article critically examines the significance of the family and the concept of the *paterfamilias* in Augustine's reflections on peace, justice, love, and conflict resolution. Drawing primarily from Book XIX of *De ciuitate Dei* and other writings of Augustine, this essay focuses on the concept of the *paterfamilias*, an oft-neglected and under-recognized idea in the thinking of the bishop of Hippo. This article will argue that the *paterfamilias* stands at the epicenter of building and propagating peace and justice both at the family level and other echelons of human life. To demonstrate how this happens, first, the idea of family as a *locus* for peace, and as a legal, theological and sociological concept is delimited at three basic levels. Second, while highlighting some ways through which peace can be propagated and attained, especially in our postmodern world, the centrality of love and collaboration as the bases for peacebuilding and conflict resolution will be emphasized.

Keywords

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Resumen

Desde la antigüedad, la familia siempre ha desempeñado un papel importante en la vida y el bienestar de las comunidades y las sociedades. Este capítulo examina de manera crítica la centralidad de la familia y del *paterfamilias* en las reflexiones de Agustín sobre la paz, la justicia, el amor y la resolución de conflictos. Basándose principalmente en el Libro XIX de *De ciuitate Dei* y en otros escritos de Agustín, este ensayo se centra en el concepto de *paterfamilias*, una idea a menudo olvidada y poco reconocida en el pensamiento del obispo de Hipona tanto en los estudios pasados como en los actuales. Sostengo que el *paterfamilias* se sitúa en el epicentro de la construcción y la propagación de la paz y la justicia tanto en el ámbito familiar como en otras esferas de la vida humana. Para demostrar cómo sucede esto, en primer lugar, se delimita la idea de familia como *locus* de la paz y como concepto jurídico, teológico y sociológico en tres niveles básicos. En segundo lugar, al tiempo que se destacan algunas formas de propagar y alcanzar la paz, especialmente en nuestro mundo posmoderno, se destaca la centralidad del amor y la colaboración como bases para la construcción de la paz y la resolución de conflictos.

Palabras clave

Agustín; Libro XIX (*De ciuitate Dei*); Familia; *Paterfamilias*; Paz; Justicia; Resolución de conflictos; Construcción de la paz; Obediencia; Liderazgo; Amor.

I. Introduction

The significance of family in human existence can never be overemphasized. Augustine is one of the most influential thinkers in late antique Christianity that has given serious attention to the place and role of the family in society. However, despite the central place the family occupies in his thinking, he never wrote a systematic tract dedicated to the topic of the family and its responsibilities. Thus, a coherent understanding of his thought here must be gained through a careful study of references to the subject matter in his works. Though much of what Augustine says about his experience of family life in relation to societal pressures is found in his *Confessiones*, a close analysis of his other writings, especially *ciu.* Book, XIX, reveals the profound significance that he attaches to the family with regards to the obligation of the *paterfamilias*. As a nuanced legal construct, the term *familia* is not entirely restricted to those who share the same biological descent –those adopted and outside may also constitute a *familia* (Gardner, 1998). The *paterfamilias* not only had absolute control of all family property in the Roman family structure, but also full legal powers and authority over those under his legal control. In Augustine's antique Roman society, the duties of both the *paterfamilias* and other members of the family were legitimately mapped out to promote a smooth running of family and civic affairs. Besides being a good property administrator, the *paterfamilias* was also expected to be a responsible administrator of his household (Nathan, 2000, p.27). Though the structure and role distribution of the Roman family was not something rigid and static, the

position of the *paterfamilias* always stood out (Parkin, 2011, p.277). Nathan points out the dynamics of parent-child relationship within the Roman family set-up thus:

> "*Pietas* of course had been the traditional characteristic shown to a father as well as a mother from a child. Respect and compliance – *obsequium* – were naturally owed to parents and underscored the harmony and order of the Roman family, Christian or otherwise" (Nathan, 2000, p. 144).

While a number of studies on *pater* and *familia* exist (Shaw, 1987; Gardner, 1998; Fuhrer, 2002; Becker, 2009), these studies do not indicate how the family and *paterfamilias* in Augustine's Roman society contributed to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This essay answers the following question: how does Augustine understand the role of the family and *paterfamilias* in fostering peace and justice in human relations, and what inspiration does this offer for contemporary reflections on peacebuilding and conflict resolution? Family, as it is used in this article, is not only restricted to a "microstructure of parents and children," (von Kamptz, 2010, p. 678), since the notion of family has nuanced layers of application. It is also used in a broad sense to refer to a macrostructure of persons as members of societies and communities. In order to proceed concretely and answer the question raised above, first, the idea of family as a *locus* for peace, and as a legal, theological and sociological concept is delimited at three basic levels. Second, while highlighting some ways through which peace can be propagated and attained, especially in our postmodern world, the centrality of love and collaboration as the bases for peacebuilding and conflict resolution will be emphasized.

II. Methodology

For many decades, Augustinian scholarship has focused on the use of the historical, textual and literary methods to understand and interpret the writings of Augustine. Though these methods still remain foundational and relevant, this article *slightly* moves away from this methodological tradition by reading Augustine from a sociological-contextual lens. While understanding the texts used in this essay within the historical and epistemological contexts of Augustine's milieu, this article reads and extrapolates the texts from a sociological perspective. In this reading, history converges not only with text, but also with past and present contexts. A search for explicit and implicit references to the terms *paterfamilias*, *domus* and *familia* in the Augustinian corpus is done through the digitized *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense* (*CAG*), and the English Translation in the *WSA* series (*The Works of Saint Augustine for the 21st Century*) is used throughout this article. The critical editions, *Corpus Christianorum series Latina* (*CCL*) and the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (*CSEL*) are used alongside the *WSA*. Through the *CAG* search, the chronological development of the *paterfamilias* concept in Augustine's oeuvres will be traced and the contexts within which Augustine uses it will be analyzed. In *ciu.* Book XIX, the article will extrapolate how Augustine underlines the significance of the *paterfamilias* in peacebuilding within a family, and how this functions at three delimited levels, namely, micro-primary, macro-secondary, and spiritual-eternal. Though the major primary text in this essay is *ciu.* Book XIX, other relevant texts that implicitly and explicitly mention or describe the role of the *paterfamilias* are used to corroborate our argumentation.

III. The Notion of Family Delimited

To assess the role of the family and the *paterfamilias*, and how they function in promoting peace and justice, the notion of family is delimited at three basic levels in this article: the micro-primary level, the macro-secondary level, and the spiritual-eternal level. Interestingly, this tripartite classification of human existence could also be drawn from what Augustine writes. While reflecting on the tragedy of human life and the imperfections that underpin it, Augustine agrees with some philosophers about the stages of human interaction. He writes: "After the city or town comes the world, which the philosophers posit as the third level of human society. They start with the household, go from there to the city, and come finally to the world" (*ciu.* 19,7; CCL 48, 671). Even though there is no explicit mention of the spiritual-eternal level above, Augustine implicitly mentions it in his discourse on the two cities. He writes: "They [*patres familias*] desire and pray that they will all come to the heavenly home where the duty of commanding mortals will no longer be necessary [...]" (*ciu.* 19,16; CCL 48, 683). Meanwhile, it is important to mention that, though Augustine does not directly come up with a threefold classification of the family as mentioned above, references to this can be garnered from some of his writings.

The micro-primary level

This is the first basic level of human existence and interaction where a person is born, nurtured and raised through parental care, and potentially through the care of other family members. Augustine hints at this level in his *De bono coniugali*. In stating that "the first natural bond of human society [...] is that of husband and wife" (*b. coniug.* 1,1; CSEL 41,187), Augustine seems to suggest that the family "is human race's first social union" (*b. coniug.* 6,6; CSEL 41, 195). Obviously, Augustine borrows this idea from Cicero, who wrote in his *De Officiis*:

> "the origin of society is in the joining of man and woman, next in children, then in a single household, all things held in common; this is the foundation of the city and, so to speak, the seed-bed of the common wealth (*seminarium rei publicae*)" (Cicero, *De off.* 1,17,54).

Persons who belong to this level of existence share a lot of things in common—hereditary traits, intimacy, behavior, social status, language and the like.

This level serves as the civilizational key that opens the door of subsequent spheres of interaction. Augustine's understanding of the family essentially begins at this level, where the *paterfamilias* is vested with enormous obligation to cater for the immediate members of his family, to promote good behavior and encourage piety. Augustine mentions something about this micro-primary level when he writes: "A man's household ought to be the beginning, or small part, of the city" (*ciu.* 19,16; CCL 48, 683). As "the primal social unit" and "a miniature locus of power in the whole society" (Shaw, 1987, p.17), the micro-primary family serves as a laboratory for the shaping of minds and the building of societies (Williams, 1987, p.64).

The macro-secondary level

The macro-secondary level is an amalgam of various family groups and units. At this level, persons with different behavioral traits, character and orientation come together to form communities, societies, nations, races and the world at large. Augustine reveals this in the comparison he makes between an individual that forms part of a city and a letter that makes up a word. He writes: "[…] for single individuals, like single letters in a word, are the elements, so to speak, of which a city or a kingdom is made up, no matter how broad the territory it occupies" (*ciu.* 4,3; CCL 47,100). Augustine would characterize this level as a broader or bigger family of persons where the sovereign leader functions as the *paterfamilias*, vested with authority for the service of the common good of all. It is to be noted that, at this level, the authority of the sovereign leader does not conflict with that of the individual *paterfamilias*. As the head of his immediate family, the said sovereign leader also superintends over the larger family through an ordered hierarchy. This kind of family is formed, according to Augustine, when a group of people unanimously agree on the object and vision of their love (*ciu.* 19,24).

The spiritual-eternal level

Augustine interprets the family in a theological-eschatological sense at this level with God as *pater*. Although the first two levels discussed above point to this level, as will be demonstrated subsequently, Augustine would argue that both the micro and the macro levels owe their origin to the eternal-heavenly family. The members of this family are the righteous who, as Bennet (2008) argues, belong to the household of God (p.119). This family exists both now and in the future—it is a family that is both realized and unrealized. Augustine distinguishes this kind of family from other pagan families when he writes about the Christian notion of a kingdom (see *ciu.* 4,3). When this family is realized, there will be no need to struggle for peace and justice because God, the *pater* of this *familia* is himself the peace which every human creature yearns for.

For the bishop of Hippo, every human family has its origin and end in the supreme *paterfamilias*, God. Augustine further develops this notion of the spiritual family in his doctrine of the two cities. While belonging to the macro-secondary level is not restricted, but open to all, that is, to both the righteous and the unrighteous, the spiritual-eternal level will, at the consummation of time, be inhabited by the righteous in eternal blessedness (*ciu.* 19,10). For Augustine, becoming members of the eternal family is the ultimate desire and hope of the righteous, who understand the fleeting glories of this earthly life. With the notion of the family delimited, the succeeding sections of this article focus on how the *paterfamilias* functions to resolve conflicts and propagate peace.

IV. The Correlation between Domestic Peace and Civic Peace

Augustine gives special attention to the family not only as a natural, primary place where relationships are built and nurtured, but also as a locus where the virtues of peace and justice are developed and cultivated. To build a responsible family is tantamount to having a safe society. Being the first institution where

human persons are schooled in love, the family creates the necessary opportunity and atmosphere for the sustenance of peace and justice. As the cradle of civilization that introduces a person to the wider society, the family, metaphorically speaking, is the womb of humanity that gives birth to every human experience. It serves as the bedrock on which the peace and harmony of society is built (*ciu*. 19,18).

To demonstrate what domestic peace consists in, Augustine offers a definition of peace and links it to order. He writes: "The peace of a household is the properly ordered concord, with respect to command and obedience, of those who are living together" (*ciu*. 19,13).[2] For there to be peace and tranquility in family life, Augustine argues that there has to be a well-established agreement among the persons who live together and share things in common. But it is not enough for an agreement to be expressed between those who live together. Hence, Augustine attaches two clauses to this—command and obedience. Although he does not mention the commander or those bound to obey, it is obvious from the context that he is referring to the leadership structure and dynamics of family life, where the *paterfamilias* is an embodiment of authority. Here, there is an asymmetric power relationship, whereby the father acts as the command-giver, and the members of the family as obedient followers. The question worth asking here is whether this father-centered structure of the family could still work in domestic peacemaking, especially when there is an abuse of paternal authority. Although Augustine does not provide any direct answer to this, one could imagine his response without putting words into his mouth. Certainly, the bishop of Hippo would not support any form of power abuse, neither will he encourage disobedience—he would admonish the family members to tolerance and endurance, while not turning to vices.

Conversely, Augustine defines civil peace as "the properly ordered concord, with respect to command and obedience, of its citizens" (*ciu*. 19,13).[3] Just as the father of the family exercises authority over his family through command, the sovereign leader does the same to a city placed under his authority. Hence, Markus suggests, "a ruler or magistrate should behave like a *paterfamilias*" (Markus, 1970, p.205). Citizens, like family members, are expected and encouraged to show civic obedience for the sake of peace and prosperity. From the above analysis, it is evident that there is an inseparable connection between domestic peace and civil peace. There are two important observations in this regard. First, Augustine affirms that while both domestic peace and civil peace are complementary, the former is the aim of the latter. He states this very clearly: "[…] it seems to follow clearly enough that domestic peace is directed to civic peace" (*ciu*. 19,18).[4] Second, in both the former and the latter, command and obedience are characteristic elements of propagating peace, though authority figures differ. For Augustine, Roman society took some bold measures in the interest of peace. These measures were not only applicable to the citizens of the immediate Roman society, but to all those under Roman rule also. He notes: "It is true enough that, for the sake of social peace, the imperial city has taken pains to impose on her subjugated peoples not only her yoke but also her language…." (*ciu*. 19,7).[5] In Augustine's estimation, even the imposition of language on Roman vassal societies was aimed at ensuring peace in the whole empire. Uniformity is seen here in terms of order and decorum. To enjoy some level of peace in society, Augustine offers two fundamental suggestions. First,

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2   CCL 48, 679: "Pax domus ordinata imperandi atque oboediendi concordia cohabitantium.."
3   CCL 48, 679: "Pax ciuitatis ordinata imperandi atque oboediendi concordia ciuium."
4   CCL 48, 683: "Satis apparet esse consequens, ut ad pacem ciuicam pax domestica referatur."
5   CCL 48, 671: "At enim opera data est, ut imperiosa ciuitas non solum iugum, uerum etiam linguam suam domitis gentibus per pacem societatis inponeret."

people have to practice goodness by avoiding evil, and second, there has to be mutual charity, which begins at the level of the micro-family (*ciu*. 19,14).

Since the family or household is the nursery-bed for the wider society or city, Augustine suggests that there should be no contradiction between domestic and societal laws. In fact, he recommends that "the father of a family should draw his precepts from the law of the city" (*ciu*. 19,16).[6] Augustine's reason for making such a proposal is obvious: harmonious and peaceful coexistence at every stratum of society. Furthermore, Augustine expounds on the right attitude that should characterize every form of leadership when he avers that leaders "do not give their commands out of any desire for domination but rather out of dutiful concern for others, not out of any pride in ruling but rather out of compassion in providing for others" (*ciu*. 19,16).[7] This means that a *paterfamilias* must always be careful not to lord it over those under his care. In further arguing that this is in tandem with the natural order, Augustine cites Genesis 1:26, where God gave human beings dominion over other creatures, and not over fellow humans (*ciu*. 19,15).

Much as Augustine places the *paterfamilias* at the center of the family, the role of other family members must never be downplayed or overlooked, since a peaceful family is realized through parent-child cooperation. Thus, for Augustine, domestic-civil peace does not come effortlessly. There are methods that must be adopted, as is examined in the following section.

V. The *Paterfamilias*, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

Augustine believed that though absolute peace is unrealizable in this earthly life, some level of peace commensurate to worldly existence remains possible. This section analyzes some of the means through which the *paterfamilias* can promote peace and resolve conflicts in human relations. These include laws and punishment, obedience, good leadership, right use of resources, and the exercise of justice.

Laws and Punishment

Just as there is no family that exists without a system of rules that guides the behavior and conduct of every member of the family, so too there is no society that exists without a body of regulations that establishes a system of control for the maintenance of justice and peace.[8] This was evidently the case in

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6   CCL 48, 683: "Ita fit, ut ex lege ciuitatis praecepta sumere patrem familias oporteat."

7   CCL 48, 682: "Neque enim dominandi cupiditate imperant, sed officio consulendi, nec principandi superbia, sed prouidendi misericordia."

8   See Markus, *Saeculum*, 205. Markus observes that, Augustine "did not seek to justify the claims of political authority on the grounds of any alleged natural superiority of ruler to subject […]. For the coercive power which is part of the very substance and meaning of political authority also exists in the family; it enters the family, as it enters society, through sin and disorder. But a family is a family without it – we may conceive, even in a sinful world, of a family in which paternal authority is an exercise of care and guidance without coercion."

Augustine's late antique Roman society, much as it is the case even in our own contemporary times. The *paterfamilias*, around whom the fate and orderliness of the family revolved, was regarded as the sole leader and administrator of his family. Besides making laws for the peace of his family, the *paterfamilias* also ensured the enforcement of laws and good behavior.

For Augustine, one of the ways through which some measure of peace could be fostered is through the use of laws and punishment. Deane maintains that "the fear of punishment is the only safeguard of general peace and security" (Deane, 1963, p.137).[9] Augustine's reflection on the use of punishment as a corrective measure is grounded within the framework of his biblical exegesis where he uses the motif of paternal punishment in both human relationships and in divine-human interaction. In disciplining those under his authority, an earthly *paterfamilias* imitates God who disciplines all his children (De Bruyn, 1999, p.268). It is the father's duty, according to Augustine, to discipline a disobedient child. Doing this was, for him, not only an expression of love (Burt, 1999, p.112), but a religious duty which ensures domestic peace and civil harmony. Shaw shows how the efforts of the *paterfamilias* serve to maintain discipline and ensure peace.

> "The role of the father which defines the household is a power relationship: he dominates because he must enforce the peace of the household to ensure its harmony. He achieves this goal in the first instance by the infliction of corporal punishment. The household is thus seen primarily as a microcosm of the regimen of discipline and punishment that is part of a whole web of social control. The peace of the family has a direct relationship to the "civic peace" of the state. The father has to fill the role of disciplinarian and owner (that is, one who dominates) so that the household might fit into the wider social order" (Shaw, 1987, pp. 11-12).

Augustine's oft-quoted biblical passages in his use of the motif of paternal discipline revolve around Proverbs 3:11-12[10] and Hebrews 12:6.[11] Regarded as an authority figure, the *paterfamilias* has every obligation to keep watchful care over his family and promote decorum. Augustine had a similar impression about the correction of the Donatists. He likens the state-sanctioned measures against the Donatists as an act of paternal discipline, borne out of love (*ep*. 93,1,1). Similarly, in his *enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine presents God as a father figure who disciplines his children out of love for them (*en. Ps.* 30,2,1,10; 37,23; 117,13). He insists that a disobedient child should not be spared from the necessary discipline that could lead to transformation and good behavior. Thus, "to use Christ's command of infinite forgiveness as an excuse for not punishing willfulness is to destroy all discipline and to allow anarchy to rule the world"

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9   Deane's idea of punishment is grounded within his interpretation of Augustine's theology of Original sin, where he maintains that "the state and its instruments of coercion," are both remedies and "punishments for the sinful condition of fallen man." For Deane, "Only by such means can the wicked be kept from destroying one another as their competing egoisms clash, and discouraged from open assaults upon the minority of good and pious men. Surely, it is not without purpose that we have the institution of the power of kings, the death penalty of the judge, the barbed hooks of the executioner, the weapons of the soldier, the right of punishment of the overlord [*dominantis*], even the severity of the good father" (p. 137).

10 See *en. Ps.* 37,23; CCL 38, 397: "Fili, ne deficias in disciplina domini, neque fatigeris cum ab illo increparis; quem enim diligit dominus, corripit; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit [Prv 3,11sq.]."

11 See *s. Denis* 21,3; CCL 41, 205: "Flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit [**Hbr 12,6**]. Quid ergo eligis: flagellari et recipi, an non tangi et non recipi? Uide qualis filius sis. Si hereditatem paternam appetis, flagellum ne recuses."

(Burt, 1999, p. 94). What truly counts in the application of discipline is ultimately the intention, which is to promote good behavior. It is worthy of note that Augustine does not assign the task of discipline to only the domestic *paterfamilias* or civil *paterfamilias*. He considers bishops as agents of correction, acting as fathers of the household of God. In caring for those under their responsibility, they also rebuke the disobedient and impious.

Furthermore, Augustine suggests that if a *paterfamilias* is unable to discipline his dependants, he could seek some legal-imperial assistance (*Io. eu. tr.* 30,8). However, Arjava (1998) argues that rather than use legal frameworks or state machinery to exert some level of control on their family, some heads of families relied on their economic powers by using the threat of disinheritance to command obedience (p.154). This is what Augustine equally hints at when he links the bequeathal of family property or wealth to obedience. The system of establishing a body of laws about which Augustine speaks at the level of the micro-primary family is also applicable to the macro-secondary family (that is, the larger civil society). This is because the leader at this level is seen as *pater*, having several micro-primary families under his authority. Though the *paterfamilias* functions as an authority figure at both the micro-primary and macro-secondary families, his duty at the latter level far outweighs the former, since he is dealing with more people with different concerns, belief systems, needs, desires and aspirations. The leader of the society, acting as *paterfamilias,* also does everything possible to safeguard the tranquility and peaceful coexistence of his people, both within and outside.

Obedience

For there to be a peaceful family and society, there has to be not only laws, but also recognition of these laws through obedience and submission. Augustine strongly believes that obedience is one of the surest ways of maintaining peace and harmony within the family and civil society (*ciu.* 19,14). Obedience, according to Augustine, is owed and directed to the *paterfamilias* who acts in the name of the family and makes available all that is required for the family's well-being (Burt, 1999, p.102). In Augustine's thinking, members of a family show obedience to the *paterfamilias* not merely out of duty or recognition of the authority that he commands, but for their own benefit and the common good of the whole family and society. This entails that any family member who fails to practice obedience does so both at their own peril and that of other members of the family. A peaceful house, according to Augustine, is where obedience reigns within the ranks of the members of the same family, and where amicable relations with friends are upheld (*en. Ps.* 136,5).

For Augustine, obedience is not only necessary for domestic peace, but also lays the foundation for conflict resolution and the maintenance of civil peace. He believes that, to attain some measure of peace proportionate to this life, an *imperandi oboediendique concordiam* ("concord of command and obedience") must be established (*ciu.* 19,17). This system of command and obedience also works in societies where citizens, just like family members, are obliged to obey the command of their leader (*paterfamilias*). For this kind of obedience, which leads to peace, leadership must be exercised responsibly, to which the next section turns.

Good Leadership

That Augustine places a high premium on good leadership is evident not only in *ciu.*, but also in most of his writings, letters and sermons. While affirming that leadership exists at different levels of human interaction, that is, at the micro-primary, macro-secondary and spiritual-eternal levels, Augustine, like the Apostle Paul, insists that every form of leadership owes its source and origin in the supreme God, the *paterfamilias* of the whole human family. It is not enough for a *paterfamilias* to be saddled with leadership responsibilities. He must be able to diligently carry out his paternal obligations through the exercise of good leadership skills and qualities. Meanwhile, Markus affirms that though civil rule is a product of the *peccatum originale*, steeped in the lust for domination, the exercise of civil leadership need not be perverse (Markus, 1965, p.72).

Apparently, for Augustine, what accounts for the discord, tension and injustice in human affairs is ascribable to leadership and the exercise of authority (*ciu.* 19,16). Since the micro-primary level of the family is the backbone of the larger society, it is necessary that the *paterfamilias* demonstrates responsible leadership which has an impact on both the immediate members of the family and the larger family of human beings. Though there could be good leaders and bad followers and vice-versa, Augustine apparently suggests that a good family is known through a good *paterfamilias*. But this is not always the case, as there can be a good *paterfamilias* and disobedient family members. Meanwhile, the exercise of good leadership by the *paterfamilias* does not solely lie in the enactment of household rules and regulations (*ciu.* 19,14). There is more to it–good leadership is also seen in the way resources are used and administered, and this is what we turn to in the next subsection.

Right Use of Resources

According to Augustine, all the resources and goods of the earth have a reason for which they were created and ordered by God. This reason is the enhancement of human life through the right use of earthly goods (*ciu.* 19,13). Though Augustine believes that it is impossible to attain perfect peace and absolute justice on earth, he reckons that some measure of peace and justice could be attained through the right use of earthly goods and resources. This understanding is to a large extent, informed by his Christian eschatological orientation, whereby a person's reward and hope of a better future is shaped by a responsible interaction with the present. In writing about the nexus between resource use and peace, he states:

> "[…] any mortal who makes right use of such goods, which are meant to serve the peace of mortals, will receive fuller and better goods, namely, the peace of immortality and the glory and honor appropriate to it, in an eternal life meant for the enjoyment of God and of one's neighbor in God, but that anyone who uses them wrongly will not receive these eternal goods and in fact will lose those temporal goods" (*ciu.* 19,13).[12]

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12 CCL 48, 680: "Ut, qui mortalis talibus bonis paci mortalium adcommodatis recte usus fuerit, accipiat ampliora atque meliora, ipsam scilicet immortalitatis pacem eique conuenientem gloriam et honorem in uita aeterna ad fruendum deo et proximo in deo; qui autem perperam, nec illa accipiat et haec amittat."

Augustine clearly speaks in terms of eschatology (that is, eternal reward), and economics (resource management and appropriation. These two are mutually connected: while the latter serves as the basis for the attainment of the former, the former is the end-result of the latter, and this could either be eternal peace or eternal damnation. Argued further, any *paterfamilias* or property owner who misuses the goods and resources at their disposal paves the way for discord and disharmony among people. One of the main obligations of the *paterfamilias* is to ensure the appropriate use and management of family resources and property. However, this system of resource management differs from what happens in contemporary larger societies, where private individuals, families and even governments own and administer their property. In further emphasizing the purpose temporal goods are meant to serve, again, Augustine states: "In the earthly city, then, all use of temporal things is directed to the enjoyment of earthly peace; in the heavenly city, in contrast, it is directed to the enjoyment of eternal peace" (*ciu.* 19,14).[13] It is very striking that, while the bishop of Hippo argues that the use of temporal goods is common to both the *ciuitas terrena* and the *ciuitas caelestis*, he nevertheless maintains that the orientations of the two cities differ.

Commenting on the role of the *paterfamilias*, especially with respect to the use of family wealth and resources in late antiquity, Shaw asserts that a *paterfamilias* who responsibly manages the commonwealth of his family safeguards the socioeconomic welfare of the family and bequeaths some inheritance to his children for the continuity of the family name (Shaw, 1987, p.18). This safeguarding of a family's wealth and name has both immediate and future effects, since it creates an atmosphere of trust and promises a future full of hope, prosperity and possibilities. Indeed, this is what Augustine often stresses, especially in his sermons. The responsible use of temporal goods satisfies the needs of a family and prevents the pain of lack. It is when human needs and desires are guaranteed that conflicts can be resolved, and peace sustained. Human experiences and events always reveal to us how families and societies can degenerate into the throes of violence when certain needs are not met. This means that a peaceful family is one that is able to not only manage resources through the *paterfamilias*, but also to distribute goods according to the needs of each member of the family.

While living a good life could be the fruit of the right use of earthly goods by families, heads of families, individuals and societies, having these resources does not entail living a life of happiness or fulfilment. This is because one may possess all the resources of this temporal existence and still live a miserable, irresponsible life. Thus, living a good life does not consist in the abundance of one's earthly possessions, but rather in one's ability to manage appropriately whatever they have, no matter how meagre.

The Exercise of Justice

Just like his ideological forebears, Cicero and Ambrose, Augustine believes that justice is essential and indispensable to the existence and wellbeing of every human family, society or civilization.[14] He defines

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13 CCL 48, 680: "Omnis igitur usus rerum temporalium refertur ad fructum pacis terrenae in terrena ciuitate; in caelesti autem ciuitate refertur ad fructum pacis aeternae."

14 For some insights into Cicero and Ambrose's reflections on justice, see, Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1,41ff; Swift, L. (1979). *Iustitia and Ius Privatum*: Ambrose on Private Property. *The American Journal of Philology*, 100(1), 176-187; Nussbaum,

justice as "the virtue which gives to each his due" (*ciu*. 19,21). According to him, no society can attain its goals and desired objectives in the absence of justice. A good and responsible *paterfamilias*, Augustine says, is one who not only instructs those under his care in the virtue of justice but also ensures that justice is practiced by everyone. He states that training people, especially the young in justice, is far more important than the observance of ancient laws and customs (*ciu*. 2,7). For the attainment of peace and resolution of conflicts, the *paterfamilias* must play an active role in the promotion of justice in both human and in human-divine relations.

Augustine maintains that every true republic worthy of its name is maintained by and governed in justice (*ciu*. 19,21). When there is justice, people's rights are respected and upheld, and the common good is attained and preserved. This means that the absence of justice implies the non-existence of a republic. And it is this absence of justice that makes human institutions cruel and leads to conflicts. Augustine's notion of justice in families and in human interactions is characteristically expressed in one of his oft-quoted passages: "Remove justice, then, and what are kingdoms but large gangs of robbers" (*ciu*. 4,4).[15] This clearly expresses the idea that justice lies at the core of human existence and without it no institution can stand. This justice does not just function horizontally, that is, at the level of human beings. It functions also vertically, that is, in divine-human relationship.

To Augustine's mind, a *paterfamilias*' obligation is not only restricted to civil or socio-political matters, but it also extends to religious activities, which consist in promoting the worship of the one true God (*ciu*. 19,16). Justice, therefore, becomes not primarily "a question of natural morality but a question of true religion" (Ruokanen, 1993, p.128), which strengthens human institutions and relations. Since God, as *pater par excellence*, always gives his creatures their due, Augustine asserts that it is the sole duty of every *paterfamilias* to ensure that God is likewise given his due in worship. Insisting that "true justice is found where the one Supreme God rules an obedient city" (*ciu*. 19,23), Augustine maintains that in such a 'God-oriented' city, worship or sacrifice is offered to no one except God (*ciu*. 19,23). Evidently, it is the *paterfamilias* who ensures that this is practiced by all those under his authority. It is not enough to have concrete ways for the promotion of peace and harmony among people. There has to be collaboration of people at all levels, as the next section shows.

VI. Peacebuilding, the *Paterfamilias* and the Necessity for Collaboration

From the above discussion, it is incontestable that the desire for peace is what characterizes every circle of human existence, and this does not come by easily. Regardless of their social, religious or political standing, both leaders and followers have a role to play. Since it is not sufficient merely to have established principles or guidelines for peace to be attained and sustained, the question remains as to how sustainable peace that fosters interpersonal and societal development can be attained at all the levels of the family.

M. (2000). Duties of Justice, Duties of Material Aid: Cicero's Problematic Legacy. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 8(2), 176-206; Wood, N. (1991). *Cicero's Social and Political Thought*. California: University of California Press.
15 CCL 47, 101: "Remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?"

For this to happen, there must be effective collaboration at the following levels: intra-family, inter-family and church-state.

When there is an effective collaboration in the safeguarding of peace and justice within a family, it essentially paves the way for a good inter-family collaboration, and for church-state collaboration in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. To attain and sustain peace at all levels of the family, there has to be collaboration and understanding among leaders and followers at every stratum of human relations. Since a society is made up of different micro-primary family units, it means that various heads of families have to come together and agree on what is of common benefit to them and to their family members. This is because there is always a symbiotic exchange and interdependence between the family and civil society (Roukanen, 1993, p. 103). It is through this kind of social contract and collaboration that peace and stability can be fostered among people. It is only when families and heads of families who make up the society unanimously agree to promote the common good that they can promote peace and justice for all. Therefore, Augustine insists that a fuller understanding and appreciation of our social nature should stimulate the love of concord, unity and peace (*ciu.* 12,28).

According to Augustine, the temporal coexistence of both the *ciuitas terrena* and the *ciuitas caelestis* is something that is necessary and inevitable. It is this unavoidable coexistence that charts the path for mutual collaboration between the Church and state in the engenderment of peace and order. Augustine explains how the collaboration between the earthly city and the heavenly city brings about some level of peace. He writes:

> "So long as this heavenly city is a pilgrim on earth, then, it calls forth citizens from all peoples and gathers together a pilgrim society of all languages. It cares nothing about any differences in the manners, laws, and institutions by which earthly peace is achieved or maintained. But it does not rescind or abolish any of these; rather, it preserves and follows them, provided only that they do not interfere with the religion which teaches that we are to worship the one supreme and true God, for, however different they may be in different nations, they all aim at one and the same thing – earthly peace (*ciu.* 19,17)."[16]

While the Church liaises with the state and even observes state laws for the maintenance of peace and order, the Church, in the mind of Augustine, must not get itself entangled or preoccupied with things that distract it from its mission. To be sure, Augustine is not advocating for any civic disobedience against the state; in fact, he exhorts and encourages Christians to observe state laws and respect constituted authorities. He does not see the Church and state as competitors or rivals, but as partners in building a just, peaceful and orderly society that guarantees humanity's flourishing. In fact, there was some level of church-state collaboration at the time of Augustine. According to Dupont, "[…] the Church, and Augustine as one of its bishops, also exercised functions on behalf of the State, such as the administration of justice in civil trials, and care for the poor and for orphans. Conversely, the State assisted the Church by giving support

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16 CCL 48, 685: "Haec ergo caelestis ciuitatis dum peregrinator in terra, ex omnibus gentibus ciues euocat atque in omnibus linguis peregrinam colligit societatem, non curans quidquid in moribus legibus institutisque diuersum est, quibus pax terrena uel conquiritur uel tenetur, nihil eorum rescindens uel destruens, immo etiam seruans ac sequens, quod licet diuersum in diuersis nationibus, ad unum tamen eundemque finem terrenae pacis intenditur, si religionem, qua unus summus et uerus deus colendus docetur, non impedit."

and protection" (Dupont, 2019, p.10). Despite the Church-state separation in many contemporary countries, there remain opportunities for the Church to cooperate with states in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Achieving this peace, which is common to both the Church and the state, becomes all the more practicable when there is mutual understanding, commitment and trust between the civil or secular *paterfamilias* and that of the *ecclesia*. This implies, in both principle and practice, a responsible interaction between state leadership and Church leadership, as well as a responsive citizenry.

VII. Conclusion

At the beginning of this enquiry, a question was raised about Augustine's understanding of the role of the *paterfamilias* in resolving conflicts and promoting peace in human relations. Through the methodological framework adopted, two basic findings of this research and its relevance to contemporary sociological context are thus presented. First, Augustine grounds his understanding of *paterfamilias* within his theological anthropology whereby God, the ideal *paterfamilias,* confers responsibility on the human *paterfamilias* and orders all things for the good of the whole human family. As the enquiry shows, the concept of the *paterfamilias* is not used exclusively to refer to the head of a family in the strict sense, but also applied to any societal leader. While the authority of the *paterfamilias* stands out with its associated obligation in both cases, this authority has a dissimilar derivative process. In the former, it is derived through a natural-juridical process, and in the latter, it comes through a common agreement, where a leader (*paterfamilias*) receives political or religious legitimacy from those with whom they share the same object of love.

Secondly, the *paterfamilias* acts not only as an administrative figure, but as a teacher of virtue, and as a peacebuilder whose actions are aimed at resolving conflicts, upholding justice and building peace at different levels of human interaction. Though Augustine thinks that the household is something private, it is also dialectically public. In this private-public dialectic of the family, the exercise of spousal love which grows into parent-child relationship evolves into an inter-family or neighborly concern, where Augustine says, the *paterfamilias* extends his family concern to the other (*ciu.* 19,13). It is in and through this family dialectics of love and collaboration that family members and people who constitute the *polis* can be at peace. Given the violence and intolerance ever-present in human societies, this enquiry becomes relevant because it helps us understand (through the eyes of Augustine) how the valorization of justice, responsible use of resources, good leadership and collaboration can foster effective peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

However, despite the insights generated from this analysis of Augustine's thoughts on the *paterfamilias* as peacebuilder, the enquiry does not show how the *paterfamilias* motif overemphasizes the dominance of the male sex/gender over the female sex/gender, and the implication this has for our contemporary culture. Though the concept evolved from a patriarchal Roman culture, the role of women as mothers and leaders is apparently downplayed. Consequently, future research could explore the tensions that could result from this asymmetrical gender relationality, especially in a gender-sensitive society that takes the role of mothers and women seriously, and which can account for those who do not identify with a binary conception of gender. Another research path is to assess the ecclesiological significance of the *paterfamilias* motif in view of the eschaton in the heavenly family and in relation to the role of church leaders and parents in teaching the virtues of charity, peace and justice. The sociological-contextual method adopted

in this essay implies that future Augustinian scholarship has to find more concrete ways through which the insights of the bishop of Hippo, especially as found in extant texts, would become more relevant to the contemporary Church and contemporary society.

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