

the unity of the testaments is to be found in the voice of Christ, whose own teaching is summed up in the twofold love command. This command thus becomes 'a hermeneutical key to Scripture' (96). Love is always paired with the humility for Augustine, 'for by humility love is preserved.' (145, commenting on Galatians 2.11-14).

What is striking is that, despite – or rather, precisely in Augustine's claim that Peter truly did err in imposing Jewish customs on Gentiles, it is *Peter* who is most worthy of imitation on the occasion of his being rebuked by Paul. Peter graciously received rebuke publicly and from a junior colleague, and it is his humility in so doing that prompts Augustine to commend the *imitatio Petrus*. The building up of the Christian community finds concrete manifestation in this loving, though difficult exchange, an exchange which Augustine invites us to imitate in our life together.

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### *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*

Robert Dodaro

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. viii + 253pp., h/b.

#### SUMMARY

Dodaro shows the influence of Augustine's doctrines of Christ and Scripture on his conception of justice through categories of classical rhetoric. Detailed exegesis offers an interpretation that focuses on the truly Christian virtue of 'pietas', requiring moral conversion for just social action, which tends toward an individualist reading of society.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dodaro zeigt den Einfluss der Lehren des Augustinus über Christus und die Schrift auf seine Konzeption der Gerechtigkeit mittels der Kategorien der klassischen Rhetorik. Eine detaillierte Exegese bietet eine Interpretation, die den wahrhaft christlichen Wert der „pietas“ fokussiert, die eine moralische Konversion für gerechtes soziales Handeln erfordert und zu einer individualistischen Leseweise der Gesellschaft tendiert.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Dodaro montre quelle influence la doctrine que Saint Augustin avait de Christ et de l'Écriture a influencé sa conception de la justice à travers les catégories de la rhétorique classique. Une exégèse détaillée aboutit à une interprétation centrée sur la vertu chrétienne véritable qu'est la *pietas*, qui requiert une conversion morale en vue d'une action sociale juste, laquelle tend à être conçue à partir d'une compréhension individualiste de la société.

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The publisher's cover blurb suggests that this book con-

siders 'Augustine's political thought and ethics in relation to his theology.' Dodaro, in fact, rightly sees Augustine's theology as already encompassing political and ethical reflection and not needing a relation to be externally posited. This study therefore underlines 'how alien it [Augustine's thought] is to our modern, compartmentalized approach to issues in philosophy or theology.' (1)

Robert Dodaro explores Augustine's thinking on the just society, again, in a manner that would bewilder those looking for the run-of-the-mill themes of contemporary justice discussions such as (re)distribution and rights. We find the expected extensive reference to *City of God*, as well as a deeper mining of Augustine's polemical writings, letters and commentaries. The book's strength is its particular focus on Augustine's Christology and his interpretation of Scripture as important sources for his theology and pastoral advice. The chapter headings are as follows: Introduction; 1: Eloquence and virtue in Cicero's statesman; 2: Justice and the limits of the soul; 3: Christ and the formation of the just society; 4: Divine eloquence and virtue in the scriptures; 5: Wisdom's hidden reasons; 6: Eloquence and virtue in Augustine's statesman. A final General Conclusion admirably summarises the findings of each part of the book serving well as a guide to judicious reading.

Facing the problem of sin, understood as ignorance and weakness, (ch. 2) we read that '[c]entral to Augustine's conception of piety as practised by statesmen is their public acknowledgement of the limits of their virtue through prayer to God for forgiveness of their sins' (57). Ch. 3 develops a notion of communication of justice by grace whereby the incarnation is presented 'as a divine discourse by which human beings are justified.' (107) Particular attention is given to the influence of the Pelagian controversy for Augustine's developing Christology, where Christ's communication of virtue, as the body's head to its members, is framed in the language of classical rhetoric (Ch. 1)

As Dodaro's reading develops one emphasis is clear: Augustine cannot envisage true justice being known or practised, even partially, without the effecting, by grace, of moral conversion. (119, 144) Ch.4 deals with Augustine's theology of scripture as a function of his Christology leading to Ch. 5's examination of his understanding of scriptural examples of virtue that, in argument with Pelagius, become models of limit and penitence rather than simply 'heroes of old'. True justice requires the true piety of love of God and neighbour, and the abandoning of a presumptuous, pagan effort to secure such virtue by dint of individual effort. So 'faith and humility are the initial virtues required by human beings who desire to live justly.' (p. 217). This fits a vision of the just society rather than merely just individuals by the same incorporating logic of the incarnation that issues in Augustine's thinking about the church. The church is that society that anticipates the future, truly just society of the *City of God*. Nevertheless Dodaro implicitly displays one of two possibilities in reading Augustine, whereby his



focus, through Christology and virtue, example and sacrament, imagines society from below as a mere aggregation of just individuals. There is clearly potential to read Augustine as he does, yet making more of ecclesiology could allow for a different emphasis that might go further to answering our question about society. Dodaro's work would need to be supplemented by a more ambitiously synthetic and constructive reading of Augustine to answer questions as to what he means by society and how the church as society relates to wider society and its rulers.

An ironic flip side to the individualist virtue reading is that there is evidence that justice is still conceived by the author within the modern parameters of a 'state of affairs' rather than conceiving of justice as a task to be undertaken. This points to a kind of 'end of history' thinking whereby Christian virtue is slotted into the place of Fukuyama's liberal democracy and market. This does not account for Augustine's view of historical development, and acute awareness of the eschatological framing of his doctrine, but may account for reading the church as anticipation, and not concrete instantiation in the present, of the City of God.

This is a work of historical theology where, happily, meticulously researched history does not drive out a nuanced theological reading. The challenge remains for the reader to reflect in equal detail on our own context so that, in evaluating Augustine's thought, this learning can guide our need for repentance, faith, humility and love in political thought.

*Andy Draycott, Aberdeen*

### *Itinerant Temples. Tent Methodism 1814-1832*

**J.K. Lander**

Paternoster, 2003, p/b, £19.99, pp 268., ISBN: 1842271512

#### SUMMARY

J.K. Lander has produced a readable and scholarly account of a previously little-known Methodist break-away group, the Tent Methodists. They first emerged from Wesleyan Methodism in the second decade of the C19th in the Bristol, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire area although they later established a foothold in London, Liverpool and Manchester. They were essentially a revivalist group who, according to Lander, may well have flourished as a reaction to the growing middle-classness of early C19th Wesleyanism. Their leadership and organisation were never as strong as other Methodist offshoots such as the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians and this may account for their short life-span of only 18 years. This is a scholarly book that has been assembled by painstaking scrutiny of fragmentary primary sources.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

J. K. Lander hat eine lesbare und gelehrte Darstellung einer

bisher wenig bekannten methodistischen Splittergruppe geschrieben, der Tent-Methodisten. Sie gingen ursprünglich in der zweiten Dekade des 19. Jahrhunderts in der Gegend von Bristol, Gloucestershire und Wiltshire aus den Wesley-Methodisten hervor, obwohl sie sich später in London, Liverpool und Manchester etablierten. Sie waren im wesentlichen eine erweckliche Gruppe, die laut Lander wahrscheinlich als Reaktion auf die steigende Popularität des Wesleyanismus im Mittelstand des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts aufblühte. Ihre Leitung und ihre Organisation war nie so stark wie andere methodistische Gruppen wie z. B. die „Ursprünglichen Methodisten“ und die „Bibel-Christen“, und dies mag ihr kurzes Leben von nur 18 Jahren erklären. Dies ist ein gelehrtes Buch, das aus der Sammlung und sorgfältigen Prüfung fragmentarischer Primärquellen entstanden ist.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Voici une présentation à la fois accessible et de caractère scientifique, d'un petit groupe méthodiste dissident méconnu, les « Méthodistes de la tente ». Ils sont tout d'abord issus du méthodisme Wesleyen au cours de la deuxième décennie du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans la région de Bristol, de Gloucestershire et de Wiltshire, et ont ensuite établi des bastions à Londres, Liverpool et Manchester. C'était essentiellement un mouvement revivaliste qui, d'après Lander, pourrait bien être né d'une réaction à la mentalité grandissante de classe moyenne au sein du mouvement méthodiste au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ils n'ont jamais eu une direction et une organisation aussi forte que d'autres mouvements issus du méthodisme comme les « Méthodistes primitifs » et les « Chrétiens de la Bible », ce qui peut expliquer qu'ils n'aient pas subsisté plus de dix-huit années. Ce livre est le résultat d'un examen minutieux de sources fragmentaires de première main.

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This book charts the rise and fall of a little-known Methodist breakaway group known as the Tent Methodists. In many ways similar to groups such as the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians they lacked the leadership and organisational skills of these two earlier groups. Led by John Pyer and George Pocock the Tent Methodists first emerged in the Bristol area in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Their first tent which was able to accommodate 500-700 people was taken to a number of towns and villages in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol. Although the group was primarily located in this area of south west England, Tent Methodism also took root in Manchester, Liverpool and London. Tents were used in the initial evangelism stages but once a congregation was established buildings were either rented or purchased

The energy and charisma of Pocock and Pyer enabled Tent Methodism to make rapid progress in the early stages. It was estimated that 900,000 people heard the tent preachers in 1817 alone. By 1820 the Tent Methodists had established their own connexional organisation