

**Practicing Peace, Preaching
Psalms: The Centrality
of the *Enarrationes in
Psalmos* to Augustine's
Developing Theological
Understanding of Peace**

Practicando la paz, predicando los
salmos: la centralidad de las
Enarrationes in Psalmos para la
comprensión del desarrollo
teológico de Agustín sobre la paz

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Kevin G. Grove
University of Notre Dame, United States of America



Abstract

This chapter claims that while the subject of peace permeates the Augustinian corpus, Augustine's theological understanding of peace—which progressed from an absence of conflict to the graced concord of love as the whole Christ—developed as he labored to preach on the Psalms. Augustine began to preach on the Psalms in the 390s and continued to do so for the rest of his life, rendering his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* his longest work. The Psalms, replete with the language of peace—interior and exterior peace as well as the peace of Jerusalem—were the texts Augustine regularly expounded as he preached *ad populum* in his own Basilica of Peace. By looking at Augustine's theology of peace through the *Enarrationes*, the chapter shows that peace as it appears in his preaching is only fully understood for Augustine when seen through his Christology. The *Enarrationes in Psalmos* provide evidence of the practice of peace. Augustine suggests earthly peace and love might be exercised both within his congregation and among the dwellers of North Africa of the fifth century. Having examined the *Enarrationes* themselves, the chapter suggests the relevance of this reading for two other texts, considering the examples of an early and a late treatment of peace: *de Sermone Domini in Monte* and *De civitate Dei*, respectively.

Keywords: Psalms, preaching, peace, christology, *Christus totus*, Jerusalem.



Resumen

Este capítulo afirma que, si bien el tema de la paz impregna el cuerpo agustino, la comprensión teológica de la paz de Agustín –que progresó de una ausencia de conflicto a la honrada concordia del amor como todo Cristo– se desarrolló mientras trabajaba para predicar sobre los salmos. San Agustín comenzó a predicar sobre los salmos en 390 y continuó haciéndolo por el resto de su vida, discutiéndolo de sus *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, su trabajo más largo. Los salmos, repletos del lenguaje de la paz, tanto la paz interior y exterior como la paz de Jerusalén, fueron los textos que Agustín exponía regularmente cuando predicaba *ad populum* en su propia Basílica de la Paz. Al observar la teología de la paz de Agustín a través de las *Enarrationes*, el presente capítulo muestra que la paz, tal como aparece en su predicación, solo se entiende completamente para san Agustín cuando se la ve a través de su cristología. Las *Enarrationes in Psalmos* proporcionan evidencia de la práctica de la paz. Agustín sugiere que la paz y el amor terrenales se pueden ejercer tanto dentro de su congregación como entre los habitantes del norte de África del siglo quinto. Después de examinar las *Enarrationes*, el capítulo sugiere la relevancia de esta lectura para otros dos textos, considerando los ejemplos de un tratamiento temprano y tardío de la paz: de *Sermone Domini in Monte* y *De Civitate Dei*, respectivamente.

Palabras claves: salmos, predicación, paz, Cristología, *Christus totus*, Jerusalén.



Sobre el autor | About the author

Kevin G. Grove [kgrove1@nd.edu]

Kevin G. Grove, CSC, is an assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. He completed his Ph.D. in philosophical theology at the University of Cambridge (Trinity College) and postdoctoral research at L'Institut Catholique of Paris and the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. Grove's research interests include St. Augustine, Christology, memory, and Basil Moreau.



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Introduction

The Psalms functioned like a scriptural and theological laboratory in which the thought of Augustine concerning peace developed as he preached. From his earliest years as priest and bishop in the 390s until nearly the end of his life, Augustine continued to preach and comment upon the Psalms, rendering the collection of these texts, his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (cited hereafter, *en. Ps.*), his longest work both in number of words and in number of years that it took to complete. In his *Confessiones* (cited hereafter, *conf.*), as Williams has pointed out, Augustine wrote that the Psalms of David were not only a part of his conversion, but that the texts themselves refashioned Augustine.

As a priest and bishop, Augustine preached upon psalms in the basilicas of Carthage and Hippo in Northern Africa. These sermons, both on feast days and regular occasions, reveal a classically trained rhetor drawing on the depths of his training as he figuratively explicated scriptural texts for his people. Augustine understood himself to be in competition on Sunday afternoons with the amphitheater in town. He commends his congregants for standing to hear and engage a full sermon rather than those in the amphitheater seated and entertained (*en. Ps.*, 147,21). Scholars like Hildegund Müller suggest that the interior of Augustine's basilica would likely have been rather plain. After the singing or reading of the text, Augustine would have stood to preach and remained standing. His sermons were recorded by *notarii* as he spoke. That others wrote them down adds to the value of the *en. Ps.* because Augustine never went back to revise them. They are not commented upon in his *Retractationes* (cited hereafter, *retr.*). On account of this, the texts preserve the dynamic relations and even side comments that Augustine makes to his congregation. He will explain to them that they have labored hard enough for one day and that they will pick up with the remainder of a particular psalm the following day or following liturgy. He will reference the heat and the weather, exhort people to pay attention for a short while longer, or comment on a reaction that he might have received after saying something deliberately provocative. Thus, sermons of Augustine the exegete not only reveal him as a thinker and theologian, but him as thinker in the midst of his praying congregation. Augustine, as Michael Fiedrowicz has explained, is both performing and inhabiting the texts, for the scriptures function as both mirror and medicine in his theology.

Besides the Psalms' importance for Augustine in terms of his longstanding exegetical engagement as a preacher, they are simultaneously full of the language of peace. Other than the book of Leviticus, which includes repeated

instruction on peace offerings, the Psalms are the scriptural book with the highest density of peace language in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Psalms one finds the two cities trope of Jerusalem and Babylon which structures Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, (cited hereafter *civ.*) The psalms give expression both to the experience of not knowing how to sing the songs of Zion at the rivers of Babylon as well as how to make ascents—physical in the case of the actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem and spiritual for Augustine and his hearers—up to the city of Jerusalem. Augustine, who commented on all 150 psalms, treats the issue of peace in his expositions of nearly fifty of those psalms.

Yet, the frequency of Augustine's investigating the issue of peace in his preaching on the Psalms is only part of the reason for choosing the *en. Ps.* for this study. As Augustine scholar Michael Cameron has suggested and my own work developed, Augustine's understanding of Christ grew as he continued to preach on the Psalms. For he, like other patristic authors, read the Psalms as words of and in Christ. This is a most happy confluence for this study of Augustine's theological development concerning peace. In the texts where Augustine is most frequently grappling with and commenting on the issue of peace, he is also working to expound and explain his own account of the mediation that Christ brought and continues to impart. And so, this study draws out from Augustine's preaching on the Psalms a theology of Christ's peace being mediated to Augustine and his North African hearers. In encountering the Psalms, we examine a site of Christological praxis where peace is not merely theorized but inhabited and desired by the living, breathing, body of Christ.

Method

The approach of this paper builds upon two complementary methods of assessing Augustine's theology of peace in extant scholarship—peace as inner peace and peace as eschatological collective (this second type of peace also relates to earthly peace).

George Lawless treats the issue of inner peace as an aspect of Augustine's theological anthropology in *conf.* The word *pax*, in its variant forms, occurs nearly as much as the word *confessio* (45). As such, Lawless points out that, the quest for peace, part and parcel of the quest for God, forms a major axis in early Augustinian thought (60). One need not look further than the climactic address to God in the middle of Augustine's exploration of memory in *conf.*, 10: "You called, shouted, broke through my deafness; you flared, blazed, banished my blindness; you lavished your fragrance, I gasped, and now I pant for you;

I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for your peace” (*conf.*, 10, 27, 28). Augustine describes the experience of God in terms not only of sensory experiences fulfilled but also of peace. Yet, Augustine will continue from this high Latin poetics to investigate his sensory experiences and desires for the remainder of *conf.*, 10. I have argued in my own work that though Augustine searches for God in his own desires, he cannot find God as located or contained there. Peace is not fully found in Augustine’s sensory experiences, just as earlier in the book he was not able to establish God fully within his own memory (13–28).

Thinkers like Lawless show the desire for inner peace to be a primary expression for the individual’s quest for God, even when that quest might be partial and frustrated. Lawless intimates, but does not investigate, the correlation between individual peace and both the concord and discord which characterize human corporate relations in *civ.* Nevertheless, Lawless establishes the centrality of the trope of peace for the individual’s search for God.

Concerning the eschatological collective, Thomas Camelot, in his article “St. Augustine, Doctor of Peace,” highlights the heavenly and eschatological dimension of Christian peace. Christian peace, as Camelot explains, is the hope of the heavenly city, a perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and one another (p. 79). Those on earth work—inspired by eschatological hope of true peace—in faith to enjoy peace here below. Though “imperfect and fragile” this peace is the pursuit of Christians in the earthly city. Camelot and others (Dodaro; Elshtain) who comment upon *civ.*, rightly point out the eschatological nature of peace in the heavenly city, even as people strive for peace as an earthly good.

Building from both of these methods of examining peace—one from the interior search of *conf.* and the second in terms of the heavenly city, *civ.*—I will follow a method that includes both the individual and the collective. I acknowledge that the collective in Augustinian understandings of peace is at times about the state and politics, but I limit this study to focus on the Christological collective. This method is what I will call the *Christus totus* method of the *en. Ps.* The *Christus totus*, or “whole Christ,” was a communal construct of head and members which Augustine developed while preaching on the Psalms. It allowed him to hold together the eschatological perfection of Christ ascended into heaven (Christ the head) along with those who individually and together are journeying here below (the members). In as much as head and members form one, whole Christ, terms like “peace” are not only held in hope, but practiced in practical ways by Christ’s members here below.

This method is productive for five distinct outcomes for considering Augustine's theology of peace, each of which we will treat in turn. In the first instance, focusing on Christology helps to hold together a very diverse semantic field for peace. Second, because Augustine is convinced that Christ is peace (Eph 2:14), tracking the development of his whole Christ simultaneously reveals developments in his ideas of peace. Third, his mature Christology is one of speaking, singing, and participating as the Psalms image the vibrant life of the whole Christ. This whole Christ becomes the place for preaching, singing, and participating in peace as well. Fourth, the whole Christ assumes that human beings do not have peace on their own. This assumption on its own could seem to reflect the darkened and grim view of human persons which the late Augustine is sometimes alleged (BeDuhn). However, as I intend to demonstrate, in the whole Christ, the admission of the failures of or lacks in peace are ever a restatement of the need for healing in the whole Christ. In the final section, I place this work into relief with two of Augustine's treatises. I explore how Augustine's preaching on peace is suggestive for interpreting his later work (*civ.*) as well as how it might hint at development from his earlier (*De Sermone Domini in Monte*) (cited hereafter *s. Dom. mon.*).

Psalms and the Semantics of Peace

The *en. Ps.* show forth a diverse semantic field for the term peace. In his conclusion to *en. Ps.* 134, Augustine explains peace as it relates to Jerusalem, which, he preaches to his congregants, means "vision of peace" (134,36). Augustine is speaking of the eschatological vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, a city where people will live without worry of the walls crumbling. Christ himself lives in the city and guards it. This "vision of peace" actually contains quite a number of terms and concepts brought together. Augustine writes that such a peace: cannot be praised sufficiently by the human tongue; those experiencing a vision of peace will have no further exposure to enemies within the Church, no exposure to enemies outside of the Church, no exposure to enemies in their own flesh, and no exposure to enemies in their own thoughts (134,36). Thus, the peace that correlates with rest and defines citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem can be described as effecting multiple strata of reality. Peace affects one's thoughts, physical body, the body of the Church, as well as relations with those outside of the Church. This is important because heavenly peace is peace in all of these aspects. Augustine's treatment of peace in his *en. Ps.* might treat one aspect of peace or another in a particular sermon. Yet, in moments of summary when he reminds his congregants of his pedagogy, Au-

gustine will employ the “vision” of Jerusalem to maintain the theological unity of these various aspects of peace.

At times, Augustine’s taking up the topic of peace arises from discord within the self (*en. Ps.*, 102,15). At other times, a single figure will achieve an inner peace that figures the whole body of Christ (*en. Ps.*, 76,8; Grove). Sinners in this world below seem to enjoy a peace of this world (*en. Ps.*, 72,10) while members of Augustine’s congregation do not have peace. Those who learn to sing a new song are learning the song of peace (*en. Ps.*, 149,2). Augustine grapples with the relation between the Law and peace (*en. Ps.*, 118,31,5). These are but a sampling of the multiform ways in which the word “peace” extends broadly within Augustine’s preaching. The result, as we shall see, is an expanded semantics of peace as the action of rightly ordered desire: singing, working in harmony, praying, preaching, and praising.

A question at this point arises: do these diverse formulations and applications of peace theologically cohere for Augustine? This essay claims that they do. Each of them has a place within Augustine’s whole Christ. Thus, in order to appreciate the unifying center of his diverse expressions of peace, we must first have in place Augustine’s unifying Christology.

Developing Christology, Developing Peace

Augustine’s Christology evolved as he continued to preach on the Psalms and read more deeply in Pauline texts. The scholarly consensus on Augustine’s Christology has also recently evolved. Twenty-five years ago, as noted by Michael Heintz (1993), it was debatable as to whether or not one could describe Augustine as having a Christology. However, as scholars have looked to Augustine’s figurative exegesis as a source of his theology (I grant that “theology” is our word, not Augustine’s), more work is coming forth about the relationship between his thinking about Christ and the act of sacred reading. I will trace a Christological development in two moments. For the first, I rely on the work of Michael Cameron’s *Christ Meets Me Everywhere* (2012). For the second, I rely on my own *Memory and the Whole Christ* (2015). Both Cameron and I are attempting to articulate watershed moments in Augustine’s development. Both moments have to do with the exegesis of Christ’s voice concerning the word “me.” Once we have established these two moments, we will be able to appreciate fully Christ’s voice as that of peace (*en. Ps.*, 84,10).

Psalm 21 stands as a foundational moment in Augustine’s exegesis. This psalm provided Augustine with a model for how the human and the divine in the

incarnate word might relate and interact. The phrase at the heart of the problem is Christ's cry of dereliction from the cross: "O God, my God, why have you forsaken me, and left me far from salvation?" (*en. Ps.*, 21,1,1). Augustine opens his explanation of the first verse by stating that "the words of this psalm are spoken in the person of the crucified one, for here at its beginning is the cry he uttered while he hung upon the cross" (*en. Ps.*, 21,1,1). With the question of who is speaking having been solved from the outset, Augustine has to explain how it is that these words could make sense on the lips of the crucified one. Augustine's earliest psalm expositions showed him wrestling with the problem of how it was that the human flesh of Jesus could speak in the text without seeming like the human part of Jesus were praying to the divine part of Jesus. The same problem is at issue here. If Jesus were truly divine, then he would have never been forsaken by God. If Jesus were truly human, then he would have known the human feeling of abandonment. Augustine clarifies the speaker by plunging into the mystery of redemption. Christ is indeed speaking, but he speaks in "the character of our old self, whose mortality he bore and which was nailed to the cross with him" (*en. Ps.*, 21,1,1). In assuming human flesh, Christ also assumed a human voice and a human death. He spoke in human words so that human beings might speak in his. He died a human death so that humans might die in him.

This is mediation with a universal effect. Augustine uses "Adam" as a trope for all men and women, representing fallen humanity after sin. Christ did not speak in imitation of, on behalf of, or even for the benefit of Adam. Rather Christ—who himself shares Adam's flesh—speaks *in the voice* of Adam because he has taken it up as his own (Cameron 154). Augustine styles this as a great, redemptive "exchange"—death for life—transacted in human flesh (Babcock 30-45). The Manichaeans had thought that someone other than Christ died upon the cross; divinity abhorred entanglement with material. Augustine's insight moved him in precisely the opposite direction. By taking up humanity's cry of dereliction, Christ did not eliminate dereliction but made it possible that those who experience dereliction—or pray the words "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Ps. 21:1)—might not do so alone but in him. This opened up a new way that Christ was a mediator of divinity to humanity. In taking up flesh, the Word also took up death and a voice. Christ on the cross could not have been more human and so his salvific exchange overcame the two most human problems: sin and death. Death and dereliction no longer needed to be experienced alone, but in him.

Augustine's insight into Christ the crucified mediator employed one of his rhetorical skills. *Prosopopeia* was a Greek term for an author's impersonation of

the voice of a character either well known or invented. Known as *fictiones personarum* in the Latin rhetorical tradition, this tool makes present the voice of a person. One sees through the eyes and speaks through the voice of another. But the concept is even older than rhetorical handbooks. The psalms themselves are written such that the one who prays the Psalms sees God coming in majesty, gates lifting high their heads, and laments as one in exile. Cameron explains that “by this device the self transcends itself to become the other, even if only briefly” (181).

Augustine began to experiment with *prosopopeia* in his early psalm expositions, and it provided him a theological and basic hermeneutic for his later ones. At first, this method allowed a multiplicity of voices to speak in various ways: at times the Christian might speak, at times Christ, and at others the Church. These voices began to pray within each other—the individual in the Church, and the Church in Christ. Different voices came to form a “whole” in Christ. The practice of *prosopopeia* gave Augustine the mechanism by which Christ could speak in Adam’s voice and thereby reveal the redemption of the cross. Cameron summarizes: “*Prosopopeia*’s rhetorical transposition of voices provides Augustine with the Christian theological pattern that articulates that momentous exchange” (199). Augustine would continue to treat the crucifixion in six other early psalm expositions. In each, Christ speaks in the first person from the cross (*en. Ps.*, 15, 16, 17, 21, 27, 29, and 30).

The picture of Christ the mediator that emerges from Augustine’s consideration of Psalm 21 hinges on the theological union of voices. Christ speaks in Adam’s voice, employing *prosopopeia* not for the purpose of theatrics or declamation but for the purpose of redeeming human flesh from sin and death. In its mature formulation, Augustine’s Psalm 30 presentation of Christ the mediator and the exchange of voices captures what Augustine’s consideration of the crucifixion added to his understanding of mediation:

But in fact he who deigned to assume the form of a slave, and within that form to clothe us with himself, he who did not disdain to take us up into himself, did not disdain either to transfigure us into himself, and to speak in our words, so that we in our turn might speak in his. This is the wonderful exchange, the divine business deal, the transaction effected in this world by the heavenly dealer. He came to receive insults and give honors, he came to drain the cup of suffering and give salvation, he came to undergo death and give life (*en. Ps.*, 30.2.3).

Augustine’s second watershed insight came with his considering the relevance of Acts 9:4, and the theology of the ascension, for his continued considerations

of speaking in Christ's voice. I have shown that Augustine's mediator Christ comes to its complete configuration after the ascension, which Augustine explains in conjunction with Acts 9:4, the conversion of Paul (Grove 35-57).

When Saul was rebuked by God on the road to Damascus, a voice from heaven asked him the question: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). Saul asks the voice to identify itself and Jesus responds: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (9:5). Augustine points out that Christ had certainly already ascended into heaven, and that Saul's actions could not have directly harmed the resurrected and ascended flesh of Christ (*en. Ps.*, 30,3,3). Rather, Saul had been "raging against" Christians on earth (*en. Ps.*, 30,2,3). Augustine asks why it might have been that Christ did not say why are you persecuting "my saints" or "my servants," but rather "why are you persecuting me?" (*en. Ps.*, 30,2,3). His conclusion is that when the voice of Christ spoke to Saul it was saying the equivalent of "why attack my limbs? The Head was crying out on behalf of the members, and the Head was *transfiguring the members into himself*" (*en. Ps.*, 30,2,3). The voice from heaven indicated that head and body were one. Further, Augustine explains that the relationship between head and body is continually established and renewed by means of the head. As a result, the head continues to transfigure the members into himself, even after ascending to heaven. This is Augustine's complete configuration of head and members imagery. In speaking through the members, the head "transfigures" the members into himself. Christ's mediation after the ascension is an ongoing action of transfiguration of his own body still on earth.

The central consideration of this scriptural text hinges on the same word as Augustine's consideration of Psalm 21: "me." In Psalm 21, Christ speaks from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" The "me" of the cry of dereliction is Christ, who is speaking in the voice of Adam. In Acts 9, Augustine again determines the referent of "me." This time "me" is Christ speaking in his members.

Augustine's exegesis of Acts 9:4 helped him to discover the indispensable part played by the ascension in Christ's mediation (Grove 48-57). In Augustine's homilies that treat the ascension, he builds on the language of "taking up" we have encountered in considering the incarnation and crucifixion. Christ had taken up human flesh in the incarnation of the word. Christ had also taken up other aspects of the human condition, including taking up a human death and a human voice such that he could speak in the voice of Adam on the cross. After the resurrection, Christ ascends—literally taking up a human body—to heaven. One could imagine this being the end of Christ's mediation as Augustine is clear to say

that humans do not yet glory in immortality. Christ, however, does not set down again what he has taken up. Augustine reminds his congregants that if Christ purchased their redemption in his death and resurrection, he is now gathering up after the ascension that which he bought (Grove 50). Christ the individual's body ascended, but the ascension made Augustine consider Christ's being head of a body of which human beings are members (1 Cor. 12:12). Augustine maintains that the members of the body remained connected to the head in grace, even though physically they might be on earth. From heaven then the head would experience and understand the sufferings and plight of the members.

Augustine puts this point vividly. The whole Christ functions like the tongue of a body speaking in the name of the foot. When one's foot is trampled in a crowd, the tongue cries out, "You are treading on me!" not, "You are treading on my foot." (50-51). The tongue was not crushed; the foot does not speak. Nonetheless, the unity of tongue and foot within the body allows the tongue to say "me" for both. Augustine thus does not differentiate among voices speaking Psalm 30, such as "Christ is speaking here in the prophet," for he can simply say "Christ is speaking." Christ speaks because on the cross Christ "transfigured the body's cry and made it his own" (*en. Ps.*, 30,2,11; Grove 50). The ascension extends that speaking relationship beyond Christ's immediate bodily presence on earth. Head and members mean that once separate voices within a psalm—in this text the prophet, the people redeemed, and the people in fear—are all be transfigured into the one voice from the one body of Christ.

For Augustine, the mediatory acts of Christ on earth—like transfiguring humanity's cry by taking up Psalm 21 from the cross—did not cease after he ascended to heaven. Rather, Augustine transfers these mediatory relations to the interaction between head and body. Both head and members maintain unique voices on account of the actual difference of Christ being in heaven and humans being on earth. Nevertheless, in the mystery, or *sacramentum*, of their union, as intimate as bridegroom and bride, head and members speak together.

This union of voices provides the most useful way of assessing the development of Augustine's theology of peace. Peace maps onto the same development that I have just established. A comparison of two psalm expositions, one from his very first commentaries before his whole Christ was fully configured and one from his mature exegesis, proves this point.

The first example is *en. Ps.* 28, an early exposition before the whole Christ was a fully formed concept for Augustine. The psalm closes with the line "The Lord

will bless his people with peace.” Augustine’s sermon here is flatly descriptive. Augustine simply states that peace was not promised to people here below and that strength is required to endure the “world’s storms and squalls” (*en. Ps.*, 28,11). Augustine continues to explain, however, “This same Lord will bless his people by granting them peace in himself, for he said, ‘My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you.’” (*en. Ps.*, 28,11). Two observations are possible at this juncture. First, Augustine’s people are to be aware that life on earth has storms and squalls. Secondly, Augustine uses an insight from the Gospel of John—another important locus of his considering peace—to claim that the peace which might bless his people and be left with them is going to come from Christ.

In Augustine’s early exegesis much is undeveloped. Though the word peace actually occurs frequently in these early expositions (*en. Ps.*, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 28, 29), Augustine has not yet configured how it is that the peace of Christ is mediated to his earthly body. By the time of his later expositions, this has become clear. *Enarratio in Psalmo 125* provides a clear example. The psalm line of interest is, “Those who sow in tears will reap with joy” (*en. Ps.*, 125,11). Augustine describes this life as a tear-filled life in which those who sow are planting the good works of mercy. Further, Augustine describes that the place where these works of mercy are to be planted is Christ. For, he preaches, “no place is vaster than Christ” (*en. Ps.*, 125).

Those who sow works of mercy in Christ have a single harvest: peace. Yet, this peace is not for those who give half-heartedly. They imitate the kenotic gift of Christ. Augustine shows this with examples from the scriptures. He holds up Zacchaeus who welcomes Christ and gives half of what he owns to the poor (Lk. 19:8). He mentions the widow who gives of her two small coins (Lk. 21:1-4). These are the sowers and reapers of what Augustine describes as “peace on earth to people of good will” (*en. Ps.*, 125,11). Inasmuch as they are in Christ, they are ever more aware of cultivating this good will, the sowing of mercy, and the reaping of peace. Augustine writes,

“Perhaps you are also aware of some need suffered by your own kin, and then you offer help if Christ is in you; and you offer it to strangers too. And the same holds good for beggars among themselves: professional beggars, I mean. Even they have the means to help one another in times of trouble” (*en. Ps.*, 125,12).

Implicating everyone in his congregation from wealthy to families to beggars, Augustine uses their location in the whole Christ to show that the peace which

they might reap is only that which is produced by showing mercy. He continues with a flourish,

“One person is disabled and cannot walk; let another who can walk lend his feet to the lame man. Let someone who can see lend her eyes to the blind. And let one who is young and healthy lend his strength to another who is old or ill and carry him” (*en. Ps.*, 125,12).

This is the Christological body in which peace is reaped by those who sow with earthly tears. Those who reap the harvest of peace are always planting works of mercy and charity within the body of Christ.

In this section we have traced the development of Augustine’s whole Christ. It has allowed us to see, in its mature formulation, that Augustine understood the whole Christ as a location in which the members were ever being transformed and transfigured by their head. Because Augustine also correlates Christ with peace, this head and members relation within Christ also neatly configures an Augustinian exegesis of peace. It is to the practical ways in which peace is mediated within Christ that we now turn. We look at the actions of the whole Christ: preaching, singing, and participating.

Preaching, Singing, Participating

In *Enarratio in Psalmo 121*, Augustine describes how it is that the whole Christ allows individuals to participate in the being of God. Augustine extends that participation to peace. Augustine begins by describing participation in the “Selfsame” or “Being-Itself” (*Idipsum*) as a difficult idea to comprehend. He encourages his congregants to struggle, to try to understand, to strain at the edges of their intellects. After identifying Being-Itself with the Exodus theophany (3:14), I am who am, Augustine turns to Christ. In the paragraph of his sermon which follows, Augustine preaches about participation in Being-Itself based on the same insights he gathered from Psalm 21:1 and Acts 9:4. The Word from the beginning became a participant in what we are so that we might participate in the Word. Augustine preaches:

You cannot take it in, for this is too much to understand, too much to grasp. Hold on instead to what he whom you cannot understand became for you. Hold onto the flesh of Christ, onto which you, sick and helpless, left wounded and half dead by robbers, are hoisted, that you may be taken to the inn and healed there. Let us run to the house of the Lord, run all the way to that city, so that our feet may stand there, in that place which ‘is being built like a city,

which shares in the Selfsame.’ To what am I telling you to hold fast? Hold onto what Christ became for you, because Christ himself, even Christ, is rightly understood by this name, I AM WHO AM, inasmuch as he is in the form of God. In that nature wherein ‘he deemed it no robbery to be God’s equal,’ there he is Being-Itself. But that you might participate in Being-Itself, he first of all became a participant in what you are; ‘the Word was made flesh’ so that flesh might participate in the Word (*en. Ps.*, 121,5).

The ongoing Christological participation of Augustine’s hearers with Christ their head is the way in which they can know the more difficult concept of the being of God. Yet in the same passage Augustine references the place where his and his hearers’ feet might stand, namely the “forecourts of Jerusalem,” as Augustine read in Psalm 121.

As the psalmist writes that peace might reign for Jerusalem, Augustine interrogates his hearers as to what makes for the peace of Jerusalem? Augustine’s answer is simple. The peace of Jerusalem consists in acts of mercy and love (*en. Ps.*, 121,9-12). As he preaches, he recalls passages which he has used before and with which his hearers might be familiar. In describing the peace of Jerusalem for his hearers, he again calls forth the contribution of Zacchaeus and the giving of even a cup of cold water in the name of Christ (*en. Ps.*, 121,10). It is through acts of charity and mercy that people here below participate in the peace of the heavenly Jerusalem. The root of this participation, according to Augustine, is a rising above one’s own “self-seeking” in order to seek the good of the other. Thus, Augustine is able to say that the ascent to God—a common trope both in the Psalms and his modified Neoplatonism—is undertaken by the Church, the saints, the pilgrims, and the needy together (*en. Ps.*, 121,11-14).

Participation in Christ is how Augustine justifies his continuous preaching of peace. He quickly admits—and does so consistently throughout his sermons—that there is not the fullness of peace for the body of Christ during its pilgrimage on earth. Augustine preaches, “I do not yet enjoy your peace, but I preach of your peace to others. I preach it not for my own gain, as do the heretics who seek their own advancement as they say, ‘Peace be with you,’ when in truth they do not have the peace they preach to the peoples” (*en. Ps.*, 121,13). Rather, Augustine preaches peace for the sake of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, so that even now his hearers might “Pluck fruit from it, eat, drink, grow strong, and seize the prize” (*en. Ps.*, 121,14). He does not promise his hearers that they will produce the fullness of peace in their midst. Instead, by straining toward the courts of Jerusalem, they participate—together, not alone—in the peace which is rightly theirs in Christ.

In addition to Augustine's preaching, one of his favorite expressions for learning to participate in the heavenly peace of Christ is to learn to sing. The new song, which is the song of the whole Christ, is the song of peace (*en. Ps.*, 97,1). It is not a song of this world, but one learned through the scriptures and sung by whole Christ (*en. Ps.*, 149,2). To learn to sing such a song, however, is inherently difficult on account of the discordant voices of bodily desires, fatigue, vexations, cravings, and wants that plague human singers (*en. Ps.*, 84,10). The song is not determined by these things however. The voice that speaks peace is always Christ's. Augustine preaches, "The voice of Christ, the voice of God, is peace, and it calls us to peace. Come, he says, love peace, all you who are not yet at peace, for what greater benefit to yourselves can you find in me than peace?" (*en. Ps.*, 84,10). It is important here to see that Augustine is saying that the voice of Christ speaks to and in his people in the present. Though the fullness of peace is not realized on earth, the desiring of it, learning to sing of it, and speaking of it with the words of Christ simultaneously moves them along in their journey toward its attainment.

Augustine is creating in his hearers a desire to speak of the city of God without end. He heightens this desire in his congregants:

be in a city... my brothers and sisters, when I begin to speak about that city I do not want to stop, especially when offenses grow rank all around us. We cannot help desiring that city, whence no friend departs, where no enemy gains entrance, where there is no tempter, or disturber of the peace, no one to cause divisions within God's people, none to collude with the devil in harassing the Church when the prince of demons is flung into the eternal fire, along with all those who support him and refuse to abandon his service. A peace made pure will reign among God's children: they will all love themselves as they see themselves full of God, and God will be all in all. [...] He himself will be our peace, perfect and total (*en. Ps.*, 84,10).

This is his description of the peace that is currently being spoken by the voice of Christ into him and his congregation. The final line gives the heart of Augustine's eschatology of peace: it produces a vision of the self and the neighbor as full of God. The members of Christ will have fully assumed their identity. Yet, it would be a mistake to see such eschatological language as removed from the current bodily lives of his congregants. As much as Augustine seeks to lift their hearts, desires, and voices toward the peace which satisfies, this rhetoric functions as a spiritual exercise for those who undertake it. Those who seek and desire peace also, he claims, begin to act justly or to love justice as "peace's friend" (*en. Ps.*, 84,12). Quarrelling with peace's friend includes for

Augustine: stealing, committing adultery, doing to another what one does not wish to endure, or saying to another what one would not wish to hear (*en. Ps.*, 84,12). By acting justly, one simultaneously lives more fully his or her identity as Christ's peace. Augustine says of those who act justly, "You will not need to seek [peace] for long, for she will run to meet you, so that she may kiss justice" (*en. Ps.*, 84,12). One acts justly and becomes just. As one desires, sings, and speaks of peace, he or she participates in Christ's peace. Augustine describes this transfigurative journeying together as Christ refashioning those who follow in his footsteps precisely by the fact that they are following, speaking, singing, and participating in the "Selfsame" along the way.

In each instance, the movement toward peace in Christ is a movement toward unity. The care extended in mercy to the poor draws together the body of Christ. At the conclusion of his sermon on Psalm 147, Augustine describes those who see God as ones at peace. Augustine asks "In what peace?" and he answers his own question "in the peace of Jerusalem, for the psalm says, 'He has established peace on your frontiers.' There we shall praise him. All of us will be one in the one Christ, and all of us will be intent upon him who is one, for nevermore shall we be a crowd of scattered individuals" (*en. Ps.*, 147,28). The sermon ends with one of Augustine's enduring concerns, that the process of seeking, desiring, and loving peace, whether by preaching, singing, or participating, might also have the effect of drawing along those who are scattered into the one Christ.

As inspiring of a vision as that is, it is secondary evidence of the divisions within North African Christianity about which Augustine was well aware and frequently preached. Thus, from Augustine's clear desire for union among those who are scattered, we turn now to his treatment of those situations where peace is not to be found.

Lacking Peace, Seeking Peace

Augustine's articulation of peace through the whole Christ is relevant for those lacking peace and those seeking peace. As such, three discernable theological points emerge.

First, earthly peacemakers in some way attain the peace that is our common good (*en. Ps.*, 127,16). This qualifies Augustine's more frequent statements that human beings are in conflict with themselves—their own bodies, desires, and wills. Humans are also in conflict outside of themselves, agreeing at times to partial peace that is "treacherous, unstable, precarious, unreliable" (*en. Ps.*,

127,16). Yet, Augustine qualifies these honest statements about the difficulties and battles of the temporally embedded life by stating that we can see the fruits of our good works. He specifically brings up works like almsgiving. Peacemakers, he says, “surround the Lord’s table like a nursery of young olive trees” (*en. Ps.*, 127,16). These young trees are fruit bearing and do so by means of their deeds for Christ. The Lord, who comes hungry, thirsty, naked, and a stranger, is the beneficiary of their fruitfulness (Mt. 25:35-40). In other words, the other members of Christ are the recipients of the good works of the peacemakers. The consequence is that peace is never established for the self or self-interest. Peacemaking is inherently a communal and community-creating exercise. The whole Christ, for Augustine, extends to the ends of the earth and includes all creation. Peacemakers who truly share in the peace of the heavenly Jerusalem have this communal end.

Second, Augustine learns from Psalm 119 to deal peaceably with those who hate peace. His first worry is about hypocrisy on the part of one who has begun to sing the new song of peace. He writes that one can test the truth of what he or she is singing only if one’s actions are in harmony with his or her song (*en. Ps.*, 147,9). If one sings the song of peace yet is not at peace, there is a dissonance between song and act. A song of Christ is equally on the heart and the actions of the lips. This proved to be a challenging teaching, especially concerning one of Augustine’s frequently commented on North African antagonists, the Donatists.

Augustine describes the Donatists as those who, at their own choosing, compromise the unity of the whole Christ. At one point, using the metaphor of the body, he refers to them as Christ’s self-amputating arm, a society only of the pure and self-selected (Cameron). In terms of peace, Augustine includes the Donatists among those who hate peace because they tear apart unity within the Catholic Church. Of great importance, however, is Augustine’s holding open the possibility that those who hate peace might be drawn again into it. Augustine shows a hesitance to cut anyone off from the possibility of reunion within the body of Christ. He writes,

Whose voice is it in this psalm—ours or theirs? You must decide! The Catholic Church says, ‘Unity must not be sacrificed; God’s church must not be rent apart. God will judge later between the bad and the good. If the bad people cannot be sorted out from the good now, they must be borne with for the time being. Bad people can be with us on the threshing-floor but cannot be in the barn. In any case, those who appear to be bad today may be good tomorrow, just as those who today are proud of their own goodness may tomorrow turn

out to be bad. Anyone who humbly tolerates bad people for a time will attain everlasting rest. This is the Catholic voice (*en. Ps.*, 119,9).

To be certain, Augustine would preach without relenting against Donatism, as Michael Cameron has shown. What makes this passage of interest is his approach to the church. Peace is not merely to be made with good people, for the church itself is a mixture of wheat and chaff on the threshing floor. Within the church these roles are not fixed. One who is good might become bad and vice versa. Thus, while Augustine supports the unity of the Catholic Church against any division, he fully realizes that those who strive for eternal peace will also tolerate those who sever and break the temporal peace of the church. It is a difficult conclusion: those who love peace and strive for it will tolerate even those who hate and break peace. For the lover of peace is one who tirelessly works for union and cannot make the mistake, as Augustine alleged that the Donatists did, of leaving behind many good people whom they stigmatized as evil (*en. Ps.*, 119,9).

Augustine summarizes the way in which those who work for peace follow the uniting, incarnational pattern in Christ. He writes, "If Christ is peace because he made two into one, how can you make one into two? In what sense are you promoters of peace, if when Christ makes two into one, you make one into two?" (*en. Ps.*, 119,9). Augustine, committed to dealing peaceably even with those who hate peace, holds union and unity as that which cannot be compromised because Christ cannot be divided.

The third point concerning Augustine and situations that lack peace returns to the Christological in-speaking which we have discussed in the evolution of the whole Christ. Following one of his oft quoted psalm lines "Seek peace and pursue it" (*en. Ps.*, 33,2,19), Augustine is honest about the ways in which peace is lacking. The individual struggles with the lusts of the body over and against the spirit. One gives alms and still takes what does not belong to him or her. One clothes the poor while still in some way taking advantage of them. Augustine reminds his hearers that they are still engaged in this earthly contest. And his advice to them is to speak, ask, and "say to God" their desire for peace. He reminds his hearers, "Listen there to our head joining his voice to ours" (*en. Ps.*, 143,9). This joining is both performed in recitation of the text of the psalm concerning peace and it is also enacted in their own lives. Augustine is trying to foster peace by stimulating and sustaining in his congregants an ongoing relationship of speech with Christ. By speaking in Christ's words, or experiencing his words joined to their own, Augustine and his congregants again know and

incarnate a word of peace which their voices and their circumstances could not otherwise produce. Those who seek peace speak in Christ.

Relevance for Reading Other Augustinian Formulations of Peace

On Augustine's teaching peace throughout his writings, Timo Weissenberg has argued that Augustine's presentation of peace is unsystematic. Weissenberg resists approaching Augustine's understanding of peace as developmental (19–32). This chapter has opened the question about Augustine, development, and peace through a different lens: Christology. In accord with a growing body of literature, I have above presented representative evidence from the *en. Ps.* for the manner in which Augustine's Christology developed as he preached on the psalms—texts in which he was looking for Christ's voice. The question now becomes: if one takes seriously the relationship between Christ and peace for Augustine, then does Augustine's developing Christology—in the places that it touches peace—reshape how he presents peace? This claim does not over-systematize his ideas of peace, but is suggestive for how peace might be studied through Christ.

To demonstrate this claim, I examine here two prominent places in which Augustine treats peace outside of the *en. Ps.* The first, *s. Dom. mon.* was completed between 392–395. It is interesting for this article because it antedates the development of Augustine's *Christus totus* logic which I have laid out above. Further, Augustine returns to issues of peace in *s. Dom. mon.* in his *retr.* (427) near the end of his career. The second example comes from *civ.* where Augustine takes up the issue of peace at length in book 19. In the first example, the relation between Christ and peace is set forth primarily through anthropology with no evidence of psalms or of the *Christus totus*. In *civ.* one compelling passage suggests that the *Christus totus* of the *Enarrationes* has aided Augustine's presentation of peace and that the two texts can work together for increased understanding of his later thought.

In *s. Dom. mon.*, Augustine interprets the line in the beatitudes that the peacemakers shall be called children of God (Mt. 5:9). Augustine's presentation of peace is largely characterized by Lawless's aforementioned category of inner peace as an aspect of anthropology. Peacemakers, as Augustine presents them, resist God in no way. They bring their bodily lusts into right relation by means of reason; they further submit their reason to Christ who

is truth (s. *Dom. mon.* 1.2.9). In this way, both the inferior and the superior within Augustine's anthropology are correlated to Christ as truth. This process of drawing harmony out of disordered lusts is akin to the way in which Augustine describes the triple *concupiscentiae* (lusts of the flesh, eyes, and pride, cf. Gen. 3:6) in his *conf.* (10,30,41; 10,41,66) such that it resolves at the end of the book through Christ the true mediator (*conf.*, 10,42,67-70). This correlation to Christ presents hope for the healing of the individual human divided against the self on account of sin. When Augustine later envisions "perfect peace" in the second book of s. *Dom. mon.*, that peace—realized only in the eschaton—is the condition of no antagonism to beatitude such that the soul and body might be reconciled entirely (s. *Dom. mon.*, 2,6,21-23). When Augustine revisits this work in his *retr.*, he reaffirms that there would always be earthly discord within the human person, rebellion against peace on account of movements against reason until the fulfillment of all things (*retr.*, 1,19,1-2). Again, the dominating focus is on reconciling the individual at war within the self.

Much more could be said of the manner in which peace within the human person might be sought and practiced in these early works. But for the purposes of this argument they show forth the relationship of Christ to peace as that of the true mediator who reconciles the post-lapsarian *distentio* of human body and soul as well as desires of the eyes, of the flesh, and pride of life. These issues of anthropological healing do not disappear for Augustine, and certainly they are present in his treatment of peace in his much later work of *civ.* It is, however, the whole Christ's relation to peace that beckons in this later text. For there one, finds an important reference to the "cry of the members."

In *civ.* 19-22, Augustine concludes his treatise with four books on the eternal destinies of the two cities. His most extensive presentation on peace is in the book 19, beginning with the meanings of peace (e.g. eternal peace as the ultimate good versus the way in which peace is at times used to describe mortal affairs of the earthly city, 19,11) and continuing through numerous issues of peace, justice, the person, the republic, and how one desires the peace that comes only with eternal life. Psalm references related to peace occur at the beginning and end (19,11; 19,26-27).¹

¹ Augustine also cites or alludes to Psalms 96 and 113 in 19,11, but his rhetorical focus at those points is against Porphyry.

At the outset, Augustine presents Jerusalem as the definition of the peace that is the ultimate good of human persons (*civ.*, 19,11). Augustine cites Psalm 147, “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem” which also includes the line that the Lord “has made your borders peace” (147: 12-14). This definition is relatively straightforward, but helpful in two ways. First, in interpreting the meaning of the name of Jerusalem as Augustine understood it, he references what he had said before, Jerusalem means a “vision of peace” (*civ.*, 19,11). The place in which he said it “before” was in his *en. Ps.*, 64,2 or 134,36. This reference itself indicates that Augustine is considering in *civ.* what he had worked out in his preaching on the Psalms. When one looks back to see what Augustine preached on the psalm, one discover that he explicitly cites (147: 12-14), one finds tremendously powerful rhetoric. Augustine exhorts his hearers, “Be Jerusalem, all you who are here today” (*en. Ps.*, 147,7) and “I implore you, citizens of Jerusalem, I charge you by the peace of Jerusalem, by her redeemer, by Jerusalem’s builder and ruler” (*en. Ps.*, 147,1). This rhetoric works in the boundary space between individuated lack of peace (which his hearers have) and eternal peace (which they do not yet have). Augustine can thus preach without contradiction, “The psalm says, ‘sing united praise’ because you, Jerusalem, are comprised of many; but it adds ‘Praise him’ because you have become one” (147,1). This exposition is thought to be written during the first decade of the fifth century (circa 403), antecedent to *civ.* and after Augustine has started using the *Christus totus* in a mature manner in his preaching (Boulding 6.441). This rhetoric provides Augustine a temporally flexible space—already and not yet—where within the whole Christ he can consider that which the head has already attained and the members await with groaning and labor.

At the end of *civ.* 19, Augustine returns to cite Psalm 143:15: “Blessed the people whose God is the Lord” (19,26). Again, Augustine’s *Enarratio in Psalmum* 143,15 is replete with *Christus totus* rhetoric, “What about you, body of Christ? What about you, who are Christ’s members?” (143,19). It is also here that the head and members rhetoric appears explicitly in *civ.* in the context of peace. Augustine writes in the oft quoted passage:

The peace that is proper to us, in contrast, we both have now with God through faith and shall have for all eternity with God through sight. But the peace that we have here, whether the peace common to both the good and the evil or the peace proper to us alone, is a solace for wretchedness rather than the joy of blessedness. Our justice, too, although it is true justice because it is directed to the true supreme good, is such that in this life it consists in the forgiveness of sins rather than in the perfection of virtue. The prayer of the whole city of

God that is on pilgrimage here on earth bears witness to this point. In all its members it cries out to God... (19,27).

Augustine is careful here to maintain a distinction between peace as final good and peace in the earthly city, likewise justice as perfection of virtue and justice as forgiveness. At the end of these careful distinctions, two aspects of the final line of this citation merit further reflection. First, the city of God is on pilgrimage. That statement opens questions of place, mode of pilgrimage, and how one journeys there together. It would be foolish to isolate *civ.* from the scores of *en. Ps.* that treat precisely this pilgrimage of the corporate Christological person—whether figuratively described as Jerusalem, Idithun, whole Christ, or any other number of titles that Augustine used as he continued to preach. Second, and most importantly, Augustine employs the “cry of the members.” If one only read the *civ.* without the complete picture of Augustine’s preaching, then this cry—whether the cry of peace as solace for wretchedness or the cry of justice as forgiveness of sin—remains simply the expression of hope within the vicissitudes of the earthly condition. But, in light of Augustine’s preaching, one knows that Christ “transfigures” that cry by making it his own not only on the cross but after the ascension in the ongoing speech of the members. This ongoing transfiguration forms the juncture between the peace and justice of the earth and the peace and justice of the final good. That, in sum, is what Augustine’s Christology, worked out in the psalms, contributes to understanding peace in *civ.* Further, for scholarship, it suggests that Augustine’s preaching, especially in the places where he treats peace in the context of the *Christus totus*, can provide an instructive complement that deepens appreciation for the terms and possibilities in *civ.*

It may well be the case, as Weissenberg has suggested, that one cannot impose a too simple developmental progression onto Augustine’s occasional presentations on peace. Yet, his Christology does develop and inasmuch as it does, it provides nuance to his treatment of peace. *civ.* 19,11 and 19,26-27 are but suggestive examples, which could open onto larger scale research throughout Augustine’s corpus.

Conclusions

Augustine, *doctor pacis*, could be accused of being rather pessimistic about earthly peace. Within ourselves and our desires, human persons cannot sustain the peace that we seek. In our communities, we divide rather than unite. Even when we find the courage within ourselves to feed, clothe, and serve, we

can do good things for the wrong reasons, failing the integrity of purpose and being that characterize the citizens of the city of God.

A more charitable reading of Augustine would be that he, in his *en. Ps.* took as a starting point the brokenness of the world around him, including within himself. Searching for peace began from division, both within the self and society. Moreover, the search for peace pushed him to look to the fullest and final example of the heavenly Jerusalem. He would explore this heavenly peace and the search for it in many ways, from seeking it at the height of his spiritual exercises in *conf.* 10 to the theological configuration of the heavenly Jerusalem in *civ.*

However, Augustine believed eschatological peace is indeed mediated to those who lack peace now. That structure of mediation, for Augustine, is the whole Christ—an earthy, all-encompassing, and uncompromisingly united Christ. In this structure, which Augustine realized through the practice of his own spiritual reading of the Psalms, those here below can participate in their head as they journey along their way. The way is also the end. Augustine preached, “I could not have seen it myself if I had not seen it through the eyes of Christ, if indeed, I had not been in him” (*en. Ps.*, 118,30,4). His helping his congregants to realize their location in Christ gave them an already-but-not-yet experience of peace. That desire, yearning, and journeying to complete peace, however, also implicated them in their works. For journeying toward peace in Christ means becoming rightly disposed to both oneself and others. The poor, the needy, the repentant sinner, and the neighbor all became figures of primary importance in Augustine’s theology of peace. Peace simply cannot be practiced or attained if any of Christ’s members is ignored.

Augustine’s vision of peace is Christ’s. Yet he does not pass it off as an unattainable goal or a contemplation removed from the slings and arrows of discord which he and his community faced on a daily basis. Rather, Christ, in whom he and his congregants found themselves, spoke in their words so that they might speak in his. He united himself to their humanity so that they might be united to his divinity. This union is ongoing for Augustine. Christ speaks and sings a song of peace so that humans might be able to sing such a new song not only with their own voices but with Christ’s, not only with their own actions, but Christ’s. Indeed, for humans who seek peace, Augustine’s theological advice is that they—with all of their being—learn in Christ together to speak and then to sing.



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