# Tolerance and the Two Cities: Anti-Donatism for Western Church and Society

**8**

La tolerancia y las dos ciudades:
el anti-donatismo para la iglesia
y la sociedad occidental

Gregory W. Lee
Wheaton College, United States, of America

## Abstract

As Western society becomes increasingly polarized, Augustine's ecclesial and political writings offer wisdom for negotiating objectionable difference. Against Donatist views, Augustine teaches that it is impossible to avoid sinners within the Church– contact with sinners does not communicate sin, and Christ is able to preserve the wheat faithful among the tares. These principles, moreover, also apply to social and political spheres, where Christians are called to endure as exiles in a fallen world. Augustine's understanding of penance reflects these concerns as this chapter seeks to demonstrate. Though mortal sins merit exclusion from Eucharist, bishops should exercise mercy toward offenders and avoid disciplining them in ways that may accelerate their departure from the faith. John Bowlin's recent work on tolerance, for example, illuminates Augustine's anti-Donatist principles and commends the importance of discernment concerning such questions of dissociation. Tolerance is not moral laxity but a necessary response to evil in the world. Still, the practice of tolerance should not be used to pressure the oppressed to suffer more abuse. Augustine understands the endurance of sinners as a burden the strong bear on behalf of the weak.

*Keywords*: Augustine, Bowlin, Donatism, penance, politics, tolerance.

## Resumen

Frente a una sociedad occidental cada vez más polarizada, los escritos eclesiales y políticos de Agustín ofrecen la sabiduría necesaria para negociar diferencias objetables. Contrario a los Donatistas, Agustín enseña lo imposible para evitar que existan pecadores dentro de la iglesia −el contacto con pecadores no transmite pecado y Cristo es capaz de mantener el trigo sin dañarse aún entre la cizaña. Estos principios aplican también dentro de las esferas sociales y políticas, en las que los cristianos son llamados a soportar a los pecadores como exiliados en un mundo caído. El pensamiento de Agustín sobre la penitencia refleja estas preocupaciones. Aunque los pecados mortales merecen la exclusión de la Eucaristía, los obispos deben practicar misericordia hacia aquellos que ofenden y evitar disciplinarlos a través de vías que puedan acelerar su salida de la fe. El reciente trabajo de John Bowlin sobre la tolerancia ilumina los principios anti-Donatistas de Agustín y elogia la importancia del discernimiento en cuestiones de disociación. La tolerancia no significa laxitud moral sino una respuesta necesaria a la maldad en el mundo. Aun así, la tolerancia no debe ser utilizada para presionar al oprimido a sufrir más abuso. Agustín entiende el martirio como una carga para el pecador.

*Palabras clave*: Agustín, Bowlin, Donatismo, penitencia, política, tolerancia.

**About the author** | Acerca del autor

**Gregory Lee** [gregory.lee@wheaton.edu]

His work is driven by an interest in retrieving the Christian tradition for constructive theological ends. After establishing roots in evangelicalism through the undergraduate campus ministries at Princeton University and the M.Div. at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Gregory began his Ph.D. in Christian Theological Studies at the Duke University. His time there both strengthened his sense of identification with classic Christianity and broadened his appreciation for Christianity's rich intellectual heritage. It also sparked in him a love for Augustine and especially for the *The City of God*, a remarkable text that has profoundly shaped his thought and will remain central for his future work. Currently, Gregory is an Assistant Professor of Theology and a Senior Fellow at The Wheaton Center for Early Christian Studies, Wheaton College, Wheaton IL, United States.

# Introduction

The polarization of Western society has become a truism. Already during the Obama presidency, American divisions between Democrats and Republicans had reached historic highs, and this trend has only risen since. A recent PEW study found that 81% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents have an unfavorable opinion of the Republican Party, of whom 44% have a very unfavorable view (PEW Research Center "The Partisan"). This animosity is mirrored almost exactly by Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, of whom 81% have an unfavorable impression of the Democratic Party, and 45% a very unfavorable view. The same data reveal fissures within each party that rival the significance of the fissures between them (PEW Research Center "Political Typology"). In addition, these trends match polarization across Christian communities: 76% white evangelicals identify or lean Republican, while 88% Black Protestants identify or lean Democratic (PEW Research Center "The Parties") —despite sociological research demonstrating alignment between these communities on core theological convictions (Putnam and Campbell 274-284; Shelton and Emerson, 2012). Partisan hatred has escalated to the point that some historians and national security experts have begun to ask whether widespread political violence and the rejection of current forms of political authority could lie in America's future (Wright).

This polarization has been fueled by a preoccupation with organizational purity. Supposedly, it is immoral to associate with immoral persons or organizations.[1] If some church, corporation or political party has committed a serious wrong, the ethical response is to leave it. What counts as a moral failing will differ according to diverse theological or political leanings. But the formal argument is the same among both liberals and conservatives (I use these terms loosely), regardless of their convictions concerning doctrinal matters, sexual ethics, race, immigration, tax policies, or some other controversy. What neither side typically provides is an explanation with regard

---

[1] I intentionally avoid furnishing examples of this reasoning, though they are easily found.

to why dissociation is required in the particular case, as opposed to other instances of moral failure that do not require separation. For many commentators, no more argument is necessary than enumerating an organization's deficiencies and then decrying those who remain affiliated with it. It is often assumed that conviction precludes pursuing change from within; the moral option is to sever ties and disavow the other side.

The fragmentation of Western society invites fresh attention to Augustine's vision for peace. In his writings about unity, purity, and discipline —especially as developed against the Donatists— Augustine sets forth an approach to association and dissociation far more conducive to holiness and social harmony than the options currently on offer. As Augustine argues, purity does not demand the renunciation of impure communities. To the contrary, premature division corrupts those who commit it as they indulge their hatreds and hypocrisies. The core of Augustine's alternative is tolerance, which I will defend as a necessary practice for both Church and society. Let us first consider his understanding of the former, and then of the latter.

## Anti-Donatist Principles

Augustine first develops his understanding of tolerance against the Donatists, a community that arose from a controversy almost a century before his bishopric.[2] In the early fourth century, when the North African Church was ravaged by the Diocletianic Persecution, a number of priests gave copies of the Scriptures and liturgical books to Roman officials, a betrayal that earned them the epithet *traditores* ("traitors"; *traditio* means "a giving up"). Schism broke shortly after the persecution ended, when a priest named Caecilian was ordained Bishop of Carthage against the opposition of a rigorist community that claimed his ordination was administered through at least one *traditor* bishop. So the rigorist party installed

---

[2] Parts of this section draw from Gregory W. Lee, "Using the Earthly City: Ecclesiology, Political Activity, and Religious Coercion in Augustine," Augustinian Studies 47 (2016): 41-63, though I have reworked that material for my purposes here. For recent scholarship on the Donatist Controversy, see Burns and Jensen; Miles; Shaw.

first Maiorinus, and then Donatus of Casae Negrae as Bishop of Carthage instead. This latter personage furnished the epithet the laxist party would use for the rigorists, and his skillful leadership helped establish two rival churches throughout North Africa until Augustine's lifetime and beyond. For our purposes, it makes most sense to call the laxists "Catholics" and the rigorists "Donatists."

Shortly after Augustine's ascension as Bishop of Hippo in 396, he began an aggressive campaign to restore the Donatists to Catholic fellowship. Though many of his tactics against the Donatists have troubled later Christians,[3] his arguments against schism have pro- foundly shaped Western understandings of the Church. The driving theme of Augustine's ecclesiology is that God can preserve his peo- ple among sinners. We can delineate this conviction in three steps. First, it is impossible to avoid sinners, even within the Church. The parable of the wheat and the tares teaches that true and false Christians reside in one field, the Church, and will only be separa- ted by angels at the final judgment (Matt., 13, 24-43). The same ideas arise from images of the threshing floor with the wheat and the chaff (Matt., 3, 12), the great house with the noble and the ignoble vessels (2 Tim., 2, 20), the net with the good and the bad fish (Matt., 13, 47-48), and the field with the sheep and the goats (Matt., 25, 32-33).[4] The Church is a *corpus permixtum* whose purity remains an object of hope, not reality. Though Augustine supports disci- pline against open sinners, he stresses the delay of God's judgment, which necessitates enduring fellowship with sinners until Christ's final return.

Second, contact with sinners does not communicate sin. Sin is for Augustine congenital, in that it is passed down from generation to generation,[5] but not contagious, as if we could contract guilt by participating in impious communities. If sin were as communicable as the Donatists think, Jesus himself would have caught the infection. For Jesus did not avoid the temple, which he called a

---

[3] I have addressed Augustine's defense of religious coercion in Gregory W. Lee, "Using the Earthly City: Ecclesiology, Political Activity, and Religious Coercion in Au- gustine," Augustinian Studies 47 (2016): 41-63.

[4] *See bapt.*, 4, 12, 19; *ep.*, 93, 12, 50; 105, 5, 16; 108, 3, 12; *c. litt. Pet.*, 3, 2, 3, among others.

[5] For a recent treatment of Augustine's doctrine of original sin, see Couenhoven.

den of robbers, and he lived with his own *traditor*, Judas Iscariot, all the way through that traitorous kiss, even including him in the first Eucharist.[6] What corrupts is not our fellowship with sinners, whether known or hidden, but our direct complicity in wrongdoing. In 1 Tim., 5, 22, Paul urges Timothy not to participate in another person's sins but to keep himself pure (*c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 21, 40). As Augustine explains, the second part of this command explains the first: keeping pure equals not participating in others' sins. This entails not committing the same sins, experiencing displeasure at others' sins, and challenging sinners.[7] But it does not demand breaking fellowship with the unfaithful, for those who follow God's commands will remain firm and pure among evil people as wheat among tares (*c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 21, 40). As Augustine repeats, each person bears his or her own burden (Gal., 6, 5).[8] The faithful may separate spiritually but not bodily from sinners until the final winnowing when God will enact bodily separation as well.[9]

Third, our preservation from sin is a gift from Christ and his Spirit. The Lord, who commanded, "Be holy as I am holy," can keep us holy as we live among sinful people, so long as we guard the holiness he has granted us (*c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 16, 37). Augustine particularly develops this point against Petilian, the Donatist bishop of Constantina, and Cresconium, a lay Donatist grammarian. Petilian located the power to confer baptism in the character of the human minister (*c. litt. Pet.*, 1, 1, 2; 1, 2, 3), while Cresconium modified Petilian's position to stress the minister's reputation instead (*Cresc.*, 2, 17, 21-18, 23). However, Petilian could not explain what happens if the minister is a hidden sinner

---

[6] *En. Ps.*, 10, 6; *ep.*, 43, 8, 23; 44, 5, 10; 93, 4, 5; 108, 3, 7-8; *c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 17, 36; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 22, 50; *s.*, 266, 7.

[7] The importance of correcting sinners while maintaining fellowship with them is a constant theme in Augustine's anti-Donatist writings. See *Cresc.*, 1, 6, 8-9; 12, 3, 35-39; *en. Ps.*, 54, 9; *ep.* 53, 3, 7; 108, 7, 20; *c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 1, 3; 3, 1, 1-3; 3, 2, 13-16; *c. litt. Pet.*, 3, 4, 5; *s.* 88, 19-20; 23, 164, 3; *ep.* 87, 4; *c. ep. Parm.* 2, 22, 42.

[8] See *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 20, 45; 2, 23, 54; 2, 92, 208; *s.* 164; 3, among others. For a treatment of this image in Augustine, see Jourjon (258-262).

[9] Passages pertinent to this theme include *bapt.*, 6, 5, 7; 6, 14, 23; 7, 51, 99; *Cresc.*, 2, 34, 43; 4, 26, 33; *c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 5, 10; 2, 8, 15; 2, 11, 25; 2, 15, 34; 2, 18, 37; 3, 2, 7; 3, 2, 8; 3, 2, 9; 3, 3, 19; 3, 4, 20; 3, 4, 23; 3; 4; 25; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 43, 2; 2, 102, 235; 2, 104, 239; 2, 106, 243; 3, 3, 4; 3, 38, 44.

(*c. litt. Pet.*, 3, 14, 16).[10] In addition, Cresconium would have false reputation secure —what good conscience cannot, to the extent that he should almost prefer the baptism of hidden sinners (*Cresc.*, 2, 18, 22). Any suggestion that baptism derives from the human minister breaks down. If it is better to receive baptism from a holier person, there must be as many varieties of baptism as there are people, and we should all clamor for the holiest minister (*Cresc.*, 3, 6, 6; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 6, 13). By exaggerating the power of human holiness, the Donatists commodify the Church. They also miss the source of its purity: Christ, the head, the root, and the origin of baptism (*c. litt. Pet.*, 1, 5, 6). To spurn him for human ministers is to hope in humans over Christ, as well as "cursed are those who put their hope in a human" (Jer., 17, 5).[11]

Coupled with these positive considerations for Church unity are Augustine's warnings against division. As a violation of love, schism is the worst of all sins, worse even than *traditio* (*bapt.*, 2, 7, 11; 3, 2, 3). God's punishment against Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (schism, Num 16) exceeded his judgments against either idolatry (Exod., 32) or the destruction of a prophetic book (Jer., 36).[12] Paul also teaches that acts of apparent spiritual greatness, even to the point of death, are empty without love (1 Cor., 13, 1-3).[13] Propriety of doctrine and practice can no more save the schismatic than healthy limbs can save someone who has suffered trauma to another body part (*bapt.*, 1, 8, 11).[14] Those outside the Catholic unity forsake the Holy Spirit, who just is love, as Paul teaches: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom., 5, 5).[15]

---

[10] Petilian will respond that he meant only the minister who confers baptism in a holy manner, and only the recipient who knowingly accepts baptism from a faithless minister. He also suggests that those who ignorantly accept baptism from a hidden sinner receive their cleansing from Christ. For Augustine, this solution also fails, since all should then strive to have faithless baptizers without realizing it. See *c. litt. Pet.*, 1, 6, 7; 3, 15, 18; 3, 20, 23; 3, 22, 26-23, 27; 3, 43, 52.

[11] Quoted in *c. litt. Pet.*, 1.6.7; among others.

[12] See *bapt.*, 1, 8, 10; 2, 6, 9.

[13] See *bapt.*, 3, 16, 21; *s.*, 88, 21.

[14] See *Cresc.*, 1, 29, 34.

[15] See *bapt.*, 3, 16, 21.

Augustine also connects schism with hypocrisy. The Donatists boast of their purity, but they permit drunkenness, greed, and sexual immorality among their ranks (*ep. Parm.*, 2, 3, 6; 2, 9, 19; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 88, 195; 2, 104, 239). They tolerate the Circumcellions, who savage the innocent with wooden clubs and other blunt instruments, or in the worst case, an acid mixture they throw in their victims' eyes (*Cresc.*, 3, 42, 46; *ep.*, 88, 8; 88, 12; 111, 1; *c. ep. Parm.*, 1, 11, 17; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 96, 222).[16] And they can provide no account for Optatus, the Donatist bishop of Thamugadi until 398, who terrorized Numidia for a decade during the rule of Gildo, the Count of Africa (*Cresc.*, 3, 12, 15-13, 16; 4, 24, 31-25, 32; *c. ep. Parm.* 2, 1, 2; 2, 2, 4; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 23, 54; 2, 83, 184; 2, 103, 237.[17] By the Donatists' own logic, the Church must have perished when it cooperated with these murderous despots —or, for that matter, when Cyprian retained fellowship with those who rejected rebaptism (*bapt.*, 2, 6, 8; 5, 1, 1). But then, the Donatists' claim to be the true Church dissolves.

Augustine's favorite argument concerns an incident so well suited for his purposes that he considers it a divine gift (*en. Ps.*, 36, 2, 19).[18] In 393, shortly after the ascension of Primian as Bishop of Carthage, a group of at least fifty bishops rejected his leadership to establish a new communion under Maximian, whom they ordained Bishop of Carthage instead. The following year, 310 Donatist bishops convened in Bagaï, where they excommunicated Maximian, his twelve consecrators, and the Carthaginian clergy who aided the ordination, and set a deadline for the other Maximianists to return to the Donatist communion. An aggressive campaign ensued,

---

[16] See also *Cresc.*, 3, 48, 52; *ep.*, 185, 7, 30. On the Circumcellions and Donatist violence more generally, see Gaddis; Shaw (630-720).

[17] On Optatus of Thamugadi, see Frend (208-226); Tengström; Shaw (46-50 and 134-35). Shaw, challenging Frend and following Tengström, raises questions about the closeness of Optatus' relationship with Gildo, and the severity of Optatus' violence against the Maximianists.

[18] Augustine's lengthy treatment of these events, including a transcript of the Maximianists' 393 decree, occupies the rest of this *enarratio*. Other lengthy discussions include *Cresc.*, 3, 12, 15-25, 28; 3, 52, 58-63, 66; 4, 28, 35-42, 49. For discussion of the Maximianist schism, including translations of the Maximianists' and Donatists' decrees, see Shaw (107-145). See also de Veer (219-237); Hoover (274-92); Gronewoller (409-417).

supported by the aforementioned Optatus of Thamagudi, which eventually exhausted many Maximianists back into the Donatist fold. At Optatus' persuasion, the Donatists allowed two of Maximian's consecrators, Felicianus of Musti and Praetextatus of Assuras, to return with episcopal honors intact. The Donatists thus offered their own dissidents what they still refuse Catholics, whom they require to be rebaptized. As Augustine argues, the Maximianist split exemplifies schism's tendency toward self-cannibalization. Division begets division, as each tiny new faction of a faction repudiates the former and claims, absurdly, to be the sole repository of God's grace in the world (*bapt.*, 1, 6, 8).

In the end, Donatist purity is just a clumsy litmus test. Those who have not committed *traditio* are holy, regardless of their other transgressions; those who have committed *traditio*, or associate with those who have, are not. Crude lines breed inconsistencies: re-baptizing Catholics but not Maximianists, denouncing *traditio* but not murder. "Like all puritans," Willis (176) remarks, "[the Donatists] so insisted on one aspect of holiness as to lose the whole balance of Christian morality and faith." The Donatists' preoccupation with *traditio* is a ruse to establish their moral superiority. The true reason for Donatist division is a contentious spirit steeped in pride, intransigence, and deception (*c. ep. Parm.*, 3, 1, 1).

## Christians in the Earthly City

The requirement to endure sinners weds Augustine's ecclesiology to his social and political thought.[19] *Answer to the Letter of Parmenian*, for instance, inserts Augustine's theology of the two cities into his ecclesiology by presenting the Church as a mixture of two peoples and two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, each with its own prince, whether Christ or the devil (*c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 4, 9). The heavenly and earthly cities do not correlate to Church and State; both reside within a visible Christian unity. *Instructing Beginners in Faith* also links the ecclesial and the social. According to its many references to humanity's division into two peoples, the Church is a *corpus*

---

[19] In developing the argument of the next paragraphs, I have relied heavily on Lauras (117-150); Lauras and Rondet (97-160).

*permixtum* because the heavenly and earthly cities are *permixtae*.[20] Christians' burden to endure false Christians is thus a special case of enduring the world more generally.[21] Finally, *en. Ps.*, 64, applies the anti-Donatist distinction between bodily and spiritual separation to the Christians' calling in this world. Augustine likens the faithful to the Israelite captives in Babylon and encourages them to adopt this attitude:

> Yes, I am in Babylon as to my body, but not in my heart. Both these things are true of me: that I am here in Babylon bodily, but not in heart, and that I am not in that place whence my song springs; for I sing not from my flesh, but from my heart. (*en. Ps.*, 64, 3)[22]

In *en. Ps.*, 61, Augustine presents what is probably his most concrete description of the interaction between citizens of the two cities. As he explains,

> This mixing together in the present age sometimes brings it about that certain persons who belong to the city of Babylon are in charge of affairs that concern Jerusalem, or, again, that some who belong to Jerusalem administer the business of Babylon. (*en. Ps.*, 61, 8)

Old Testament examples include the bad kings of Jerusalem, on the one hand, and Daniel's friends under Nebuchadnezzar, on the other.[23] For a New Testament example of Babylonian citizens governing the Church, Augustine turns to Jesus's instruction in Matt., 23, 3: "Do what they tell you, but do not imitate what they do (*en. Ps.*, 61, 8)," a passage he cites frequently in anti-Donatist contexts against the idea that bad leaders legitimate Church division.[24] On the flip side,

---

[20] See *Cat. rud.*, 7, 11; 11, 16; 14, 21; 17, 26; 19, 31-32; 20, 36-21, 37; 24, 44; 25; 48-49; 26, 50; 27, 53-55.

[21] Besides the references above, see also s., 15, 6; Borgomeo (359-63) for discussion of *tolerare* as a mode of the Church's patience. Other relevant verbs include *sustinere*, *pati*, *portare*, *sufferre*. See also Lamirande (40).

[22] See *cat. rud.*, 19, 31; *en. Ps.*, 64, 2; 136, 1; 148, 4.

[23] For Augustine's treatment of Daniel and his friends in *c. litt. Pet.*, see 2, 92, 204-5; 2, 92, 211-13.

[24] Relevant passages include *bapt.*, 4, 11, 17; *Cresc.* 2, 29, 37; 3, 4, 4; 4, 20, 24; *c. ep. Parm.*, 2, 4, 8; 2, 9, 18; 2, 10, 22; 2, 11, 24; *c. litt. Pet.*, 1, 7, 8; 2, 5, 11; 2. 6, 13; 2, 51, 118; 2, 61, 138; 3, 2, 3; 3, 8, 9; 3, 49, 59; 3, 50, 62; 3, 56, 68.

> Every earthly State makes use of some of our citizens to adminis-
> ter its affairs. How many of the faithful are there among its citizens,
> among its loyal subjects and its magistrates, its judges, generals,
> governors and even kings? All these are just and good, and all they
> have at heart are the surpassingly glorious things that have been
> spoken about the city of God. (*en. Ps.*, 61.8)

In the mixing of the cities, Christians and non-Christians will even lead each others' communities. Augustine is sensitive to the awkwardness of this situation. Christians are stuck in a foreign land, groaning for God's delayed deliverance. Yet they are also commanded to pray for their kings and high officials (1 Tim., 2, 1-2) and to seek the peace of the city, "because in its peace is your peace" (Jer., 29, 7).[25] Since such duties necessitate converse with the wicked, Christians have no choice but to endure as they await their eventual return to the *patria*. Jesus himself modeled such toleration (*tolerandorum malorum*) in his endurance of Judas Iscariot (*civ.*, 18, 49). So too,

> Christ's servants —whether kings or princes or judges, whether
> soldiers or provincials, rich or poor, free or slave, men and women
> alike— are told to endure (*tolerare*), if need be, the worst and most
> depraved republic and, by their endurance (*tolerantia*), to win for
> themselves a place of glory in the most holy and majestic senate of
> the angels, so to speak, in the heavenly republic whose law is the
> will of God. (*civ.*, 2, 19)[26]

These considerations illuminate Augustine's oft-cited remarks in *civ.*, 19, 17. Here Augustine stresses the two cities' contrasting orientations toward earthly and heavenly goods as well as their incompatibility on religious matters. Yet he also encourages the heavenly city's cooperation with the earthly city to promote things pertinent to this mortal life. In affirming Christian partici-pation in worldly orders, Augustine does not endorse the vices of the earthly city. The depiction of Rome in *civ.*, 1-10, stands —and Augustine could hardly approve the sexual immorality— material indulgence, and violent military practices he condemned in those

---

[25] See civ., 19, 26.

[26] See *en. Ps.*, 142, 3.

earlier books. But sin does not stain by association, so interaction with immoral people in an immoral community cannot itself constitute immorality. Christians sin only to the extent that they personally commit wrongdoing, and they cooperate blamelessly with the earthly city so long as they retain a proper orientation toward the goals they share with the earthly city, even as the earthly city bears a different orientation.

As mentioned above, it sometimes occurs that Christians gain the opportunity to exercise authority over the earthly city. Augustine refers several times in anti-Donatist contexts to a new development in the Church's history when kings have come to worship God (Ps., 72, 11).[27] *The City of God* extends this trajectory, as Augustine presents his image of the ideal emperor (*civ.*, 5, 24), issues odes to Constantine and Theodosius (5, 25-26), and commends the governance of Christian rulers on the grounds that their pious leadership will benefit all peoples–Christian and non-Christian (*civ.*, 4, 3; 4, 15; 5, 19; 5, 24; *ep.*, 91, 6; 138, 2, 9-3, 17). Peter Brown has dismissed *civ.*, 5, 24-26, as "some of the most shoddy passages of the *City of God*" (34).[28] Yet Augustine's "mirror for princes" (5, 24) and his depiction of Theodosius (5, 26) not only affirm themes developed throughout his other writings,[29] they also elucidate some of the most counterintuitive elements in his vision of Christian political leadership. As Rowan Williams argues, Augustine breaks from Eusebius's precedent to stress "those features of Theodosius's reign least congenial to an ideology of the emperor's sole authority and unlimited right" (64).[30] The good ruler tempers severity with mercy, seeks eternal happiness over empty glory, prefers governing his soul more than governing subjects, and offers to God true sacrifices of humility, compassion, and prayer (*civ.*, 5, 24). Thus, Augustine writes, "Theodosius took more joy in being a member of the Church than in ruling the world" (*civ.*, 5, 26), and

---

[27] See *en. Ps.*, 149, 14; *ep.*, 93, 1, 3; 93, 3, 9; 105, 2, 5; 105, 3, 11; 173, 10; 185, 5,19-20; *c. litt. Pet.*, 2, 92, 210-12; *cat. rud.*, 21, 37; 24, 44; 27, 53. Note Robert A. Markus's treatment of such passages in "'*Tempora Christiana*' Revisited" (202-206).

[28] For other scholars who have affirmed this judgment, see Dodaro (192; n 47).

[29] See *ep.*, 138, 2, 9-3, 17; 153.

[30] See Dodaro (192-193).

he abased himself with such a public act of penance "that the people, as they prayed for him, felt more grief at seeing the imperial majesty lying prostrate than they felt fear of the imperial wrath against sin" (*civ.*, 5, 26). Leadership in the earthly city does not preclude faithfulness, even at the highest ranks.

## Augustinian Tolerance

The principles considered in the previous sections are not Augustinian idiosyncrasy. In their broad lines, they encapsulate incontestable implications of classic Christianity, which have often been ignored in institutional and popular practice, especially at moments of controversy and strife. Since Christians have no absolute obligation to separate from sinners, division can be legitimated only by explaining why it is necessary in the particular case. Though Augustine's anti-Donatist writings do not require preserving visible unity at all costs, they commend discernment in determining what circumstances merit division, which requires more than simplistic appeals to the requirements of personal purity, or the dangers of associations. The previous sections have gestured toward the significance of tolerance for Augustine's ecclesiology and social thought. In the remaining sections, I develop an Augustinian account of tolerance and consider its implications.

As Miloš Lichner argues, tolerance plays a central role in Augustine's understanding of the Church as a community on pilgrimage toward its final end. As the body of Christ, the Church must participate in some way in Christ's holiness.[31] Yet the Church's holiness is a dynamic and ultimately eschatological reality, possible in this temporal age only through Christ's sanctification of his people. Against the Pelagians, Augustine invokes the description of the Church in Eph., 5, 27, in order to argue that "not having stain or wrinkle, or any such thing" does not mean all Christians are sinless (*s.*, 181, 2, 2).[32] Christians will receive absolute holiness only at the termination of this life, and they participate only partially in that reality now

---

[31] See especially *Io. ev. tr.*, 108, 5, as treated in Lichner (72-78).
[32] See Lichner (78-92); Adolar Zumkeller (459-474). So far as I am aware, the Pelagians never made the claim Augustine attributes to them here.

as Christ wipes away their stains and smooths out their wrinkles (s., 181, 5, 7). Eph., 5, 27, must be read alongside 1 John, 1, 8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," which teaches us that "nobody in this flesh, in this perishable body, on this earth, in this ill-favored age, in this life full of trials and temptations, nobody can live here without sin" (s., 181, 1, 1).

Augustine distinguishes within the Church between sinners who welcome their sanctification and those who refuse it, despite their participation in the sacraments. But for each community, the sources of God's grace remain the same: Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, the hearing of Scripture. To excise the tares from the church would be to deny them the medicines that could heal their souls, and thus to risk accelerating their fall from grace (Lichner 163-166). Augustine holds tenaciously to the possibility of non-Christians converting, whether they are inside or outside the church, and he seeks desperately to avoid disciplining them in ways that could result in their permanent damnation. The burden of averting false Christians from this fate thus falls on the faithful within the church, who must endure objectionable people for the sake of their salvation. Augustine acknowledges that this task demands great mercy and patience. But he reminds his hearers of the tolerance God himself has modeled toward the world. Tolerance is a gift to those in special need of God's grace, a charitable gesture that regards others' needs above one's own.

Despite these considerations, the Church does not tolerate all manner of behavior.[33] Augustine frequently identifies sins that could disqualify offenders from Eucharist. In some writings, he focuses on three great sins: adultery, homicide, and sacrilege (*Cresc.*, 2, 28, 35; *ep.*, 22, 1, 2-3; *fid. et op.*, 19, 34; *lib. arb.*, 1, 3, 6; *s.* 9, 18; 352, 3, 8; 392, 3, 3; *symb.*, 1, 7, 15-8, 16 (*s.*, 398).[34] In others,

---

[33] The paragraphs that follow rely heavily on a series of articles by Anne-Marie La Bonnardière: "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-I (31-53); "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II," (249-283); "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-III" (181-204). See also van Bavel (273-276); Fitzgerald (640-46); Lichner (159-62).

[34] Citations taken from La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II," 256), with revisions.

he expands the list, including violations of the Decalogue, and to a lesser extent, the practices Paul condemns in his vice catalogues (Gal., 5, 19-21; 1 Cor., 6, 9-11; Eph., 5, 3-7; Col., 3, 5-9).[35] For committing such crimes, offenders were generally required to submit to public penance (*paenitentia magna*) and barred from Eucharist. This period of penance would come to an end with a rite of reconciliation. Individuals could only receive the rite of reconciliation once. If they fell into grave sin again, they would remain in penance for the rest of their lives, though Augustine holds forth the possibility that God will forgive them despite their separation from the Church (*ep.*, 153, 3, 7; *s.*, 20, 2).[36] He also stresses the importance of seeking the salvation of those who have stubbornly refused discipline (s., 82, 4, 7).[37]

Other offenses required different measures. Augustine distinguishes "crimes" (*crimina*), which are avoidable and require *paenitentia magna*, from "sins" (*peccata*), which all Christians commit. The passage 1 John, 1, 8, which insists that all Christians sin, refers to the latter and not to the former. Lesser offenses encompass such matters as inappropriate conjugal relations (1 Cor., 7, 5), taking another believer to court (1 Cor., 6, 1-6), calling one's brother "fool" (Matt., 5, 22), and laughing too loudly at a social gathering (Sir., 21, 20).[38] Augustine's remedy for such infractions is the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, a practice that preceded participation in Eucharist, which was celebrated daily in the North African Church during Augustine's time (La Bonnardière "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-I" 49-53). Of special importance is the request, "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven

---

[35] See *en. Ps.*, 129, 4-5; 140, 18; *c. ep. Pel.*, 1, 14, 28; *Io. ev. tr.*, 41, 10; *perf. iust.*, 17, 38; *s.* 56, 8, 12; 59, 4, 7; 261, 9; 351, 3, 5; *virg.*, 53, 54. Citations taken from La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" (257-258), with revisions. As La Bonnardière observes, though Augustine considers the vices listed by Paul to be great sins, he does not typically connect them to *magna paenitentia*. S., 351, 4, 7, is a rare exception.

[36] Quoted in Burns and Jensen (341; n 317). The first reference is clearer than the second.

[37] It appears, though, that Christians were not to eat with those who had been excommunicated. See *c. ep. Parm.*, 3, 2, 13 (qtd. in Fitzgerald 644).

[38] Lichner (157-58).

our debtors" (Matt., 6, 12), which Augustine understands as both a confession of sin and a commitment to pardon others (La Bonnardière, "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-I" 52). He thus weds daily penance to the restoration of personal relationships, and treats both practices as prerequisite for receiving the body and blood of Christ.[39]

Augustine insists against the Donatists and other rigorist communities that mortal sin does not merit schism. The Donatists raised against Augustine a series of Scriptural passages that stressed the importance of communal purity: Lev., 22, 4; Ps., 26, 4-10; 50, 16-18; 20, 141, 5; Isa., 52, 11; Jer., 23, 28; 1 Cor., 5, 6, 13; Eph., 5, 11-12; 1 Tim., 5, 22; 2 Thess. 3, 6; 2 John, 10-11.[40] Augustine's basic response is to accuse the Donatists of hypocrisy (given the sins they tolerate in their own communities) and to argue that these passages support only temporal excommunication, not the withdrawal of good Christians from bad Christians into a pure sect. Augustine also stresses the practical difficulties of discerning when to exercise discipline versus mercy.[41] The bishop must weigh several factors: the number and seriousness of the sins, the malleability of offenders to correction, the public implications of the sins, the risk that discipline might exacerbate offenders' rebellion or even provoke a revolt. Bishops may have to exercise private instead of public discipline in order to avoid these dangers and preserve peace.[42] In the end, though, they will not be able to prevent all who should be undergoing penance from participating in Eucharist, nor should they try (s., 4, 35; 4, 7).[43] God commands bishops to exercise mercy now so that he may exercise

---

[39] Note, briefly, that this penitential system concerns the sins of laity and not of clergy. On this distinction, see La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" 277); Burns and Jensen (344-45).

[40] For discussion and citations, see La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" 270-72).

[41] See, especially, *ep.*, 95.3, treated in La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" 275-77).

[42] For discussion of this innovative practice, see La Bonnardière ("Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" 278-83); Burns and Jensen (341-43).

[43] Treated in La Bonnardière (Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II" 277-78).

severity later –though God may also bring judgment in the present, as in Paul's time with those who ate and drank to their own judgment (1 Cor.; 11, 29).

## Tolerance among the Virtues

As we have seen, the necessity of drawing disciplinary lines between those who may and those who may not participate in Eucharist suggests the importance of discernment. In *Tolerance among the Virtues*, John Bowlin develops a Thomist approach to such judgments by treating tolerance as a virtue. In the spirit of Thomas's positive appraisal of pagan virtue, Bowlin depicts tolerance as a practice both Christians and non-Christians can display, and he frames his discussion of tolerance according to its necessity for civil society. He also analyzes forbearance (tolerance's sibling virtue), which operates off more overtly Christian categories and converges with Augustine's account of tolerance. Bowlin's work provides conceptual resource for a thicker and more precise account of the themes we have already considered in Augustine.

Bowlin defines tolerance as the patient endurance of objectionable difference to preserve peace between those who tolerate and those who are tolerated, and to respect the autonomy of both parties with respect to their difference (117).[44] Tolerance is necessary because human society inevitably falls into moral disagreements, and our epistemic limitations prevent us from judging moral matters with certainty (101). Perfect harmony is not possible in any human context, yet our need for social converse precludes the possibility of dissociating from one another every time we disagree. Tolerance is thus a necessity for all human societies and not just a product of modern liberalism.[45] It is tied to the virtue of justice, which governs the relations humans have

---

[44] See also pp. 184-86, where Bowlin defines autonomy as "the power or capacity to determine which actions to perform, which ends to pursue and activities to take up" (185). He distinguishes this definition from modern understandings of autonomy as the ability to choose one's own conception of the good.

[45] See discussions in Bowlin (127-129; 178-186; 193-201). On the ubiquity of human concern for justice, see (91-97).

with one another, but it applies justice to relationships divided by objectionable difference. Tolerance thus resembles courage in that neither would be required in an ideal world (i.e., without dangers or objectionable differences) (103). Both essentially concern imperfect and difficult circumstances.

Tolerance responds to those differences that "fall between the unbearably harmful and the harmlessly unobjectionable" (28), offenses that are morally problematic but not so abhorrent as to demand aggressive action against their perpetrators. There are some differences that are not morally problematic at all. It is, for instance, inappropriate to encourage "racial tolerance," since racial difference is not morally objectionable. It would be more accurate to promote racial *respect* or *equality* (134-136). There are other differences that initially appear to be objectionable but are later recognized to be trivial (so the right reaction is indifference) or even good (so the right reaction is acceptance) (166-167). Finally, some moral offenses are technically intolerable, such that enduring them patiently would constitute moral laxity. In these cases, the virtuous response might be contestation, which spans a variety of efforts to challenge the objectionable behavior and thus to change the relationship between the one who tolerates and the one who is tolerated (168-172). Contestation is distinct from toleration, which simply endures, sometimes without hope that the offender will change. In extreme cases, objectionable behavior might even demand coercion, which involves actions against objectionable behavior that do not respect the autonomy of the offender (though they do pursue a certain kind of social peace and stability) (167-168). Coercion marks the limit of tolerance, bringing tolerance to an end (168). Therefore, "The tolerant will at times coerce, not tolerantly, but justly" (168).

Bowlin's definition of tolerance sets the stage for its sibling virtue (forbearance), which aligns more closely with Augustine's concerns (168-172). Forbearance differs from tolerance on several grounds. First, while tolerance is a function of justice, forbearance is indexed to love. Tolerance aims toward peace with the tolerated as well as the autonomy of the tolerated. It may hope that objectionable differences disappear, but this hope is not essential to tolerance.

Forbearance aims toward a more intimate relationship, the mutual affection and common life of friendship, and thus hopes for reconciliation with the offender (215-216). By implication, the sorrows of tolerance and forbearance also differ. While the tolerant regret that society manifests objectionable differences that they must endure, the forbearing mourn the ruptures of relationship the objectionable differences have cleaved.

Second, forbearance endures worse offenses than tolerance does. Following a Thomistic understanding of nature and grace, Bowlin distinguishes between natural and gracious forbearance. The former derives from ordinary friendship, while the latter is elevated by divine grace and participates in God's life (207). Even under the first form of forbearance, patient endurance bears more than tolerance would. We are, for instance, more likely to endure a cutting comment from our spouse than from a coworker (219-220). But gracious forbearance sets no limits on what it will endure. Those who forbear,

> Do not ask whether this sin or that objectionable difference is so vile, so intolerable, that the relationship must be abandoned. For them, exit and expulsion are never real options, and thus they need not determine which sinners must be endured or which sins they must help bear. (225)

Gracious forbearance does not entail passivity toward objectionable difference. In some cases, fraternal correction may be necessary. In other cases, when there is a threat to people or the common good, it may be necessary to protect the vulnerable, restrain or coerce wrongdoers, or deter those who might imitate them (226). Still, each of these responses involves endurance of some kind. Gracious forbearance literally bears all things.

Third, gracious forbearance hopes for the transformation of sinners, which always remains possible during this life. Tolerance may consider this hope unrealistic, and forbearance may agree. But those who have received the grace of Christ recognize that his mercy is available to all, and they bear the burden of others' sins, even to the point of personal risk, to facilitate the sinners' repentance (228-229). Forbearance is like a self-fulfilling prophecy in that it "tends to secure the object of its hope through its

sacrifice" (218). Sometimes what appears to be forbearance is only a semblance. When people endure more than natural forbearance requires, they may be modeling a mysterious and perfect love. But it is also possible that they endure because of self-hatred or self-deception, that what looks like a virtue is actually a pathological (albeit understandable) response to abuse and domination (221). Gracious forbearance especially risks danger, since it recognizes no limits to objectionable difference.

> These theological symbolics can encourage the sadism of some and the masochism of others. Inequalities of power and the lust to dominate only encourage this misuse. Those who have been victims of these symbolics, who have suffered under their misuse, will be inclined to do without them. (231)[46]

While Bowlin's account of forbearance captures many elements of Augustinian toleration, there are some differences that elucidate Augustine's positions. The first is a technical point of definition. Augustine does not restrict toleration to enduring objectionable difference. He rather defines tolerance as the preservation of fellowship with objectionable people. Thus, contestation is not an alternative to tolerance but one of the reasons for it, since it is only by preserving fellowship with sinners that bishops can discipline them for their salvation.[47] While Augustine primarily thinks of fellowship with sinners as an ecclesial reality, he extends this concept to non-ecclesial contexts, where we interact and cooperate with non-Christians toward common ends, despite the absence of Eucharistic communion.

Second, Augustine construes the uncertainties of tolerance somewhat differently. Bowlin emphasizes the possibility of learning that what we initially considered morally objectionable is not morally objectionable after all. Augustine tends to assume that what bishops consider to be morally objectionable is in fact wrong, though he also recognizes the difficulties of knowing how best to address others' sins. So Augustinian tolerance worries less that our

---

[46] Bowlin cites in this regard D. Williams.

[47] It appears that this definition of tolerance corresponds with Thomas's definition of *forbearance*. See discussion in Bowlin (209).

moral judgments may be mistaken than that discipline may not produce the desired effect. On this matter, it seems unnecessary to pit the authors against each other. Both sets of ambiguities complicate our response to objectionable difference.

Third, Augustine treats the distinction between tolerable and intolerable sins as a pastoral matter. Though Augustine delineates between venial and mortal sins, the line he draws between these categories is fluid, and he does not enforce disciplinary mechanisms rigidly. In some cases, he thinks, private discipline may be more appropriate than public. In other cases, discipline may not be a possibility at all, to the point that bishops may have to tolerate mortal sins. This approach both converges with and diverges from Bowlin's understanding of forbearance. On the one hand, Augustine theoretically affirms a limit to objectionable difference that Bowlin's gracious forbearance does not. Certain sins merit expulsion from the community, as enforced through the denial of Eucharist. On the other hand, Augustine's emphasis on grace tends to override his affirmation of limits. Excommunication is intended for the restoration of the sinner, it is not an absolute requirement for addressing mortal sins, and it does not preclude all contact with the offender. Though the rite of reconciliation is available only once, those who lapse again may still participate in the Church community to some degree, in hope for God's grace despite their permanent penitential status. Outside the Church, total avoidance of sinners is even less of a possibility, for Christians cannot exercise the same disciplinary mechanisms. It is easier to expel offenders from Church than to expel them from society. Augustine's practice thus aligns with Bowlin's definition of forbearance, despite minor qualifications. As both ultimately affirm, there is no sin that destroys the possibility of contact with sinners or the desire for their friendship.

## Enduring the Present Times

What implications may we draw for the present context? First, tolerance is, indeed, an appropriate response to objectionable difference. As Bowlin argues, this point requires defense against the unique suspicions that tolerance often arouses. The worry

is that tolerance involves moral compromise, a complaint that can adopt different forms. One is that apparent tolerance is actually indifference, that the reason people endure something objectionable is that they do not object to it. Unlike other virtues, Bowlin observes, tolerance and its semblance may look the same (38-40). It is easy to discern a failure of courage, for instance, when someone retreats from dangers that a courageous person would have endured. But it may not be clear to observers whether someone is patiently enduring evil because of virtue or laxity. Since the former can so easily be perceived as the latter, suspicions arise that tolerance is not a virtue at all.

A related objection to tolerance is that it leads to laxity. To borrow a phrase from George Fletcher (158-172),[48] tolerance is unstable. We may begin by enduring something we find objectionable, but as time passes, we will find ourselves lapsing into indifference or acceptance. It is psychologically difficult to endure what we dislike. So if we do not rupture fellowship with offenders, either through exit or expulsion, we will eventually adjust our beliefs about whether our differences are objectionable after all.

An Augustinian response begins with his arguments against the Donatists. It is impossible to find a pure community in this life, whether within the church or without. Efforts to secure a holy enclave chase a chimera and tend only to accelerate division, sometimes to the point of absurdity. *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 1910-2010 counts over 6,000 Christian denominations in Northern America alone (Johnson 192). That many of these communities arose from sincere conviction cannot be denied. But Augustine challenges us to ask whether such divisions reflect the stubbornness and pride he identified in the Donatists. Christ liberates Christians from the need to divide from others, which opens up the possibility of contestation within sacramental fellowship, which enhances the prospects that offenders might change. Those who retain fellowship with open sinners invite the suspicion of moral compromise, as we have seen. But this should come as no surprise for followers of the one who ate with

---

[48] Treated in Bowlin (30-31).

tax collectors and sinners (Matt., 9, 11). And from an Augustinian perspective, such misperceptions can ironically nourish humility. Augustine often associates pride with a desire to be honored by others, as for instance, in his critique of Roman heroes who pursued virtue for the sake of reputation (*civ.*, 5, 12-20). To be judged for persisting with sinners is to join those saints "who here below endure taunts and insults for the sake of God's truth, which is hateful to those who love this world" (*civ.*, 5, 16).

Second, tolerance raises sensitive challenges when it operates as a requirement for the vulnerable. As we have seen in Bowlin, we should worry when someone endures more than natural forbearance requires, and we should take seriously suspicions of gracious forbearance's potential to underwrite the oppression of those who already endure abuse. Bowlin especially cites for this point Delores Williams, a womanist scholar who writes from the vantage point of being both a woman and an African-American. We might also note that the separation of African-American Christians from white churches constitutes the lone exception to Richard Niebuhr's invective against denominationalism in his seminal *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*:

> The causes of the racial schism are not difficult to determine. Neither theology nor polity furnished the occasion for it. The sole source of this denominationalism is social; it demonstrates clearly the invasion of the Church of Christ by the principle of caste. And this caste sense is, as always, primarily present in the economically and culturally superior group, and secondarily, by reaction, in the economically and culturally inferior society.

> Negroes have apparently taken the initiative of forming separate churches, but the responsibility lies with their former masters in the North and South. These made the independent church movement inevitable by the attitude which they adopted toward the colored Christians (259-60).

Attending to race, gender, and other power dynamics exposes false appeals to unity as efforts to reify the power of those who already possess privilege. Examples of such language include the suggestion that those who complain about racism or sexism

are being divisive, or the admonition to treat policies that harm vulnerable communities as issues about which we can agree to disagree. In the American context, these dismissive remarks are often coupled with warnings against allowing such issues to distract from a pure, spiritual faith.[49] But Augustinian tolerance focuses on the obligations the strong have toward the weak. Bishops tolerate wandering laypeople, bearing the burdens of their congregants for the sake of their salvation. This situation is inverted when the oppressed are told to bear the burdens of those who oppress them. Those who withdraw from abusive situations are not violating unity through the stubborn assertion of pride. They are protecting themselves from oppressors who have already destroyed fellowship, leaving the abused little option besides exit. Indeed, this is the kind of circumstance when the most notorious element of Augustine's theology—coercion—makes the most sense. Arguably at least, force may be necessary to protect the vulnerable, despite the violation of aggressors' autonomy.

Third, some boundaries are, at the end of the day, salutary. These boundaries will not intend to protect the holiness of those who already participate in Christ's sanctity. But they may serve to defend the vulnerable, to send a public message, or to preserve community wellbeing. The establishment of boundaries will exercise greater effect when it represents the collective will of a community. Communal decisions are also more likely to reflect patient discernment, an important check against individuals' tendency to make rash decisions in the heat of relational conflict. Still, even collective decisions to dissociate from others must be characterized by love for offenders, hope that they will change their behavior, and faith that Christ is powerful to accomplish his will in his world. By modeling these virtues, Christians not only set an example for the world. They help secure the peace of the earthly city, whose stability contributes to Christians' own stability, even as they labor in pilgrimage through this temporal existence (*civ.*, 19, 17, 26).

---

[49] For studies that illustrate how such strategies have been used to defend racial discrimination, see Marsh; Emerson and Smith; Renée Dupont.

One, therefore, who conquers evil with good suffers the loss of temporal goods in order to teach how they are to be scorned in comparison to faith and righteousness. For by loving them the other person becomes evil, and in that way the one who does injury learns from the one to whom he does the injury the character of the things on account of which he did injury, and thus he is won over to harmonious unity, than which there is nothing more useful for the city, as repentant, conquered not by the strength of someone in a rage but by the goodwill of someone patient. For we are right to act in this way when we see that it benefits the person on account of whom we do it in order to produce correction and harmonious unity in him. (*ep.*, 138, 2, 11)

## Conclusion

Centuries after Augustine's time, the principles he sets forth against the Donatists and develops in his political thought continue to bear relevance. In this tumultuous age, many in Western Church and society find themselves tempted to separate from those whose political or theological leanings seem too offensive to endure. Yet the power of Christ to protect his people invites fresh approaches to social and ecclesial fissures. Toleration is a species of enemy love, the most distinctive feature of Jesus's teaching, and it is possible because of the mercy he has shown to his enemies, whom he now calls friends. It has been Augustine's indelible legacy to illuminate these connections. He is *Doctor pacis* because he is also *Doctor gratiae*.

# References

Van Bavel, Tarsicius. "Discipline." *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1999, pp. 273-76.

Borgomeo, Pasquale, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin*. Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1972.

Bowlin, John R. *Tolerance among the Virtues*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016.

Brown, Peter. "Saint Augustine." *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine*. New York, Harper & Rowe, 1972, pp. 25-45.

Burns, J. Patout Jr. and Jensen Robin M. *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs*. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2014.

Couenhoven, J. *Stricken by Sin, Cured by Christ: Agency, Necessity, and Culpability in Augustinian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Dodaro, Robert. *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Emerson Michael O. and Smith, Christian. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Fitzgerald, Allan D. "Penance." *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1999, pp. 640-46.

Fletcher, George P. "The Instability of Tolerance." *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, edited by David Heyd, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 158-72.

Frend, William Hugh Clifford. *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*. Oxford, Clarendon, 1985.

Gaddis, Michael. *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005.

Gronewoller, Brian. "Felicianus, Maximianism, and Augustine's Anti-Donatist Polemic." *Studia Patristica*, vol. 70, 2013, pp. 409-417.

Hoover, Jesse A. "The Contours of Donatism: Theological and Ideological Diversity in Fourth Century North Africa." Dissertation, Baylor University, 2008.

Johnson, Todd M. and Ross Kenneth R. *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

Jourjon, Maurice. "*Sarcina*: Un Mot Cher a l'Évêque d'Hippone." *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, vol. 43, 1955, pp. 258-62.

La Bonnardière, Anne-Marie. "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-I." *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. 13, 1967, pp. 31-53.

------------------------. "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin-II." *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol., 13, 1967, pp. 249-283.

------------------------. "Pénitence et réconciliation des Pénitents d'après saint Augustin–III." *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, vol. 14, 1968, pp. 181-204.

Lamirande, Émiliene. *Church, Sate and Toleration: An Intriguing Change of Mind in Augustine*. Philadelphia, Villanova University Press, 1974.

Lauras, Antoine. "Deux Cités, Jérusalem et Babylone: Formation et Évolution d'un Thème Central du <<De Civitate Dei>>." *La Ciudad de Dios*, vol. 167, 1954, pp. 117-50.

Lauras, Antoine and Rondet, Henri. "Le Thème des Deux Cités dans l'Oeuvre de Saint Augustin." Études Augustiniennes, edited by Henri Rondet et al., Paris, Aubier, 1953, pp. 97-160.

Lichner, Miloš. "Vers une Ecclésiologie de la "Tolerantia": Recherche sur Saint Augustin." *Sensus Fidei Fidelium* 4, Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2014.

Markus, Robert A. "'*Tempora Christiana*' Revisited." *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, edited by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 202-206.

Marsh, Charles. *God's Long Summer*: *Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997.

Miles, Richard, editor. *The Donatist Schism: Controversy and Contexts*, *Translated Texts for Historians, Contexts*. Liverpool, UK, Liverpool University Press, 2016.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. New York, Meridian, 1929.

PEW Research Center. "The Parties on the Eve of the 2016 Election: Two Coalitions, Moving Further Apart; Trends in Voter Party Identification 1992-2016," *People-press.org*, 13 Sept. 2016, http://www.people-press.org/2016/09/13/the-parties-on-the-eve-of-the-2016-election-two-coalitions-moving-further-apart/

PEW Research Center. "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider: Sharp Shifts among Democrats on Aid to Needy, Race,

Immigration." *People-press.org*, 5 Oct. 2017, http://www.people-press.org/2017/10/05/8-partisan-animosity-personal-politics-views-of-trump/

PEW Research Center. "Political Typology Reveals Deep Fissures on the Right and Left: Conservative Republican Groups Divided on Immigration, 'Openness'." http://www.people-press.org/2017/10/24/political-typology-reveals-deep-fissures-on-the-right-and-left/.

Putnam, Robert D. and Campbell, David E. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010, 274-84.

Renée Dupont, Carolyn. *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement*, 1945-1975. New York, NYU Press, 2013.

Shaw, Brent D. *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Shelton, Jason E. and Emerson, Michael O. *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions, Religion and Social Transformation*. New York, New York University Press, 2012.

Tengström, Emin. *Donatisten und Katholiken: Soziale, wirtschaftliche und politische Aspekte einer nordafrikanischen Kirchenspaltung*. Gothenburg, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1964.

De Veer, Albert C. "L'exploitation du schisme maximianiste par saint Augustin dans sa lutte contre le Donatisme." *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. 3, 1965, pp. 219-273.

Williams, Rowan. "Politics and the Soul: A Reading of *City of God*." *Milltown Studies*, vol. 19-20, 1987, pp. 55-72.

Williams, Delores S. *Sisters of Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1993.

Willis, Geoffrey Grimshaw. *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy*. London, SPCK, 1950.

Wright, Robin. "Is America Headed for a New Kind of Civil War?" *The New Yorker*, 14 Aug. 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/is-america-headed-for-a-new-kind-of-civil-war

Zumkeller, Adolar. "*Eph*. 5, 27 im Verständnis Augustins und seiner donatistichen und pelagianischen Gegner." *Augustinianum*, vol. 16, 1976, pp. 459-74.