

# Augustine's Criticism of Pagan Theologies and Its Contemporary Significance

(An abstract)

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Among all religions in the world, some religions have theology, some have not. What then is the relationship between religion and theology? Or what kind of religious significance does theology have? This paper attempts to explore this problem by analyzing the relevant thought of Augustine.

In Augustine's *The City of God*, it is revealed that there are many other religions besides Christianity, many other faiths besides the Christian faith, and many other gods besides the Christian God. During Augustine's time, although Christianity was a state religion, the faith did not really sink in the minds of people. Augustine thus criticizes three kinds of theology, namely, the mythical theology, the natural theology, and the civil theology in the Roman Empire.

It is quite strange that Augustine uses the terms "Christian truth" and "Christian doctrine" instead of "Christian theology" in his works. This paper supplies a new interpretation of the part played by Augustine's theology in the historical emergence of Christian philosophy and theology.

Augustine's thought reveals a clue to the question of

religion– theology relation. If the Church in China does not have a theology of her own, she cannot stand and develop for long. If she does not have her own indigenous theological education, and if her believers join the church only for interests in this life, there is no way for her to play an important role in the Chinese society. The living experience of contemporary Chinese may prove this. In short, theology is the key issue in raising the quality of religion.