

**Kenosis as a Spirituality and an Ethic:
The Church and Secularity**

Kerry Kronberg

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Theology

Faculty of Theology
Saint Paul University

© Kerry Jean Wilson Kronberg, Ottawa, Canada, 2018

ABSTRACT

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the kenotic conversation made a pronounced shift from ontological speculation about the Incarnation of Christ to discussion of kenosis as a metaphor for God's self-emptying or self-giving existence. God's kenosis is manifest through creation and, most perfectly, through the crucified Christ who is the standard for authentic human, Spirit-enlivened life. In Western secular culture, where a primary question centres on what it means to be the most genuine version of oneself, kenosis offers an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody a faithful and relevant response. David Tracy's hermeneutic of mutually critical correlation offers a method for a church-secular dialogue which assumes everybody is asking questions and seeking answers. Secular people must listen to each other, not to the end of achieving a fictitious sociological neutrality, rather with the goal of intelligently upholding distinct points of view.

To the question of genuine humanity, contemporary people, religious and otherwise, have come up with some answers. In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor describes key ways that Western secular people understand genuine humanity in an "immanent" situation. Because the contemporary Western church is grounded in the same philosophical and historical milieu as secular culture, the church and culture are likely to view the situation and solutions in similar categories providing common ground for conversation.

Kenosis as a Christian spirituality and ethic is explored through Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*, W.H. Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, and Lucien Richard's *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*. This offers a way for Christians to raise the conversation about genuine humanity in a way that correlates with, expands on and even transforms common understandings.¹

¹These comments are excerpted from the beginning of chapter four of this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	1
Western Secularities: Three Notions	2
“Secularity Three” and “The Age of Authenticity”	3
Kenosis: Philippians 2	5
Contemporary Catholic Conversations: Kenosis in Secularity	5
Contemporary Protestant and Anglican Conversations: Kenosis in Secularity	9
The Fourth Interpretive Phase of Kenosis	13
Definitions: Spirituality and Ethics	13
Methodology	17
Chapter 1: Jürgen Moltmann’s <i>The Crucified God</i>	21
The Identity-Involvement Dilemma	21
A Dialectical Existence	23
A Kenotic Christology	25
Kenosis in the Trinity: Suffering in God	27
A Kenotic Anthropology	29
Kenosis and Psychological Freedom	30
Kenosis and Political Freedom	32
Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in <i>The Crucified God</i>	34
Kenotic Spiritual Practices	
Letting Go of Previous Identity Constructs	35
Choosing Fellowship with the Sufferings of Jesus	37
Watching and Praying Within the Silence of God	37
Kenotic Virtues	
Agape	39
Sympathy	40
Hope	41
Kenotic Moral Decision-Making	
Society in the Church: The ‘Outsider’ is In?	42
The Church in Society: In Christ <i>and</i> Political	44
Chapter 2: W.H. Vanstone’s <i>Love’s Endeavour, Love’s Expense</i>	48
The Church and Societal Need	49
The Identity-Involvement Dilemma Applied to Vanstone’s Experience	50
The Church and Societal Strength	51
From Significance through Utility to Significance in Being: A Work of Love	53
Defining Human Love: A Phenomenological Method	54
The Kenosis of Christ and The Kenosis of God	56

Secularity and The Church: Two Ways to Respond to (God's) Kenotic Love	60
The Significance of the Church: Recognizing God's Kenotic Love	63
Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in <i>Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense</i>	66
Kenotic Spiritual Practices	
The Church in Love	67
Kenotic Virtues	
Self-Giving Love as Agape-Eros	68
Patience	72
Kenotic Moral Decision-Making	
Mutuality	73
Acceptance and Change	74
Chapter 3: Lucien Richard's <i>Christ: The Self-Emptying of God</i>	75
The Problem of Dehumanization: Seeking 'Greatness' Without Limits	76
Toward a Kenotic Christology	78
Kenotic Christology in Scripture	79
Patristics and Kenosis	81
A Kenotic Christology 'From Below' and the Incarnation	82
Kenosis and the Trinity	83
Kenosis and Creation	83
Kenosis and Authentic Humanity in Jesus	85
Becoming Ourselves	87
Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in <i>Christ: The Self-Emptying of God</i>	90
Kenotic Spiritual Practices	
Faith as a Journey or Pilgrimage	92
Relationship with the Crucified Christ	93
Kenotic Virtues	
Humility	95
Compassion	95
Kenotic Moral Decision-Making	
Power as Self-limitation: An Ethic of Poverty	96
Power as Solidarity Through Service	97

Chapter 4: The Kenotic Church Within Secularity	98
Four General Properties of Kenosis	98
A Synthesis of Kenosis as a Spirituality and an Ethic	100
Kenosis as a Spirituality and an Ethic in relation to the “Age of Authenticity”	101
Kenosis and the Freedom to Choose One’s Identity	102
Kenosis and Tolerance for Others’ Choices	106
Kenosis and Mutuality	109
Kenosis and Journeying	110
David Tracy’s “Criteria for Relative Adequacy”: Is Kenosis Faithful and Relevant?	111
Conclusions	115
Bibliography	120

Acknowledgements

I offer this work as a wholehearted response of my being to you, God of Jesus Christ.

I have received more gifts than I can count by way of honest, prayerful, growing, funny, faithful people. I want to acknowledge some of those people here.

My parents, Don and Jean Wilson, are models of generosity. Thank you, Dad and Mom, for going out on a limb for people and for giving of yourselves to me.

To my husband, Paul Kronberg: You are an example of consistent, serving, affectionate love. Thank you for your friendship, sense of humour and support. To our children: Emily, your self-possession, strength of conviction and grace toward others are beautiful. Matthew, you are an example of compassion and humble intelligence. Thank you for cheering me on. To our housemate and friend, Emma Barrett: Thank you for your company during hours of writing.

To my friends, Andrea Argue, Chris and Heather Barrett, Liz Chan, Tracy Curle, Joy and Ellen Kelly, Dan and Sue McIver, Sarah Pentlow, Sandy Saleh, and Krista Shaver: Thank you for your prayers and for your vulnerable, dedicated camaraderie in the cruciform way.

To Professor Mark Slatter: You have pointed me toward the crucified and risen Christ. Your commitment to the cross as the standard for the good is contagious and inspiring. I am grateful for who you are and for your thoughtful direction. A heartfelt thank you.

To Professors Catherine Clifford and Karl Hefty: Thank you for the time you took to read and comment on my work, and for your kind and rigorous engagement during my thesis defense.

To the generous donor of the Dilastasti Cor Meum Award (2016): Thank you. As a mother and student, I was encouraged by your financial gift. It alleviated some of the anxieties that go with juggling many life responsibilities simultaneously.

To my professors and to the administration at Saint Paul University: As a Christian who has spent much of my adult life in the Wesleyan tradition, I have experienced an excellent education in this Catholic institution. I love the Church and I am grateful for the spiritual formation that I have received in this context. Here's to ongoing dialogue and kenotic relationships.

Introduction

Contemporary Western secular culture presents challenges and opportunities for Christian people in their experience, articulation and embodiment of faith. One interpretation of the process of secularization suggests that the decline of religion is a sign that we are moving in the direction of cultural maturity. This view objects to current expressions of Christian faith, considering them archaic impediments to societal development. This is only one possible analysis.

An alternate interpretation suggests that “the secular” was not meant to dismiss religion. In its original expression within medieval Latin Christendom, “the secular” referred to the relocation of religious experience to everyday life in contrast to it being the privilege of a spiritually élite few.¹ This second interpretation puts to question the prominent idea that becoming secular must mean leaving Christian faith behind. The modern secular dismissal of religion might be understood as the result of a complex sequence of decisions over the course of the past five hundred years beginning with the late medieval desire for “Reform.”² History did not have to unfold the way it has. It is not clear that secular culture without religion is society’s only and best version of itself.

This realization raises challenges and opportunities for people, Christian and otherwise, in a secular culture. We are challenged to critically reconsider the notion of a complete and necessary disjunction between the church and secularity.³ We have an opportunity to identify creative strategies for fruitful co-existence between the church and wider secular culture. Some be-

¹José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” in *Rethinking Secularism*, Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 56.

²Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 61–3, 77. The goal of Reform was to eliminate the spiritual distance between religious and lay people, bringing *all* people up to a higher spiritual standard. The inadvertent effect of Reform efforts was an eventual “disenchantment,” a “levelling up” of spiritual experience until the supernatural was perceived to be within the grasp of all people thereby losing its “magic.” This set the trajectory toward an eventual confidence in one’s own ability to flourish without reference to God.

³Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 739. Like Taylor, I am focusing on the church as “a network...of relations which link particular, unique, enfleshed people to each other...on the basis of a mutual fittingness which is not based on kinship but on the kind of love which God has for us [through Christ].”

lievers think the present critique of religion within secular culture is a positive development. Christians are forced to recognize that Western culture has moved beyond Christendom, in which “everyone was a Christian,” reflexively or not.⁴ It is time to explore and discover post-Christendom ways of being Christian within Western versions of secularity.

Western Secularities: Three Notions

Discussions about the church and secular culture are confounded by multiple definitions of the term “secular.” In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor describes three notions of secularity. The first two emphasize a bifurcation between religion and secular culture, spatially or temporally. The third version thinks of religion and secularity in terms of common philosophical foundations and historical milieu.⁵

Taylor calls the separation of religion from the public sphere “secularity one;” faith practices are relegated to private settings. “Secularity two” connotes a pervasive absence of faith in both public and private settings; religious faithfulness is a thing of the past. “Secularity three” pertains to “the conditions of belief.”⁶ Western societies live in an “immanent frame” where the embrace of transcendence is no longer a given for believers and others.⁷ Faith in something beyond oneself is a complicated choice. People are self-reliant. They make human flourishing, independent of transcendence, their highest goal. While individuals are free to close themselves off to God entirely, “secularity three” leaves the option of transcendence open, though perhaps difficult to access.⁸ This third mode of secularity offers a description of the milieu in which all people

⁴James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 11–12.

⁵Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 2-3.

⁶Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3.

⁷Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 541–2. Taylor summarizes the features of the “immanent frame” as follows: 1) The self is a disciplined, bounded individual. 2) Society is constructed for the benefit of individuals. 3) Values are determined based on utility. 4) Time is measured by the clock or calendar and is not to be “wasted.” 5) Behind all these features runs the idea of a division between “natural” and “supernatural” order or an “immanent” situation in contrast to a “transcendent” one.

⁸Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 542.

find ourselves. In “secularity three,” belief *and* unbelief are approached in a secular way, from a default situation of immanence. This raises a question for Christian people: How might the church effectively and authentically experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in a “secularity three” age?⁹

“Secularity Three” and “The Age of Authenticity”

To answer this question in a reasonable manner, it is important to be aware of distinct features of Taylor’s “secularity three.” This past half century has seen a change in how secular people maintain the modern focus on the individual through a form that Taylor calls “expressive individualism.” Present among élites since the Romantic expressivism of the late 1700s, “[t]he 60s provide perhaps the hinge moment, at least symbolically,” when “this kind of self-orientation seems to have become a mass phenomenon.”¹⁰ In this “age of authenticity,” persons are committed to discovering and practicing their unique way of being human.

Some expressions of the church will be inopportune in the age of authenticity for those who consider themselves religious and for those who do not. For example, people do not want to submit to models “imposed” on them from the “outside.”¹¹ The freedom to choose one’s own identity and tolerance for the choices of others are primary values within the age of authenticity; “[t]he sin which is not tolerated is intolerance.”¹² When the church presents itself as an authoritarian voice, unwilling to listen to others, it will not be well-received.¹³ Neither will the church

⁹Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 427–8. Prevailing secularization theory suggests that this is an irrelevant question; religion is breathing its last as evidenced by the diminishment of the “great historic faiths” and of “belief in supernatural beings.” Taylor counters with his observation that there has been no decline in wider forms of spirituality; perhaps it is more accurate to conclude that in any age there have always been more and less devout people even when unbelief was historically unthinkable. Taylor exposes sociological neutrality as a myth, claiming that there are unique and identifiable assumptions underlying *both* popular secularization theory *and* Taylor’s favorable view toward religion within secularity.

¹⁰Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 473.

¹¹Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 475.

¹²Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 484.

¹³Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 493–4. Using sexual ethics as an example, Taylor notes that “laying down the law, and not waiting for a reply” is offensive at this point in history. If the church is making claims to wisdom, there is a need to “explain it persuasively, starting from where their interlocutor is...”

effectively engage the culture if it lacks the courage or clarity to offer a distinct contribution. The culture is most likely to notice when the lives of Christian people are congruent with the person and message of the Christ they claim to follow and, at the same time, open to public questions and analyses.

A journeying motif is common to the culture of our day; Taylor challenges “some conservative souls” who resist or oppose the secular individual’s quest for the authentic self.¹⁴ It is true that the “age of authenticity” has its lower, selfish forms. It also has higher, genuine expressions. The “age of authenticity” has introduced the possibility that an honest search will result in some people freely choosing God. By contrast, medieval Christians, for example, considered themselves Christians due to their historical situation. Taylor warns:

If [our age] tends to multiply somewhat shallow and undemanding spiritual options, we shouldn’t forget the spiritual costs of various kinds of forced conformity: hypocrisy, spiritual stultification, inner revolt against the Gospel, the confusion of faith and power, and even worse. *Even if we had a choice, I’m not sure we wouldn’t be wiser to stick with the present dispensation.*¹⁵

With the values of this age in mind - freedom to choose one’s personal identity, tolerance toward others, mutuality, and journeying - my inquiry becomes further refined. How might the church effectively and authentically experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in a “secularity three” culture of authenticity?

There is a growing conversation among Catholic theologians, as well as scholars and practitioners representing a variety of Christian denominations, which identifies *kenosis* as an optimal and timely response of the church within secularity. Contemporary kenotic applications may help Christians sidestep ineffectual religious expressions.

¹⁴Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 512–3.

¹⁵Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 513. Emphasis is mine.

Kenosis: Philippians 2

Before detailing the modern theological discussion about kenosis in secularity, we will consider a scripture passage which is commonly referenced.¹⁶ In Philippians 2:7, the Greek verb *κενόω*, meaning “to empty,” is used in relation to the life and work of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ Preceded by an ethical invitation in verse 5 to “[l]et the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,” the hymn continues:

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but ἐκένωσεν (emptied) himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁸

Contemporary Catholic Conversations: Kenosis in Secularity

Over the past half century, kenosis has conspicuously emerged in both Catholic and Protestant theological discussions about the church in relationship with secular culture. I suspect that this is because there are aspects of kenosis which engage effectively with the key concerns

¹⁶My work does not focus on exegesis of the originating text or texts. Such exegesis might be located, for example, within works I have come across in my reading: Michael J. Gorman, “Although/Because He Was in the Form of God: The Theological Significance of Paul’s Master Story (Phil. 2:6–11),” in *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 9–39 and Gordon D. Fee, “The New Testament and Kenosis Christology,” in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010), 25–44. Also, Lucien Richard, whose work is the subject of my third chapter includes a list of twelve sources in his endnotes. Lucien Richard, *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), 207. For Richard, the following two works “seem to be among the most important”: E. Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Phil. 2:5–11,” *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5 (1968): 45–88 and N.T. Wright, “Ēarpagmos and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5–11,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 37, no. 2 (1986): 321–52.

¹⁷Michael Brierley, “Kenoticism,” in *Jesus in History, Thought and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. J.L. Houlden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 519. Also, see Spiros Zodhiates, “2758. κενόω (*kenóō*),” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG International, INC., 1992), 857. Derived “from κενός [*kenós*] (2756), empty, void.”

¹⁸Philippians 2:5-11, New Revised Standard Version. For an explanation of the text’s context, and what it means that Christ ἐκένωσεν himself, see Fee, “The New Testament,” 30. Fee explains that the Apostle Paul is speaking to Philippian Christians at a moment when there “is some degree of dissension within the believing community at the very time they are also experiencing a degree of persecution from the local pagan population.” In verses 3-4, he calls them to unity and cautions them against mindsets - “selfish ambition” and vain conceit” - which will disrupt the community further. Instead, the Philippians are encouraged to look to Christ as their example, who “ἐκένωσεν himself...”

in an “age of authenticity.” I will first offer some examples from the Catholic kenotic conversation followed by highlights from the discussion among Protestant theologians.

In his introduction to a collection of eleven essays *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editor George McLean situates the kenotic discussion within Charles Taylor’s third mode of secularity where belief or unbelief are matters of choice. McLean insinuates that “the ‘scandals’ ...in the late 60s and 70s” deterred people from choosing Christian belief.¹⁹ He grieves the church’s failure to “witness to Christ and his salvific sacrifice on the Cross.”²⁰ The church holds primary responsibility for the present disconnection with its own membership and contemporary society. For McLean, kenosis is essential to ecclesial navigation through “the present crisis;” it is urgent to “[rethink] the entire nature of the Church and its public presence in quite different, indeed kenotic, terms.”²¹

Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church follows *Church and People* as a collection of essays in the same series, perhaps in response to McLean’s plea for kenotic theological reflection within the church. An essay by Paul Rout applies kenosis to relationships with “the other” and to the inner workings of church hierarchy. Rout begins with the story of Saint Francis of Assisi’s “encounter with a leper” through which Francis learned to relate to “the other who was most wounded and broken” in a new way, humbly realizing himself as “a *minor*” in the relationship. He outlines how Saint Francis also drew kenotic conclusions through his reflections on the eucharist. The eucharist “in the hands of the priest...[hidden] under the little form of bread” was a deeply striking kenotic symbol representing the humility of God. Francis invited his religious brothers to live a similarly humble and self-giving presence in society.²² Rout fol-

¹⁹George F. McLean, “Disjunctions in the 21st Century,” in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George F. McLean, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1 (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), 2.

²⁰McLean, “Disjunctions,” 3.

²¹McLean, “Disjunctions,” 3.

²²Paul Rout, “Be Subject to Every Human Creature for God’s Sake: St Francis of Assisi and the Experience of Authority,” in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, ed. Anthony J. Carroll, et al.,

lows with discussion of Saint Bonaventure who, only nine years old at the time of Saint Francis' death, was deeply influenced throughout his life by Francis' theology. Bonaventure applied Christ's "kenotic humility" to the life of "God as Trinity."²³ Instead of "one who rules over," God the Father may be realized as "total self-giving love."²⁴ It follows that true hierarchy in the church is "the acquisition of spiritual, 'Godlike' qualities, rather than...the power dominance of one group over others."²⁵ Being *hierarchical* is the activity of the whole church, *raised into the life of God* to be "constant, beautiful, and joyful" witnesses in society.²⁶ Rout comments that the humility in the lives and theologies of Saints Francis and Bonaventure is also reflected in the current Pope Francis who, early in his ministry, stated, "how I would like a Church that is poor for the poor." He has chosen to exercise his authority by way of "dialogue and reciprocal relationship."²⁷

Kenosis is emphasized in a work edited by Ronald Rolheiser, *Secularity and the Gospel: Being Missionaries to Our Children*. Rolheiser calls the church to respect the complexity of secularity, being careful to adhere to the "classical Catholic principle that the world is flawed, but not corrupt."²⁸ He recalls a keynote address by Michael Downey at a 2002 symposium at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, from which emerged the consensus that the "image of Christ as kenosis of God" is essential for missional engagement with secularity.²⁹

Catholic interest in kenosis also appears in Walter Kasper's *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity Today*. In his chapter titled "Ecumenical Dialogue," Kasper cites the Philippians 2 originating text for kenosis and points to the Gospel witness of "Jesus Christ as the person

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 8 (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015), 133.

²³Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature," 137.

²⁴Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature," 138.

²⁵Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature," 140.

²⁶Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature," 141.

²⁷Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature," 143-144.

²⁸Ronald Rolheiser, "Secularity and Its Many Faces," in *Secularity and the Gospel: Being Missionaries to Our Children*, ed. Ronald Rolheiser (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2006), 45.

²⁹Rolheiser, "Secularity," 53.

for others.” Jesus is exalted as Lord because “[h]e emptied himself even unto death;” it is “by his kenosis that [Jesus] manifests his Godhead.”³⁰ Kasper concludes that there is no justification for the church to enact a power-driven approach to Christian mission in secularity. A kenotic approach to mission refuses to offer gifts to coerce expressions of belief or agreement. It upholds mutual interchange, listening as well as sharing the gospel.³¹

In a similar vein, Czech Catholic theologian and sociologist Tomáš Halík notes that in a Western secular reality, the “seekers” of new, genuine ways of being Christian outnumber the “dwellers,” those “at home” in traditional Christianity.³² Only the dwellers see this seeker-dweller ratio as a threat. The church may approach this reality of more seekers than dwellers in one of two ways: first, by reinforcing its own authority to reassert itself and stave off the demise of its traditional forms, or second - a more favorable alternative per Halík - by embracing a kenotic “paradigm of exodus and discipleship.”³³ Such a paradigm views Christian spirituality as a journey. It has confidence in and patience for authentic processes. The paradigm of exodus and discipleship approaches the wayfaring of secular people, believers and others, with an attitude of trust and genuine interchange, willing to reveal personal vulnerability and courageous to “touch the pain of others.”³⁴ For Halík, this necessary paradigm shift is not a crisis for the church, but an opportunity.

Other Catholic theologians who identify kenosis as a timely and optimal response of the church and make direct or indirect applications to secular culture include: Paul Lakeland, Enda

³⁰Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity Today* (London and New York: Burns & Oates, 2004), 39.

³¹Kasper, *That They May All Be One*, 40.

³²Tomáš Halík, “The Disjunction Between a Single and Plural Spiritualities,” in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George McLean, F., Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1 (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), 197.

³³Halík, “The Disjunction,” 197.

³⁴Halík, “The Disjunction,” 198.

McDonagh, Kevin M. Cronin, Gemma Simmonds, Anthony J. Carroll, Anthony Gittins, Peter Phan and David Power.³⁵

Contemporary Protestant and Anglican Conversations: Kenosis in Secularity

Protestant and Anglican discussions about the kenotic church in secularity are also noteworthy with similar and varying emphases to those within the Catholic conversations. In *Church, Gospel & Empire: How the Politics of Sovereignty Impregnated the West*, Pentecostal-Charismatic Roger Haydon Mitchell notes that the theological reasons given for current faith-secular bifurcations commonly point to “some kind of fall in the history of Christian faith.”³⁶ This historical lapse is often located in the late medieval or early modern ages. Using similar methodology, Mitchell situates the historical fall at an earlier point in history. He argues that the conditions for current Western church-secular divisions were set in the fourth century when Christendom chose to identify sovereign power with transcendence.³⁷ The association of God with sovereign power distorted christology and “subsequent representation of divine transcendence.”³⁸ For Mitchell, it is this disingenuous version of transcendence “as an expression of empire” which secular culture has rejected.³⁹ Though difficult to speak of transcendence in the modern age of epistemic immanence, Mitchell proposes “kenarchy” as a timely “transcendent

³⁵Paul Lakeland, “Ecclesiology and the Use of Demography: Three Models of Apostolicity,” in *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 36. Enda McDonagh, “A Crucified People,” in *Theology in Winter Light* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2010), 163–5. Kevin M. Cronin O.F.M., *Kenosis: Emptying Self and the Path of Christian Service* (Rockport, MA: Element, Inc., 1992). Gemma Simmonds, “Imagining Authority in a Kenotic Church: Magisterium in the Contemporary Church,” in *Towards a Kenotic Vision*, 147–63. Anthony J. Carroll, “Post-Metaphysical Authority,” in *Towards a Kenotic Vision*, 73–90. Anthony Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 132–4. Peter C. Phan, “Kenotic Spirituality,” in *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003), 139–42. David N. Power, “Part Two: The Kenosis of the Church and Its Mission,” in *Love Without Calculation: A Reflection on Divine Kenosis* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005), 61–116.

³⁶Roger Haydon Mitchell, *Church, Gospel, & Empire: How the Politics of Sovereignty Impregnated the West* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 3.

³⁷Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, xi.

³⁸Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, 171.

³⁹Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, xi.

tool...by which to criticize or change the present world.”⁴⁰ Kenarchy implies “abandonment to God’s kenotic life [which] confronts the selfish desire for personal sovereignty and makes other people the potential recipient of identification and kenotic love.”⁴¹ Transcendence is reframed, divorced from sovereign power. This opens the door to an “originary” way of being a Christian with an “egalitarian orientation to the needs of the multitude.”⁴²

Kenosis also figures centrally in the works of Kosuke Koyama, a Japanese theologian and United Church of Christ minister who taught in Thailand throughout his early and middle adult life. From his experience in Thailand emerged two significant books about contextual theology in South East Asia. Each book offers kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic to correct and guide Western missionary methods which have sometimes neglected to take cultural contexts into account. In his introduction to *Waterbuffalo Theology*, Koyama reflects on his commitment to contextual theology. Basing his argument in the person of “Jesus Christ who *emptied himself*...in the God Incarnate,” Koyama explains that, for him, self-emptying means being sent to “*this congregation*,” entering their situation, thus “beginning [his] sermon with ‘sticky rice’ and ‘cock-fighting’” when preaching to Thai farmers.⁴³ In *No Handle on the Cross: An Asian Meditation on the Crucified Mind*, Koyama continues his argument for kenosis in various modes of culture. The crucified mind overcome by the “foolishness and weakness of God” puts off the “resourceful,” “efficient” mind and “bends down” to respectfully “come to history” without controlling or “handling” it.⁴⁴

Finally, in *Power and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender*, Anglican feminist theologian Sarah Coakley situates her discussion of kenosis in a secular context where pri-

⁴⁰Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, 171.

⁴¹Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, 196.

⁴²Mitchell, *Church, Gospel*, xiii. Mitchell also features as a Protestant contributor here: Roger Mitchell, “Authority Without Sovereignty: A Reassessment of Divine Power,” in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, 41–52.

⁴³Kosuke Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1974), viii.

⁴⁴Kosuke Koyama, *No Handle on the Cross: An Asian Meditation on the Crucified Mind*, reprint, 1977 (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 10–13.

mary cultural values include autonomy and choice.⁴⁵ After a nuanced discussion of the interpretive history of kenosis, Coakley responds to the concerns of some Christian feminists who insist on the suppression of the kenotic motif because they are concerned it will be used to promote a kind of vulnerability associated with victimization. For Coakley, it is problematic when feminists only “confront issues of fragility, suffering or ‘self-emptying’ ...in terms of victimology.” In kenosis, which she defines as “a paradox of power and vulnerability,” feminists can “embrace a feminist reconceptualizing of the power of the cross and resurrection.” She continues, “Only...by facing - and giving new expression to - the paradoxes of ‘losing one’s life in order to save it,’ can feminists hope to construct a vision of the Christic ‘self’ that transcends the gender stereotypes we are seeking to up-end.”⁴⁶ Coakley communicates further insights about kenosis through her reflection on the “risky,” “transformative,” “empowering,” “space-making,” intrinsically kenotic practice of contemplative prayer.⁴⁷

Protestant reflections on a kenotic discipleship for the church in secularity also extend beyond those already mentioned and may be observed in the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, David T. Williams, Jeffrey F. Keuss, Thomas J. Oord, Donald G. Dawe and Walter Brueggemann.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Sarah Coakley, “*Kenōsis* and Subversion: On the Repression of ‘Vulnerability’ in Christian Feminist Writing,” in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), vii, 4.

⁴⁶Coakley, “*Kenōsis* and Subversion,” 33.

⁴⁷Coakley, “*Kenōsis* and Subversion,” 35.

⁴⁸Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Disciple and Unbelievers,” in *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 182–88. Cited frequently within theological works on kenosis and secularity, Bonhoeffer informs the thinking of the three main theologians studied in this project, Jürgen Moltmann, W.H. Vanstone, and Lucien Richard. Jeffrey F. Keuss, *Freedom of the Self: Kenosis, Cultural Identity, and Mission at the Crossroads* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010). David T. Williams, “Secularization as *Kenōsis*,” in *Kenōsis of God: The Self-Limitation of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit* (Bloomington, IN: IUniverse, 2009), 187–231. Thomas Jay Oord, “Essential Kenosis,” in *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010), 117–57. Donald G. Dawe, *The Form of a Servant: A Historical Analysis of the Kenotic Motif* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1963), 86. Dawe draws conclusions about the ecumenical value of the kenotic motif and its function as “bridge between the word and the world.” Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 81–99, xi. Brueggemann discusses how the “self-giving emptying of Jesus” criticizes the “dominant consciousness” and presents an “alternate consciousness” urgently needed in Western secularity in which God freely “humanizes” through his “odd freedom, his strange justice, and his peculiar power.”

My research question has emerged considering these, and other, clues that kenosis *does* and *must* prominently factor into present theological discussions about the church within secularity. This work will focus on what David Tracy describes as “the systematic theologian’s major task,” that is “the reinterpretation of the tradition for the present situation.”⁴⁹ For Tracy, originating scripture texts are indeed “expressions of the apostolic witness” and serve as normative guides for later expressions of Christian faith. However, even scripture is “only a relatively adequate expression of the earliest community’s experience of the Risen One as Jesus.” He affirms the living Christian tradition in which we “remain open to new experiences - new questions, new and sometimes more adequate responses for later generations who experience the [Christ] event in ever different situations.”⁵⁰ Jürgen Moltmann also supports this interpretive flexibility in his discussion of the open question posed by Jesus to the disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” Though the identity of Jesus of Nazareth is fixed, the “titles of Christ” are responses to his open question; for Moltmann, “christology is essentially unconcluded and permanently in need of revision.”⁵¹ Tracy comments on the diversity “in the New Testament, [and] in the entire Christian tradition” and affirms risk-taking novel reinterpretations of Christian faith within reasonable parameters.⁵² These reasonable parameters may be discerned using Tracy’s “criteria for relative adequacy” which will be made explicit in chapter four of my project.⁵³

Kenosis has been identified as a contemporary response by the church in secularity. Pluralism is intrinsic to the Christian tradition and authentic expressions of pluralism are good for

⁴⁹David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1981), 64. In Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion,” 6, Sarah Coakley warns against “committing the ‘genetic fallacy’ of presuming that the ‘original’ meaning of this passage is now binding on us.”

⁵⁰Tracy, *Analogical*, 249.

⁵¹Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology [Der Gekreuzigte Gott]*, first Fortress Press ed., trans. R.A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 106.

⁵²Tracy, *Analogical*, 254.

⁵³A description of Tracy’s “criteria for relative adequacy” may be found here: David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 255–87.

faith development. Tracy suggests that whenever anyone considers “other ways of being Christian,” there are transformative possibilities.⁵⁴

The Fourth Interpretive Phase of Kenosis

Anticipating such transformative possibilities and having surveyed kenosis as a prominent motif in contemporary Catholic and Protestant theological discussions, I arrive at my thesis question in its most precise form: *How* has kenosis as a *spirituality* and an *ethic* been proposed as an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in our “secularity three” culture of authenticity?

This work moves beyond a focus on kenosis as “a speculative christological theory about the incarnate life of Jesus.”⁵⁵ Instead, my research question finds its historical location in the “fourth phase” of kenotic interpretation. This fourth phase occurs “from the second half of the 20th century onwards” and is characterized by an application of kenosis “to the Godhead itself, as an ethical motif found in Christ and an ideal for humanity.”⁵⁶ Within the fourth interpretive phase of kenosis, this project will focus on how kenosis is being presented as a *spirituality* and an *ethic* for the church within secular culture.

Definitions: Spirituality and Ethics

When we speak of Christian spirituality and ethics we are talking about two different aspects of discipleship.⁵⁷ In *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics*, William Spohn offers a defini-

⁵⁴Tracy, *Analogical*, 254.

⁵⁵Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion,” 33. The idea of kenosis has had an eventful history. Sarah Coakley describes and analyzes the convoluted interpretive history of kenosis. See Sarah Coakley, “Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations,” in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 193–204 and Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion,” 5–32. Coakley identifies six different meanings of kenosis and admonishes those engaging in dialogue on the subject to ensure they understand one another’s positions to avoid engaging in “shadow-boxing,” that is, “[attributing] to the ‘enemy’ a position she or he never occupied.” See also Brierley, “Kenoticism,” 519-521.

⁵⁶Brierley, “Review of ‘Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self Emptying of God,’” 71–3.

⁵⁷William C. Spohn, “Christian Spirituality and Theological Ethics,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Holder (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 269.

tion of Christian spirituality and of Christian ethics and explores the relationship between the two.⁵⁸

Christian spirituality subscribes to two notions. First, there is a reality beyond that which we may immediately perceive. Second, conscious co-existence with such spiritual reality is essential to personal and relational wholeness.⁵⁹ But how does spiritual encounter happen? Christians believe that God has taken the initiative to reveal and offer God's self to humankind. Even so, ours is not a passive role in the encounter; we have response-ability.⁶⁰ Christian spirituality concerns itself with human response to God's initiative. As an academic discipline, it conducts the higher-level analysis of *how*, by what means, we are transformed in encounter with God.⁶¹ Spohn asserts that "spiritual practices are the core of authentic spirituality," that is, through "spiritual practices, God's Spirit works to transform Christians."⁶² Spohn is not speaking about a version of personal piety in which one might engage in spiritual practices for their own sake from

⁵⁸There are many definitions of Christian spirituality. I have chosen a definition that links *Christian* spirituality with *Christian* faith, that is, faith centred on Jesus Christ as the exact representation of the Christian (trinitarian) God who is worshipped and followed by the unique, Christ-centred and ambiguous community known as 'the church.' For complementary definitions see: Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 266, Sandra M. Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986): 253–74, and Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 2.

⁵⁹William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999), 36.

⁶⁰Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 27. In the Wesleyan tradition in which I am ordained, God's self-revealing, awakening initiative toward humankind is referred to as "prevenient grace." For Wesley, this divine initiative is always held in tension with human responsibility; in other words, people actively participate as recipients of grace. In the Catholic tradition which has influenced both my graduate and undergraduate education, the Augustinian categories of "operative" and "cooperative" grace best correspond to Wesley's commitment to divine influence *and* human responsibility. For a description of these categories, see Catholic Bernard J.F. Lonergan's *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute, 1971), 241. Operative grace is God's initiating work, "the replacement of the heart of stone by a heart of flesh." Cooperative grace "is the heart of flesh becoming effective in good works through human freedom." Spirituality pertains to how we participate in our ongoing growth and/or conversion(s). The relationship between operative and cooperative grace is captured in Philippians 2:12b-13: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you [operative grace], enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure [cooperative grace]."

⁶¹Spohn, *Go and Do*, 37. It does not focus on descriptive accounts of "lived spirituality."

⁶²Spohn, *Go and Do*, 37.

the dutiful ‘should’ of the super-ego.⁶³ Neither is he advocating for spiritual practices as “techniques” for getting to God or achieving a version of spiritual ‘perfection.’⁶⁴ Authentic spiritual practices are motivated by a desire for relationship with God sparked by God’s initiating action in our lives. They are the way that we participate in the life of the God who *first* loved us. *Christian* spiritual practices are always grounded in “trinitarian, christological and ecclesial” religious experience, thus they do not fall into the trap of some versions of contemporary spirituality which have nebulous content and vague boundaries.⁶⁵ *Kenotic* Christian spirituality gets more specific still. Kenotic spiritual practices correspond to a kenotic paradigm of God.⁶⁶

Kenosis as an ethic is the second prominent focus of this project. Derived from the Greek term *ethos*, the word “ethics” is “used in a variety of ways” sometimes creating “confusion between these uses.”⁶⁷ To arrive at a clear working definition, it is helpful to distinguish between “morality” and “ethics.” Morality is concerned with rules, norms, principles, values, and right or wrong actions. Ethics is the academic discipline which conducts higher-level analyses of *how* particular moral judgements are made and the character of the one *who* is making them. For

⁶³T.F. Hoad, ed., “Piety,” in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 1137, accessed July 26, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780192830982.001.0001. Piety might be defined as “devotion to religious duties” or “dutifulness.” When defined in this way, piety differs from spirituality; piety is prone to focus on or attach to the spiritual practice or form itself. Spirituality, by contrast, engages in the practice as a *means* of loving encounter with God.

⁶⁴Spohn, *Go and Do*, 42. Perfection becomes a problematic term when it is approached by way of Greek philosophical categories. We will see how kenosis reroutes our starting point and reframes our notion of perfection; to be perfect is to be like Christ crucified who is the exact representation of God.

⁶⁵Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, 266.

⁶⁶We will become familiar with the attributes of the kenotic God of Jesus Christ through the theological investigations of Jürgen Moltmann, W.H. Vanstone and Lucien Richard in the first three chapters of this work. How one perceives God has implications for how one relates to and responds to God. The kenotic God of Jesus Christ warrants kenotic spiritual practices. As discussed in a thesis-related conversation with my advisor, Prof. Mark Slatter, January 28, 2018, “Theology is faith seeking understanding *and* theology is the experience of God seeking understanding.”

⁶⁷Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey, eds., “Ethics,” in *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 307. James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Ethics,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 206.

Spohn, some common ethical methods are less suitable for Christian moral discernment.⁶⁸ He argues that “virtue ethics provides the most appropriate avenue to approach the scriptures and the life of Jesus.”⁶⁹ In Christian virtue ethics, moral decisions are the overflow of a transformed character.⁷⁰

We have established *that* virtuous habits are good foundations for wise, moral decision-making, but *how* are virtuous habits developed? Spohn argues “that *spiritual practices* can supply the missing link between virtue ethics and the transformation of emotions and moral habits.”⁷¹ Personal transformation happens by way of love-inspired, thoughtful, affective, spiritual practices.⁷² We engage in spiritual practices as vehicles of grace to encounter the grace-full God. Encounter, or experience, with God creates the conditions for conversions of the heart, that is, for the development of virtues which affect our perceptions of reality and subsequent moral responses. Moral decisions are more likely to occur from a virtuous heart. In sum, the academic discipline of spirituality analyzes how we remain open to transformative relationship with God by way of spiritual practices. Ethics consider virtues, that is, *who* we become in encounter with God and *how* we discern moral priorities from the overflow of a virtuous heart.

⁶⁸Spohn, *Go and Do*, 27. Because scripture primarily influences our moral existence through stories and images, a principle or rules-based method - though sometimes arising in scripture - is not the most fitting way to make moral decisions. Neither is a utilitarian approach (using scripture to support certain social ends) suitable.

⁶⁹Spohn, *Go and Do*, 28. Spohn gives three reasons why virtue ethics are a most appropriate approach to the Christian moral life. First, as an approach that focuses on formation, it “fits the narrative form of the New Testament” and “can explain how the particular story of Jesus shapes the moral character of individuals and communities.” Second, it begins with the heart, that is, character formation; ethical behaviour comes from a virtuous heart, which was emphasized by Jesus as well. Third, it “fits the dominant mode of moral discourse in the New Testament, namely, paradigms that establish certain patterns of disposition and action that guide action.”

⁷⁰Virtues, or good habits of the heart, effect change in our moral psychology - our perceptions, dispositions, and identity - setting the conditions for wise (contextually appropriate) moral decision-making. Spohn discusses these three elements of moral psychology respectively here: Spohn, *Go and Do*, 75–99, 120–41, 163–84. Moral perception is to see the “morally relevant features of a situation and [be ready] to respond appropriately.” (75) Moral perception leads to moral dispositions; we lean toward, or are inclined to, or are disposed to particular actions. We begin to know ourselves in a particular way, that is, we develop a moral identity.

⁷¹Spohn, *Go and Do*, 3.

⁷²Spohn, *Go and Do*, 36, 13.

My investigation of a spirituality and an ethic of kenosis will centre on three seminal works which explore kenotic christology within its fourth interpretive phase and make applications to kenotic discipleship in Western secular culture. To uncover features of kenosis as a *spirituality*, I will ask the following question of each text: How does kenotic christology shape the church's spiritual practices toward deepened encounter with the kenotic God? To bring to light a kenotic *ethic*, I will ask two questions: What kenotic virtues arise as the overflow of relationship with the kenotic God? How do such kenotic virtues inform our moral decision-making?

Methodology

I return to my research question: How has kenosis as a *spirituality* and an *ethic* been proposed as an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in our "secularity three" culture of authenticity? A desire for the church to live faithfully and relevantly within secular culture underlies the question.⁷³ A hermeneutical method offers the best way to seek answers since hermeneutics are concerned with translation or re-interpretation. How might the church be re-imagined or reformed in and for secular culture? Jesus' words in Mark 2:22 shed light on hermeneutical method: "[N]o one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; *but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.*"⁷⁴ N.T. Wright colloquially comments that "[w]hen God is doing new things, we should join the party, not grumble because the new wine is threatening to burst our poor old bottles. A good deal of day-to-day Christian wisdom consists in sorting out the new from the old."⁷⁵

David Tracy's hermeneutical method of *mutually critical correlation* offers a way to sort out the new from the old. He assumes that wisdom is being generated within the church and be-

⁷³As a Wesleyan Methodist minister committed to ecumenical partnerships for good in society, and as a Registered Nurse working in a hospital with adolescents facing mental health crises (the most common crises being suicide attempts or ideation with a feasible plan), I am passionate about the question of Christ in relation to the sufferings in Canadian culture.

⁷⁴NRSV. Emphasis is mine.

⁷⁵Tom Wright, *Mark for Everyone* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 25.

yond and refuses one-way learner-expert relationships which simply correlate societal questions with theological answers. Instead Tracy correlates societal questions *and* answers with theological questions *and* answers.⁷⁶ Thus, his approach is dialogical. In this age of authenticity, most people, religious or otherwise, are wondering how to be our most authentic selves. I have already named some responses being generated in wider secularity without necessary reference to God.⁷⁷ This project will detail how the church, asking similar questions about human authenticity, proposes additional faithful and relevant responses by way of kenosis.

The three books to be mined for kenotic applications were written within the unique post-war age of authenticity in which we have moved from “givens” to “options;” this is a historical period of “unsettledness, anxiety, or even alienation” related to “tensions” which arise in a setting of “plurality, diversity, and fragmentation.”⁷⁸ For theologians in this age, questions of identity, divine and human, are paramount. I will compare how the following works present and apply kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic, and how their applications fit the Western “secularity three” context of authenticity.

Chapter One considers *The Crucified God* by German Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann. It was originally published in German in 1972 and in English in 1973. Moltmann’s work is known for developing new interpretive methods to relate faith to modernity. Building on the work of his mentor Karl Barth, Moltmann played a pivotal role in locating and describing kenosis within the Godhead; he then developed its anthropological and sociopolitical applica-

⁷⁶Christopher Ben Simpson, *Modern Christian Theology* (London, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 343. Tracy’s is a “significantly revised version of Paul Tillich’s method of correlation;” Tillich’s method connects cultural questions to theological answers. Tracy’s method assumes a two-way conversation; questions *and* answers are found within the church and within society.

⁷⁷See a description of Taylor’s “age of authenticity” on pp. 3 and 4 above. Some responses regarding how to be most fully human in secular culture include living authentically, tolerantly, relationally and as a sojourner.

⁷⁸Christopher Ben Simpson, *Modern*, 296–7, 295.

tions.⁷⁹ His work emerged from the question of God in light of post-war suffering and pluralistic tensions. He presents kenosis as a way to be truly human.

Chapter Two will discuss *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense: The Response of Being to the Love of God*, written in 1977 by a British Anglican priest and theologian W.H. Vanstone. Like Moltmann, Vanstone locates kenosis within the Godhead. For Vanstone, kenosis arises as an authentic way to be a Christian in a context of human flourishing. Though somewhat obscure, Vanstone's work has had significant impact. For example, his work was prominently cited in a recent compilation by John Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, for which Vanstone with Moltmann served an advisory role before Vanstone's death interrupted his participation.⁸⁰

A third work, written in 1997 by American Catholic Lucien Richard will be the subject of Chapter Three. Entitled *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, Richard's is the seminal Roman Catholic work which fits the criteria for my project. Writing around two decades later, Richard draws from both *The Crucified God* and *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense* in *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*. With Moltmann and Vanstone, he locates kenosis in God's self and makes applications to the spirituality and ethics of the church in secularity. Richard writes in the context of the secular search for "human destiny [and] meaningfulness" in situations of suffering. He focuses on the sufferings unique to our advancing technological age.⁸¹ His final chapter "Toward a Kenotic Church" foreshadows the Catholic writings on the subject which have burgeoned since Richard's work was published.⁸²

⁷⁹Richard Bauckham, "Jürgen Moltmann," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed., ed. David Ford, F. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997), 211–12. For example, Moltmann explores the cross of Christ as a "trinitarian event between the Father and the Son;" his development of the notion of a "trinitarian history of God" opens conversation about the mutual relationships within the Trinity and between the Triune God and the world, serving to connect theology with praxis.

⁸⁰John Polkinghorne, editor, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001).

⁸¹Richard, *Christ*, 3.

⁸²Evidence for recent Catholic theological writing about a kenotic church was offered above on pages 5-8.

Chapter Four will take up the task of synthesis, applying Tracy's method of mutual correlation to analyze how the kenotic applications derived from Moltmann, Vanstone and Richard correspond to the question of genuine humanity in this current culture of authenticity. The relative adequacy of emergent applications of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic will be assessed using the criteria for relative adequacy derived from David Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination*. This chapter will be followed by concluding remarks and proposed next steps.

Chapter 1: Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*

The Crucified God was written by Jürgen Moltmann in 1972 after his seminal *Theology of Hope*¹ to more thoroughly describe a Christian hope centred on “*the cross of the risen Christ*.”² Moltmann’s acquaintance with profound human suffering compelled him toward the cross as the focal point of his theology. He resonated with Dietrich Bonhoeffer who had written from his Nazi prison cell that “only the suffering God can help.”³

Moltmann’s experience as a German soldier during the Second World War significantly shaped him. As a prisoner of war in Britain between 1945 and 1948, he was tormented by a growing awareness of the atrocities which had occurred in German concentration camps. His burdens and questions compounded in the decades which followed as he spent his post-war years sensitive to the needs of international “victims of injustice and violence.”⁴ As he related with suffering others, he became aware of an ever-increasing gap between Christian faith expressions and world issues; “Christianity faced a growing crisis of relevance and credibility.”⁵ Pursuit of relevant interface with the culture seemed to require Christians to compromise their identity. Moltmann called this problem the “identity-involvement dilemma”⁶ and proposed identification with the crucified Christ through kenosis, or self-emptying, as the way for Christian people to remain faithfully united with Christ *and* effectively connected with cultural realities.

The Identity-Involvement Dilemma

At first glance, the identity-involvement dilemma appeared to be a no-win choice between either preserving true Christian identity or pursuing relevant engagement within society.

¹Written in 1967.

²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, ix.

³Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. John W. de Gruchy, trans. Isabel Best, et al., Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 8 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2009), 479 quoted in Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, xi.

⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, ix. Moltmann mentions “the years between 1968 and 1972” during which he acutely experienced personal suffering related to his alliance with persecuted “friends living under Stalinism in Eastern Europe and under military dictatorships in Latin America and South Korea.”

⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 8.

⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 7.

Moltmann noticed that progressive and conservative Christians reinforced the identity-involvement dilemma in opposite ways.

Progressive Christians primarily concerned themselves with the gulf between the church and secular culture. They responded by disconnecting from rigid (fundamentalist, dogmatic, moralistic) forms of Christian faith. Motivated by a desire for relevant engagement with society, some progressive Christians left the church entirely, thinking this the only way to become socially and politically pertinent.⁷ Without clear criteria to guide critical engagement with the culture, naive assimilation with no unique contribution was probable:

Solidarity with others in meaningful actions loses its creative character if one no longer wishes to be anything different from the others...Only someone who finds the courage to be different from others can ultimately exist for 'others', for otherwise he exists only with those who are like him. And this is not much help to them.⁸

For Moltmann, conservatives did no better at preserving genuine Christian identity by trying to maintain 'pure' faith through emphasis on doctrine and separation from secularity.⁹ Neither referencing the creeds, nor citing religious or conversion experiences, nor participation in the liturgy, nor personal faith are the core of Christian identity. Christianity is not faith in faith, neither is it faith in one's own good works. Christianity is faith in a *person*, the crucified Christ. One cannot identify with him without also being in a relationship with the culture.

Christian identity can be understood only as an act of identification with the crucified Christ to the extent to which one has accepted the proclamation that in him God has identified himself with the godless and those abandoned by God, *to whom one belongs oneself*.¹⁰

By Moltmann's analysis, neither conservative sectarianism nor progressive cultural assimilation represent true Christian identity or praxis. The identity-involvement dilemma presents a false dichotomy; an alleged pure Christian identity is juxtaposed with relevant societal en-

⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 8-9.

⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 16.

⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 15.

¹⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 19. Emphasis is mine.

gagement. Moltmann argues that *what*, or more accurately, *who* one identifies with is key to holding true identity and relevant cultural involvement together. He offers self-emptying, or kenosis, as the way to integrate Christian identity and cultural involvement through alignment with Christ crucified who aligns himself with suffering others. Christian kenosis is “imitation of the one who abandoned his divine identity and found his true identity in the cross (Phil. 2).”¹¹ Kenosis entails an initial “homelessness,” a detachment from all previous self-definitions to make oneself at home in the crucified Christ.¹² In and from him we live for others. This is a “dialectical existence.”¹³

A Dialectical Existence

The kenotic path requires us to let go of “likeness” and embrace otherness as the primary basis for all relationships. Identification with the crucified Christ “[alienates us from] the principle of likeness and similarity in society.” In the crucified Christ, we seek “fellowship with those who are different,” empowered by a “creative love” (agape) for what is “alien and ugly.”¹⁴

A kenotic world view is always cross-oriented; the crucified Christ sets the standard by which the authenticity of *all* Christian faith expressions is evaluated.¹⁵ In his second chapter, Moltmann looks to the cross of Jesus Christ to test and critique four key Christian practices, setting the foundations for later applications to a kenotic spirituality and ethic. How does a kenotic, i.e., crucicentric, world view shape the eucharistic gathering, a spirituality of suffering, the way of discipleship, and theological reflections about God?

First, the cross critiques the meaning of the eucharistic gathering which is the central sign of communion with Christ and communion between believers. An irony is exposed. Though the eucharist perpetually points to the crucified Christ as the centre of the religious system, the his-

¹¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 16.

¹²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 17.

¹³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 26.

¹⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 26, 28.

¹⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 28.

torical crucified Christ died “outside religion and the temple.” His resurrection made “the separation of cultic and profane in Christianity impossible and [demands] that Christians should break down this separation.”¹⁶ Christian identification with the crucified Christ puts to question ecclesial decisions about the meaning of and belonging at the eucharistic table.

Second, the cross critiques all false spiritualization of suffering. It is perverse to use religion to justify suffering or to lull people into passivity with respect to it. This may be a convenient way for powerful people to keep the suffering poor in their place, leaving them to their circumstances, even perpetuating abuse. Jesus is not simply an example of a good man who suffered and told us to do likewise. Much suffering is meaningless, never to be romanticized.¹⁷ Authentic participation in the mystical sufferings of Christ requires an understanding of *what* Jesus suffered for, and *why*. Jesus suffered because he extended grace to those who were unrighteous by religious standards. He suffered because he challenged laws which harmed marginal people. He suffered because he extended unprecedented welcome in a shame-honour culture. Jesus suffered the consequences of challenging the powerful status quo. His was a chosen suffering.¹⁸ True Christian identification with the crucified Christ means active, *chosen* suffering with Christ for *his* gracious purposes.

Third, the cross corrects perceptions of discipleship. There is never a point when the follower of Jesus graduates as an independent expert. One is always a follower, always a learner. Followers of the crucified Christ follow in a specific way. They “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow [him].”¹⁹ Christ-followers are neither moralists nor simply imitators of Christ. Identification with the crucified Christ means death “to the world of the law, of sin, of the powers of death” and *embodiment* of the new norm of a spirit-given quality of life.²⁰

¹⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 44.

¹⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 48-9.

¹⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 51.

¹⁹Mark 8:34, NRSV.

²⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 56. This death and new life is symbolized and mysteriously enlivened through baptism.

Fourth, a theology of the cross takes a dialectical approach to knowing God. By contrast, a “theology of glory” emphasizes knowledge of God by way of analogy through likeness or similarities and through images of victory and strength.²¹ Dialectically, God is first known through his opposite, his absence, and his sufferings; this is the theology of the cross. Analogically, God is known through “his works,” for example, through creation; this is a theology of glory. Moltmann does not reject the analogical principle but deems it secondary. He believes God must first be known in that which is “unlike” God: the “godlessness of the cross.”²² The nature and extent of God’s love is revealed in how far God is willing to go to identify with his opposite, i.e., god-forsaken humanity. The dialectical vision of Christ crucified, irreligious criminal, impotent, rejected and abandoned by God reorients one’s primary vision of God; God is where he was not previously thought to be.²³

A kenotic imagination concentrates on the cross of Christ. Perceiving God through the crucified Christ reshapes the church’s understandings of Christian belonging, redemptive suffering, genuine discipleship and theological method. Moltmann delves into three christological chapters before locating kenosis in the triune God in his sixth chapter. He then makes kenotic applications to genuine psychological and sociopolitical existence.

A Kenotic Christology

Jesus of Nazareth is the starting point for Moltmann’s christological investigation. The Jesus of history, crucified and raised, is the Christ. This Jesus of Nazareth invited Peter, and invites modern day disciples, to consider his open question: “But who do you say that I am?”²⁴ We

²¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 28, 71.

²²Richard Bauckham, “Moltmann’s Eschatology of the Cross,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30, no. 4 (1977): 304–5.

²³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 69.

²⁴Matthew 16:15, New American Standard Bible. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 83, 88, 95. By contrast, christology has often taken an opposite approach. Closed questions starting from universal categories have been asked about Jesus of Nazareth at the risk of creating an idol of him. For example: Is Jesus (the “indivisible, unchangeable”) God? Is Jesus truly (that is, the “ideal”) human? Is Jesus the messiah? Moltmann (103) explains that “...a starting point in a universal can both reveal and obscure the concrete element of his person and his history, so that in the framework of the universal question, both faith and unbelief are possible.”

are invited to investigate Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and draw conclusions about his universal meaning as the Christ.

How did Jesus of Nazareth live? What did he die for? By looking at his path to the cross, we obtain clues about our own kenotic discipleship. Jesus did not simply teach about the kingdom of God; he claimed to embody it. Demonstrating a paradoxical style of authority, he disregarded normal distinctions between devout and sinful people and promised "the kingdom to the unrighteous as a gift of grace." He acted like God, offering forgiveness to sinners. He boldly told the righteous that no one would enter the kingdom of God on merit. A powerless man himself, he "[anticipated] the power of God as grace amongst the rejected and the powerless."²⁵ Perhaps mistaken for a revolutionary Zealot, a close look at his behaviour indicates otherwise. He shared table fellowship with Zealots *and* their enemies the tax collectors, he feasted more than he fasted, and his "revolution" was one of love for enemies, not vengeance.²⁶ Ultimately his way of life created grave offense among the religious, legal and political powers of his day, resulting in his trial and death by crucifixion, a criminal's execution. He died outside the city gate, abandoned and rejected, damned according to the Jews, a political traitor according to the Romans.²⁷ For Jesus, the Father's absence was out of line with his life experience.²⁸ His cry "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" was not a desperate plea for mercy. Rather, it was a righteous man's hopeful shout in the dark, trusting his faithful Father to come through for him.²⁹

Had Jesus died "as a merely historical person he would long have been forgotten because his message had already been contradicted."³⁰ But Jesus' resurrection appearances to the disciples meant that his inseparable person and message were validated by God. The disciples who had previously fled the public crucifixion scene were dramatically converted to become public

²⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 131.

²⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 140-141.

²⁷Mark 14:33, New Revised Standard Version. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 147.

²⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 148.

²⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 150.

³⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 162.

witnesses to “Easter faith” in Jesus *Christ* at great personal risk.³¹ What explains their newfound boldness? They realized that Jesus, and with him the message he embodied, was alive. Dashed hopes were now renewed. In Jesus, lives *were* set right, not based on the law “which finally gives each man his just ‘deserts,’” but based on grace.³² For those who knew their own poverty this was good news, worth banking their lives on. God had raised Jesus Christ who was crucified as an irreligious, godless, rebellious, lawbreaker. This was a scandalous break from the old order of things, a dismantlement of the economy of reward and punishment. The resurrection of the crucified Christ meant that God redeems the type of person that by another standard would be considered unredeemable.³³

In sum, the kenotic christology in *The Crucified God* makes the crucified Christ its centrepiece. Kenosis is Jesus’ chosen path to the cross, a self-emptying for the sake of others. A kenotic christology holds the paradox of the Jesus of history and the universal Christ so that we do not “fall into the Christological version of the identity-involvement dilemma.”³⁴ Jesus of Nazareth *is* the universal Christ. His living message, grounded and embodied in his historical person, is open for appropriation and reinterpretation in all eras and contexts.

Kenosis in the Trinity: Suffering in God

Moltmann proceeds with the question “*What does the cross of Jesus mean for God himself?*”³⁵ It is “not radical enough” to only consider the cross in terms of human salvation; the cross is central to understanding of the triune God; “[w]hen the crucified is called the ‘image of the invisible God,’ the meaning is that *this* is God, and God is like *this*.”³⁶ For God as Trinity, the

³¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 166.

³²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 178. Romans 3:22b-23 (NRSV) describes a grand leveling and universal hope: “...there is *no distinction*, since *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; *they are now justified by his grace as a gift*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” Emphasis is mine.

³³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 166.

³⁴Mark Slatter, *Insights While Suffering: With a View to the Cross and Resurrection*, vol. 345 of *Theology and Religion*, American University Studies (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2015), 36.

³⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 201.

³⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 205.

kenosis of Jesus to the point of death is a “death *in* God” for us.³⁷ The crucifixion of Christ as a historic and kenotic event between Father and Son at Golgotha has been taken up into the triune God.³⁸ Through Christ,

[a]ll human history, however much it may be determined by guilt and death, is taken up into this ‘history of God’, i.e. into the Trinity, and integrated into the future of the ‘history of God’. There is no suffering which in this history of God is not God’s suffering; no death which has not been God’s death in the history of Golgotha. Therefore there is no life, no fortune and no joy which have not been integrated by his history into eternal life, the eternal joy of God.³⁹

This kenotic, trinitarian God challenges the theological manifestation of the identity-involvement dilemma, i.e., the theistic portrayal of God over and against the atheistic portrayal of no-God. Moltmann argues that the modern dilemma of theism versus atheism finds its basis in a non-kenotic, non-trinitarian view of God. The theistic ‘God’ is defined in terms of power, perfection and permanence and derives from “theistic philosophy and theology.”⁴⁰ Held up to the

³⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 207. Moltmann (36) has called his readers to “radical Christian faith...committing oneself without reserve to the ‘crucified God.’” Given the various meanings of the ‘death of God’ which emerged among atheists and Christian theologians during the mid-twentieth century, Moltmann is careful to nuance his understanding in trinitarian terms. (For a summary of meanings of the ‘death of God,’ see Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005), 60.) Moltmann explains, “The ‘death of God’ cannot be designated the origin of Christian theology, even if the phrase has an element of truth in it; the origin of Christian theology is only the death on the cross in God and God in Jesus’ death. If one uses the phrase [‘death of God’], it is advisable to abandon the concept of God and to speak of the relationships of the Son and the Father and the Spirit at the point at which ‘God’ might be expected to be mentioned.” (209) A trinitarian understanding of God allows Christians to speak of the death of God in a differentiated way. (See footnote 38 below.) The Christian God “suffered in the suffering of Jesus...[and] died on the cross of Christ...so that we might live and rise again in *his* future.” (216) (Emphasis is mine.) In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper (60) discusses *The Crucified God*, explaining that “if we start with the death of God on the cross and really take this seriously, then atheism is integrated into the reality of God and, at the same time, is therein negated, preserved and transcended. On the cross God has anticipated atheism, made it his own, and blunted it...” Kasper (61) later cautions that Moltmann takes his conclusions too far to the point of collapsing God with the world in a way that is “almost mythological and tragic in character.”

³⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 243. The kenotic event between Father and Son is described as follows. The Son is delivered up to death by the Father. Out of love comprising total trust toward the Father, the Son surrenders or delivers himself up. The will of the Father and the will of the Son are not at counter-purposes at the cross; they are united. It is their experience of suffering which differs. The Son suffers rejection in his dying while the Father suffers grief in the death of his beloved Son. The Son empties himself to the point of death. The Father “forsakes himself” when he forsakes his Son. “What proceeds from this event between Father and Son is the Spirit which justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and even brings the dead alive.” (244)

³⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 246.

⁴⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 250.

crucified Christ as the standard for all that is truly Christian, the theistic image of God may be declared idolatrous and Christians may rightfully declare themselves “atheists” with respect to it. By contrast, atheism esteems the characteristics of the theistic version of ‘God,’ and relocates these same characteristics (power, moral perfection, and limitlessness) to human beings. The atrocities of the past century demonstrate that when human beings try to live this version of ‘god-like’ superiority, evil ensues. Moltmann suggests that “with a trinitarian theology of the cross, faith escapes the dispute between theism and atheism; God is not only other-worldly but also this-worldly; he is not only God, but also man; he is not only rule, authority and law but the event of suffering, liberating love.”⁴¹

A Kenotic Anthropology

Moltmann returns to the anthropological question with which he began. What does it mean to be truly human in light of the kenotic God of Jesus Christ? If a word about God is a word about humanity, what does a kenotic theology of death and suffering in God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - say about being human in the face of suffering? One might conclude that it is impossible to be true to the God of Jesus Christ and isolate oneself from the plight of one’s fellow human beings. But *how* do we truly suffer with our fellow human sufferers? There are more and less authentic ways to do so.

To authentically suffer with fellow human beings, we must negotiate the anthropological version of the identity-involvement dilemma, holding the tension between *apatheia* and *pathos*.⁴²

⁴¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 252.

⁴² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 267–74. Moltmann defines the extremes of *apatheia* and *pathos* presented in Greek and Jewish philosophy respectively. The Greek notion of *apatheia* in God was derived in contrast to the “capricious, envious, vengeful and punitive” gods who created havoc among humans. (268) The Greek apathetic God is good, self-contained, needing no person nor object for his being, neither requiring nor offering love. The moral human who follows this God is emotionally unaffected by life, lives freely and tranquilly on the higher plain of rationality, approaching godlikeness in the Greek sense. In ancient use, *agape* love “without self-seeking and anxiety” was facilitated by *apatheia*. (269) *Apatheia* corresponds to the self-sufficient love within the Trinity but does not account for the overflow of triune love *for us*. The Jewish notion of God’s *pathos* balances our understanding. *Pathos* in God pertains to how, in history, God is affected by his people. This is a covenant God who experiences injury when human beings act in relationship-breaking ways. The God of *pathos* dwells with his people; his *Shekinah* presence makes its home in the depth of Israel’s sufferings and their redemption is tied up in his

Apatheia is the self-sufficiency which facilitates agape love for the other. Pathos is affective involvement with sufferings in history which manifests as sympathy, that is, “the openness of a person to the present of another.”⁴³ Together apatheia and pathos through agape and sympathy offer a self-possessed way for human beings to suffer with one another. Through kenosis - being in Christ for the suffering other - we hold apatheia and pathos in tension.

In his final two chapters of *The Crucified God*, Moltmann makes applications to a kenotic spirituality and ethic. How does a kenotic spirituality relate to psychological freedom? How does kenosis manifest as an ethic in the sociopolitical sphere? After considering these questions, I will offer a summary of *The Crucified God* and expound on key aspects of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic which have been unveiled throughout.

Kenosis and Psychological Freedom

By way of kenosis, Moltmann manoeuvres through another tension between religious faithfulness and psychological freedom. This is the psychological version of the identity-involvement dilemma in which devout faith is juxtaposed with soundness of mind. Moltmann encourages people of faith to face psychologist Sigmund Freud’s concerns about the enslaving impact of religion head-on. Christians need not fear knowing about religious pathology; it exists. Sometimes Freud’s is a straw-man critique, setting up caricatures of religion and knocking them down. Christians might consider Freud’s critique and take care to represent authentic faith. In fact, Freud’s observations might help thoughtful Christians separate the “gold of true faith from the dross of religion.”⁴⁴ Moltmann offers three examples of Freud’s critiques.

suffering. (273) Moltmann suggests that this is the Jewish God recognized on the “gallows” in Auschwitz. There is a difference between the Jewish God of pathos and the passion of the Christ. For Jews, covenant relationship with God is the condition for God’s pathos. For Christians, God’s grace is the condition for God’s pathos. Passion originates in Christ for human beings who “cannot satisfy [covenant] conditions: the sinners, the godless and those forsaken by God.” (275)

⁴³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 272.

⁴⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 296.

First, Freud noticed a similarity between his patients' obsessive-compulsive ritual hand-washing to assuage anxiety and Christian engagement in rote religious rituals to repress guilt. For Freud, both activities reflected the same anxiety-based pathology. Moltmann agrees with Freud; he also disagrees. Certainly, naive participation in religious rituals to repress guilt *is* idolatrous, undermines flourishing, and perpetuates numbness in an ongoing vicious cycle of obsession and repression. However, participation in rituals to assuage guilt is not authentic Christian practice. Unconscious ritual behaviours serve no function in a system of grace.⁴⁵

Freud makes a second link between mental illness and religion. In patriarchal societies, he notices a childish, "parricidal" rebellion toward authorities or father figures.⁴⁶ Freud thinks this "law of parricide" is central to the Christian story; childish guilt over rebellion against an oppressive Father is atoned for through the blood sacrifice of the Son.⁴⁷ Freud is critiquing a pervasive misinterpretation of the Christian religion. Moltmann rejects this notion of God the Father as "despotic divine paternal authority," arguing for a kenotic Christian narrative of God-with-us who, out of suffering love for humanity, extends freedom to all.⁴⁸

Third, Freud compares the general anxiety and depression associated with unfulfilled dreams with the apathetic resignation of immature religious people when their notion of "utopia" proves illusory.⁴⁹ Freud's solution is to grow up and face reality. Moltmann argues that mature Christians *do* face reality. They do not passively resign themselves to the hardships of 'real life,'

⁴⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 293. This must not be misunderstood as a statement that religious ritual has no function *at all*. Religious rituals, authentically practiced, are consciously chosen expressions of love for God and desire for God. They are human acts of invitation and openness to God's initiative and ongoing action in and through one's life. Authentic religious forms will be further discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁴⁶J.B. Sykes, ed., "Parricide," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 745. "1. one who kills his father or near relative; one who kills person regarded as sacred; person guilty of treason against his country."

⁴⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 304–5.

⁴⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 307.

⁴⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 308.

rather they identify with the crucified Christ in his solidarity with suffering humanity. Christian hope holds the tensions of reality.⁵⁰

Kenosis and Political Freedom

Moltmann makes kenotic ethical applications to the sociopolitical sphere. Here the identity-involvement dilemma manifests either in an extreme separation between church and state or in analogous correlations between church and state. Moltmann calls the extreme separation of religion from politics the “model of unburdening.”⁵¹ Though there is value in each realm’s freedom from the other, the problem with this model is that it risks allowing the church to coexist uncritically alongside *any* sociopolitical regime.⁵² The other extreme, called “the model of correspondence,” also presumes separation between church and state but attempts to make analogous connections between them. For example, freedom from sin in the religious sphere is corresponded to freedom from political ideologies in the sociopolitical sphere. The problem with this model is that it risks creating a hierarchy in which “the church is idealized so as to become the model of society.” Moltmann argues that both church and society are morally ambiguous at the present time.⁵³

Kenosis provides a way through this unburdening-correspondence version of the identity-involvement dilemma. God in Christ is for history.⁵⁴ To expand on the unique relationship be-

⁵⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 312. This understanding of hope was brought home to me through comments by Professor Mark Slatter to my research paper entitled “Overcoming Excarnation through the Analogical Imagination” dated April 12, 2017. In response to my comment that “hope *and* realism are held in tension” he suggested a more accurate statement: “Hope is the tension that holds realism. It is the virtue of carrying the contradictions of reality.”

⁵¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 318.

⁵²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 319. This separatist church might judge individual Christian’s efforts to secure freedom for others as a form of “works-righteousness” and collectively choose to remain silent in the face of systemic oppression. In making this point it is likely that Moltmann has in mind some segments of the church during the second world war who did not act against injustice.

⁵³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 320. See also Tracy, *Analogical*, 47. David Tracy, discussing the relationship between the church and society, puts it this way: “In more strictly theological terms, the situation can be described by understanding *the intrinsic ambiguity of both world and church for ‘faith.’*” (Emphasis is mine.) He sounds much like Moltmann when, instead of upholding the popular “*in* the world, but...not of it” slogan, he states that “it seems more correct to say that the Christian is released...*from* the world, *for* the world.” (48)

⁵⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 321.

tween Christian faith and culture, Moltmann raises Rousseau's discussion of civic religions compared to Christianity. Rousseau judged Christianity "politically impracticable and even dangerous" because "[it] does not bind the hearts of citizens to the state, but lures them away from it."⁵⁵ Christian people who primarily identify themselves with the crucified Christ are freed up to secure the freedom of others at great personal risk:

Just as the unconditional love of Jesus for the rejected made the Pharisees his enemies and brought him to the cross, so unconditional love also means enmity and persecution in a world in which the life of man is made dependent on particular social norms, conditions and achievements. A love which takes precedence and robs these conditions of their force is folly and scandal in this world.⁵⁶

The kenotic church lives by the standard of the crucified Christ of God and cannot make its primary identification with any political group. From primary identification with Christ, the church freely exists for freedom in society. This freedom manifests in three ways. First, the kenotic church never unwaveringly attaches to a political leader as God's person; every political leader must be evaluated and re-evaluated by the standard of the cross. Second, the kenotic church never links civil law to human salvation, thus Christian freedom allows for civil disobedience on crucicentric grounds.⁵⁷ Third, the kenotic church resists leaving political control in the hands of the leaders, a form of idolatry; individual Christians enliven democratic political processes through their active interest and participation.⁵⁸ Moltmann summarizes kenotic, political

⁵⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 324. The religion of the civilian pertains to the rituals and allegiances required by citizens to supposedly protect the interests of the society. In ancient times, there was a civic duty to be faithful to Caesar. Any version of modern day nationalism has similar features. Christianity "separates the theological system from the political system and disquiets people. This is the reason why the pagans always regarded Christians as 'real rebels.'" (324)

⁵⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 248.

⁵⁷That is, with acceptance of the consequences.

⁵⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 328.

theology by pointing to the “crucified God [who] is in fact a stateless and classless God. But that does not mean that he is an unpolitical God.”⁵⁹

The rule of the Christ who was crucified for political reasons can only be extended through liberation from forms of rule which make men servile and apathetic and the political religions which give them stability...Christians will seek to anticipate the future of Christ according to the measure of the possibilities available to them, by breaking down lordship and building up the political liveliness of each individual.⁶⁰

For Moltmann, identification with the crucified Christ will manifest through specific political liberation efforts - socialism, democracy, pluralism, ecological connectedness, and eschatological hope. These efforts interrupt the following cultural cycles of suffering, respectively: poverty, oppression, bigotry, pollution and meaninglessness.⁶¹

Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in *The Crucified God*

How Christians understand God affects how they live in relation to society. Moltmann challenges the notion of the theistic God which emphasizes God’s separation from humanity. A form of discipleship based on this theistic view might position the church over and against the culture.⁶² The God of Jesus Christ, dialectically discerned through the crucified Jesus who was raised, locates God with us; transcendence has entered the immanent sphere. Thus, genuine Christian expression locates God in the supposedly ‘godforsaken’ places where God was not thought to be.

Moltmann argues against the possibility of human beings becoming like God through their own efforts and solutions. The kenotic, crucicentric path, the way of the crucified Christ, is the way to become like God.⁶³ Through emptying ourselves rather than asserting ourselves, we become most authentic expressions of the image of God, that is, we become more fully human.

⁵⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 329.

⁶⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 329.

⁶¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 332-335.

⁶²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 206. For Moltmann, the traditional, theistic idea of God emphasizes God’s unchangeableness and impassibility. It emphasizes the division between divinity and humanity.

⁶³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 71, 211. Though “created in the image of God,” human beings are “in practice...sinner[s]” and thus cannot reliably, by their own analogical methods, obtain knowledge of God. We are

I return to my research question: What key features of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic may be derived from *The Crucified God* as optimal for the experience, articulation and embodiment of Christian faith in Charles Taylor's "secularity three" culture of authenticity?⁶⁴ We will consider three kenotic spiritual practices insinuated in *The Crucified God* which act as means for transformative encounter with the kenotic, trinitarian God of the crucified Christ.⁶⁵ At least three kenotic virtues may emerge as gracious by-products of such kenotic spiritual practices. We will discuss two ways emerging kenotic virtues might impact on moral decision-making.

Kenotic Spiritual Practices

At least three prominent spiritual practices in *The Crucified God* set the conditions for intimacy with the kenotic God of Jesus Christ: 1) the practice of releasing oneself from previous identity constructs to establish a truer identity in the crucified Christ, 2) the practice of participating in the sufferings of Christ, and 3) the practice of "watching" or "living with unheard prayers" within "the trinitarian situation of God."⁶⁶

Letting Go of Previous Identity Constructs

First, a kenotic spirituality involves the practice of releasing oneself from previous identity constructs to establish a truer identity in the crucified Christ. This requirement is reminiscent of Jesus' words to his disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those

most likely to "misuse" any "natural knowledge of God...in the interest of [our] self-exaltation and [our] self-divinization."

⁶⁴The second half of my research question, which makes connections between kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic and the "secularity three" culture of authenticity will be considered in the most detail in my later integrative fourth chapter. I will suggest that a kenotic form of discipleship, that is, kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic, relates to present cultural questions and responses and offers the culture a way to live its current values at a higher level of authenticity.

⁶⁵See pages 13-16 for definitions of spirituality and ethics. As explained in my introduction, by spiritual practices I do not mean guilt-induced duty or engagement in manipulative techniques to somehow 'get' God to be what we want. This is not actually possible, and poisons spirituality.

⁶⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 277. Moltmann further explores waiting in prayer in a 1999 lecture given at Princeton: Jürgen Moltmann, "Praying and Watching," in *The 1999 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture* (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999), 33-44, accessed September 5, 2017, <http://www.ptsem.edu/lectures/?action=tei&id=youth-1999-03>.

who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”⁶⁷ What does this language of “laying down” and “taking up” mean? How does one avoid the potential pitfalls identified by some feminist theologians who argue against kenotic practices because of an understandable concern about glorifying vulnerability to the point of perpetuating abuse?⁶⁸ I will speak in terms of the ego, differentiating between the ego states of egoism, ego strength and ego weakness to uncover what is meant and what is *not* meant by the practice of abandoning previous identities to “[find] a new self” in Christ.⁶⁹

The ego may be neutrally defined as the control centre of the personality. Ego strength is a positive state of the ego whereby one has the interior security and stability necessary to cope “realistically with a wide variety of pressures within and without.”⁷⁰ Though self-focus is essential to responsible human being, the term “egoist” applies to an undesirable state of excessive self-regard. “Narcissism” or “pride” might be descriptive words applied to the egoist. Ego weakness is a second undesirable ego state in which one lacks the interior resources to be sufficiently self-possessed.⁷¹ Such ego fragility correlates with inadequate self-knowledge and subsequent dependence on others, including God, for a sense of identity and security. Both the egoist and the one suffering ego weakness are at the mercy of unreliable self-assessments and the fluctuating evaluations of others. Considering these definitions of the ego and its states, what does it mean to release oneself from previous identity constructs to establish a truer identity in the crucified Christ? Identification with Christ crucified is a *choice* one makes *for oneself* from a position of sufficient ego strength. It is a death to egoistic notions of self-sufficiency and superiority, and a death to relying on others for one’s sense of identity. Primary identification is with the crucified

⁶⁷Mark 8:34b-35, NRSV. Also quoted by Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 15.

⁶⁸This concern was raised on page 10-11 of my introduction.

⁶⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 15.

⁷⁰James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Ego,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 185.

⁷¹Slatter, *Insights*, 307. Childress and Macquarrie, “Ego.”

Christ. Moltmann uses language of “non-identity” or “homelessness” to capture the experience of letting oneself be defined in the cruciform terms of sin, alienation, rejection, and difference.⁷²

Choosing Fellowship with the Sufferings of Jesus

A second kenotic spiritual practice is to participate in the sufferings of the crucified Christ. This is an active and chosen participation in a particular kind of suffering incurred as a consequence for Gospel words and actions.⁷³ Fellowship with Jesus’ sufferings entails a voluntary alignment with him in his proclamation and demonstration of radical grace toward others. This solidarity with the other is based in the conviction that God is where he is not thought to be, bringing his presence and his participation to supposedly shameful situations.⁷⁴ To participate in the sufferings of Christ, one first identifies with him as “brother and companion” who offers the sufferer “respect, recognition, human dignity and hope.”⁷⁵ Second, one actively follows him in chosen poverty, that is, self-emptying, in order to enrich the lives of others. This is the way of fellowship with the Christ who was crucified, allowing for neither passive “submission to fate” nor “apathy in suffering.”⁷⁶

Watching and Praying Within the Silence of God

A third kenotic spiritual practice reflected in *The Crucified God* is the discipline of faithful watching and praying within the silence of God: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁷⁷ The Son’s lament to his Father from the cross reflects watching and praying in the face of a real experience of abandonment.⁷⁸ This was not an expression of “self-pity” or of “personal dis-

⁷²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 17.

⁷³No other forms of suffering are pursued or romanticized.

⁷⁴“...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8, New American Standard Bible.

⁷⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 49.

⁷⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 52.

⁷⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 150–1. Psalm 22:1, NRSV.

⁷⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 152. There is contention among theologians regarding the idea that the Father truly abandoned his Son at the cross. In her chapter entitled “A Critique of Christian Masochism,” Dorothee Soelle strongly objects to Moltmann’s notion of what she frames as a deliberate abandonment of Christ “by the Father to the fate of death” in which “the first person of the Trinity casts out and annihilates the second.” In graphic terms, she asserts that to honour this “sadistic” God is to “[worship] the executioner.” Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*, trans. Everett R. Kalin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 27. Walter Kasper, in less stark terms, also objects to the

gress,” rather it was a plea for the Father to vindicate his message and his mission, to be true to God’s self.⁷⁹ In the dramatic crucifixion scene between the Son and the Father, we see the whole of human experience (including our yet unanswered cries of abandonment) taken up into the three-personed life of God.⁸⁰ This view of life in relation to God might best be described as *panentheism*, that is, “a trinitarian theology of the cross [which] perceives God in the negative element and therefore the negative element in God.”⁸¹ By way of the kenotic, crucified Christ, God has entered “the negative element” of human existence and “the negative element” has been taken up into Godself. This is an image of Love *ultimately* overcoming evil.⁸² Human suffering has been taken up into the trinitarian eschatological process. One prays *in* the triune God “through the Son to the Father in the Spirit. In the brotherhood of Jesus, the person who prays has access to the Fatherhood of the Father and to the Spirit of hope.”⁸³ Contrary to Freud’s critique of immature religious people who become apathetic in the face of unrealized utopic

notion of real abandonment of the Son by the Father. “The cross is the utmost that is possible to God in his self-surrendering love; it is ‘that than which a greater cannot be thought;’ it is the unsurpassable self-definition of God. This self-renunciation or emptying is therefore *not a self-abandonment...*” (Emphasis is mine.) For Moltmann, the abandonment of Jesus cannot be reduced to perception; the actual “rejection of Jesus by God” must be faced. “The cross of the Son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction. The resurrection of the Son abandoned by God unites God with God in the most intimate fellowship.” Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 152. The chosen cross of the abandoned Son of God is where God’s presence meets godforsakenness. This difficult idea is reflected in the questions and refrain of Romans 8: 31, 32, 35, 37-39: “What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? *He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?...Who will separate us from the love of God? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Emphasis is mine.)

⁷⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 150.

⁸⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 215-16. For Moltmann, the God of theism - perfect, unchangeable, untouched by suffering - is incompatible with this incarnational, trinitarian understanding of God. Christopher Ben Simpson, *Modern*, 17, 57. The opposite extreme view of God, pantheism, is also incompatible with the crucified Christ of God. Pantheism is defined by C.B. Simpson as when *everything is* a “necessary expression or manifestation of God.” Emphasis is mine. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 277. For Moltmann, the pantheistic, God-is-identical-with-the-universe view is problematic because it requires us “to ignore the negative elements in the world” and offers no response to suffering. One must exercise care to discern between pantheism and *panentheism* in this discussion.

⁸¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 277.

⁸²In other words, it is an image of ‘not yet’ more than ‘already.’

⁸³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 247.

dreams, this is a posture of active realism.⁸⁴ In a 1999 lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary, Moltmann further expands on how we pray in situations of God's seeming silence:

Praying is often very dramatic, sometimes a tragedy and a wrestling with the "hidden face" of God, suffering under the No of God and still searching for the Yes of God because we believe there is a hidden Yes in the No of God...The torments of death and the yearning for life make all earthly creatures sigh and groan...For where these sighs and groans are heard, there is still hope for redemption. Where everything in us and around us is struck dumb, hope dies, too. *Sighs and groans are hope's signs of life in opposition to death.*⁸⁵

The sighing and groaning of which Moltmann speaks is not simply a catharsis, which transforms nothing. Rather, sighs and groans indicate our refusal to settle for a false version of a distant God who treats us as we deserve; thus, sighs and groans are protest language toward change. Watching and prayer, sighing and groaning, are kenotic spiritual practices which symbolize our hope in the God who exists as transformative Love. They are foundational building blocks toward a kenotic ethic of solidarity with the suffering other.⁸⁶

Kenotic Virtues

Kenotic virtues are the fruit of kenotic spiritual practices. They are outcomes of encounter and relationship with God. Some kenotic virtues which might arise from aligning one's primary identity with the crucified Christ for suffering others in a posture of watching and waiting are: 1) agape, 2) sympathy, and 3) hope.⁸⁷

Agape

Moltmann identifies agape as the love of God for the other, having nothing to do with natural connection, commonality, or attraction.⁸⁸ In the words of Charles Taylor, "what has al-

⁸⁴Earlier discussion of Freud's critique may be revisited on page 30-31 above.

⁸⁵Moltmann, "Praying," 40-1. Emphasis is mine.

⁸⁶See Soelle, *Suffering*, 72-4 for a helpful explanation of lament as an "indispensable step on the way...to the solidarity in which change occurs." (74)

⁸⁷I am reminded of Psalm 1:3, New Revised Standard Version, which describes those who participate in certain spiritual practices motivated by delight in God: "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit *in its season*..." Emphasis is mine.

⁸⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 28. "[L]ove for what is similar and beautiful" is "philia."

ways been stressed in Christian agape is the way in which it can take us beyond the bounds of any existing solidarity.”⁸⁹ Moltmann draws from apathetic theology to highlight agape’s freedom. Agape love “arises from the spirit and from freedom” and is “not characterized by desire or anxiety.”⁹⁰ This freedom in love is similar to what Mark Morelli calls “self-possession,” that is, “being at home with oneself in one’s...deliberate and reflective conscious performance.”⁹¹ Jesus demonstrates such freedom in his statement, “I lay down *my* life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but *I* lay it down of *my own* accord. *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.*”⁹²

Sympathy

Agapic freedom is insufficient to describe authentic human existence in relation to the suffering other. The virtues of agape and sympathy must be held together for human beings to genuinely reflect the freedom of God’s love in situations of human suffering. Moltmann derives his discussion of sympathy from Jewish pathetic theology which concerns itself with how God is “interested in the world to the point of suffering.”⁹³ In human beings, the pathos of God is reflected as “sympathy,” defined as the “openness of a person to the present of another.”⁹⁴ Together

⁸⁹Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 246.

⁹⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 269. Apathia as “indifference” is never what Moltmann means. (269) Such indifference is anathema to the Christian God, and to Christian people. Drawing from the Greek idea of apathy, Moltmann describes the “free God who freed others for himself.” Elsewhere, Moltmann discusses apathy only in its negative sense. See Jürgen Moltmann, “The Passion of Life,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 4, no. 1 (1977): 4–5. Apathy, once the “highest virtue” of perfect, impassible Greek divinity, is no longer cultivated as a virtue in present culture. However, it is a primary temptation and, perhaps unconscious, way of being in present culture, revealed through our frantic efforts to actively pursue a level of success in order to dull or obliterate our experience of suffering.

⁹¹Mark D. Morelli, *Self-Possession: Being at Home in Conscious Performance* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Lonergan Institute Boston College, 2015), 339.

⁹²John 10:17b-18a, New Revised Standard Version. Emphasis is mine.

⁹³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 271.

⁹⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 272. According to James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Sympathy,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 612, to have sympathy is to be able to “understand and share the feelings of other human beings.” The properties of sympathy may be further nuanced in contrast to other fellow feelings, e.g. compassion and empathy. Such differentiation will be considered in my fourth chapter and will prove helpful in proposing best expressions of kenosis in secular culture.

agape and sympathy avoid the identity-involvement extremes of disassociation from and over-involvement with suffering others.⁹⁵

Hope

A third virtue, hope, is enlivened by the spiritual practices of watching and waiting, even in the silence of God. Hope is the virtue which holds the tensions of reality.⁹⁶ Moltmann challenges the notion that “the other-worldly dimension of Christian hope purchases personal consolation at the cost of this-worldly social and political involvement.” He argues that fixing our vision on “God’s new and coming future...foster[s] both an openness to and a readiness for social and political change.”⁹⁷ Watching and waiting, and the ‘faith-full’ lament intrinsic to these practices, are signs that hope exists. When a person has stopped watching and waiting, when they have stopped crying, when they are listless and no longer care to protest negative existence, it is a sign that hope is lost.⁹⁸

Our view of God is deeply important for maintaining hope. Moltmann points to the work of French philosopher and journalist Albert Camus who critiques God in the face of human suffering.⁹⁹ Moltmann argues that Camus bases his conclusions in a theistic notion of God; Camus describes this God as unable to suffer or die, weak compared to humans. For Camus, humans are greater than God when they view death not as “doom,” but as something to be chosen and freely accepted. Thus, “the peak of metaphysical rebellion against the God who cannot die is freely-

⁹⁵In a later article, Moltmann seems to equate sympathy with compassion. See Moltmann, “The Passion of Life,” 6: “He who lives in a covenant with this passionate God cannot become apathetic. His whole life is shaped by *sympathy*, by compassion.” From my reading of *The Crucified God*, it seems that agape and sympathy together, not sympathy alone, best represent the meaning of compassion. This will be addressed in my fourth chapter.

⁹⁶See footnote 50 above.

⁹⁷James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Hope,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 276. The contribution of Moltmann’s “theology of hope” to definitions of hope is directly addressed in this dictionary entry.

⁹⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 220.

⁹⁹David Simpson, “Albert Camus (1913–1960),” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/camus/>.

chosen death, which is called suicide.”¹⁰⁰ For Moltmann, the *crucified God* joins the “metaphysical rebellion” against this idolatrous view of God, offering himself as one who takes up the cry of godforsakenness and takes on the mystery of suffering humanity because his nature is love.¹⁰¹ This is a panentheistic view of the God of Jesus Christ, the God of hope who holds and redeems negative reality, strengthening the person with faith to remain open to the tensions of life and, perhaps, offering the suffering other a sense that transcendence may be near.

Kenotic Moral Decision-Making

We have seen that a kenotic spirituality of ego alignment with the crucified Christ, participation in his sufferings, and waiting and watching when God seems silent create the conditions for the emergence of the God-given virtues of agape, sympathy, and hope. The virtues of agape, sympathy and hope incline the heart toward one key moral priority, that is, fellowship or solidarity with the other within and beyond the church based on grace. For Moltmann, this priority of fellowship or solidarity with the other affects how moral decisions are made about society in relation to the church, and the church in relation to society. True to its paradoxical nature, a kenotic ethic perceives and enacts good in unexpected places and ways; it is flexible and open to the other’s reality.

Society in the Church: The ‘Outsider’ is In?

A kenotic ethic questions the criteria for participation at the eucharistic table in Christian worship gatherings. Moltmann suggests that the eucharistic gathering is ironic considering it ritually celebrates the Christ who was crucified once and for all as a complete outsider from the religious community and society.¹⁰² One response offered by Catholic moral theologian Mark

¹⁰⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 222. In a mental health crisis unit for adolescents, I work with several young people every week who have attempted suicide or who are planning to act on their strong death-wish. For some, their acquiescence to death is quite apparent; no other goals for the future or reasons for living can be expressed. Their lack of fight for life is a disturbing sign of hopelessness. Sometimes I imagine Christ’s outcry echoing through the halls of the crisis unit - “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” - and I silently cry those words alongside the young people from my own spirit.

¹⁰¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 227.

¹⁰²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 43-44.

Slatter, in light of this “theological absurdity,” is that the “[t]he word of the cross...must be strongly proclaimed in place of the ‘compulsive repetition of the cult’ since the *cultus* of sacrifice without this preaching will replicate in another guise the cycles of psychological compulsiveness.”¹⁰³

Moltmann insinuates at least two additional kenotic responses to this dilemma of belonging within the church. Since Christ practiced table fellowship based on grace, a second response might be for the eucharistic table to be open to all based on God’s initiative through the crucified Christ and the human desire to trust him. Moltmann seems to support this in his statement that:

the eucharist, like the meals held by Jesus with ‘sinners and publicans’, must also be celebrated with the unrighteous, those who have no rights and the godless from the ‘highways and hedges’ of society, in all their profanity, and should no longer be limited, as religious sacrifice, to the inner circle of the devout, those who are members of the same denomination.¹⁰⁴

Moltmann hints at a third alternative; the eucharist might be disassociated from Christ’s sacrificial death in exchange for a primary emphasis on the eucharist as “a celebration of the hope which remembers him” since “[t]he unique historical nature of his death on the cross, outside religion and the temple, makes the identification of the crucified Christ with the cult impossible.”¹⁰⁵

I suspect that a kenotic ethic is characterized by ambivalence toward any actions by the church which are perceived to reinforce the line between insiders and, especially suffering, outsiders. This does not mean Christians must thoughtlessly do away with traditions. It means the

¹⁰³Slatter, *Insights*, 33. See Freud’s critique of such “psychological compulsiveness” on p. 31 above. Slatter’s wisdom is reflective of David Tracy’s caution that manifestation and proclamation, sacrament and word, must be held together in tension. The word of the cross must be preached to keep the eucharistic ritual from regressing into magicalness. See Tracy, *Analogical*, 216–18.

¹⁰⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 44.

¹⁰⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 44. These three suggestions which hold the eucharistic gathering to the standard of the cross of Christ seem to reflect three approaches taken in the churches. The first approach might be reflected in some Catholic contexts. The second approach might be reflected in some Wesleyan contexts; a theology of the eucharist as a means of grace combined with Wesley’s interest in primitive Christianity gives some theological freedom to invite all who seek Christ, baptized and non-baptized, to the table, even as an act of initial faith response. The third approach might be reflected in some Reformed or Anabaptist contexts where the Lord’s Supper is understood as a memorial celebration.

church must be willing to acknowledge and live in tensions, open to change as it learns kenotic applications which are congruent with the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the universal Christ.

The Church in Society: In Christ and Political

Moltmann's advocacy for critical political engagement, summarized earlier, recognizes the ambiguity present both in the church and society.¹⁰⁶ For the self-emptying church, criticism of society must be preceded by self-criticism. This is in keeping with Jesus' admonition to get the "log" out of your own eye so that you can see to remove the "speck" from the other's eye.¹⁰⁷

The kenotic church lives in Christ within history *for* the culture.¹⁰⁸ Being in Christ within history for the culture is risky for everyone concerned. The self-emptying church who aligns with the crucified Christ not only risks but willingly chooses to suffer for that which Christ suffers. On the other hand, the culture is at risk of being disrupted by the church who does not primarily answer to it. The church, at its best, will not be tamed by the culture; this was Rousseau's worry and the reason why he described the church as "dangerous."¹⁰⁹ The kenotic church is no pawn of the state. In its authentic form, it cannot officially align with a political party. It cannot seek power or status since that is incongruent with the crucified Christ. Neither progressive nor conservative, the kenotic church is "hidden with Christ in God."¹¹⁰ Since political and religious leaders were the ones who crucified Jesus, the church today need not assume that the very fact that a person is in a position of leadership makes them 'God's person.' Leadership, political or otherwise, must be held up to the critique of the cross of Christ. As Moltmann puts it, "political rule can only be justified 'from below.'"¹¹¹ If political leaders or social norms violate the stand-

¹⁰⁶See footnote 53 in this chapter.

¹⁰⁷Matthew 7:3-5, NRSV.

¹⁰⁸This is unlike the 'batten down the hatches' reaction that I see among many North American evangelicals at this time in insecure reaction to cultural events. The choice to withdraw from culture is contrary to early evangelical tenets, resulting in an inauthentic and disheartening form of a movement once built on faithfulness and engagement. No wonder some evangelicals loathe using the categorization.

¹⁰⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 324.

¹¹⁰Colossians 3:3, NRSV.

¹¹¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 328. When I was growing up in an evangelical tradition, if a religious leader was living in an overtly questionable manner, we were taught there was little course of action. I've seen the

ard of the cross, the church is free to peaceably engage in civil disobedience and to peaceably accept the consequences for that disobedience as Jesus did. The church must be very careful to explore what this means; not all church activity ‘in the name of Christ’ is genuinely so. Charles Taylor, sounding much like Moltmann, suggests that the church at its best serves the state in an “anti-structural” way, acting as a “built in ‘counter-principle to the dominant source of power.’”¹¹² In other words, the church has a “public” role; in Christ, it is political in a paradoxical, that is, self-emptying, way. In Christ, the church is free to engage and influence political processes. It dismantles political idolatries and seeks to “build up the political liveliness of each individual.”¹¹³

Moltmann outlines the five “vicious circles” from which one, in Christ, works to free suffering others to become their authentic selves.¹¹⁴ These circles of suffering are interconnected. To see improvement in one area is to see improvement in another. First, the circle of poverty, “consists of hunger, illness and early mortality, and is provoked by exploitation and class domination.”¹¹⁵ It is closely related to a “vicious circle of force” in which oppressive attitudes and behaviours by those who are privileged ensure the ongoing impoverishment of the poor. The third circle is “racial and cultural alienation,” that is, loss of identity by those who are already too powerless, economically or socio-politically, to hold onto themselves; they risk taking on the identity projected on them by those in power. In this circle, one is at risk of even greater exploitation as “apathetic cogs in a technocratic mega-machine.” Those used to boost the technocracy might find themselves employed in a way that reinforces a fourth vicious circle: progress at all

same in my adult life; 1Chronicles 16:22 was and is quoted, “do not touch [the Lord’s] anointed ones,” used as justification for inaction, though incongruent with the Armenian, free-will, theology of the Wesleyan denomination in which I am ordained (and more congruent with the Calvinist tradition in which I was raised). The cross of Christ provides a different possibility of critique and transformative action in the case of ungodly leadership. Godly leadership always reflects the crucified Christ.

¹¹²Kerry Kronberg, “Liminality as Anti-Structure: Toward a Public Theological Voice in ‘Secularity One’” (THO 6333: Saint Paul University, 2017), 4, quoting Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 48–9.

¹¹³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 329.

¹¹⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 329.

¹¹⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 330.

costs. In this vicious circle, the commitment to growth and development outstrips the value of limits, even to the point of violating the environment in which we live, ushering in decay and death.¹¹⁶ Finally, the previous four vicious circles create the conditions for a growing interior hopelessness and apathy, even to the point of “an unconscious death-wish.”¹¹⁷

The kenotic church lives in history for the liberation of culture from these vicious circles. How might that look? Moltmann offers five “symbols” which represent concrete action and change.¹¹⁸ The circle of poverty may be upended by “socialism” defined as “the satisfaction of material need and social justice in a material democracy.”¹¹⁹ Wealth must be redistributed, and basic human needs met. The second vicious circle of oppression by those who have more power over those who have less, might be interrupted by “democracy,” that is, individual freedom from political control for participation and influence in society. Democracy sets the conditions for the third symbol, “recognition of others,” which represents the openness necessary to upend racial and cultural alienation. Distinctions between people are valued and “different kinds of people encounter each other without anxiety, superiority or repressed feelings of guilt and regard their differences as fruitful, working together productively.”¹²⁰ The fourth vicious circle, in which nature is used and abused without appropriate regard for its built-in limits and rhythms, may be interrupted through renewed “peace with nature.” This is the recognition that ours is a living environment and must be cared for as such. It is a move away from objectifying the natural world, including human nature, making space for the emergence of life with no regard for notions of utility.¹²¹ Finally, Moltmann’s fifth symbol for liberation of culture is “counting on hope.” In response to the hopelessness and apathy that can’t help but follow all the vicious circles, meaning must be realized in God-with-us. For Moltmann, “[i]n a situation of godforsakenness and sense-

¹¹⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 331.

¹¹⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 332.

¹¹⁸Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 337.

¹¹⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 332.

¹²⁰Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 333.

¹²¹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 334.

lessness the knowledge of the hidden presence of God in the godforsaken Christ on the cross already gives ‘courage to be,’ despite nothingness.”¹²² In Christ, there is freedom to hope; in the tension of real experience one continues to demonstrate hope by working for the liberation of one’s fellow human beings. Moltmann reinforces that work must be done for liberation within every vicious circle; “[a]nyone who falls short here is courting death.”¹²³

In summary, through five symbols - socialism, democracy, recognition of the other, sympathetic partnership with the natural world, and “counting on hope” - Moltmann offers concrete direction for an incarnational Christian existence.¹²⁴ The five symbols represent sacramental actions through which the “real presence” of Christ is made manifest in society.¹²⁵ On this sacramental note, Moltmann concludes. He offers deep meaning to human life within history as “the ‘sacrament’ of Christian ethics, not just its material.”¹²⁶ History does not simply point toward God, rather it bears God’s presence. Human beings in Christ are the real presence of the crucified God for the culture; “[b]rotherhood with Christ means the suffering and active participation in the history of this God.”¹²⁷

¹²²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 335.

¹²³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 336.

¹²⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 329-335.

¹²⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 337.

¹²⁶Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 321.

¹²⁷Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 337.

Chapter 2: W.H. Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*

W.H. Vanstone joins Jürgen Moltmann as a twentieth century theologian who explores kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic but within a different context.¹ Vanstone's context is an almost idyllic post-war industrial town of northern England in the 1950s. As he pondered the self-sufficiency of the townspeople within his new parish, questions of his own identity as the parish priest and of the relevance of the church began to plague him. What is the significance - of God, of a priest, of the church - in a setting of satisfied, self-reliant confidence? It was two decades before he wrote his book explaining his kenotic insight.

Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense was published in 1977 after twenty years of reflection on the significance of the church in a situation of stability and strength.² An Anglican priest with a "brilliant undergraduate and graduate career," Vanstone had the opportunity to spend his life in the academy but chose the life of a parish priest.³ Early in *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, he refers to his ministry formation in New York and his appreciation for the contribution of his professors Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr to his thinking about the church. By their assessment and critique, the church contains the "ambiguity of motive and the impropriety of

¹I was encouraged toward Vanstone's work through an email correspondence with Regent College professor Loren Wilkinson. I described my interest in "exploring a kenotic form of discipleship as a key to faithful and relevant interface with secularity" and he generously responded by sharing the syllabus for a graduate seminar he conducted in 2013 on the subject of "Kenosis, Creation and Culture." He commented: "to my mind the most important works are W.H. Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*" followed by mention of the anthology edited by C. Stephen Evans, ed., *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010). Professor Loren Wilkinson, October 10, 2015, email correspondence with Kerry Kronberg.

²W.H. Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007), xvii. Sarah Coakley, "Deepening Practices: Perspectives from Ascetical and Mystical Theology," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 81–3. Anglican theologian Sarah Coakley suggests that the delay between insight and writing reflected Vanstone's commitment to doing "theology from the deep end." Her statement refers to an obituary for Vanstone, published in *The Daily Telegraph*, March 1999 in which he was remembered for describing the church as a "swimming pool in which all the noise comes from the shallow end." Coakley asks: "How much academic theology, and how much posturing in ecclesiastical politics, 'comes from the shallow end?'" It was "[l]ate in life, however, after his first major heart attack, he wrote three short monographs into which he poured the condensed theological wisdom gleaned from his practices in the parish."

³Coakley, "Deepening Practices," 81.

method” which occurs in other institutions.⁴ “Ambiguous” as a descriptor for the moral situation of the church has already occurred in our discussion of *The Crucified God* and we might watch for it to emerge in ongoing discussion and later synthesis.⁵ At first glance this makes sense; when divinity meets unredeemed humanity within any context, church or otherwise, there will be a “mixture of good and evil, light and darkness named ambiguity.”⁶ Even so, in his early ministry years, Vanstone maintained a high view of the church as the central agent of unity and care in society: “with all its faults, [the church] was the agency most likely to further the will of God by the practical promotion of the brotherhood of man.”⁷

The Church and Societal Need

In the first chapter of *Love’s Endeavour, Love’s Expense*, the reader becomes acquainted with Vanstone’s conviction that the church *is significant in secular culture*. What will notably change over the course of the book is his understanding of *how*. He will arrive at kenosis as a key for the meaningful existence of the church in a context where people are living satisfactory lives without reference to the transcendent. During his childhood in the 1930s, the significance of the church seemed readily discernible for all. Raised by a clergyman father and dedicated mother, he witnessed that the action of the church as a social safety net filled a void which would have otherwise remained vacant. By the 1950s, widespread economic revitalization combined with emerging government-administered social programmes meant that the charitable function of the church had given way to a new role of community hub, gathering people for Sunday worship and

⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 6-7.

⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 320. See discussion above in chapter one, footnote 53.

⁶Tracy, *Analogical*, 47. It has been emphasized already throughout my project that humanity is the good creation of God, and Jesus is the authentic human. Moral ambiguity within humans in the church, and beyond, is because of the current mix of inauthenticity and authenticity in every human person; another word for this falling short of original being is ‘sin.’ Nobody has entered full union with God. Within trajectories of human growth there are always seeds of decline ready to take root. Observation of Lonergan’s transcendental precepts are key to assist with recognition of one’s situation and conversions toward progress and away from decline. See Lonergan, “Method in Theology,” 52–54.

⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 7.

providing weekday means for life together. However, even this view of church became untenable after Vanstone was assigned to a new parish only twenty miles away but seemingly worlds apart.

He had the responsibility of establishing an Anglican presence in a town where the church building and Vanstone's own lodgings were being newly constructed. Over the course of six months, he made frequent trips between his soon to be former parish and the new assignment. His bishop had encouraged creative freedom in the development of a ministry plan. However, what might have been an interesting challenge became the stimulus for encroaching discouragement to the point of despair. The polite disinterest of the townspeople toward the new church stood in contrast to his former parish where his work was still received as relevant and transformative. He perceived no animosity in his newly assigned parish, simply disinterest. The townspeople seemed to have a satisfying life apart from the church:

In truth, if and when the Church came into being, it would be a matter of no importance: its presence would make no significant difference to the district: its activity would be, at the best, a harmless hobby - an alternative to, and on a par with, the activities of the Dramatic Society and the Scout Group...I was preparing not for a new kind of life but for a long charade. I was going through the motions of an important enterprise...Every prospect was of a good world, in which everything was present that was necessary to the happiness and fulfillment of man. But I myself, in my future role, was unnecessary: the cause which I represented was entirely superfluous.⁸

The Identity-Involvement Dilemma Applied to Vanstone's Experience

Applying Moltmann's language of identity and involvement to Vanstone's situation, it could be stated that Vanstone had been deriving the church's identity from its relevance to society. This set the conditions for a crisis of Christian identity. Once societal need for the church diminished and church culture became increasingly continuous with secular culture, the distinct role of the church in society became difficult to discern. It was seemingly redundant and replaceable. Society had moved on. Now the church had to reconsider its identity. Vanstone's story and argument will build toward the discovery of kenosis as a timely key for being the church in a situation of societal stability.

⁸Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 14-15.

The Church and Societal Strength

Vanstone observed that he was living in a time strangely reminiscent of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's prediction of a future after the war when people would, as Vanstone puts it, "discover and display a new kind of strength and self-sufficiency."⁹ According to Vanstone, Bonhoeffer had advised that such strength was to be taken seriously. The church would "degrade itself" if it directed its efforts toward uncovering weakness and needed to learn how to "minister" to people in their strength.¹⁰ The word "minister" was particularly puzzling to Vanstone in this context of strength because, for him, ministry implied contact with human need. Though he respected Bonhoeffer's advice, he had yet to receive insight for applying it within his parish context.

Vanstone's existential angst set the stage for an insight which occurred during a disillusioned walk, coinciding with the moment he physically crossed a road from one side to the other. He had a dramatic "intellectual conversion."¹¹ Though it remained "clear to [him] that people did not want the Church or need it," his was the renewed conviction that the church was both good and important but "in something other than its service to, or satisfaction of the needs of man."¹² He set out with a rekindled spirit to discern how the church was significant in a secular time of stability and independence.

⁹Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 13. Vanstone indicates that he is quoting Bonhoeffer, but does not offer citations. He refers to Bonhoeffer's prediction that, after the war, people would live in a world where they would have "come of age." In Vanstone's words, the human person would be "free from that need of religion which, in all previous ages, he had felt and recognised." I can only surmise that Vanstone is referring to Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*. See Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, 479–80: "God consents to be pushed out of the world and onto the cross; God is weak and powerless in the world and in precisely this way, and only so, is at our side and helps us...This is the crucial distinction between Christianity and all religions. Human religiosity directs people in need to the power of God in the world, God as *deus ex machina*. The Bible directs people to the powerlessness and suffering of God...To this extent, one may say that the previously described development toward the world's *coming of age*, which has cleared the way by eliminating a false notion of God, frees us to see the God of the Bible, who gains ground and power in the world by being powerless." Emphasis is mine.

¹⁰Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 13.

¹¹Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 238. I am using Lonergan's category here. He defines "intellectual conversion" as a "radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge."

¹²Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 16.

At first his questions yielded no satisfactory answers. Perhaps the church's reason for existence was to glorify God? This was a common reason offered for the practical activity of Christians. Vanstone could not accept that the minutiae of parish work with its detailed similarity to the human activity occurring outside the life of the church was of great importance to God's being. He found it objectionable that petty human enterprises were attributed to the glory of God as though God were an "aging actor who is gratified by the recognition and applause of however small an audience, or the monarch who watches with peculiar interest and concern the manoeuvres of his Household Cavalry."¹³ He continued to explore the significance of the church within the context of the secular immanent experience of self-reliance.

If the church was inessential to socioeconomic or community well-being, and insignificant to God's being, perhaps the church was significant for achieving eternal salvation. Neither did this explanation sit well for Vanstone. Life within and outside the church appeared alike to him and it seemed that people's association with the church was a matter of coincidence. Pondering his new parish, Vanstone opined:

It was repugnant to belief in a God of love and justice that chance-passengers on the Ark should be so richly rewarded, and those who, equally by chance, were absent so heavily penalised [sic]. If the new Church [his new parish assignment] were God's instrument for selecting, identifying or preserving those who should be saved, then it was a crude and random instrument. To assert that God so intended or so used the Church would be to degrade and brutalise [sic] the concept of God.¹⁴

Vanstone had thus ruled out his local church's primary significance at three levels: it was not the key to the well-being of humankind, nor was it necessary to God's being, nor to eternal salvation.

¹³Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 24. Living for the glory of God might be an authentic function of the church but not in the way implied here by Vanstone. In my chapter summary and analysis, Lonergan's description of the glory of God will be used to revisit Vanstone's comment and define life for the glory of God in a different sense. See Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 116–17.

¹⁴Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 26. Vanstone's comment about the church and salvation indicates an understanding of salvation as a kind of rescue from this world. In later discussion - for example, see my discussion of Richard's *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, pages 90-91 below - we will see a differently nuanced, wider view of salvation which may have been more acceptable to Vanstone.

From Significance through Utility to Significance in Being: A Work of Love

Observing little material difference between the church and its surroundings, he stated that “the Church must be at least as important as the things out of which it was made.”¹⁵ Focusing his attention on the emerging nature conservationist movement, he noted that some preservationists spent their lives on the care and realistic understanding of specific natural objects apart from any widely noted utility. This observation compounded while watching two young boys at play using natural resources to create a country scene in miniature. From his observations of the boys emerged three reflections. First, the boys laboured and they waited. Second, their waiting offered that which they had created the freedom to come forth, for better or for worse. Third, inequality between the creative boys and their artistry was “overcome by the gift of value” attributed by the boys to their work.¹⁶ Vanstone was struck by the “self-giving built into the model,” and “[he] could find no simple word or name [for their self-giving] but love.” At this point he had another insight: the importance of material reality is not associated with its utility but “simply of its being the work of love.”¹⁷ Applied to the church, this meant that the church’s significance did *not* lie in its pragmatic contributions - to society, to God’s reputation, to salvation - rather in its being a work of love.

What might it mean for the church to be a work of love? Vanstone explores this question by first defining authentic human love. He then correlates authentic human love, discerned phenomenologically, to features of the authentic love of God revealed dialectically through the kenotic Christ in God. One might argue that human love and God’s love are in such contrast to one another that making definitive connections between the two is unreasonable. However, though they are qualitatively different, authentic human and divine love are not categorically

¹⁵Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 27. This might be understood as a focus on the church’s ‘earthiness,’ or its human side.

¹⁶Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 33.

¹⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 34.

disparate. For Vanstone, all authentic - that is, kenotic - love derives from the same divine source whether that source is recognized or not.

Defining Human Love: A Phenomenological Method

First, Vanstone defines human love by way of a phenomenological method.¹⁸ “Phenomenology” is “the study of ‘phenomena’: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience.”¹⁹ Vanstone argues that “when we give an account of the authentic by detecting a pattern in that which is rejected as mere appearance, then our method may properly be described as phenomenological.”²⁰ He justifies his choice of method arguing that in the study of human love, this method is most fitting because in matters of love “there exists in man a practical power to detect and reject that which is mere appearance.”²¹ There is no perfect list of criteria against which the individual may verify human love. Rather, the features of authentic love emerge and are judged true in contrast to love’s identified distortions.

Vanstone argues that even children can discern inauthentic love. Attempts to deceive one another in the ways of love (e.g., using a person for one’s own benefit under the pretense of friendship) are offensive because they disregard the human perception of authentic love’s “pre-eminent worth.”²² Reflection unveils three “marks” of inauthentic love: limitation, control, and detachment.²³

¹⁸Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 41.

¹⁹David Woodruff Smith, “Phenomenology,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2016), accessed Sept. 13, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>. Also see: Mark Elliot, et al., “Phenomenology,” in *A Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, 2016), accessed Sept. 13, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780191816826.001.0001. Originating in the 19th century work of Edmund Husserl, “phenomenologists hold that an object should not be treated as separate from the consciousness that apprehends it.” When applying a phenomenological research method, researchers set aside their own meaning-making to investigate the meaning the individual gives to a particular object or situation.

²⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 41.

²¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 42.

²²Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 41.

²³Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 53.

First, limitation is a sign of inauthentic love. Vanstone gives the example of human kindness which is acceptable when offered under its right name but becomes unpalatable when “it masquerades as love. When love is expected, no kindness however lavish satisfies: for it is known that, however much is given, something is being withheld.”²⁴ However, Vanstone cautions that there are occasions when authentic love is misjudged as false when it is indeed true. This may happen in the case of individuals who, compelled by their neuroses, cannot accept love and make ongoing attempts to expose its edges.²⁵ It is true that human love has its limitations, however authentic love may be recognized by its trajectory in the direction of enlargement. True love doesn’t contract; it expands. Even so, the loved one may place limits on love, perhaps experiencing it as excessive or untimely, or finding it difficult to trust. In such cases, authentic “love accepts without limit the discipline of its circumstances;” the other person is a gift not a possession, and love reciprocated is not a right.²⁶ Vanstone is building toward a definition of kenotic love which he will ultimately locate in the triune God before discussing implications for the church in secularity. He continues by describing two additional marks of inauthentic human love: control and detachment.

Controlling “love” seeks to override and absorb the other. As such it obliterates the other and becomes egocentric love of self. By contrast, authentic love relinquishes control, respects the other as separate and chooses the “precarious” edge of “waiting” for a response.²⁷ Creativity is exercised in the hope of traversing differences, however there are no guaranteed outcomes. It is possible that authentic love may never connect with the loved one due to misunderstandings or their difficulty receiving. Love’s precariousness lies in the open possibility that it will end in “triumph” or “tragedy;” great love may be offered, and small love received, “much may be ex-

²⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 42-3.

²⁵For example, I have seen this in my mental health work with adolescents; some young people, having endured deep rejection, test, challenge and spurn even the most unconditional expressions of love by an adoptive or foster family.

²⁶Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 44-5.

²⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 49.

pendent and little achieved.”²⁸ The next steps of love are always determined in relation and response to the other. There are no advanced directives. Authentic human love initiates, responds, and waits. It is differently applied to every individual, like the way parents adjust their expressions of love to meet the particularities of each child.

Finally, a third sign of inauthentic love is detachment. To be detached is to remain self-sufficient, “unaffected and unimpaired,” untouched by the other.²⁹ When love is authentic, the one who loves succumbs to attachment allowing the other to have “power of meaning.”³⁰ For Vanstone, “[l]ove is *self-giving*, and the self includes power of feeling as well as power of possession and action.”³¹ When we love someone, we allow them to affect us. Detachment is the most “feared” sign of inauthentic love because it exposes “one’s inability to affect the one whose love is sought, of one’s inability to ‘mean anything’ to him or her.”³²

Vanstone concludes his chapter on “The Phenomenology of Love” by summarizing the three marks of inauthentic human ‘love’: limitation, control, and detachment. He extrapolates that authentic love is limitless, precarious and vulnerable. He proceeds to explore the authentic love of God, like Moltmann - dialectically - by way of the crucified Redeemer. He follows by drawing an analogy between genuine human and genuine divine love, suggesting that both comprise kenotic features.

The Kenosis of Christ and The Kenosis of God

Citing a verse in the Latin hymn *Dies Irae*, Vanstone notes that Christian devotion ascribes a quality of love to the Redeemer which is limitless, vulnerable and precarious.³³ Vanstone points to “Scripture”³⁴ and to Christological reflections about “the Redeemer as ‘emptying him-

²⁸Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 46.

²⁹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 50.

³⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 51.

³¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 50.

³²Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 53.

³³Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 57. “Spent didst’t Thou fall that Thou mightest my soul gain; To save me Thou didst’t bear the cross’s pain; May not so great a labour be in vain.”

³⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 58. He does not offer a specific scripture text when he makes this comment.

self” and “the coming of the Redeemer as divine ‘self-emptying,’ or Kenosis.”³⁵ He moves beyond historic controversies concerned with the meaning of the kenosis of Christ for the ontology of God. In response to the question of whether God’s fullness is hidden by Christ’s self-emptying, he argues “self-emptying” is not something God in Christ did as an event at one point in history, rather “self-emptying” is who God is. The Redeemer expends himself, he chooses to be affected by others,³⁶ and his love is always at risk of being offered in vain. Kenosis is the “heart and substance” of the revelation of God.³⁷

Vanstone emphasizes the limitlessness of God’s “self-giving”:

Nothing must be held from the self-giving which is creation: no unexpended reserves of divine power or potentiality: no ‘glory of God’ or ‘majesty of God’... ‘no power of God’... ‘no eternity of God’...It is to be understood that the universe is not to be equated with

³⁵Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 58.

³⁶God’s suffering is not, as Walter Kasper puts it, “a passive being-affected, but an active allowing others to affect one.” Kasper, *The God*, 196. It seems Vanstone joins Protestant and Catholic modern theologians who explore the notion of passibility in God to some “manner and extent,” i.e. Catholics Hans Urs von Balthasar, Roger Haight, Elizabeth Johnson, Hans Küng, Marcel Sarot, and John Sobrino, and Protestants Karl Barth, Richard Bauckham, Paul Fiddes, Eberhard Jüngel, John Macquarrie, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Keith Ward. (For an extended list of theologians and philosophers considering the notion of passibility in God, see Thomas G. Weinandy, “Does God Suffer?” *Ars Disputandi* 2 [2002]: 1, accessed February 1, 2018, <http://www.ArsDisputandi.org>. Modern discussion about impassibility/passibility in God warrants careful definitions of terms and presuppositions. Kasper explains that for the church fathers, the application of Greek philosophical notions of impassibility and immutability to the Christian God were based on a set of presuppositions about suffering as “a non-free external passive experience and even as an expression of the human fallenness brought about by sin.” Kasper, *The God*, 191. The fathers were concerned for the divinity of God, countering Greek mythological notions of unpredictable gods who passively “suffer and change” at the hands of external forces. (190) Kasper continues: “In the process they [the church fathers] doubtless often defended God’s impassibility in a way that betrays the influence more of Greek philosophy than of the testimony of the Bible.” Thomas Weinandy is less confident that the fathers of the church “often” misrepresented God’s impassibility; he asserts that “faith in the biblical God” was their main concern, and their use of Greek philosophy served biblical faith, though they may have made “the occasional misstep.” Weinandy, “Does God Suffer?” 3. Though further discussion is not possible here, we may return to Moltmann’s nuanced consideration of apathetic and pathetic theologies to help us negotiate the impassibility-passibility dilemma in a way that remains faithful to the intent of church tradition *and* aligns with Vanstone’s assertion that the Redeemer chooses to be affected by others. (See chapter one, footnotes 42 and 90, for Moltmann’s consideration of apathy and pathos.) Kasper also contributes to the discussion about how God is, and is not, affected by human beings by offering the solution of God’s “freedom in love.” Kasper, “Jesus Christ,” 191. For further exploration of how to “steer a middle way between the Scylla of depicting God as indifferent and the Charybdis of theological sentimentalism,” see Marcel Sarot, “A Moved Mover?: The (Im)Passibility of God,” in *Understanding the Attributes of God*, Gijbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot, Contributions to Philosophical Theology Vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang), 119.

³⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 58.

‘that which science knows’, nor even with ‘that which science might, in principle, come to know’: the universe is the totality of being for which God gives Himself in love.³⁸

For Vanstone, this kenotic view of a self-surrendering God contrasts with three alternate emphases by popular devotion: the glory of God, the supremacy of God, and the power of God. First, God’s glory, when defined as “an immeasurable reserve which is held back from, not imparted to, the being of the universe” is incongruent with “the relationship of the artist to the work of art, [and] the lover to the object of His love.”³⁹ Second, viewing the Creator as necessarily superior to an inferior creation tends to reduce worship to shrewd negotiation within a relationship which contains a power differential.⁴⁰ Third, he argues that power is morally ambiguous, and thus does not automatically warrant respect. Furthermore, “religious imagery which displays and celebrates the supremacy of divine power neither convinces the head nor moves the heart.”⁴¹ To use Moltmann’s language, a “theology of glory” is not the primary way to know God. Creation as the overflow of the love of God requires an image which reflects his limitless self-offering. In *The Crucified God*, that image is Christ crucified in weakness and suffering. While God is known *indirectly* through natural knowledge, he is known *directly* through the cross of Christ. Moltmann explains, “In the one place one looks so to speak only at his hands; in the other one looks into his heart.”⁴² Vanstone thinks along similar lines to Moltmann as evidenced by his assertion:

³⁸Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 60.

³⁹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 60.

⁴⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 61. Vanstone explains that Christian emphasis on the superiority of God is based in the early efforts of Judaism to define the monotheistic God in a polytheistic society. Language and metaphors of quantity and superiority were used to make a qualitative differentiation. When contemporary Christians prioritize descriptive images of superiority they lose sight of their own unique insight and task, that is, of reflecting on Christ incarnate and his revelation of the triune God as Love. (72-3)

⁴¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 62.

⁴²Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 212.

We may say that Christ, the Incarnate Word, discloses to us, at the climax of His life, what word it was that God spoke when ‘He commanded and they were created’. It was no light or idle word but the Word of love, in which, for the sake of an other, all is expended, all jeopardised [sic] and all surrendered. The Cross of Christ discloses to us the poignancy of the creation itself - the tragic possibility that, when all is given in love, all may be given in vain.⁴³

Not only is God’s kenotic love limitless, it is precarious: “each triumph includes a new potential of tragedy, and each tragedy may be redeemed into a wider triumph.”⁴⁴ Our future is safe, not because all immediate outcomes are fixed, rather because we are in the loving hands of a God who will not leave or disown us. God “leaves no problem abandoned and no evil unredeemed.”⁴⁵ Vanstone identifies evil as the consequence of freedom within creation. Evil is not God’s will, nor is it the work of an equal and opposite power derailing God’s creative activity; matter itself is not evil. Offering the analogy of artist and art, Vanstone notes that the artist works with material and form. There are always challenges, not because anything is intrinsically wrong, but simply because it is risky and challenging to give oneself over to the creation of the other.⁴⁶

A third mark of God’s kenotic love is vulnerability. Vanstone cautions against drawing conclusions about God’s interiority. To say God is vulnerable is to make a statement about the activity of God. God is affected by us. God allows us to have “power of meaning.”⁴⁷ Such vulnerability in God, or in human love, does not mean that being itself is destroyed when love is spurned, as evidenced by the fulfillment intrinsic to the Trinity.⁴⁸ Vanstone offers the analogy of a family who is complete within itself and takes in another member through adoption. Love is the overflow of the fullness of the family. The family soon comes to a point where they cannot imagine life without their new loved one because they have allowed him to ‘mean the world’ to them. “Love has surrendered its triumphant self-sufficiency and created its own need...Of such a

⁴³Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 70.

⁴⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 63.

⁴⁵Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 64.

⁴⁶For Vanstone, God’s precarious love never affirms or assimilates evil, rather redeems it.

⁴⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 67.

⁴⁸Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 68.

nature is the Kenosis of God - the self-emptying of Him Who is already in every way fulfilled.”⁴⁹
This self-emptying God, of limitless, precarious and vulnerable love, waits for human response.

Secularity and The Church: Two Ways to Respond to (God’s) Kenotic Love

The power to participate in love’s triumph or love’s tragedy lies within human response. Vanstone’s second last chapter “The Response of Being” outlines three possible ways that human beings might respond to God’s work of love in creation within the “concrete reality of the universe.”⁵⁰ He explains what the universe is *not* to describe what it *is*. First, the universe is not an extraneous backdrop for the salvation story of humankind. Creation is not simply to be used and disposed of by its human inhabitants.⁵¹ Vanstone holds to a “relational ontology;” kenotic love is the foundation of all being.⁵² Second, the universe is not expanding toward a final “consummation” as per 19th century theologians who claimed that expansion of the universe correlated to a kind of progress toward the higher purposes of God.⁵³ Taking his cues from contemporary cosmology, Vanstone notes that though the universe is indeed expanding, it is not progressing to higher forms; the expansion of the universe is “the enlargement in space and time of what it already is.” He arrives at the theological interpretation that the church must bring about the triumph of God’s love “in the concrete reality” of “the universe as it is.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 69.

⁵⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 79.

⁵¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 79. See F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, “Panentheism,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 510, accessed September 23, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001. Vanstone holds a view of the universe suggestive of panentheism, “the belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against pantheism) that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.”

⁵²Michael Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology,” in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God’s Presence in a Scientific World*, ed. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 13–14. Brierley explains that the doctrine of God may be explored via “three essential types”: “classical theism, pantheism, and panentheism.” Included in his extensive list of proponents of panentheism are Jürgen Moltmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Paul Tillich. (3–4) In the chapter notes, he identifies Vanstone, “the highly influential Anglican theologian” as “[a]n interesting case of ambiguity between classical theism and panentheism.” (276)

⁵³Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 79.

⁵⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 80–1.

Before concentrating on the church's unique contribution to love's triumph, Vanstone details two ways that secular people, Christians and others, may demonstrate God's creative love without even being conscious of it. First, we may engage in the "response of nature," and second, in the "response of freedom."

We demonstrate the first level *response of nature* when we are inclined toward all of creation becoming what it was meant to be. Anytime a person has the sense that all is not well, and he desires for things to "come right," he is demonstrating a response of nature.⁵⁵ The response of nature means valuing ourselves and others *as we are* and nature *as it is* while hoping for greater authenticity.⁵⁶

The second level *response of freedom* involves not only the desire for but active choices toward things and people coming right.⁵⁷ Inherent to the response of freedom is the need to understand power, where it is and isn't present, and how it may be used. Vanstone gives the example of a long-term psychiatric institution in which patients are intractably ill, often without visitors and disoriented to their situation. They have little personal power. The situation is not likely to improve; its nature is tragic. However, there remain occasions for the nurses to offer responses of freedom on the patients' behalf, choosing to uphold human dignity, and thus exercising their power in the direction of love's triumph.

How does one work for a situation to "come right," or how does one choose the good? Vanstone neither advocates for moral decision-making primarily based on general principles nor by way of private self-determination. He describes a middle path of *wisdom* on a contextual basis.⁵⁸ For example, the general principle - one must not take one's own life - is, by itself, ineffectual for a person who is acutely suicidal. In a crisis, a principle does not *alone* suffice to help a

⁵⁵Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 81.

⁵⁶Romans 8:22, 23, NRSV. The Apostle Paul uses the fitting image of "the whole creation...groaning in labour pains" waiting for "the redemption of our bodies."

⁵⁷Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 86.

⁵⁸This is not a situation ethic.

person choose the good. In fact, allusion to the “rule book” *alone* may “rule out” one’s effective involvement with a suffering person because it “appears to the sufferer that [one] has failed to grasp the very core of the situation - which is its uniqueness and individuality. *Man in crisis always finds his crisis unique.*”⁵⁹ A wise response to another person’s crisis respects proper order; first, one must be present to the situation as it is, then one may discern when the crisis has passed enough that principles may be introduced toward further stabilization and growth. Moltmann asserts that each crisis offers a “[point] of decision and new possibility” where a “situation may ‘go either way.’”⁶⁰ The coming right of life situations is not a progressive linear development, instead it is:

the angular progress of the ever precarious creativity of the love of God - the risk that fails and must be won back in yet more costly correction, the tragic outcome which must be redeemed, the triumphant outcome which becomes the basis for a yet wider and more generous adventure of love.⁶¹

In both responses, of nature and of freedom, the church and wider society may work together, and they do, for great good. In both instances God remains hidden, anonymous, undercover. It is not uncommon for much of life to be lived on these two levels of response where no overt reference is made to God. The church takes its unique place on the scene of God’s hiddenness and engages in a third level of response, that is, the *response of recognition*, the “creative activity” of pointing out or celebrating God’s kenotic love which has been made known through Christ the Redeemer and through creation. Though authentic love does not demand recognition, God’s love remains hidden and incomplete *until recognized*. Thus “we may say that love *needs*, though it does not *seek*, recognition.”⁶²

⁵⁹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 91-2. Emphasis is mine.

⁶⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 91.

⁶¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 92.

⁶²Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 94.

The Significance of the Church: Recognizing God’s Kenotic Love

Vanstone’s perspective has shifted. Serving the culture at its points of need is an important activity by Christians in partnership with their colleagues in society; however, the church’s distinctive mantle lies in creatively recognizing God’s love. The church must not primarily identify itself in terms of its utility. Rather, the church first identifies itself, and all of creation, as the overflow or inevitable fruit of divine love. It is *not* because we are useful that we are loved. We are *first* loved; our value is a given. We cannot take away from (nor add to) our belovedness and value, regardless of what we do.⁶³ This is the public message of the church.

To further clarify the difference between not recognizing and recognizing God’s love behind the gift, and gifts, of life, Vanstone offers the analogy of a person who receives a surprise book in the mail. If there is no note attached to the book, the book might be enjoyed and received for its “cash value” or “utility;” the book has met a need. But when there is a card attached to the book with someone’s signature at the bottom, the book becomes more than a useful object. It becomes a symbol of love.⁶⁴ The church figuratively recognizes God’s signature on his gifts. The church also shoulders the burden of knowing the vast cost of God’s love while having no assurance that others will recognize it.⁶⁵

To give oneself to public acknowledgement of God’s love is a self-expenditure, freely chosen. Though we are free to recognize God’s love (or not), we may not exercise “pure spontaneity” in *how* we do so.⁶⁶ There are authentic forms through which the church celebrates the love

⁶³I am reminded of Jesus’ teaching. John 15:5, 8-9, NRSV. “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing...My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.”

⁶⁴James 1:17, NRSV. As the apostle James puts it, “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above...”

⁶⁵Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 99.

⁶⁶Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 97. I am reminded of a sign on a private home’s rooftop in Omemee, ON where the citizen seems to be trying to publicly recognize God’s love by patterning the shingles on their roof to spell “Jesus is alive” in extremely large letters. His creative neighbour has arranged his shingles to spell “So is Elvis.” This is an example of a freely chosen attempt to make the love of God public in a manner that is, arguably, outside of the tradition!

of God. The church must also be mindful that it is possible to inhabit authentic forms, inauthentically. For example, “enforced conformity” is always a sign that a form is being inauthentically wielded.⁶⁷ The same goes for ritual repetitions; a ritual might be freely inhabited by one person as a way of recognizing the love of God while another person compulsively *uses* the form to relieve anxiety and to supposedly obtain God’s ‘favour.’⁶⁸ Authentic forms are always free, embodied expressions of love for God. The church offers itself to the task of acknowledging God’s love through freely inhabited forms.

Vanstone offers a disclaimer here. There are occasions when a form that previously facilitated gracious encounter with God comes to be at counter purposes with the church’s message and mission at another point in history. In this case, the church must carefully discern steps toward reform. Reform is never chosen to make life in the church more comfortable or up-to-date. Reform is chosen to more truly recognize and encounter the love of God in Christ.⁶⁹ Vanstone states that “[r]eform of the Church requires more than sociological insights into contemporary trends and attitudes; it requires the artist’s understanding and the lover’s experience of the costly discipline of love.”⁷⁰

Vanstone details three forms through which the church might live kenotically, giving itself over to the recognition of God’s love: through the forms of the church building, through the form of intercessory prayer and through preaching. How might one recognize or celebrate the love of God in the way one inhabits the church building? It is helpful here to remember Vanstone’s story about the two boys who created a masterpiece using natural material. He observed that it was the boys’ loving attention that made their creative work valuable, not the product’s utility. Material is not valuable because it is useful. It is first loved, so valued. The same

⁶⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 103.

⁶⁸Freud’s critique of such inauthentic compulsive use of ritual is detailed on page 31 above.

⁶⁹We must be wary of and exercise careful discernment regarding all new movements. If the only motive is cultural relevance, it is possible that the new form will do nothing to forward the Gospel. The rule of thumb is always this: Does this new form better represent the God of Jesus Christ at this point in history?

⁷⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 108.

principle may be applied to the material of a church building. If the building is evaluated on utilitarian grounds, it might be judged unused for much of the week, therefore a waste of space. Or, it might be considered redundant since a similar building is two blocks away. However, in God's economy, love precedes value. Thus, the church building is valued because it is a work of love, a sacred space dedicated to the recognition and celebration of the love of God. For Vanstone, one must never destroy a church building on the basis of common sense or efficiency. If in the building's dismantlement or re-purposing, the love of God is more richly represented, one might justify such actions.⁷¹ Vanstone offers a second example of the church's embodied celebration of love through the form of intercessory prayer. Again, prayer is not valuable because it is useful. Prayer is valuable because it proceeds from an encounter with Love. This realization will transform how I pray, i.e., not to get what I want but as a creative response to an encounter with God's love. Because I realize what God gives, endures and suffers to see his purposes fulfilled, I pray. Prayer is a posture of alignment with God's loving purposes. Vanstone explains:

[I]f our intercession is feeble or infrequent, it is because of the feebleness or failure of our understanding...The intercession of the Church expresses our understanding of how costly a thing we are asking when we say 'Thy will be done.'⁷²

Finally, Vanstone describes the form of preaching as a third way through which God's love might be recognized and celebrated. Again, preaching is not valuable because it has been judged useful or even relevant. Preaching is valuable because it is informed by love and it is a work of love. The preacher wrestles with the "material that is already present," today's lectionary readings and today's historical situation, and brings the knowledge of God's love to the surface of our consciousness.⁷³

Vanstone concludes that once the love of God has been realized, it is excruciating to experience love's tragedy, i.e., non-participation in or non-recognition of God's purposes. This is

⁷¹Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 109.

⁷²Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 110-111.

⁷³Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 112-113.

the church's unique suffering. Its own existence and the existence of the entire universe is not dependent on a "lightly spoken word of God" nor on an "easy gesture." Rather, "[t]hat upon which all being depends is love expended in self-giving, wholly expended...in precarious endeavour, even poised upon the brink of failure, ever questing, ever venturing...helpless before that which it loves, for the response which shall be its tragedy or its triumph."⁷⁴

Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*

Throughout *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, Vanstone wrestled with the significance of the church within a society which may draw from an array of resources to meet its own material and social needs. What is the point of the church when people may experience a reasonable quality of life within an "immanent frame" without reference to God?⁷⁵ Has the church become obsolete? Vanstone does not think so, but he must let go of his previous ideas about the identity of the church, the Christian, and the priest to make space for a new insight. He concludes that the church is not primarily meant for the material and social servicing of others, rather the church is the body of people who realize that God's transcendence, i.e., Love, pervades our immanent situation. Before we lift a finger in our daily pursuits, our full value and worth is established; we are works of love. This is the good news of the church, applicable to all.

Kenosis is a counterpoint to the modern notion of a division between transcendence and immanence or the supernatural and the natural. The transcendence of God manifests *within* "the immanent frame" by way of kenosis. Vanstone defines kenosis as authentic love - divine and human - characterized by limitlessness, precariousness and vulnerability.⁷⁶ The kenosis of God is the extravagant love of God, Creator and Redeemer, risked within the human situation with no

⁷⁴Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 115.

⁷⁵Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 539–44. Though Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour* preceded Taylor's *A Secular Age* by three decades, Vanstone is describing what Taylor has named the "immanent frame." For Taylor, the key features of the immanent frame are "a buffered self-perception, high level of discipline, individuality in relation to society, pragmatic goals for the good of fellow beings, efficient use of time, grounded in 'natural' order."

⁷⁶Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 93. For God and humankind, authentic love is qualitatively similar, i.e., it is kenotic. The difference is that only human love has the possibility of decline, that is, falling short of authenticity, becoming a distorted version of 'love.'

guarantee of being immediately acknowledged or accepted. It is tragic when God's love is thwarted or unrealized, in which case God's good purposes remain unfinished, for now.⁷⁷ However, it is possible for both society and the church to participate in love's "triumph" while God remains *in cognito*. Apart from any relation to God, many people intuit that all is not what it is meant to be and desire for all to be well (the response of nature). As well, many work for fullness or greater authenticity in the cosmos (the response of freedom). Unique to the church is its knowledge that when the natural world or human beings do not "come right," this is a "tragedy of the love of God."⁷⁸ God's creative purposes remain outstanding. Vanstone has discovered that the church is the "enclave of reality" which participates in the "completion" of "the creative love of God" by realizing and receiving it.⁷⁹

I revisit the first half of my research question. What key features of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic may be derived from *Love's Endeavour*, *Love's Expense* as optimal for the experience, articulation and embodiment of Christian faith? For Vanstone, a kenotic spirituality centres on the kenotic love of God. The church responds by way of spiritual practices which creatively celebrate Love; Vanstone calls these practices "offerings" of responsive love.⁸⁰ A being in love with God will become loving in the same way she has been loved. Two key kenotic virtues which may arise in a life which is attentive to God's kenotic love are self-giving love (as *agape-eros*) and patience. We will discuss two ways in which the virtues of self-giving love (as *agape-eros*) and patience might affect moral decision-making.

Kenotic Spirituality

The Church in Love

A kenotic spirituality in *Love's Endeavour*, *Love's Expense* is best understood as the ongoing embodied, spiritual practices through which the church recognizes and responds to the

⁷⁷Vanstone hints at love's *ultimate* triumph, but his writing primarily pertains to the ambiguity of 'not yet.'

⁷⁸Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 81, 92.

⁷⁹Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 95.

⁸⁰Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*, 108.

love of God. The church, defined as “that by which, or in which, the love of God is celebrated,” includes a constituency from within its institutional form, and extends beyond it. The church’s recognition of love is not “a single, simple and decisive psychological event.”⁸¹ We are not simply alert to the *fact* of God’s love; rather, our whole beings are captivated in an ongoing way. God has first loved us with a kenotic love, and we freely embody our ‘yes’ to God:

..in words spoken, in bodies in a certain place or posture...in stone placed upon stone to build a Church...in music composed or practised, played or sung: in the doing of certain things upon a particular day and the giving up of certain things during a particular season: in the fashioning, out of time and care and skill, of something beautiful...in the struggle of brain and pen to find expression and interpretation for the love of God: in the event of worship which celebrates the love of God: in hands stretched out for the receiving of Bread and in lips raised for the touch of wine...⁸²

In responsive encounter with Love, the church - to use Bernard Lonergan’s language - is a people who undergo “religious conversion” or an “other-worldly falling in love.”⁸³ Love is the foundation and energy of the church.⁸⁴ Life in love with God is transformative. How might one’s character be transformed by God’s kenotic love?

Kenotic Virtues

Two kenotic virtues which may arise from being in love with the kenotic God are first, self-giving love as agape-eros, and second, patience.

Self-Giving Love as Agape-Eros

For Vanstone, the synonym “*self-giving* love” offers an interpretive key for understanding kenosis as a virtue; each half of the word - “self” and “giving”- must be held in tension with the other to avoid distorted applications.⁸⁵ As *giving* love, it is congruent with the unmeasured,

⁸¹Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 94.

⁸²Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 108.

⁸³Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240.

⁸⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 105.

⁸⁵The promotion of kenotic, or self-giving, love as a virtue might draw a reaction from feminist theologians, and from others. Anna Mercedes, *Power for: Feminism and Christ’s Self Giving*, (London: New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 2. Feminist theologian Anna Mercedes explains that the “legacy of female subjugation that has relied on women’s sacrifice as a fundamental currency of patriarchal economies implicates self-emptying [or self-giving] doctrine as a tool of hierarchical enforcement...[therefore,] contending with the self-sacrificial aspects of

others-centred love of agape based in difference. As *self-giving*, it is vulnerable; there is a *self* being given. As Vanstone puts it, “[l]ove is *self-giving*: and the self includes...power over the feeling self.”⁸⁶ The one who gives is affected. Vulnerable love desires the loved one’s response; positive acknowledgement is needed for its completion.⁸⁷ Self-giving love, limitless *and* vulnerable, corresponds to the contemporary theological discussion of self-giving love as agape-eros, “gift-love” *and* “need-love.”⁸⁸ Self-giving love as the virtue of agape-eros is of interest for modern, panentheist theologians who neither understand God as external to the cosmos (theism), nor as identical with the cosmos (pantheism), rather God is in an “interrelationship” with the cosmos characterized by limitless giving *and* personal vulnerability.⁸⁹

To further define the virtue of self-giving love as agape-eros, I will draw from an essay by Paul Fiddes titled “Creation Out of Love” from a project in which he personally collaborated

Christianity, as one group of feminist writers describes it, is like ‘swallowing a fishbone.’” This descriptive phrase is derived from Daphne Hampson, ed., *Swallowing a Fishbone? Feminist Theologies Debate Christianity* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996). Feminist concerns about kenosis as addressed by Sarah Coakley are also briefly raised on page 11 of my introduction. On the day of writing this section, I spoke with a friend who was a soldier in the Canadian military. My conversation with him reinforced that feminists are not the only ones concerned about possible misuse of kenosis. After expressing interest in the subject of my dissertation, he noted that if kenosis pertains to “humility,” it is important for our time. At the same time, this military man had a “visceral reaction” to kenosis because he felt it could be used to keep those who were already abused, down. Hopefully, analysis of the virtue of self-giving love as agape-eros might offer a corrective to distorted applications.

⁸⁶Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 50. Original emphasis.

⁸⁷Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 52.

⁸⁸Paul S. Fiddes, “Creation Out of Love,” in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 187. We have already come across the importance of the apatheia-pathos tension for kenotic anthropology as per Moltmann, described in chapter one, footnote 42. In chapter one applications, I took up the argument for agape and sympathy as virtues which, together, avoid the tension of disassociation from suffering or over-involvement with it. The need for this balance will be also raised in my third chapter through Richard’s discussion of “compassion” and will figure prominently in my chapter four synthesis which will include discussion of the key kenotic virtues allowing for faithful and effective interface between the church and the “secularity three” “age of authenticity.”

⁸⁹John Culp, “Panentheism,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (2017), accessed October 26, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=panentheism>. See footnotes 51 and 52 in this chapter for my earlier comment about panentheism in relation to Vanstone and *Love’s Endeavour*, *Love’s Expense*. Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 14. Panentheism recognizes “asymmetry in the relation between God and the cosmos,” however “the mutuality in the relationship [between God and the cosmos] under panentheism is genuine.” An emphasis on mutuality is absent in classical theism in which love is thought of as *agapē*, i.e., “pure beneficence, needing no love in return.” By contrast, states Brierley, the panentheistic view defines God’s love as “an inextricable mix of *agapē* and *erōs*, as the interdependence of giving and receiving.”

with both Moltmann and Vanstone.⁹⁰ Fiddes proposes that God *chose* to create the world for love and that “a God who creates ‘out of love’ has needs to be satisfied.”⁹¹ This is a controversial point.⁹² Fiddes thinks there are at least three arguments which support his proposal. First, he draws an analogy from the best versions of human love: “true lovers do not in fact assume a rigid stance of refusing to receive anything from those they love. *Eros* (need-love) is always mixed with *agape* (gift-love).”⁹³ His second argument for *agape-eros* is based on God’s fellowship with human beings in our sufferings; through his “self-sacrifice (*agape*) God becomes more satisfied in love (*eros*).”⁹⁴ Fiddes anticipates two negative reactions to this argument. He responds to those who would accuse God of “masochism”: God does not desire to suffer, rather God desires rela-

⁹⁰Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love*.

⁹¹Fiddes, “Creation,” 169. See Fiddes, “Creation,” 179. Fiddes contrasts the *choice* to create the world for loving relationship with the metaphysical necessity of doing so. The idea of necessity resides in process theology. If it were necessary for God to create for love, the authenticity of such love is questionable; true love is *freely* offered. For Fiddes, “process thought cannot really reflect the dynamics of love.” In 2005, I became intrigued by a theology categorized as “open theism” through reading Clark H. Pinnock, *The Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God’s Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2001). I think it offers an orthodox alternative to process thought. A summary by influential Neo-Anabaptist theologian Greg Boyd of the differences between process thought and open theism might be read here: Greg Boyd, “Process Theology and Open Theism: What’s the Difference?” ReKnew, accessed October 18, 2017, <http://reknew.org/2014/03/process-theology-open-theism-whats-the-difference/>. For Dr. Boyd, open theism, like process thought, asserts that the “future is partly comprised of possibilities” while avoiding process thought’s unorthodoxy. See also the work of prominent Nazarene theologian Thomas J. Oord who cites Pinnock, *The Most Moved*, 148 in a comparison and contrast of process theology and open theology in Thomas Jay Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010), 90.

⁹²Fiddes, “Creation,” 170–1. Fiddes presents three arguments from those who oppose his notion that God created for love and has needs which are satisfied in relation to creation. A first argument against Fiddes’ position is that the best examples of human love portray only self-sacrifice. The “Classical Protestant debate” upholds this view, arguing that “God’s love must be purely *agape* with no hint of *eros*; the two loves are driven apart as opposites.” Two further arguments are metaphysical, from scholastic thought. First, there must be “one uncaused cause of all;” this argument suggests that, on the basis of God’s “self-existence” before and apart from creation, God cannot possibly have any need which is fulfilled through his creation. A final metaphysical argument is based on God’s perfection; God is complete within God’s triune self, thus has no need. Fiddes’ arguments to these first two points will be found in the body of my work on this page and p. 71. To this third point, Fiddes argues that even “the image of God as Trinity has been developed from experience of God’s salvific action in the world, and so already includes human beings within the story of the divine relationships.” (178)

⁹³Fiddes, “Creation,” 172. For Fiddes, an attempt at pure one-way love is “at best a cold kind of do-gooding, and at the worst a kind of tyranny.” In his reference to “tyranny” he is quoting John MacMurray, *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 189–90 who will also influence the author of my next chapter, Lucien Richard, in his view of authentic personhood. In response to scholastic concerns, Fiddes argues that belief in God’s “self-existence” may be upheld without insisting on God’s “self-sufficiency” (172) which God has kenotically renounced. (182) He also comments that self-realization is not selfishness.

⁹⁴Fiddes, “Creation,” 174.

tionship with creation, which entails suffering. To the metaphysical critique that God must not suffer because suffering undermines God's perfection, Fiddes challenges notions of "[p]erfection" as a "fixed maximum." He proposes perfection as "the perfect relation of God in all the reality there is at any one point." Therefore, God can "grow in perfection as the purposes of creation move towards greater and greater completion."⁹⁵ A third, historical support for the connection between agape and eros comes from the spiritual writings of Julian of Norwich who speaks of "the desire of God" as the drive or "momentum" behind creative love.⁹⁶

Finally, I will draw from the work of feminist theologian Anna Mercedes to present the kenotic virtue of self-giving as agape-eros as key to genuine human being. Like Brierley and Fiddes, Mercedes locates agape *and* eros in God's being. She argues that the "self-giving God described by Luther...[is not] purely agapeic;" "there is certainly something in it for God." Through kenosis, God "comes into Godself."⁹⁷ For Mercedes, self-giving love as agape-eros is essential to our becoming, thus Christian kenosis as agape-eros is congruent with feminist goals and concerns. Self-giving as agape-eros neither means giving to the other in a way that obliterates one's identity nor does it allow for a narcissistic commitment to one's own becoming. In generous relationship with the other, one becomes oneself.⁹⁸ Kenosis is a way of exercising "power for" the other and for one's own becoming.⁹⁹ We turn toward others, "not to absorb them, not to hide away in them, but to encounter their transcendence with awe and passion. Here is the eros of our kenosis - for to be for others is also a self-serving posture."¹⁰⁰ This mystery of giving and receiving is reflected in Jesus' saying: "Those who find their life will lose it, and *those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*"¹⁰¹ Self-giving as agape-eros offers an interesting, risky,

⁹⁵Fiddes, "Creation," 173.

⁹⁶Fiddes, "Creation," 174.

⁹⁷Mercedes, Anna, *Power For: Feminism and Christ's Self-Giving* (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 64.

⁹⁸Mercedes, *Power For*, 83.

⁹⁹Mercedes, *Power For*, 8.

¹⁰⁰Mercedes, *Power For*, 69.

¹⁰¹Matthew 10:39, NRSV. Emphasis is mine.

affected way to be in relationships, perhaps more congruent with some feminist views of the self. Instead of the old mantra to “strike a balance between yourself and other people,” kenosis as agape-eros challenges the strong enlightenment-inspired differentiation between self and other and suggests a different “fluidity” but not indistinguishability.¹⁰² Mercedes quotes philosophical theologian Karmen MacKendrick, expressing her resistance toward an “over sanitized and pastoral conception of love...as a polite strengthening of discontinuity.” As MacKendrick puts it, “I would work instead with an image of love as an impossible joyous abandon - a sense of being without recourse which opens the self and thus undoes it,” that is, kenosis.¹⁰³

Patience

A second kenotic virtue is patience. Kenotic love may or may not be recognized. Vanstone describes the in-between time when love may or may not be known as the “tense passivity of waiting.”¹⁰⁴ In *The Stature of Waiting*, Vanstone affirms that patience is the virtue of waiting in a situation where one cares about the outcome *and* one has no control.¹⁰⁵ Patience signals that God’s creation has significance; people and nature are worth the wait. The possibility that all will come right is worth waiting for. The fact that one is waiting in no way undermines

¹⁰²Mercedes, *Power For*, 10.

¹⁰³Mercedes, *Power For*, 11, quoting Karmen MacKendrick, *Counterpleasures* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 156. To further explore the virtue of agape-eros, see William C. Mattison III, “Movements of Love: A Thomistic Perspective on *Agape* and *Eros*,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 1, no. 2 (2012): 31–60 which makes a helpful distinction (see p. 32) between “‘movements,’ (or Pope Benedict’s ‘dimensions’) of love, on the one hand, and ‘venues’ of love on the other hand.” As Mattison puts it, “These movements can exist in any venue of love, be it the love among family members, the love of friends, or the love of spouses (romantic love). Failure to recognize the difference between movements and venues of love can muddy our understanding of love and in particular our understanding of eros.” Consider Benedict XVI, “Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* [25 Dec. 2005],” accessed October 18, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html. A key Protestant work which Pope Benedict has in mind when writing his encyclical is Anders Nygren’s *Agape and Eros* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954). According to James F. Childress and John Macquarrie in their entry on “Love,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 355, Nygren “maintained that the “*erōs*-motif” predominant in Catholicism is irreconcilable with the “*agapē*-motif” of the NT because *erōs* is always egocentric as the pursuit of a good to be acquired for the self...*Agapē* on the contrary is entirely unselfish, seeking only the good of others...” I will have to leave this subject of the relationship between agape and eros for later studies. My dissertation is based on a premise that agape and eros may be held together and are not necessarily oppositional.

¹⁰⁴Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 49.

¹⁰⁵W.H. Vanstone, *The Stature of Waiting* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), 102.

one's dignity. In a culture where productive activity is valued, patience challenges the presupposition "that human dignity is preserved only to the extent that man is active in the world, and initiates and creates and earns and achieves."¹⁰⁶ As image-bearers of the God who waits on creation's response, we accept that there is dignity in a patient, receptive stance to the natural world and to society around us.

Kenotic Moral Decision-Making

The virtues of agape-eros and patience manifest in moral decision-making on the bases of mutuality, acceptance and change.

Mutuality

Mutuality in moral decision-making means that "relationships of domination are replaced with ones of genuine reciprocity."¹⁰⁷ Power is shared; authoritarianism is foreign and unwelcome. Within Vanstone's kenotic framework, mutuality means that each person arrives at the decision-making 'table' as a valued voice, not because they are strong or brilliant but *because* they are first loved.

Mutuality also means we approach moral decision-making contextually. One does not arrive on the scene armed with pre-packaged answers, rather through careful listening and interchange, the moral way forward is discerned. This might be viewed as a type of "contextual ethics," as a "third way between antinomianism and legalism" which "emphasizes the primacy of the principle of love" as one responds to "what God is doing in the world."¹⁰⁸ This never means complete moral flexibility. For Christians, moral decisions must be discerned within the bounds of the kenotic love of God.¹⁰⁹ In relation to others, mutuality means keeping in mind the good words of Walter Kasper: "Jesus Christ is the fulfillment and fullness of dialogue, not its end or

¹⁰⁶Vanstone, *The Stature*, 110.

¹⁰⁷Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 14.

¹⁰⁸James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds., "Situation Ethics," in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 586–7.

¹⁰⁹See my discussion on pp. 61-62 above for Vanstone's ideas about how things "come right."

suppression.”¹¹⁰ One may offer a faithful and clear witness to Christ’s way forward in any given moral situation while also receiving the “spiritual and moral goods” of others, respecting their freedom of response.¹¹¹

Acceptance and Change

When patience take root in our hearts, we are inclined to make moral decisions based on *acceptance* of life “as it is” while at the same time doing our part to create the conditions for *change*. We accept others, claiming that all of creation is extravagantly loved *as it is*. Utility is irrelevant to belovedness. We anticipate change, as growth *and* as conversion, because God who is Love has sacrificed God’s self for our greater authenticity.¹¹²

For Vanstone, change is the “angular progress of the ever precarious creativity of the love of God.”¹¹³ The dialectic of acceptance and change means that our moral decisions rest on the primary conviction that all of creation is loved and lovable as it is *and* it is desirable and possible for situations to come right and for people to become truer versions of themselves.¹¹⁴ Becoming our most genuine selves is what it means to live for the glory of God. As Lonergan puts it:

To say that God created the world for his glory is to say that he created it not for his sake but for ours. He made us in his image, for our authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcending, in being origins of value, in true love.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰Kasper, *That They May All Be One*, 38.

¹¹¹Kasper, *That They May All Be One*, 39. See: Second Vatican Council, “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* [28 Oct. 1965],” 2, accessed October 28, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html. “The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.”

¹¹²For differentiation between “growth” and “conversion,” see Mark Slatter, “Are Growth and Conversion Being Confused in the Spiritual Life? Is Conversion *Really* Continuing?” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 15, no. 1 (2015): 45. Kenosis and change in “secularity three” will be addressed in my fourth chapter.

¹¹³Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 92. Arguably, this is a definition inclusive of growth *and* conversion.

¹¹⁴I have noticed that the kenotic ethic of acceptance and change aligns with the basic principles of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, an approach that I find effective in my work in mental health and in my own life. Jill H. Rathus and Alec L. Miller, *DBT Skills Manual for Adolescents* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 8. “A dialectical therapeutic position is one of constantly combining acceptance with change...the presumption is that we can facilitate change by emphasizing acceptance, and acceptance by emphasizing change.”

¹¹⁵Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 116–17.

Chapter 3: Lucien Richard's *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*

American Catholic priest and theologian Lucien Richard wrote *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God* in 1997, more than two decades after *The Crucified God* and *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*. For Richard, "the problem of humanization" which had "always [been] a central concern, has now taken on the character of an inescapable preoccupation."¹ We face unique forms of dehumanization in an era of constant technological development. Richard offers kenosis as the best response to the dilemma of inauthentic existence in a technologically advanced culture. In his second to ninth chapters, he traces the historical development of kenotic christology. His argument is that one must first relationally know the kenotic Christ to engage in a kenotic response to the dehumanization which is occurring in secular culture. His final two chapters describe how our knowledge of the kenotic Christ undergirds authentic Christian praxis, that is, a spirituality and an ethic practiced by individual Christians and applied in a movement "Toward a Kenotic Church."²

Richard begins his work by highlighting the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Jesus Christ as "not only a revelation of who God is but *also a revelation of what it means to be human*."³ What it means to be truly human has become a question common to Western secular people. In Jesus Christ, the Church offers a public response to this question. This does not mean the culture has an easy time hearing it.⁴ For those who are willing to consider God at all, there is uncertainty over whether God through Christ by way of the Church *actually* makes a difference in our lives. In addition, the universal experience of suffering, especially the "anguish...found in its

¹Richard, *Christ*, 11.

²The title of his concluding chapter.

³Richard, *Christ*, 11. Emphasis is mine. See: Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World *Gaudium Et Spes* [7 Dec. 1965]," 22, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. "He Who is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15),...is Himself the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onward."

⁴See page 3 of my introduction for how the culture might experience some expressions of the Church inopportune. This is not what is being discussed here.

perceived meaninglessness,” casts a shadow on God’s relevance for humankind.⁵ Western secular people experience a particular form of suffering in our technological culture. We are deceived by the message that if only we put our minds to it, we will rise to become all we were meant to be. Before long we discover we have risked destroying our true selves through compliance with isolating cultural methods for achieving ‘greatness.’

The Problem of Dehumanization: Seeking ‘Greatness’ Without Limits

Within an immanent world view,⁶ modern technological advances reinforce the sense that we are in control and have unlimited potential. Richard cautions that since “the essence of technology is a will to power that is never satisfied,” there is the prospect of developing an unquenchable obsession with personal greatness.⁷ Becoming oneself through a quest for such greatness is evocative of Charles Taylor’s description of a lower form of authenticity.⁸ At first becoming ‘great’ sounds like an adventure. However, as we pursue advancement we become acquainted with the underbelly of the age. We thought we were free to pursue our dreams but begin to suspect that “through technology, our thoughts, feelings, and talents are being manipulated.” We get the feeling that we are being reduced to disposable parts of a “system...helpless and desperate as [we] perceive [our] lives to be dominated by anonymous powers.”⁹ If we are self-reflexive, we might notice that we are not simply victims of this form of dehumanization, we might also be its perpetrators. The dominant cultural version of ‘greatness’ occurs at the expense of the other. Richard argues that though it is “the contention of many that technology is only a tool to be used for good or for ill by whoever possesses it,” for him, “it is not neu-

⁵Richard, *Christ*, 4-5.

⁶See page 2 of this work.

⁷Richard, *Christ*, 11–13. He draws from theological works of Raymond Gilkey and Paul Tillich, and from philosopher sociologist Jacques Ellul to describe our technological situation.

⁸Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (Toronto: Anansi Press Inc., 1991), 35 “...the more self-centred and ‘narcissistic’ modes of contemporary culture are manifestly inadequate.” Taylor argues that modes of culture which separate personal fulfillment from relationships and negate “demands of any kind emanating from something more or other than human desires or aspirations are self-defeating, that they destroy the conditions for realizing authenticity itself.”

⁹Richard, *Christ*, 18.

tral...Technology possesses its own autonomy and has its own distinctive world view, its own ideological system...By its very nature technology leads to domination.”¹⁰ Narcissism thrives in a cultural context dominated by technology. The other person becomes a means for one’s own development and advancement. How might Christian faith be experienced, articulated and embodied in this dehumanizing situation?

Richard comments that North American Christian faith expressions do not address negative reality well. It is common to skip over distasteful aspects of life and speak in triumphalistic terms. According to Richard, “[t]he ultimate aim of North American Christianity is the rendering positive of life’s negatives;” we relegate the cross to the past, deeming it “a symbol of an evil that has no longer any power over us.”¹¹ Instead we emphasize the current power of the resurrection. Suppression or denial of negative reality blocks the development of effective responses to the dehumanization of our time.

There is an authentic way for Christians to speak and live in this situation. Christianity neither “[argues] against suffering” nor offers pat answers. Instead, “it tells a story about Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord.”¹² Kenosis, the embodiment of “God’s self-giving love” at the cross of Jesus Christ “provides Christianity with enduring imagery and symbolism” which

resonates with the deepest elements of our human nature. This [kenotic] Christology addresses the issue of human suffering in stark and challenging terms, and it provides Christians today with a fundamental understanding of the transformative power of love that always entails vulnerability.¹³

Citing scripture and tradition, Richard spends most of his work proclaiming a kenotic christology before drawing conclusions for kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic. Christology is never about lofty theory, rather it is always about intimacy with Christ and, through him, with the triune God. Richard will trace the lengthy and convoluted history of kenotic christology giv-

¹⁰Richard, *Christ*, 15.

¹¹Richard, *Christ*, 22.

¹²Richard, *Christ*, 6.

¹³Richard, *Christ*, 8-9.

ing an account for its diminished prevalence in the patristic period and touching on its development and diverse expressions up to the present time. His goal is that we might relationally know Christ to kenotically follow him.

Toward a Kenotic Christology

Christology may be generally defined as a journey “of getting to know, to name, and to love God in and through the person of Jesus;” like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, this journey includes both hiddenness and discovery and might be “characterized more by the ‘not yet’ than by the ‘already.’”¹⁴ Moltmann, Vanstone, and now Richard, have made it clear that a kenotic christology is always a theology of the cross. The post-resurrection disciples quickly returned to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth as their focal point, proclaiming the paschal mystery “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day.”¹⁵ As Richard puts it, “Jesus’ death is not the surprise ending but the *capstone of a career*.”¹⁶

As early Christians grappled with the meaning of Jesus’ life, passion, death and resurrection, a key question arose about his relationship to God. Two titles - Son of God and *Logos* - were commonly used to say that he was “from the side of God;” together the two titles describe “Jesus as being of the Father, not only in time but also in eternity.”¹⁷ The personal Christ of history *is* the concrete Word or expression of the eternal God. Kenosis is the most prominent motif arising in the New Testament to explain this God-man. Richard illustrates his point via the “kenotic hymn” in Philippians chapter two and through literary and thematic observations in the Gospel of Mark.¹⁸

¹⁴Richard, *Christ*, 27.

¹⁵Richard, *Christ*, 29 quoting from 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, NRSV.

¹⁶Richard, *Christ*, 30-1.

¹⁷Richard, *Christ*, 53.

¹⁸Richard, *Christ*, 56. He also notes a strong kenotic motif in the epistle to the Hebrews. See: Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 12. Gorman, in his prominent contemporary work, concurs with Karl Barth that this Philippians text represents a kenotic stream of thinking that pervades all Pauline letters.

Kenotic Christology in Scripture

In Philippians 2:6-11, the verb κενώω appears, meaning “to empty” or “to make void, of no effect;” it can be understood as Christ’s total “self-renunciation” and may also be translated “he made himself powerless.”¹⁹ Past debate about Christ’s self-emptying centred on the question: “Of *what* did Christ empty himself?” This was a case of missing the point. There is no object indicated in the text. Christ’s self-emptying is best understood as an attribute. He pours himself out as described in 2 Corinthians (8:9): “For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

Modern biblical criticism’s discovery of the poetic form of Philippians 2 discourages the primacy of ontological interpretations. Kenosis is best understood as a symbol. The kenotic hymn may be viewed in two-parts, a “descent” and an “ascent,” the cross as the centrepiece.²⁰

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but *emptied* himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.²¹

There is widespread agreement that the text contrasts Adam’s and Christ’s ways of being human, a way of “selfishness” versus “selflessness,” grasping versus letting go.²² Christ, secure in his relationship with the Father, lived selflessly from the overflow of God’s grace. He had no inclination or need to exercise coercive control over his situation. Even “[t]hough he was in the form of God,” Jesus lived this way. This text was written in a culture acquainted with what those in

¹⁹Richard, *Christ*, 59.

²⁰Richard, *Christ*, 56.

²¹Philippians 2:5-8, NRSV. Emphasis is mine.

²²Richard, *Christ*, 57–8. Whether the text implies the pre-existent Christ is a subject of debate. While kenotic Christology affirms the pre-existent Christ, this may not be the best supporting text.

the ‘form of God,’ i.e., the Roman Emperor, usually did to obtain and keep power.²³ Jesus demonstrates godlikeness in a counterintuitive way;²⁴ he willingly lived in humble service to the other. Richard asserts that “precisely *because* Christ was in the form of God he recognized equality with God as a matter not of getting but of giving.”²⁵ It is this Jesus who is truly God-like, exalted as Lord:

Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.²⁶

The paradox noticed in Philippians 2 may be observed in Mark’s Gospel as well. For example, Jesus demonstrates miraculous power early in the Gospel and powerlessness in his passion and death. Greatness is linked with servanthood and saving one’s life by losing it.²⁷ True power is demonstrated in the choice to give up one’s possessions. This Markan openness to paradox is a feature intrinsic to kenotic christology in which emptiness corresponds to fullness. The paradox continues in the account of Jesus’ crucifixion. The Markan Jesus is “delivered up” to be crucified.²⁸ He suffers an anguished, abandoned, powerless death. His helpless cry of godforsakenness expresses hopeful expectation that his loving Father will faithfully vindicate him despite his crucifixion as a cultural deviant, an outsider. Jesus’ cry from the cross elicits a statement of faith, paradoxically from another outsider, a Gentile centurion perhaps “in charge of the execution squad”:²⁹ “Truly this man was God’s Son!”³⁰ Paradox pervades kenotic christology. God is always where he was not thought to be; this is indeed good news, especially for we who perceive

²³Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 19.

²⁴Richard, *Christ*, 18–9.

²⁵Richard, *Christ*, 60.

²⁶Philippians 2:9-11, NRSV.

²⁷Mark 10:43-45, Mark 8:34-36, NRSV.

²⁸Richard, *Christ*, 66.

²⁹Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 194.

³⁰Mark 15:39, NRSV.

ourselves abandoned, even by God. According to Richard, these New Testament notions of a kenotic Christ did not carry forward into next christological developments.

Patristics and Kenosis

Though kenotic christology might be argued as the “center” of the New Testament, this was not the opinion of the church fathers during the formation of christology.³¹ Greek and Jewish metaphysical understandings of the divine were imported into the christological debates at the Councils of Nicea (325 C.E.) and Chalcedon (451 C.E.). This made authentic kenotic interpretations of the two natures-one person formula difficult because one cannot discuss a kenotic Christ while also upholding the notion of an impassible and immutable God. Throughout much of church history the priority has been to uphold Christ’s divinity.³² Christ’s divinity was philosophically defined in terms of perfection; his otherness was protected by avoiding all insinuations of human limitation in the fully human Christ. This required some theological contortions at the expense of our view of Christ’s full humanity. The two natures-one person formula was explained by locating Christ’s personhood only in the divine nature. This analysis risked reducing the humanity of Christ to a kind of ‘cloak’ worn by the Logos. It is a view which no longer suffices in the contemporary context where the human person is defined as “a psychological subject of interpersonal relations.”³³ If Christ is a full human being, he must also be a person. We have shifted our theological focus to the full humanity of Christ even while continuing to affirm his full divinity. These historical developments have made it possible to reconsider the two natures-one person formula from a kenotic point of view. Richard’s central chapter “The Incarnation as Mystery of Divine Self-Emptying” applies itself to this interpretive task.

³¹Richard, *Christ*, 73.

³²This is a deeply important priority; however, it must include a simultaneous commitment to Christ’s full humanity.

³³Richard, *Christ*, 87.

A Kenotic Christology 'From Below' and the Incarnation

The Fathers understood the incarnation using the primary metaphysical tools of their time. Western secular theologians also have contextual tools to respond to new questions about Jesus Christ, fully divine and fully human person. Historical shifts toward individualism combined with the birth of psychology mean that authentic humanity, including the humanity of Jesus, are contemporary theological concerns.³⁴ A kenotic christology from below³⁵ does not take metaphysical notions of God as a starting point. Instead, it begins its incarnational analysis with the integrated divine-human person, Jesus Christ, and moves from the person of Jesus Christ to the nature of God. Jesus' personal relationship with his Father, affirmed at his resurrection, is a window into the eternal, relational trinitarian God. Another way of putting it is that *this* Jesus in reciprocal, loving relationship with his Father is the Logos, the eternal self-expression of God. This God-in-relation is always with us:

The symbol of the incarnation says that God belongs to the world of God's creatures; the incarnation is a characteristic of God's being with us. God's transcendence is not from another world; it is a transcendence for men and women.³⁶

Kenotic christology reframes transcendence. Previous notions of God, reinforced by metaphysical presuppositions, are challenged. Transcendence - God - is at home in the immanent frame and works from the inside to raise us up in Christ. "The humanity of Jesus is the appearance, the sacrament and symbolic reality, the genuine self-disclosure of God; this is the mystery of the incarnation."³⁷ Having fixed readers' vision on the kenotic Christ as the starting point for knowing God, Richard details what this means for our understanding of the Trinity, creation and authentic humanity before arriving at applications to a kenotic spirituality and ethic.

³⁴See pages 2-4 of this work for Charles Taylor's description of "secularity three" individualism.

³⁵Richard, *Christ*, 84, 89. Early kenoticists developed their christology "from above," holding to previous metaphysical categories. This approach failed to adequately describe the incarnation in a way that held together true humanity and true divinity. Since the mid-twentieth century, kenotic christology has taken an approach from below which is the approach being developed over the course of this dissertation.

³⁶Richard, *Christ*, 89.

³⁷Richard, *Christ*, 105.

Kenosis and the Trinity

Since Jesus Christ is the window into God, the same self-emptying seen in the Christ event is central to the Trinity. For Richard, the kenotic God - Father, Son, and Spirit - is possible from all eternity, defined as “the ability to remain other while being present totally to the other.”³⁸ In God there is unity in diversity. Love is both the essence and the overflow of this dynamic God, and Love manifests as a person, the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The Holy Spirit lives kenotically in history, but not in the concrete way of Jesus. The Spirit is anonymous and faceless, working ‘behind the scenes’ as it were, for our salvation.⁴⁰ This is an even “more radical kenosis than that of the Son.”⁴¹

The Spirit, self-giving Love personified, may be rejected, as seen at the cross, but will finally triumph, as affirmed at the resurrection; “[i]n the resurrection the Spirit brings to sacramental expression the truth that God’s love is boundlessly fruitful.”⁴² The Spirit’s presence with us, vulnerable and often rejected, is an expression of “the long patience of God.”⁴³

Kenosis and Creation

This patience of God is also demonstrated in creation itself. A kenotic view of God not only realizes God as Creator but also locates God by his Spirit within creation. There is no separation between nature and grace. Creation is the first grace or gift from God. It is true gift, neither for God’s benefit nor necessary to God’s well-being because God is fullness and joy within

³⁸Richard, *Christ*, 106. See chapter two, footnote 36 above for a brief discussion regarding the controversial topic of God’s impassibility-passibility.

³⁹The epistle to the Romans (5:5, NRSV) puts it this way: “...God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given us.”

⁴⁰Richard, *Christ*, 117. Richard states that “[t]he purpose of the Spirit is the purpose of God: salvation for all through self-communication...Salvation is present in a sacramental way; it is incomplete and in process. The presence of the Holy Spirit as sanctifier is a presence that accepts sanctification as processive and respectful of human freedom and the possibility of rejection.”

⁴¹Richard, *Christ*, 116.

⁴²Richard, *Christ*, 116.

⁴³Richard, *Christ*, 117.

God's self.⁴⁴ We might make a loose analogy to good parents for whom a child is the overflow of love, not some kind of calculated choice for their own benefit. Creation, total self-gift of God, is the offering of an "ecstatic" quality of love which goes beyond itself. This Love has a self-limiting quality; in other words, it does not force itself on creation, rather, it makes space for the emergence of the other.⁴⁵

This view of a self-limiting God who makes space for the other is congruent with modern notions of evolutionary science. The fact that chance factors in to developments in nature leaves little room for a deterministic, interventionist notion of God. A kenotic view of Creator God is non-interventionistic; this offers a platform for fruitful dialogue between faith and science. The kenotic God as Creator might be considered "genuinely innovative and adaptive" and "open-ended;" for Richard, "what seems apparent is that 'chance' is loaded in favor of life."⁴⁶ This God lets creation become but does not abandon it. By his Spirit, he gifts creation with what is needed to grow and thrive. This is grace at work in nature. Upholding the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, Richard asserts that though creation was not from matter, it was not from "nothingness" either; creation is the overflow of God's "sacrificial...self-humbling, self-restraining, self-limiting" generous love which yields to the other and "seeks constantly to enlarge the creature's capacity to receive."⁴⁷ Like Moltmann and Vanstone, panentheism is the lens through which Richard views God's relationship with creation,

taking on its finitude and existence. The infinite exists in and through the finite, but is never identical with it. The mode of God's immanence is not identity, but transcendence, and God's transcendence consists in the fact that God does not remove the difference between God and what is "other," but rather accepts the "other" precisely as different.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Richard, *Christ*, 131. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* affirms "that everything has its origin and continuation in God." Richard expands on this definition explaining that while creation was not from matter, it was not out of "nothingness;" it was from "God's goodness, as an act of self-communication." Creation is not God, it is *from* God, a result of God's self-limiting love.

⁴⁵Richard, *Christ*, 137.

⁴⁶Richard, *Christ*, 134.

⁴⁷Richard, *Christ*, 138.

⁴⁸Richard, *Christ*, 139-140. See chapter one, footnote 80 for comments from Moltmann on this subject. For comments on Vanstone in relation to panentheism, see chapter two, footnotes 51 and 52.

Such kenotic activity entails a chosen suffering. God allows God's self to be at the mercy of human freedom, inviting the risk and reality of rejection. God invites us into reciprocal, dialogical relationship, a partnership for the good of creation. Though God does not demand it, he does require human involvement for at least partial fulfillment of love's purposes. Richard echoes Vanstone's description of the sometimes tragic, precarious, vulnerable nature of God's love. He sums up his interpretation of God-in-relation with creation as a version of process theology, "the co-creativity of God and God's world."⁴⁹ This God is both Creator *and* Redeemer, redemption being "God's answer to the human refusal to cooperate with God's creative purposes."⁵⁰ We see in Jesus' kenotic personhood how becoming united with God and God's purposes is the path to the authentic freedom and flourishing that Western secular culture longs for.

Kenosis and Authentic Humanity in Jesus

Western secular people are deeply interested in what it means to be our true selves. The Church offers Jesus as a response to questions about true humanity. Jesus offers a corrective to the dehumanizing effects of our narcissistic attempts to become 'great.' We find in him authentic humanity. The cultural drive for authenticity, interest in human psychology, and historical critical curiosity about the actual people and cultures behind ancient texts have driven the modern theological question: Who is the human Jesus of Nazareth? Traditional christology's answers will no longer do for most contemporary people. For example, it has been thought that Jesus ar-

⁴⁹Richard, *Christ*, 147. Richard describes process theology, based in the philosophical work of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne as "an attempt to rethink the doctrine of creation especially as this doctrine affects our understanding of God's relation to the world." God is the ground of being, and God establishes "self-creative processes." Process theology is the subject of debate. I have noticed elsewhere that its definitions differ between sources, so it is important to define one's terms before discussion. Because Richard accepts the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo, I suggest he is describing a doctrine more in line with open theism than process theology. See my discussion above in chapter two, footnote 92. See Christopher Ben Simpson, "Process Theology," in *Modern Christian Theology* (London, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 345–50 and Oord, *The Nature*, 90. Oord offers a helpful comparison between Open Theology and Process Theology; the former "seeks for truth about reality in biblical metaphors and moves secondarily to philosophy" while the latter "emerges from the metaphysics of Whitehead."

⁵⁰Richard, *Christ*, 148 citing Gabriel Daly, "Foundations and Systematics for Ecological Theology," in *Preserving the Creation: Environmental Theology and Ethics*, ed. Kevin Irwin and Edmond N. Pellegrino (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 42.

rived in history with full knowledge of his messianic identity and future destiny. It has also been thought that though ‘tempted’ in the desert, he was not actually able to sin. He has also been described as untouched by human failure and frailties, including suffering.⁵¹ None of these descriptions are satisfactory to most modern people. They sound more like myth than authentic human existence. The Epistle to the Hebrew’s description of Jesus’ humanity seems contrary to these traditional notions (4:15): “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” What does a kenotic christology say about Jesus’ human existence?

First, Jesus’ kenosis means he gave in to the process of his own becoming. Personhood is not “a substance injected into a body at conception.” We develop as persons through rubbing shoulders with “other” people and making decisions for our future. John’s Gospel (1:14) announces that “the Word became flesh and lived among us.” Richard argues that “enfleshment” is not putting on a human disguise, rather it is “immersion into the full [wretched] human condition.”⁵² Jesus developed as a human person in a historical situation, a Jew, living under the rule of the Roman Empire.

Second, Jesus’ kenosis means his knowledge was limited and developing. Jesus learned within Jewish tradition. He experienced the epistemic limitations and possibilities of his time. Like all humans, his self-consciousness grew through relationship and dialogue with others; for him, his relationship with the Father primarily shaped him.⁵³ Jesus was open to the future, so he took the risk of making decisive next steps from a place of trust and dependence on his Father. Though he could not definitively see the cross in his future, he could willingly choose a way of life that led to suffering and death. It is questioned whether Jesus knew his messianic identity; Richard leaves the question unresolved.⁵⁴

⁵¹Richard, *Christ*, 154–60.

⁵²Richard, *Christ*, 153.

⁵³Richard, *Christ*, 155.

⁵⁴Richard, *Christ*, 157.

Third, Jesus' kenosis means he lived in freedom. He limited himself to the human situation. Limitations create the conditions for having to make decisions. If there are no limits, there are no decisions to be made. Counter-intuitively, where there are limits, there is freedom because "decision...is an integral and foundational element of freedom." Jesus exercised "radical freedom" by living in total surrender to God's will and total alignment with the marginalized other.⁵⁵ On the question of whether he was free to sin, Richard's answer is 'yes.' But Jesus chose total communion with the Father, which is the opposite to sin. Jesus was not immune to the surrounding angst and chaos of his situation, so it was possible for him to experience the temptations unique to his circumstances. Richard makes an interesting point: temptation is only tempting when a person buys in to the false promise behind it. Jesus was not fooled by false promises. For example, when the devil offered Jesus power, Jesus was able to refuse it because he did not accept the underlying premise that the kind of power being offered was the path to 'greatness.'⁵⁶

Ultimately, Jesus' kenosis means he renounced himself, and lived for God and for neighbour as the deepest expression of his humanity. His kenotic love is unbounded except by the bounds imposed by human ignorance and rejection. He stands before our 'no,' our blindness to him, and takes a posture of waiting, patient and vulnerable before our response to his love. How might this understanding of Jesus translate into our contemporary understanding of authentic humanity? What does it mean, from a kenotic perspective, for us to become fully human?

Becoming Ourselves

Richard argues that becoming ourselves begins with restored relationship with God. In Jesus Christ true humanity and true divinity are integrated. Though substantially different from God, human beings were also created to bear God's image. Jesus is the exemplar for such image-bearing, which is authenticity.

⁵⁵Richard, *Christ*, 158-9.

⁵⁶Matthew 3:8-10 NRSV.

Christianity proclaims that in Jesus Christ the meaning for which all human beings strive has been attained in history, that unless one is human as Christ was human one cannot be human at all.⁵⁷ Jesus' "self-emptying for others" is extraordinary.⁵⁸ He does not grasp for identity, nor pursue his own version of 'greatness' at the expense of others. Instead he lives by the counter-intuitive rule that "those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."⁵⁹

Such radical self-emptying means rejecting the model of Adam who tried to *make himself* more like God. It turns out godliness begins with contentment in our own skin, literally. We have bodies of a certain age and identity, we have strengths and limitations, and we originate in God, so we come from Love.⁶⁰ Knowing oneself loved, a gift and gifted, is essential to becoming more oneself; "[n]o one reaches the core and ground of his or her own being, becoming free to the self and to all beings, without having received love."⁶¹ Then, "[w]e love because he first loved us."⁶² Love "decenters" us toward "collaborative" relationships characterized by "mutual reciprocity."⁶³ In relation to the Other and to others, we become ourselves. There is no option to do life alone and thrive.⁶⁴ Relationships are essential to personhood.

Richard draws from John Macmurray's theory of "person as relational" to elaborate on the meaning of personhood.⁶⁵ He argues against a Cartesian mind-body division which is egocentric, isolative, and personally destructive. When we coolly analyze the other, objectifying them

⁵⁷Richard, *Christ*, 162.

⁵⁸Richard, *Christ*, 162.

⁵⁹Mark 8:35, NRSV.

⁶⁰Richard, *Christ*, 163.

⁶¹Richard, *Christ*, 164.

⁶²1 John 4:19, NRSV.

⁶³Richard, *Christ*, 165.

⁶⁴I write this after having just completed a shift on a crisis mental health unit for adolescents. One of my patients had, due to severe social anxiety and poor parental socialization, been living in isolation from others for years. This person is diminished - in interests, abilities, vision, psychosocial skills, future possibilities, energy, relationships, hopes. This was an example of how one's personhood shrinks in isolation.

⁶⁵Richard, *Christ*, 166-7.

from a distance, we also reduce ourselves to impersonal objects.⁶⁶ By contrast, when we share ourselves with the other, we create the conditions for being known. Mutual self-revelation through dialogue is the “form of the personal.”⁶⁷ We cannot demand that the other reveals himself or herself to us, but we can freely and intentionally reveal ourselves to others in commitment to “self and other” which is the basic unit of life; “[a]bsolute autonomy, individual independence is an illusion.”⁶⁸

Since we are interdependent by nature we suffer whenever our relationships disintegrate. At the beginning of *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, Richard identified a contemporary form of suffering caused by the prominence of technology. He argued that technology interrupts human relationships since we use it to compete with and distinguish ourselves from one another. It can also promote an ironic disembodied ‘connection’ which interrupts true knowing. For Richard, suffering is a *pervasive assault* on the very core of our being-in-relation to others. It is “always an interpersonal phenomenon.” Our integrity is at risk. We feel like we are ‘falling apart’ and are out of control. We enter the less than human experience of isolation and abandonment; our personhood is compromised.⁶⁹

There is nothing good about suffering itself, but there are instances where meaning might be found in it. Meaningless suffering involves such extreme loss of freedom that one no longer cares about the other or about one’s own life. The sufferer is muted by the acuity of his or her suffering and is cut off from relationships (even with himself). For meaning to be found in suffering, there must be some freedom and some companionship in it: freedom to name and accept one’s limitations, to acknowledge the built-in need for the other and to seek available answers regarding suffering’s cause and elimination. For Richard, suffering grows in situations of self-

⁶⁶Richard, *Christ*, 168.

⁶⁷Richard, *Christ*, 169.

⁶⁸Richard, *Christ*, 170. This must not be misunderstood as the total assimilation of the self with the other. True personhood is obtained neither through individualism nor enmeshment. It is a middle ground of self-sharing and personal integrity.

⁶⁹Richard, *Christ*, 174.

sufficiency where “[i]nterdependence is broken by self-centering.” Personal connection may be restored through “vicariousness,” or “living from and for others,” which “involves self-giving.”⁷⁰ This kenotic view of personhood demands a “radical solidarity” arrived at by way of compassion.⁷¹

Richard lingers on the subject of compassion before making applications “Toward a Kenotic Church.” To have compassion is to suffer with and have strength alongside the suffering other. Compassion facilitates communion as stories of our shared human condition are told and heard. Through dialogue the “sufferer finds solidarity” which is “already a victory over suffering” because through relational connection some of the sufferer’s personhood may be restored.⁷² In its most authentic form, the church is the historic community which offers radical solidarity with suffering others by way of compassion, freeing generations up for new, Spirit-enlivened ways of being within the realities of each historic situation.

Chapter Analysis: Kenotic Spirituality and Ethics in *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*

Does God make a difference in human suffering, i.e., in our sense of isolation and experiences of abandonment? For Richard the answer is ‘yes.’ God makes a difference via the person of Jesus Christ. The incarnation of Jesus Christ shows that transcendence is present in the immanent situation. God is, and has always been, with us. In the crucified Christ, we see the full expression of the kenosis of God. From the beginning of time, God chose the possibility of his own suffering by building freedom of response into human creatures. The cross is “a symbol of reality;” it reflects the extent and cost of God’s love.⁷³ Richard agrees with Dorothee Soelle’s conviction that “[l]ove does not ‘require’ the cross, but *de facto* it ends up on the cross.”⁷⁴ One cannot love and remain intact.

⁷⁰Richard, *Christ*, 176.

⁷¹Richard, *Christ*, 177.

⁷²Richard, *Christ*, 177-8.

⁷³Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*, trans. Everett R. Kalin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 163.

⁷⁴Richard, *Christ*, 31 quoting Soelle thus: “It is not that love requires the cross, but *de facto*, it ends up on the cross.”

Through the cross “the *ache* of God...penetrate[s] the *numbness* of history.”⁷⁵ The cross reveals a suffering God. Not only does God suffer human rejection, God vicariously suffers the dehumanization and death which inevitably accompany our claim to independence. God’s response is compassion, “the basic characteristic that informs all divine activity.”⁷⁶ God takes the gut-wrenching experience of *our* suffering into *God’s* life. In Jesus we see that compassion is “more salvific than [coercive] power.” While coercive power might effect change from the outside, compassion requires an all-in personal investment, feeling with the other, stepping into his situation, and actively seeking “ultimate salvation.”⁷⁷ Words like reconciliation, atonement, union, greater or highest authenticity might best nuance what it means for us, through God’s compassion, to be ‘saved.’⁷⁸

Compassion is meant to inform the activity of human beings since we are image-bearers of the triune God. As beneficiaries of God’s compassion and the salvation it brings about, we are to share what we have received. One may not - and cannot - become more authentic for one’s own benefit. Becoming oneself for one’s own sake is a false version of authenticity. With Moltmann, Richard affirms that “the ultimate meaning of Jesus’ personhood is existing for others;” this is the case for his followers as well.⁷⁹ God through Christ by his Spirit operates sacramentally “within history, unobtrusively, even secretly.”⁸⁰ The church is a living sacrament, an extension of the God of Jesus Christ within the immanent situation. Its path is “discipleship,” that is, the

⁷⁵Jordan Carson, “The Suffering God and Cross in Open Theism: Theodicy or Atonement?” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37, no. 3 (2010): 330, quoting Brueggemann, *The Prophetic*, 55. Emphasis original. Carson, “The Suffering God and Cross in Open Theism,” 329. Though Brueggemann used this phrase - “the *ache* of God could penetrate the *numbness* of history” - to describe the function of the prophets, specifically Jeremiah, to “embody the pain of God that Israel might feel it and repent,” Carson argues that the phrase is even more applicable to Jesus’ revelation of God from the cross.

⁷⁶Richard, *Christ*, 188.

⁷⁷Richard, *Christ*, 188-189.

⁷⁸This is important for readers who come from upbringings like my own evangelical moorings which sometimes truncate salvation to mean a one-off conversion event which guarantees a future exit from this present existence or a rescue from the guilt of sin (understood as intrinsic distortion more than relational alienation).

⁷⁹Richard, *Christ*, 103.

⁸⁰Richard, *Christ*, 179.

church walks intimately with the living person of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit for others. This is a missionary existence: a visible, active, daily expression of the God of Jesus Christ in every sphere of society.⁸¹

How does a kenotic view of the God of Jesus Christ affect the details of Christian discipleship? Or, to revisit the first part of my research question: What key features of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic may be derived from *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God* as optimal for the experience, articulation and embodiment of Christian faith? Richard describes kenotic spirituality in terms of journeying and of personal relationship with Jesus Christ.⁸² Through relational knowledge of the kenotic Christ we create the conditions for kenotic virtues to emerge in our lives. For Richard, two prominent kenotic virtues are humility and compassion. Out of the overflow of humble and compassionate hearts, moral decisions are made based on *God-like* forms of power, as self-limitation and as solidarity through service.

Kenotic Spiritual Practices

At least two spiritual practices are implied in *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, setting the conditions for intimacy with the kenotic God of Jesus Christ. They are: 1) the practice of faith as journeying or pilgrimage, and 2) the practice of personal relationship with the crucified Christ.

Faith as a Journey or Pilgrimage

Richard identifies a dynamism within God, within nature, and in the relationship between human beings and Christ. This movement corresponds to an image of faith as a journey or pilgrimage. A kenotic spirituality is primarily marked by the ‘not yet.’ A kenotic church is not settled; it is “on the road.” More is hidden and less is realized. There is more silence than voice,

⁸¹Richard, *Christ*, 180-181.

⁸²Later discussion will ‘rescue’ this phraseology of “personal relationship” from the individualistic strains of North American evangelicalism. I take great satisfaction that it is a Catholic theologian who presents personal relationship with Christ as key to Christian spirituality. Evangelicals will do well to humbly allow his explanation of “personal relationship with Jesus” to correct our false notions about this turn of phrase we thought we owned!

more unknowing than knowing. There is a sense of being a learner rather than an expert. In a historical situation when many of us feel ourselves uprooted, “homeless...physically and spirituality,” such a pilgrim church is a most fitting friend on the journey.⁸³ For Richard, “the kenotic church is always an apophatic church, always anti-establishment, always offering an alternative vision, always on the road to Jerusalem.”⁸⁴ Christ-followers who understand themselves as pilgrims are more likely to be open to strangers, able to handle the tensions of difference, and inclined toward ecumenical relationships.⁸⁵ A kenotic, journeying spirituality means one is ‘insecure’ enough to be excentric, primarily centred on the Other who revealed his divinity and our hope in a counterintuitive way at the cross.

Relationship with the Crucified Christ

Knowing the crucified Christ is the priority of kenotic spirituality. We hear about and come to personal faith through the “church-remembered” Jesus Christ.⁸⁶ Richard reminds us that the early church quickly centred on the “paschal mystery,” which makes the “crucified Jesus” its “emphasis.”⁸⁷

The Emmaus road encounter between the hidden Christ and the disciples leaving the crucifixion scene is an excellent metaphor for the journeying church who needs to be personally reminded of its story. In the voice of the disciple Cleopas, we hear the dashed hopes of one who had known Jesus as a “prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”⁸⁸ This is

⁸³Richard, *Christ*, 194.

⁸⁴Richard, *Christ*, 194.

⁸⁵Richard, *Christ*, 191.

⁸⁶Tracy, *Analogical*, 321–2. Richard, *Christ*, 27. Richard cites Tracy to emphasize that our personal knowledge of Christ is rooted in the tradition’s mediation of the Christ-event. Tracy, *Analogical*, 320. To sidestep the distortions of unshakeable traditionalism or unbounded mysticism, Tracy offers criteria for assessing the adequacy of our christology. “...the faith response of an individual Christian to Jesus Christ is at once highly personal and irrevocably communal. Christians experience the Christ-event principally in the many mediated forms of the Christian church: paradigmatically in the re-presentation of the event in word and sacrament, in individual and communal prayer, in the struggle for justice and freedom...The Jesus Christ Christians know and respond to is the Jesus remembered as Christ and Lord by the Christian church from the earliest apostolic witnesses in the New Testament to the present.”

⁸⁷Richard, *Christ*, 29.

⁸⁸Richard, *Christ*, 28. Luke 24:29, NRSV. For the whole story, see Luke 24:13-35.

the common perception of godlikeness. Moltmann critiques the centrality of a “theology of glory” in which God is represented through “images of glory and strength.”⁸⁹ Vanstone and Richard also oppose a triumphalistic vision of godlikeness.⁹⁰ Richard cautions against leaving the cross behind; to do so is to avoid reality, to relegate sin, evil and the suffering of God to the past. This approach requires one to either suppress or ignore sufferings, in ourselves and society, or white-wash them with platitudes and know-it-all monologues (like Job’s friends). The hidden, crucified Christ reminded Cleopas - and reminds us through the church⁹¹ - of reality. Jesus recounted the tradition and said, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”⁹² As Jesus broke the bread at the table, the disciples’ eyes were opened, as ours need to be. As we get to know the crucified Christ, we become convinced that “Jesus’ suffering is no obstacle to the claim that he is God’s beloved Christ nor should it be an obstacle to discipleship.”⁹³ In fact, suffering with Christ for his purposes is our mandate.

Kenotic Virtues

A kenotic spirituality of journeying with the crucified Christ sets the conditions for growth and/or conversions of the heart toward humility and compassion. We become like the Christ we follow. In his concluding chapter “Toward a Kenotic Church,” Richard comments on the character of Jesus Christ:

the man for others...has *compassion* for the marginal people; he is in their midst as a servant. Jesus does not exert his power but *humbly* calls the dispossessed to full personhood in the kingdom of God. Here they are no longer “nonpersons” but God’s beloved and privileged people.⁹⁴

⁸⁹For comments on Moltmann’s “theology of glory,” see page 25 above.

⁹⁰Vanstone, *Love’s Endeavour*, 70. For Vanstone, God’s primary revelation is through “the Word of love, in which, for the sake of an other, all is expended...” Also, see pp. 56-59 above.

⁹¹We are reminded of what is real through the church when it is acting as the “gift” it is meant to be. Tracy, *Analogical*, 321. A kenotic spirituality is always realistic about ambiguity, including within the church. The “sinful church” as Tracy calls it, is a “frequent betrayer of the very event entrusted to its care.” This is the reason why anamnesis is essential.

⁹²Luke 24:26, NRSV.

⁹³Richard, *Christ*, 28.

⁹⁴Richard, *Christ*, 180. Emphasis is mine. Richard attributes the description of Jesus as “the man for others,” to Bonhoeffer. See Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 16 for his reference to Bonhoeffer’s phrase.

These comments set the stage for discussion of the kenotic virtues of humility and compassion and how they capsize common uses of power over others.

Humility

Humility might be defined in at least three different ways. First, there is the humility of “objective lowliness” where a person is on the margins of society, e.g., because of her socio-economic situation. It is problematic to consider circumstantial humility a virtue, however it warrants humble and preferential attention from others.⁹⁵ In a second sense, humility is the realization of one’s weakness or otherness in relation to God. This recognition of oneself *as one is* may be a best definition of humility as a virtue. In a third sense, humility is a virtue of God, reflected in Jesus’ total disinterest in managing his reputation and sacrificial existence for others.⁹⁶ Even exaltation cannot diminish god-like humility because of its built-in disvalue for personal honour and esteem. The one who is humble doesn’t care about her reputation, thus she has the mind and heart space for self-expenditure in extreme solidarity with others by way of compassion.

Compassion

Compassion is the foundation of God’s activity, manifest in the ministry of Jesus and key to the mission of the church.⁹⁷ It is “solidarity’s optimal disposition.”⁹⁸ The other’s misery is experienced as though it were one’s own.⁹⁹ Charles Taylor explains that the word “compassion” is

⁹⁵To consider circumstantial poverty itself as a virtue would be to say that there is something good or desirable about poverty in itself, serving as grounds for leaving the poor in their poverty. James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Humility,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 284. Those who are humble in this first sense, are “important to God,” and warrant the humble response of others by way of dignity and honour. See James 1:9, NRSV.

⁹⁶Childress and Macquarrie, “Humility” The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics suggests that humility “is not so much a virtue as a grace.” However, a later entry about virtue (649) differentiates between Greek and Christian understanding of virtue and includes humility among Christian virtues. For example, Thomas Aquinas proposed the category of “‘infused natural virtues,’ which are not the same as the natural virtues in themselves...[T]he language of “infusion” is an attempt to suggest that the virtues are as much as gift as an achievement.”

⁹⁷Richard, *Christ*, 188.

⁹⁸Slatter, *Insights*, 246.

⁹⁹Richard, *Christ*, 35.

based in the Greek “*splangnizesthai*” and “places the response in the bowels.”¹⁰⁰ This gut-level entry into another’s suffering contains a paradox; it is both “others’ centered and self-sacrificing.”¹⁰¹ It is radically sacrificial and self-possessed. Compassion may be the best word to hold the tension which Moltmann identified in his discussion of *apatheia* and *pathos* which corresponds to the kenotic virtues of *agape* and *sympathy*.¹⁰² It may also be the best word to represent Vanstone’s notion of self-giving as limitlessness and vulnerability discussed as the kenotic virtue of *agape-eros*.¹⁰³ To be compassionate is to be emotionally attuned to the other’s suffering and maintain rationality and freedom in one’s response.¹⁰⁴ The virtue of compassion will take a prominent place in chapter four’s discussion of kenotic discipleship in Western secularity.

Kenotic Moral Decision-Making

Out of the overflow of a humble and compassionate heart we make moral decisions about living well with others based on a paradoxical application of power. Coercive power is foreign to a kenotic ethic. By way of a kenotic spirituality, power has been reframed to mean self-limitation, and solidarity through service. *This* is the power of God in Christ and it is the power of those who are walking in God’s kenotic way.

Power as Self-limitation: An Ethic of Poverty

For Richard, true power is “the power to renounce power.”¹⁰⁵ Different from technological optimism, a kenotic ethic based in the virtue of humility “proceeds from the fundamental assumption that any authentic optimism has limits”:¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 115, 741.

¹⁰¹Richard, *Christ*, 188.

¹⁰²For a summary of Moltmann’s discussion of *apatheia* and *pathos*, see chapter one, footnote 42 above. Also, see my analysis of the kenotic virtues of *agape* and *sympathy* on pp. 39-41.

¹⁰³See my discussion on pp. 68-72 above.

¹⁰⁴James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, “Compassion,” in *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 109. Humility paradoxically sets the conditions for compassion’s “self-confidence that can afford to take delight in attending to other people.”

¹⁰⁵Richard, *Christ*, 71.

¹⁰⁶Richard, *Christ*, 23.

We are faced with the necessary acceptance of our limits. No triumphalistic theology is capable of addressing this problem. But the theology of the cross is explicitly directed to it. *It is at its most basic level a theology of limits.* What it rejects above all is that anthropology which thrives upon the delusion of mastery.¹⁰⁷

Noting Jesus' encounter with the rich young man, Richard suggests that possessions are a symbol of power. When Jesus advised the rich man that dispossession was the way to eternal life, he was equating God's kingdom to powerlessness, much to the man's dismay.¹⁰⁸ For Jesus, letting go of possessions was an external sign that one understood true power as relinquishment and service.¹⁰⁹ This stands in stark contrast with the earlier description of our technological context in which the norm is to pursue mastery and control. By contrast, "we are not masters but beggars."¹¹⁰

Power as Solidarity Through Service

When one humbly lives from one's true limitations, personal energy is no longer expended on inauthentic 'greatness' and is available for self-aware, "self-confident," solidarity with suffering others.¹¹¹ Redemptive solidarity is exercised through service fueled by compassion.¹¹² A kenotic spirituality manifests in a kenotic ethic which is not afraid to "descend to the dead," to be with the sufferer, to settle "into the depths of human reality."¹¹³ Richard raises the "preferential option for the poor" in whom the church sees the face of God and with whom the church may live as an extension of the communion of God through compassionate service.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷Richard, *Christ*, 26.

¹⁰⁸Richard, *Christ*, 65. Mark 10:17-22 NRSV.

¹⁰⁹This is how we might understand the Lenten and whole life call to let go in order to give to God and others. It turns out that Lent is not so much about realizing our spirituality by saying 'no' to that McDonald's caramel sundae with peanuts!

¹¹⁰Richard, *Christ*, 26.

¹¹¹Childress and Macquarrie, "Humility."

¹¹²This was also Moltmann's emphasis and conclusion as he considered the authentic, political presence of the church in Christ with society. See my discussion of Moltmann's sociopolitical theology, with kenotic applications on pp. 32-34 and 44-47 above.

¹¹³Richard, *Christ*, 22-3.

¹¹⁴Richard, *Christ*, 191.

Chapter 4: The Kenotic Church Within Secularity

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the kenotic conversation shifted from ontological speculation about the incarnation of Christ to using kenosis as a metaphor for God's existence. God *is* kenotic - self-emptying, self-giving, self-limiting - as revealed through creation and, most authentically, through the crucified Christ.

Four General Properties of Kenosis

Four general properties of kenosis emerged in previous chapters and will be presented before giving a synthesis of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic. First, the Christian idea of kenosis is *crucicentric*; the truth about God and human being is discerned from the starting point of the cross of Christ. Second, kenosis contains *paradox* which is defined as “a statement or expression so surprisingly self-contradictory as to provoke us into seeking another sense or context in which it would be true.”¹ As a symbol of the integration of divinity and humanity, kenosis locates transcendence within the immanent situation.² Further examples of kenotic paradoxes include: Jesus and Christ, saving one's life by losing it, fullness through emptiness, acceptance and change, greatness through servanthood, power through powerlessness, hiddenness and revelation, self-possession and vulnerability, the now and the not-yet. A third general property of kenosis is that it recognizes *ambiguity* in all situations, “a mixture of good and evil, light and darkness.”³ Ambiguity is present within the individual human heart; it may be found anywhere people are found, within the church and society at large. When ambiguity is acknowledged, people

¹Chris Baldick, “Paradox,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (4th Ed.)* (Oxford University Press, 2015), accessed Dec. 1, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780198715443.001.0001. Paradox “is pervasive in the literature of Christianity, a notoriously paradoxical religion.”

²I was struck early on in this project by James K.A. Smith's description of the “immanentization” which has occurred within modern thought. James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 48–51. In his short commentary on Taylor's *A Secular Age*, Smith describes our situation: “Divested of the transcendent, *this* world is invested with ultimacy and meaning in ways that couldn't have been imagined before.” He offers a Canadian image; “[l]ike the roof on Toronto's SkyDome, the heavens are beginning to close...We're so taken with this field, we don't lament the loss of the stars overhead.” What kenosis has taught me is that transcendence is actually within the SkyDome-like immanent situation. God through Christ is not ‘out there;’ God is with us. Though he may be hidden, we do not have the power to shut him out.

³Tracy, *Analogical*, 47.

will likely engage in church-secular conversations in a humble and collegial manner. One may neither deify the church and demonize the culture or vice versa, nor deify one's self and demonize the other. The church's choice to recognize its own ambiguity will dismantle its public caricature as the pure, unerring authority, a version of the church that the culture despises. Kenosis places everybody's feet on the ground. As the psalmist puts it, we remember that "we are dust."⁴ This is a realistic stance, congruent with a fourth general property of kenosis: it is *incarnational*. Moltmann, Vanstone and Richard convey a strong sacramental sense that matter, including human beings, is a vehicle for God's grace. Transcendence is at home within the immanent situation, lending dignity to regular human material life.

In Western culture, what it means to be human is a key question. Kenosis offers an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody a faithful and relevant response. David Tracy's hermeneutic of mutually critical correlation encourages those in church-secular conversations to pay attention to the questions asked and responses offered by all participants. We "secularity three" people must listen to each other, not to the end of achieving a fictitious sociological neutrality, but with the goal of sharing our distinct points of view. As Moltmann iterated, "Bonhoeffer's 'existence for others,' to which so much appeal has been made, becomes meaningless if one is no longer any different from others, but merely a hanger on. Only someone who finds the courage to be different from others can ultimately exist for 'others.'"⁵

To questions about authentic identity, contemporary people, religious and otherwise, have come up with responses. Four aspects of authentic human existence identified within a culture of authenticity are: 1) the freedom to choose one's identity, 2) tolerance for the choices of others, 3) preference for mutuality (not power) in relationships and 4) the perception of life as a

⁴Psalm 103:14, NRSV.

⁵Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 16.

quest or journey.⁶ How might kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic enliven the conversation between the church and secular culture about what it means to be human?

A Synthesis of Kenosis as a Spirituality and an Ethic

Before exploring this church-secular question about authentic humanity, a synthesis of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic will be offered based on *The Crucified God*, *Love's Endeavour*, *Love's Expense*, and *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*. As a spirituality, kenosis begins with a choice to reject egoistic notions of self-sufficiency or superiority to primarily identify with the crucified Christ. This involves suffering with him for his Gospel cause, disavowing merit-based systems and embracing fellow human beings on the grounds of grace. Kenotic spirituality is acquainted with the experience of God's hiddenness, taking a posture of watching and prayer within the silence of God. One feels out of control, but secure in God's love. Life is a journey with the person of Christ by the Holy Spirit.⁷

This quality of spiritual relationship with God within the pilgrim church cultivates the conditions for particular virtues to develop. In *The Crucified God*, *Love's Endeavour*, *Love's Expense*, and *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, a paradoxical virtue is presented in all three works, using varying terms. Moltmann offers agape and sympathy as a virtue pair which reflects the apatheia and the pathos of God. For Vanstone, the same paradox is depicted as self-giving (discussed elsewhere as the virtue of agape-eros). Again, in *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, the same tension between self-possession and suffering vulnerability surfaces a third time but is held by one word: compassion. Going forward, "compassion" will be the symbol used to represent this oft-repeated paradox. Compassion is selfless and self-implicating love. Not only is compassion "the basic characteristic that informs all divine activity," it is "a metaphor which provides a kenotic understanding of the church" and "the hermeneutical key for interpreting the church's

⁶See discussion on pages 3 and 4 of my introduction.

⁷Richard, *Christ*, 194.

mission.”⁸ In addition to compassion, there are three other kenotic virtues which are likely to arise from within a lived kenotic spirituality. They are: hope (that is, holding out for God’s future from within the tensions of the present), patience (that is, dignified, receptive waiting for the triumph of God’s love), and humility (that is, authentic self-knowledge with no care for recognition or honour).

The kenotic virtues of compassion, hope, patience, and humility will conspicuously change one’s moral psychology (perceptions, inclinations and sense of identity). An emerging kenotic ethic will prioritize fellowship with those who are different and radical solidarity with the suffering other. Relationships of domination will be rejected and replaced by mutual relationships characterized by giving and receiving, careful listening and vulnerable sharing. Concrete reality will be accepted as it is and at the same time efforts will be geared toward personal and social growth and conversions. The only power one exercises is God-like, self-limiting and serving, power which holds itself back to make space for others’ flourishing and empties itself in the service of suffering others.

This is a kenotic spirituality and an ethic as derived from *The Crucified God*, *Love’s Endeavour*, *Love’s Expense*, and *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*. I have offered a partial picture of what it means to take up one’s cross and follow Jesus Christ. I am convinced that this is the way forward for the Christian church in a secular culture. I return to my research question a final time: How has kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic been proposed as an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in our “secularity three” culture of authenticity?

Kenosis as a Spirituality and an Ethic in the “Age of Authenticity”

In a conversational spirit, realizing that Christian people *are* secular people, the four aspects of genuine humanity recognized in current culture will be considered in relation to kenosis

⁸Richard, *Christ*, 188.

as a spirituality and an ethic. Kenosis offers an optimal and timely way for Christians to raise the conversation about genuine humanity in a way that humbly corresponds to, expands on and transforms common understandings.

Kenosis and the Freedom to Choose One's Identity

How might kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic equip the church for optimal interface with secular culture on the subject of being free to choose one's identity? First, I will describe the common understanding the church and society share on the subject. Second, I will explain how it is consistent with a kenotic ethic to have church-secular conversations about identity within the *public* sphere. Third, the contribution of a kenotic spirituality and ethic, content-wise, to discussions about genuine humanity will be outlined. Finally, the underlying kenotic demeanor (virtue) which supports good church-secular interaction will be described.

First, all "secularity three" people breathe the same air in "the age of authenticity."⁹ Taylor loosely locates its beginnings in the late 1960s, an era when most Western people began to be driven by the desire to "find yourself, realize yourself, release your true self."¹⁰ He speaks of living from a "higher selfishness," construed as making responsible decisions to do one's best with one's life. Western people at large, believers and others, embrace this model. If we have the resources, we seek higher education and fulfilling employment opportunities in line with our personal strengths and interests. Our aim, we say, is to make a social contribution, but truth be told, the reality may be more ambiguous. One might be living out of an ego construct and building up one's own life as much or more than serving others. An insidious self-interest may be at work, a theme taken up by Lucien Richard in his discussion of the technocratic culture's pursuit of 'greatness.' The problem is that becoming one's self can become a solitary pursuit to the point of self-alienation and detachment from others. We have bought into an idea of limitlessness; we clamour for all that life has to offer and find ourselves lost in the service of false success. Since

⁹See my brief discussion of the "age of authenticity" on pp. 3 and 4 of the introduction.

¹⁰Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 475.

true personhood is enriched and enlivened through relationships, this is a path toward our diminishment. All secular people, Christians and others, are at risk.

This brings us to a second point. The church has unique resources to share in this situation of shrinking identity. On what grounds might the church share its convictions about authentic humanity? Should the church not just keep its ideas private? Such privacy would be inconsistent with a kenotic ethic which argues that the church is meant to contribute its wisdom within the public sphere. Moltmann strongly advocates for the church's sacramental presence in and for the culture, as do Vanstone and Richard. From a primary alignment with the crucified Christ, the church can do nothing but live freely for the freedom of society. That is what Jesus does, so that is what his followers do. Two additional arguments for the church as a public, not private, entity emerge from Charles Taylor's discussion of the church as anti-structure and David Tracy's idea of the Christ event as the Christian classic.

To live as anti-structure is to offer one's voice and one's action as a counterpoint to the dominant cultural voice. Alternate voices serve the culture by fending off decline. Charles Taylor bases his argument on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner who suggests that social structure requires "the principal that contradicts it" which functions to challenge and critique the status quo.¹¹ In the absence of antithetical principles, society may think it already contains everything needed to flourish.¹² Some current versions of secularity aim for a certain kind of homogeneity, banning faith-based and all politically incorrect perspectives from the culture.¹³ This is a kind of deification of the dominant cultural perspective, ignoring all other voices - even corrective and inspiring ones - to the detriment of all. This is a trajectory toward cultural decline.¹⁴

¹¹Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 51.

¹²Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 50.

¹³See "Rehabilitating Secularism," Rajeev Bhargava, in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun and Mark Juergensmeyer, Van Antwerpen (London: Oxford University Press, 2011). Bhargava suggests that some forms of the secular are internally flawed and require an overhaul.

¹⁴Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 55. See Lonergan's "transcendental precepts." The critically realistic Christian individual or church will "Be attentive" to the ambiguities of the situation as it is, setting the conditions to

David Tracy offers an additional argument for a public church-secular conversation about human authenticity. He, as well as Charles Taylor, advocate for the enlivening function of the classic in a pluralistic society.¹⁵ Classics are recognized in every culture, experienced as “expressions of the human spirit [which] so disclose a compelling truth about our lives that we cannot deny them some kind of normative status.”¹⁶ The Christ event is the Christian classic, presented through the living tradition of the church beginning with New Testament texts continuing with the church councils in ongoing faithfulness to the apostolic witness up to contemporaneity.¹⁷ Tracy argues that questions about human identity pertain to the realm of “meaning and truth,” the traditional domain of religion. Within a pluralistic context, we may most intelligently respond to questions about human authenticity by way of recognized religious or philosophical classics. The event of Jesus Christ - his incarnation, his death and his resurrection - is the Christian classic expression that speaks to the question of genuine identity. The church claims to have a public response to a public existential question.

We arrive at a question and a third point about the kenotic church in relation to the culture with respect to human identity. The question is: How does the Christ event, the Christian classic, speak to cultural questions about human authenticity? A response might be informed by a kenotic spirituality and ethic. Certainly, there are movements in Western culture apart from the church which challenge the notion of achieving one’s true identity through endless performance and achievement. For example, those committed to non-exploitation of the environment, if they remain reflexive and refrain from ideology, may offer a counterpoint to the unlimited grasping

also “Be intelligent, Be reasonable, [and] Be responsible,” thus able to influence the situation in the direction of progress, and away from decline.

¹⁵Taylor ends his great work with a chapter entitled “Conversions” in which he offers the paradigmatic lives of Christian saints who, in the way of a classic, disclose the truth of a new life in Christ. See Charles Taylor, “Conversions,” in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 728–72. David Tracy concurs (Tracy, *Analogical*, 323) stating that the church’s memory includes all the classic persons - the saints and witnesses to that event, the reformers, mystics, activists, sages...”

¹⁶Tracy, *Analogical*, 108.

¹⁷Tracy, *Analogical*, 237.

and striving of present culture.¹⁸ Moltmann noticed that a vicious circle of “progress at all costs” was perpetuated by our disregard for the built-in limits in the natural world, leading to many forms of death, figuratively and literally. He located a solution in one’s approach to the natural world, that is, to care for one’s self and the environment as living beings; we are not machines, though we sometimes act like it. Self-limitation, kenosis, is required to make space for the liveliness in and around us. From a kenotic spiritual perspective, letting go of our egoistic notions of self-sufficiency and superiority are a necessary first step toward finding a new self in Christ. The self in Christ is free and works for freedom within systems and for individuals.

For a culture that claims to highly value the freedom to choose one’s identity, we actually have very little freedom. As Richard asserts, “[a]uthentic freedom demands the possibility of choice in the context of unknown factors and finalities...[h]uman freedom is always freedom...within a context.”¹⁹ However, in the current identity free-for-all where we believe we can be whomever we choose, there are limitless options, no decisions to be made, thus paralysis instead of freedom.²⁰ Our society has cut loose from traditional moorings with no clear choices to define us. It turns out that total limitlessness negates freedom and interrupts our becoming. This dehumanization is compounded by our social isolation as we seek to build our selves without reference to others. The message of kenosis is that choosing to leave behind all previous self-definitions to *choose* one’s home in Christ is the way to freedom. Christ offers a message and ministry of salvation; by the Holy Spirit, Jesus restores our humanity, not based on self-assertion or a version of ‘success,’ but on the basis of grace. In a culture where people are losing them-

¹⁸In his discussion of ways that people might respond to God’s kenotic love, Vanstone noted that many times people engage in responses, of nature and of freedom, toward God’s good purposes though unaware of God’s being. They unknowingly contribute to love’s triumph.

¹⁹Richard, *Christ*, 157.

²⁰I notice the paralysis of young people with whom I work who feel their options are unlimited. I recently heard an anecdote about an Ottawa university administrator that talked about the strain of seeming unlimited choice for today’s students. We were not built to handle life with no limits. It is incongruent with our embodiment.

selves as they work so hard to find themselves, this may be received as good news. The church lives and speaks the message of Jesus Christ in the service of freedom.

Finally, patience is a key kenotic disposition which undergirds good church-secular interactions about human becoming. Patience may be thought of as dignified, receptive waiting for the triumph of God's love. The patient church in public discussion about human identity will relinquish control and commit itself to natural processes. It allows time for people to consider what it means for things to come right. The church's role is to offer Jesus, through word and deed, as the standard for authentic humanity, and the church's role is to wait. Through our waiting we choose to participate in the sufferings of the kenotic God who waits on us and creatively works toward an ultimate eschatological future.

Kenosis and Tolerance for Others' Choices

How does kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic equip the church for optimal interface with a secular culture which wants to let others choose their own path as well? "Secularity three" people in the age of authenticity exercise "tolerance," which is so highly valued that "[t]he sin which is not tolerated is intolerance."²¹ I will begin with an appraisal of this notion of tolerance. Then, I will offer three examples of how kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic enlarges engagement with the other in ways that are beyond tolerance's capability.

For Tracy, the ideal of tolerance is problematic, even disingenuous. One might exhibit tolerance in a kind of "relaxed pluralism," where one keeps all contrary views from the public ear and only speaks in terms of the "lowest common denominator" on which all may agree.²² This makes for what I call "plain vanilla" relationships where essentially little of importance enters conversations. It is a situation of false 'peace.' We are offering a version of our self that will not raise the other's ire; at the same time, we may be secretly putting up with them. Even in situations where people let all their thoughts be known, it is possible that one's supposed fair treat-

²¹Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 484.

²²Tracy, *Analogical*, xi, 451.

ment of the other's opinion is a "repressive tolerance where all is allowed because nothing is finally taken seriously."²³ This is an alienating way of living with others; nobody enjoys being *endured*. How might kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic enlarge our engagement with the other beyond the capabilities of tolerance? I will offer three examples.

First, kenosis as an ethic of solidarity may offer a way for us to free the other from what Moltmann calls the "vicious circle of alienation." We must not settle with putting up with each other. The church, in the freedom of Christ, empties itself and goes out to the other with a confident, humble and open expectation for fruitful partnership.²⁴ It overcomes alienation by way of authentic relationships.

Second, the kenotic virtue of humility supports a dialogical form of communication with the other which David Tracy calls the "analogical imagination."²⁵ Authentic relationships can only be developed through authentic conversation; tolerance is insufficient for the task.²⁶ Tracy explains that in true conversation, the subject matter is prioritized; people seek to understand one another, not prop up their own egos. We must have the humility (for Tracy, "self-respect") to know ourselves *as we are* while also participating in "self-exposure" to the other.²⁷ One must not be surprised or threatened when conflict arises. Argument functions as the impetus for honing the analogies through which one seeks to make a connection with the other. We usually don't understand each other the first time around. For the church in secular culture, Tracy's analogical imagination facilitates true relationship; the more we engage the other in careful dialogue, the more we know ourselves anew.

²³Tracy, *Analogical*, xi.

²⁴Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 333.

²⁵Tracy, *Analogical*, 446–56. I will not be able to do his complex work justice here and will briefly summarize his overarching thoughts. This book, I think, is a must-read for anyone who desires to figure out how to be a public theologian, a desire which very much fits with a kenotic spirituality and ethic. The incarnation of Jesus indicates public theology must be normative.

²⁶He advocates for fruitful relationships between theologians within Christian traditions, between Christian traditions, and between Christianity and other traditions.

²⁷Tracy, *Analogical*, 452.

Third, in *The Crucified God, Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, and *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God* there was a repeated virtue or virtue-pair which surfaced: as agape and sympathy, self-giving or agape-eros, and finally, as *compassion*. In each case a tension was held between self-possession and vulnerable suffering. When one lives a kenotic spirituality of intimate identification with the crucified Christ, it is likely that one's inclinations to simply tolerate the other will die. The love of God dislodges us from our self-centredness so that we may "enter(s) into the joys and sorrows of another."²⁸ Compassion means I, rooted in Christ, genuinely get to know the other such that I share myself truly and feel her situation as though it is mine. One must be alert to misappropriations of compassion in present culture. Though for Richard it "is the basic characteristic that informs all divine activity," current culture has done its best to beat up compassion through misuse and leave it dead at the side of the road.²⁹ In its most authentic form, compassion "is a capacity to enter the threshold of the experience of another as one who is different."³⁰ Its "properties" include keeping enough "distance" to maintain one's moral principles, offering oneself wholly with no thought of just "deserts," and enduring the tensions necessary for compassion's ongoing development.³¹ In its most genuine form, compassion is the most God-like way of standing in solidarity with others. It is symbolized by the cross of Jesus Christ which expresses the extent of God's compassionate love. Compassion is deeply transformative. It loosens the grip of suffering and raises that which is dead; "it is ultimately humanizing."³² Tolerance exhibits none of these transformative possibilities. Through an ethic of solidarity, conversation

²⁸Richard, *Christ*, 188.

²⁹Richard, *Christ*, 188. For examples of compassion's demise, see Mark Slatter, "The 'New Compassion' in Ethical Discourse," *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014): 30–54, accessed November 29, 2017, doi: 10.2143/LS.38.1.3064550. One example of its moral diminishment might be in its application to the alleviation of suffering, e.g., in medical assistance in dying which might also be about our present general discomfort and lack of moral resources for manoeuvring suffering and death.

³⁰Slatter, "The 'New Compassion' in Ethical Discourse," 53.

³¹Slatter, "The 'New Compassion' in Ethical Discourse," 49-53.

³²Richard, *Christ*, 190.

through the form of the analogical imagination, and compassion, we support and promote relationships based on mutuality rather than power.

Kenosis and Mutuality

Mutuality is a feature of the “modern moral order” in which morality focuses on “the organization of society for mutual benefit rather than an obligation to ‘higher’ or eternal norms.”³³ Mutuality has its more and less authentic expressions. A less authentic expression of mutuality treats relationships as economic partnerships, symbolized by the phrase ‘you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.’ Though egalitarian more than hierarchical, these relationships still lack the moral resources for humanization. A more generous version of mutuality is less interested in getting one’s fair share out of the deal and more interested in making a creative contribution to the other. How might kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic relate to and enhance the quality of mutuality in secular culture? I will offer two responses.

First, as a spirituality of being in love, kenosis relates to the other only on the basis of his belovedness. There is no room for subtle power dynamics; an economic-style mutual exchange is not the goal. As God loves us with no strings attached, I love the other, no strings attached. I see his intrinsic value, period. Love precedes any personal benefit and has no basis in utility. Any recognition or response by the loved one is a gift, desired but not demanded.

Secondly, kenosis as an ethic of “power with” the other safeguards mutuality from becoming a lower, tit-for-tat version of itself and grounds it in a spirituality of journeying with the Other and others. According to Richard, mutuality is “a commitment to the relational ‘us.’”³⁴ Its relational, “power with” rejects the manipulation and control intrinsic to hierarchical “power over.” In itself, “power” is a neutral word, referring to how one chooses to use one’s personal resources. It is common for people to use their resources to come out on top; this is the domineering power which is quite familiar and offensive to secular people. But one might use one’s

³³James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 142.

³⁴Richard, *Christ*, 187.

power, as per Vanstone, to participate in love's triumph. When the other endures tragedy, mutuality means arriving on the scene prepared to perceive the situation from their point of view and act in a manner that truly hears and partners with them for change.³⁵ An ethic of mutuality as "power with" expects that people have gifts to share with one another, regardless of their situations. Mutuality in its most authentic form is dignifying.

Kenosis and Journeying

It is commonly understood that people within the "age of authenticity" experience life as a quest for the authentic self.³⁶ Even within the church, most contemporary people fall into a "seeker" category.³⁷

[I]t becomes especially common for young persons to set out on life with the attitude of seekers embarking on the exciting, if at times threatening adventure of constructing their own life in their own terms. *But as more threatening to their effort than the danger of occasional mistakes, they see the imposition of a predetermined pattern of life or culture which one is destined to follow.*³⁸

The kenotic church, the journeying church, is optimally suited for engagement within a seeking culture. The kenotic church has a style of questioning and response that recognizes its knowing and its not knowing. According to Richard, it takes an "apophatic" approach to knowledge, which may be reflected in the words: "we see in a mirror, dimly...[and] know in part."³⁹

Apophaticism means that the "starting point is our awareness of the finiteness of knowledge and language."⁴⁰ This kenotic, apophatic approach to knowledge offers a refreshing contrast to confident assertions that we have obtained the answers and "the question is closed."⁴¹ For Catholics

³⁵To reiterate Vanstone (91-2): "Man in crisis always finds his crisis unique." The "power with" of mutuality recognizes this, walking and working with the sufferer to find a way forward.

³⁶Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 512-13.

³⁷McLean, "Disjunctions," 1, 5.

³⁸McLean, "Disjunctions," 5. Emphasis is mine.

³⁹Richard, *Christ*, 194. See 1 Corinthians 13:12, NRSV.

⁴⁰Giorgos Vlantis, "The Apophatic Understanding of the Church and Ecumenical Dialogue," *World Council of Churches* (2010): 296, accessed November 20, 2017, doi: 10.1111/j.1748-6623.2010.00068.x.

⁴¹Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks-to Whom?" in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George McLean, F., Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1 (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), 20.

Tomáš Halík and Charles Taylor, the overall shift toward a journeying motif is thought to be an “opportunity” for everybody in the culture, Christians and others.⁴² It produces the possibility that an honest search will result in some people freely choosing God. The kenotic church is a learning and a teaching church. Patience is exercised for the unfolding of authentic processes. In its best sense, the kenotic church reflects an ethic of acceptance and change; each person is accepted based on his or her belovedness *as he or she is*, and from that foundation of love, hope is directed toward all things coming right in Christ. We “secularity three” people share the journey in common; what the church uniquely offers to the culture is Christ as the response to our questions about authentic humanity.

Tracy’s Criteria for Relative Adequacy: Is Kenosis Faithful and Relevant?

Some final questions and comments are directed to the church considering the claim that kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic offers an optimal and timely way for the church to interface with secularity. Examples have been offered about how that may be. As demonstrated in chapters one to three of this paper, kenotic discipleship - as a spirituality and an ethic - finds its basis in an interpretation that locates kenosis in God’s being. A final evaluative question may be posed: How is one sure that a paradigm of kenosis genuinely reveals truth about God? How does one know that kenosis is a relatively adequate model for knowing God and knowing how to become authentically human? This question will be considered by way of David Tracy’s criteria for relative adequacy which rests on his supposition that classics exist in all cultures as publicly accepted means for conveying truth. Jesus Christ is the Christian classic, the definitive revelation of God’s being. In a pluralistic culture, Jesus Christ, by way of the classic text, the New Testament, is open for public consideration. His question “Who do you say that I am?” continues to be posed to Western secular people, Christians and others.

⁴²There are also “dwellers” who are most comfortable giving themselves over to an external authority. See Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 512 and Halík, “The Disjunction,” 197.

Classics are meant to be interpreted. The relationship of the interpreter to the text is important for genuine judgements to be made. Humility and patience are key. One engages a classic as one would engage in a respectful conversation. The classic may not be wielded for one's own purposes. The classic - in Christianity's case, Jesus Christ - is meant "to interpret me," to expand my horizons.⁴³ One must approach the classic expecting a gracious hiddenness and disclosure of "the whole," which Christians understand as God.⁴⁴ This hopeful disposition is encouraged through the words of Jesus: "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."⁴⁵ These words of Jesus beautifully affirm the secular inclination toward quest or journey and promise that a genuine search meets genuine discovery. One may spend a lifetime discovering Jesus Christ. He invites the curiosity of a *community* of sojourners.

So, how might one know that the paradigm of *kenosis* is a *relatively adequate* model for knowing God and for knowing how to become authentically human? I will offer two key criteria for relative adequacy and make some cursory comments. A first criterion for relative adequacy is framed in the form of a question: Is *kenosis*, as reflected in the Christ event, meant to address questions about authentic human existence?⁴⁶ Sometimes classic texts are used inauthentically to answer questions they were not meant to address. At the beginning of this work, the Philippians 2 text was offered. Prominently cited in kenotic discussions, it begins with an ethical invitation to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus..."⁴⁷ We have seen many additional examples of how the God of Christ invites human beings to live the paradoxical, kenotic way. It seems safe to say that *kenosis* is meant to offer answers to questions about authentic human ex-

⁴³Tracy, *Analogical*, 255.

⁴⁴Tracy, *Analogical*, 248.

⁴⁵Matthew 7:7-8, NRSV.

⁴⁶Tracy, *Analogical*, 259.

⁴⁷See page 5 of my introduction.

istence. A second criterion for relative adequacy might be framed by the question: Do the interpretations of kenosis offered in this work recognize that the “fundamental disclosure of the text...is an event of disclosure and concealment from and by the power of the whole?”⁴⁸ Tracy cautions that one must never wield one’s paradigm, in this case, kenosis, as the *only* real disclosure of truth about the God of Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ There is a humility with which we must approach those ideas which have meaning for us. Kenosis may be timely and optimal, but it is not the only lens through which to view God and ourselves. Only the full Christ event is “beyond all relative adequacy.”⁵⁰ The theologian must also be careful not to wield the classic text, that is, the New Testament to affirm cherished presuppositions.⁵¹ Tracy states that as with any interpretation of a religious classic, one must be careful to allow for the “full reality of both manifestation and proclamation - of both hearing and seeing, both image and word...[o]therwise, some truncation of the fully disclosive power of these religious classics will be unconsciously endorsed.”⁵² With these cautions in mind, one may take a faith-filled risk on kenosis as a genuine motif for God and for authentic humanity, knowing that all judgements are relative or provisional until further questioning elicits new understanding.⁵³ To be genuine, interpretation of kenosis must hold the paradoxes of manifestation and proclamation, the not-yet and now, enigma and clarity, sacrament and word, tradition and scripture.⁵⁴ Kenosis, a paradox of divinity and humanity, lives up to Tracy’s criteria. However, one must take Tracy’s caution seriously. The most recent phase of kenotic interpretation, while exercising the strengths of a theology from below, has the potential for its own unique distortions.⁵⁵ Our journeying relationship with Jesus the Christ will maintain our in-

⁴⁸Tracy, *Analogical*, 259.

⁴⁹Tracy, *Analogical*, 196.

⁵⁰Tracy, *Analogical*, 248.

⁵¹Tracy, *Analogical*, 196.

⁵²Tracy, *Analogical*, 257.

⁵³Tracy, *Analogical*, 252.

⁵⁴Tracy, *Analogical*, 218.

⁵⁵In its move toward taking human existence seriously, beginning with the humanity of Jesus Christ, there is the potential for kenosis to become a distorted version of itself. For example, though I cannot get into further discussion here, it seems the interpreter must beware of allowing the relocation of transcendence within immanence

terpretations and applications within relatively adequate parameters. As we continue to value kenosis as a timely spirituality and ethic for the church in conversation with contemporary culture, Tracy encourages continued openness to “[t]he full range of classic religious expression,” the limitless, precarious, vulnerable offering of Christ to us through:

prophets, mystics, sages, priests, saints; events of personal disclosure, historical disclosure, disclosure in and of nature; words in various genres-proclamation, narrative, proverb, theological reflection, hymn, ethics, law, confession, symbol, doctrine; images that disclose both the reality and pain of the negative (cross) and symbols which disclose the transformative by the positive (resurrection, incarnation); symbols disclosive of present reality (“realized eschatology”), symbols disclosive of the promised and proleptic reality of a really new future for all history and nature.⁵⁶

to move from a middle ground panentheism to a full-fledged pantheism when considering God in relation to creation.

⁵⁶Tracy, *Analogical*, 257-8.

Conclusion

When I began my study of kenosis, vaguely realizing it had something to do with “self-emptying,” I had little expectation that I would discover the depth of meaning and seemingly endless paradox that I have. I began with a hunch that kenosis pertained to humility, as modelled by Christ in his incarnation and crucifixion, and I expected kenosis would challenge hierarchical ideas of power. I had seen pain within the church because of human pride and misuse of power (my own and others’) and I had heard enough complaints from within the culture about the church to think that kenosis might offer Christians a way to interface with the culture in a way the culture could tolerate.

What I discovered was much deeper and wider than I expected. Because one of its properties is paradox, kenosis is a symbol which could be mined for a lifetime with more to discover. That, I found, was one of the challenging and beautiful things about it. Kenosis, which originates in God, contains the ability to accept situations as they are - love *people* as they are - and then raise those situations and people to fullness of life. That was particularly good news to me throughout the course of writing this dissertation since my primary employment throughout was on a mental health crisis unit for adolescents. The suffering of others, and my own, was at the front of my mind most of the time. I discovered that another property of kenosis is its crucicentrism; I found myself on a journey with the crucified Christ.

To my early intuitions, I added study of Charles Taylor’s definitions of “secularity three” and “the age of authenticity” followed by a review of how theologians are using kenosis in current conversation about the church and culture. My question emerged: How has kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic been proposed as an optimal way for the church to experience, articulate and embody Christian faith in our “secularity three” culture of authenticity? I became particularly interested in what kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic might contribute to contemporary conversations about becoming our true selves.

Through Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*, W.H. Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, and Lucien Richard's *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, a picture of kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic began to emerge. Each one was wondering, in their own unique contexts of suffering or flourishing, what it meant to be one's authentic self. How does one become one's self in relation to the kenotic God? That is a question of kenotic spirituality and kenotic virtues. How does one live one's full humanity in relation to others? That is a question of kenotic ethics. To discern kenotic applications each theologian began by exploring kenosis in the Christ of God. Their theology began from below, that is, their starting point was Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ; through his incarnation, death and resurrection, they discerned the being of God. Through the self-emptying, self-giving, self-limiting Jesus, they realized the kenotic triune God. Kenotic theology, which is always overtly trinitarian, locates death in God. Suffering in God, not god-like by Greek philosophical standards, can be explored through kenosis. Through Richard, it is emphasized that this kenotic God limited himself and made space for the full freedom of his creation from the beginning. For God, this choice introduced the possibility of God's suffering. For God and humanity, it created the possibility of authentic relationship.

A kenotic spirituality pertains to how human beings experience relationship with the kenotic God. It begins with a choice to leave behind previous ways of defining one's self for primary identification with the crucified Christ. This cruciform alliance means one suffers for the things Christ suffers for, that is, the primacy of grace and the negation of merit as determinants of value. This is an apophatic spirituality where the hiddenness of God is deeply felt, inviting a posture of watching and prayer within the silence of God. One is out of control and secure in God's love, experiencing life as a journey with Christ by the Holy Spirit. Such religious experience creates the conditions for heart transformation. Key kenotic virtues identified throughout this study were compassion, hope, patience, and humility. Out of the overflow of the heart, a life is lived with others. A kenotic ethics makes decisions about the good life based on a commitment to fellowship with those who are different and to solidarity with suffering others. It is an ethic

which negates power as domination and lives in mutual sharing. One has an accepting attitude toward situations and people as they are and an expectation for growth and conversion toward God's eschatological future. The only acceptable power in kenotic ethics is self-limiting, serving "power with" others.

The most interesting surprise through this work was how kenosis as a spirituality and an ethic converses with the four aspects of authentic human existence within a culture of authenticity which are 1) the freedom to choose one's identity, 2) tolerance for the choices of others, 3) preference for mutuality in relationships, and 4) the perception of life as a quest or journey. Kenosis invites respectful conversation between the church and culture, recognizing the ambiguity within all parties. At the same time, its incarnational property means that kenosis holds the conviction that God is present in and through material form. This is a sacramental point of view with wide applications. It raises the possibilities for human existence. Transcendence is at home in the immanent situation; God raises human existence to fullness of life. The kenotic church offers some transformative alternatives for wider secular culture, i.e., offering compassion instead of tolerance, and mutuality as "power with" rather than as a kind of economic exchange. Why are such conversations between the church and culture so important?

One very serious reason why these are important conversations is that some of the kenotic offerings of the church interrupt cultural decline; the kenotic church can breathe some life into the culture and must take its public presence, its anti-structural role, very seriously. In the case of the value of choosing one's own identity, the kenotic church reminds the culture that true freedom happens in a context of choice, and that human beings are not actually made for limitless-ness. The mentality that I can do and choose whatever I want is binding the culture, not loosing it. In addition, human beings become themselves, not in isolated pursuit, but in relationship with others, and the Other. These are life-giving conversations that may be had with cultural others with whom we share a common "secularity three" world view. Finally, within a culture that has lost some of its moorings, a kenotic church offers a living Christ to journey with. Sensitive to the

cultural rejection of a “predetermined way of life,” and sympathetic to it, the kenotic church is the sacrament of the journeying Christ. When it is living according to its own humble, patient, hopeful, compassionate standard, the kenotic church genuinely, fruitfully shares life with its neighbours, i.e., whomever crosses its path.¹ Intrinsic to kenosis as a journeying and compassionate spirituality is its ability to handle the tensions of difference. The kenotic church is an optimal manifestation in a pluralistic time.

There are many conversations that may be had between the church and the culture as reflected in the following four ideas for future research. First, I was intrigued that a kenotic ethic held the tensions of both acceptance and change, the exact words used to describe a form of cognitive therapy called Dialectical Behaviour Therapy. If Christ is a classic, open to public interpretation, I wonder how one might find ways to integrate the kenotic Christ as a classic into dialectical behaviour therapy conversations which both affirm the person and call him or her to growth. A second, further area of research could be along the lines of the relationships between kenosis and panentheism and how both function to draw science and the Christian faith into conversation with one another. A third area of future research could identify how kenosis is being used in other religions, such as Buddhism, and how Buddhist-Christian dialogue on the subject might more deeply form and establish each group in their own understandings. Finally, my deep love for the church and commitment to ecumenical relationships sparks my interest in future research regarding how kenosis informs and supports ecumenism.²

Kenosis has been offered here as a metaphor for the God of Jesus Christ. In the kenotic Christ we see both the fullness of God and the authentic expression of humanity. I have proposed kenosis as an optimal, bridge-building and prophetic, spirituality and ethic for the church in Western secularity. At a point in Western history where there seem more questions than answers,

¹McLean, “Disjunctions,” 5.

²By “church,” I mean as per Charles Taylor, “a network...of relations which link particular, unique, enfleshed people to each other...on the basis of a mutual fittingness which is not based on kinship but on the kind of love which God has for us [through Christ].” Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 739.

the church has a unique opportunity to inhabit the culture in a way that “finds the courage to be different from others...to “ultimately exist for ‘others.’”³

³Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 16.

Bibliography

- Baldick, Chris. "Paradox." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (4th Ed.)*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Accessed Dec. 1, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780198715443.001.0001.
- Baukham, Richard. "Jürgen Moltmann." In *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*. 2nd ed., edited by David Ford, F., 209-24. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997.
- "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30, no. 4 (1977): 301-11.
- Benedict XVI. "Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* [25 Dec. 2005]." Accessed October 18, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. "Rehabilitating Secularism." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan Van Antwerpen. London: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. "The Disciple and Unbelievers." In *The Cost of Discipleship*, 182-88. New York: Touchstone, 1995.
- *Letters and Papers from Prison*, edited by John W. de Gruchy. Translated by Isabel Best, Lisa E Dahill, Reinhard Krauss, and Nancy Lukens. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 8. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2009.
- Boyd, Greg. "Process Theology and Open Theism: What's the Difference?" ReKnew. Accessed October 18, 2017, <http://reknew.org/2014/03/process-theology-open-theism-whats-the-difference/>.
- Brierley, Michael. "Kenoticism." In *Jesus in History, Thought and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, edited by J.L. Houlden, 519-21. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003.
- "Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology." In *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, edited by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke, 1-15. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.
- "Review of 'Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self Emptying of God.'" *Modern Believing* 50, no. 1 (2009): 71-3.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.
- Carroll, Anthony J. "Post-Metaphysical Authority." In *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carroll, Marthe Kerkwijk, Michael Kirwan, and James Sweeney. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 8, 73-90. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015.

- Carson, Jordan. "The Suffering God and Cross in Open Theism: Theodicy or Atonement?" *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37, no. 3 (2010): 323-37.
- Casanova, José. "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 54-74. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Childress, James F., and John Macquarrie, eds. "Compassion." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 109. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Ego." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 185. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Ethics." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 206-8. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Hope." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 275-76. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Humility." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 284. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Love." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 354-59. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Situation Ethics." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 586-88. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- , eds. "Sympathy." In *The Western Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 612-13. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.
- Clarke, Paul Barry, and Andrew Linzey, eds. "Ethics." In *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Coakley, Sarah. "Deepening Practices: Perspectives from Ascetical and Mystical Theology." In *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, edited by Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, 78-93. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.
- , "Kenōsis and Subversion: On the Repression of 'Vulnerability' in Christian Feminist Writing." In *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender*. Challenges in Contemporary Theology, 3-39. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.
- , "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations." In *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, edited by John Polkinghorne, 192-209. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.
- Cronin O.F.M., Kevin M. *Kenosis: Emptying Self and the Path of Christian Service*. Rockport, MA: Element, Inc., 1992.
- Cross, F.L., and E.A. Livingstone. "Panentheism." In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Accessed September 23, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001.

- Culp, John. "Panentheism." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta, 2017. Accessed October 26, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=panentheism>.
- Daly, Gabriel. "Foundations and Systematics for Ecological Theology." In *Preserving the Creation: Environmental Theology and Ethics*, edited by Kevin Irwin and Edmond N. Pellegrino. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994.
- Dawe, Donald G. *The Form of a Servant: A Historical Analysis of the Kenotic Motif*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1963.
- Downey, Michael. *Understanding Christian Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1997.
- Elliot, Mark, Ian Fairweather, Wendy Olsen, and Maria Pampaka, eds. "Phenomenology." In *A Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press, 2016. Accessed Sept. 13, 2017, doi: 10.1093/acref/9780191816826.001.0001.
- Evans, C. Stephen, ed. *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010.
- Fee, Gordon D. "The New Testament and Kenosis Christology." In *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, edited by C. Stephen Evans, 25-44. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010.
- Fiddes, Paul S. "Creation Out of Love." In *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, edited by John Polkinghorne, 167-91. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.
- Gittins, Anthony. *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1989.
- Gorman, Michael J. "Although/Because He Was in the Form of God: The Theological Significance of Paul's Master Story (Phil. 2:6-11)." In *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology*, 9-39. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.
- *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology*, 194. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.
- Halík, Tomáš. "The Disjunction Between a Single and Plural Spiritualities." In *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George McLean, F. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1, 189-98. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012.
- Hampson, Daphne, ed. *Swallowing a Fishbone? Feminist Theologies Debate Christianity*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996.
- Hoad, T.F., ed. "Piety." In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1137. Oxford University Press, 2003. Accessed July 26, 2017, doi:10.1093/acref/9780192830982.001.0001.

- Kasper, Walter. *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity Today*. London and New York: Burns & Oates, 2004.
- Kasper, Walter. *The God of Jesus Christ*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005.
- Käsemann, E. "A Critical Analysis of Phil. 2:5-11." *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5 (1968): 45-88.
- Keuss, Jeffrey F. *Freedom of the Self: Kenosis, Cultural Identity, and Mission at the Crossroads*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010.
- Koyama, Kosuke. *No Handle on the Cross: An Asian Meditation on the Crucified Mind*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- . *Waterbuffalo Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1974.
- Lakeland, Paul. "Ecclesiology and the Use of Demography: Three Models of Apostolicity." In *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, edited by Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg, 23-41. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015.
- Lonergan, Bernard J.F. *Method in Theology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute, 1971.
- McDonagh, Enda. "A Crucified People." In *Theology in Winter Light*, 163-5. Dublin: The Columba Press, 2010.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- MacKendrick, Karmen. *Counterpleasures*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- McLean, George F. "Disjunctions in the 21st Century." In *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George F. McLean. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012.
- Macmurray, John. *Persons in Relation*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Mattison III, William C. "Movements of Love: A Thomistic Perspective on *Agape* and *Eros*." *Journal of Moral Theology* 1, no. 2 (2012): 31-60.
- Mercedes, Anna. *Power for: Feminism and Christ's Self Giving*. New York: T&T Clark, 2011.
- Mitchell, Roger. "Authority Without Sovereignty: A Reassessment of Divine Power." In *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carroll, Marthe Kerkwijk, Michael Kirwan, and James Sweeney. Cultural Heritage and Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015.
- Mitchell, Roger Haydon. *Church, Gospel, & Empire: How the Politics of Sovereignty Impregnated the West*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011.

- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology [Der Gekreuzigte Gott]*. First Fortress Press Ed. Translated by R.A. Wilson and John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- "The Passion of Life." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 4, no. 1 (1977): 3-9.
- "Praying and Watching." In *The 1999 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture*, 33-44. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999. Accessed September 5, 2017, <http://www.ptsem.edu/lectures/?action=tei&id=youth-1999-03>.
- Morelli, Mark D. *Self-Possession: Being at Home in Conscious Performance*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Lonergan Institute Boston College, 2015.
- Nygren, Anders. *Agape and Eros*. London: S.P.C.K., 1954.
- Oord, Thomas Jay. "Essential Kenosis." In *The Nature of Love: A Theology*, 117-57. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010.
- *The Nature of Love: A Theology*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010.
- Phan, Peter C. "Kenotic Spirituality." In *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation*, 139-42. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Pinnock, Clark H. *The Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2001.
- Polkinghorne, John, editor. *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.
- Power, David N. "Part Two: The Kenosis of the Church and Its Mission." In *Love Without Calculation: A Reflection on Divine Kenosis*, 61-116. New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005.
- Rathus, Jill H., and Alec L. Miller. *DBT Skills Manual for Adolescents*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2015.
- Richard, Lucien. *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.
- Rolheiser, Ronald. "Secularity and Its Many Faces." In *Secularity and the Gospel: Being Missionaries to Our Children*, edited by Ronald Rolheiser, 116-34. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2006.
- Rout, Paul. "Be Subject to Every Human Creature for God's Sake: St Francis of Assisi and the Experience of Authority." In *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carroll, Marthe Kerkwijk, Michael Kirwan, and James Sweeney. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 8, 131-45. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015.
- Runyon, Theodore. *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

- Sarot, Marcel. "A Moved Mover?: The (Im)Passibility of God." In *Understanding the Attributes of God*, Gijbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot. Contributions to Philosophical Theology Vol. 1, 199-37. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986): 253-74.
- Second Vatican Council. "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* [28 Oct. 1965]." Accessed October 28, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.
- "Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World *Gaudium Et Spes* [7 Dec. 1965]." Accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spēs_en.html.
- Simmonds, Gemma. "Imagining Authority in a Kenotic Church: Magisterium in the Contemporary Church." In *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carroll, Marthe Kerkwijk, Michael Kirwan, and James Sweeney. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 8, 147-63. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015.
- Simpson, Christopher Ben. *Modern Christian Theology*. London, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.
- "Process Theology." In *Modern Christian Theology*, 345-50. London, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.
- Simpson, David. "Albert Camus (1913-1960)." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Accessed October 12, 2016, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/camus/>.
- Slatter, Mark. "Are Growth and Conversion Being Confused in the Spiritual Life? Is Conversion Really Continuing?" *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 15, no. 1 (2015): 41-60.
- *Insights While Suffering: With a View to the Cross and Resurrection*. Vol. 345, Theology and Religion. American University Studies. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2015.
- "The 'New Compassion' in Ethical Discourse." *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014): 30-54. Accessed November 29, 2017, doi: 10.2143/LS.38.1.3064550.
- Smith, David Woodruff. "Phenomenology." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2016. Accessed Sept. 13, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>.
- Smith, James K.A. *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014.
- Soelle, Dorothee. *Suffering*. Translated by Everett R. Kalin. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

- Spohn, William C. "Christian Spirituality and Theological Ethics." In *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, edited by Arthur Holder, 270-85. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005.
- *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999.
- Sykes, J.B., ed. "Parricide." In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Taylor, Charles. "The Church Speaks-to Whom?" In *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, editors Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George McLean, F. Christian Philosophical Studies, vol. 1. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012.
- "Conversions." In *A Secular Age*, 728-72. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.
- *The Malaise of Modernity*. Toronto: Anansi Press Inc., 1991.
- *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Tracy, David. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.
- Vanstone, W.H. *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007.
- *The Stature of Waiting*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2006.
- Vlantis, Giorgos. "The Apophatic Understanding of the Church and Ecumenical Dialogue." *World Council of Churches* (2010), 296-301. Accessed November 20, 2017, doi: 10.1111/j.1748-6623.2010.00068.x.
- Weinandy, Thomas G. "Does God Suffer?" *Ars Disputandi* 2 (2002). Accessed February 1, 2018, <http://www.ArsDisputandi.org>.
- Williams, David T. "Secularization as Kenōsis." In *Kenōsis of God: The Self-Limitation of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, 187-231. Bloomington, IN: IUUniverse, 2009.
- Wright, N.T. "Ēarpagmos and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5-11." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 37, no. 2 (1986): 321-52.
- Wright, Tom. *Mark for Everyone*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Zodhiates, Spiros. "2758. κενόω (kenōō)." In *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG International, INC., 1992.