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THE CHRIST HYMN AS A SONG FOR LEADERS

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Through the use of hymn and homology, as well as the rhetorical dramatic use of language, Paul is able to illustrate the appropriate attitude for the believer. He also provides, through the example of Christ, a rubric for Christian leadership: humility, selflessness, and servanthood. This approach stands in contrast to the prevailing cultural context of the recipients of the epistle, and continues to be a powerful statement on a leadership paradigm that challenges many traditional leadership models. A socio-rhetorical examination of the text reveals as many questions as answers. Those questions challenge the exegete to take a broader view that takes into consideration the implications of the text in light of the prevailing culture of Philippi in the first century, as well as that of the twenty-first century. This text, in light of contemporary culture, is a corrective comment for modern human leadership endeavors.

Philippians 2:5-11 is a beautiful summation of the doctrines of Christ's deity, incarnation, sacrificial death, resurrection, and exaltation.¹ It should be among one of the most celebrated texts in scripture, but because of theological controversies surrounding this text,² it has not ascended to the heights of the Twenty-Third Psalm or the Lord's Prayer as a liturgical text. One reason for the absence of Philippians 2:5-11 in such lofty company is the numerous theological controversies and exegetical

¹ David J. MacLeod, "Imitating the Incarnation of Christ: An Exposition of Philippians 2:8-8," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158.631 (2001): 308.

² Andrew J. Bandstra, "'Adam' and 'the Servant' in Philippians 2:5ff," *Calvin Theological Journal* 1.2 (1966): 213.

conundrums that surround it. Hawthorn notes, "It quickly becomes apparent . . . that although much has been written on these verses there is little that can be agreed upon."³

Unfortunately, the hymn has suffered much in the hands and minds of scholars, skeptics, and saints. In form criticism, this text is identified as an early Christian hymn, perhaps one of the very earliest Christian examples of this form.⁴ Once identified as a particular form, it is often stripped from its context and put under the microscope of anachronistic interpretation with little consideration of the intent of Paul in quoting the hymn. Murphy-O'Connor, for example, attempts to interpret the hymn independent of its Pauline context.⁵ Many have become so focused on breaking it down, dissecting, and fleshing out the nuances in the hymn that they have divorced it from Pauline Christology. More recently scholars have begun to consider the context and function of the hymn in the epistle,⁶ as well as the socio-rhetorical function employed by Paul in using this hymn.⁷ This approach provides needed balance to the atomistic approach of earlier form-critical scholars and opens up important theological considerations that go beyond the text and into intent and social impact. From this perspective, important leadership lessons can be gleaned.

Understood against the social backdrop of first-century Philippi and the rhetorical intent of Paul, the hymn gains new life as a fitting lesson in leadership and the importance of the willingness to embrace the example (mind/attitude) of Christ, even when (or especially when) it runs counter to popular and religious culture.⁸

I. THE STRUCTURE OF THE HYMN

From Johannes Weis (1899) to the present, there is much agreement this text is a hymn of the early church. However, a minority maintain that it is of Pauline authorship, representing "exalted prose" and is not necessarily a hymn at all. For example, Fee asserts that despite the majority of scholarship that view this text as a hymn, "it almost certainly is not."⁹ Even Silva, who views this passage as hymn, admits that "one can hardly prove that verse 6-11, in whole or part, constitute a formal poem or hymn."¹⁰

³ Gerald F. Hawthorne, "Philippians" in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 76.

⁴ Corne' Bekker, "The Philippians Hymn (2:5-11) as an Early Mimetic Christological Model of Christian Leadership in Roman Philippi," (paper, Servant Leadership Roundtable, Regent University, August 2006): 1-19, http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/2006/pdf/bekker.pdf

⁵ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Christological Anthropology in Phil., II, 6-11," *Revue Biblique* 83 (1976): 46.

⁶ Moises Silva, "Philippians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).

⁷ Bekker, "Philippians Hymn."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gordon Fee. "Philippians 2:5-11: Human or Exalted Pauline Prose?" *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 2 (1992): 30.

¹⁰ Silva, "Philippians," 93.

Gloer, who provides a synopsis of sixteen common elements of a Christian hymn,¹¹ maintains that Philippians 2:6-11 qualifies as a Christ hymn. Notably, it contains language that is rare for the author, for example, the single biblical occurrence of *παῦς* is found in this text, as well as the two uses of *μορφ* which occur only in this passage (vv. 6, 7) in the New Testament. In addition, the passage contains a chiasmic structure, demonstrates antithesis use of the relative clause introduced by *ος*, and it can be divided into verses or strophes, which are other common elements of a hymn.

Therefore, Fee notwithstanding, I would agree with the majority view that this is, in fact, a Christ hymn. A “Christ hymn,” says Gloer, “is defined as a passage ‘whose contents deal with Christ and His work (mostly his humiliation and exaltation),’”¹² and this passage certainly does that.

As to how this hymn is structured, Lohmeyer’s¹³ six three-line stanzas is useful.

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped,

7 but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹¹ W. Hulitt Gloer, “Homologies and Hymns in the New Testament: Form, Content and Criteria for Identification,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11.2 (1984): 124-129.

¹² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹³ Ernst Lohmeyer, “Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2,5-11” (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Jahrg. 1927-28, 4. Abhandlung, 18. Heidelberg: Winter.)

Corne` Bekker illustrates the chiastic structure of this passage as shown in figure

1.¹⁴

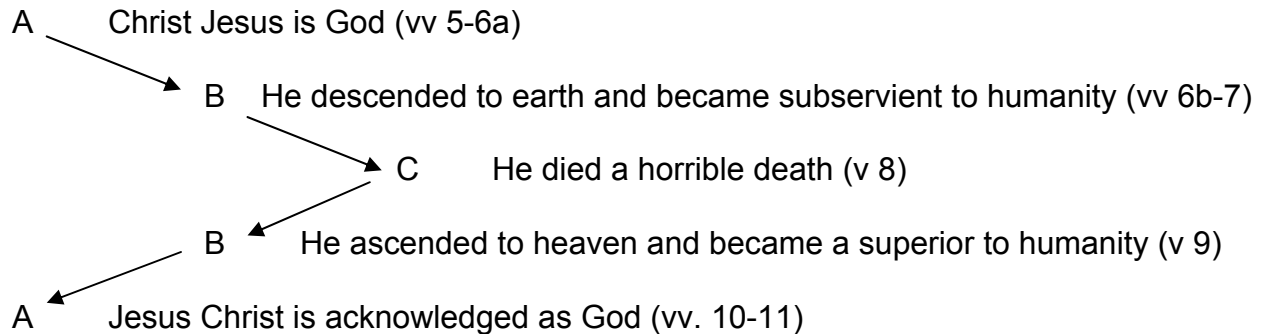


Figure 1. The chiastic structure of Philippians 2:5-11. Reproduced by permission from Corne` J. Bekker 2006.

II. EXEGESIS OF THE HYMN

Verse 5

The exegetical maze begins at verse 5 where the Greek phrase, *τοτο φρονετε ν μν κα ν Χριστ ησο* (Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus) leaves open several questions. First, is *φρονετε* passive or active? Is the believer exhorted to simply allow this mind or attitude of Christ to come upon them, or are they to actively embrace this attitude? According to Melick, "Most Greek texts have the active form, and that is the better reading."¹⁵ However, Hawthorn¹⁶ takes the position that the passive form should be preferred. Melick notes Hawthorn's minority opinion and adds, "Almost no one agrees with him."¹⁷ The significance of the active over the passive is that that active indicates that Paul is instructing the Philippian believers to do "this," to think like Jesus with respect to their relationships with others. Whereas the passive view is that the mind of Christ is already resident within them as believers and all that is required is to allow it operate within them.

¹⁴ Bekker, "Philippian Hymn," 6.

¹⁵ Richard R. Melick, Jr., *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), 100.

¹⁶ Hawthorne, "Philippians," 80.

¹⁷ Melick, *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition*, 100.

A second question is what is meant by $\mu\nu\ \kappa\alpha\ \nu\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\ \eta\sigma\sigma$ (as that of Christ Jesus). Is this phrase advocating that they discern and adopt the same mindset that Christ had, or does it mean that as believers the mind of Christ that is already in them should be the standard for their attitude and conduct? A rather awkward translation adopting the active view has been proposed by Silva: "Think among yourselves as it is necessary to think in view of your corporate union with Christ."¹⁸

One thing seems certain, verse 5 is intended to link the hymn to previous instruction concerning unity. MacLeod posits that $\tau\omicron\tau\omicron$ (this) points back to verses 1-4,¹⁹ meaning that they were to have the mind of Christ that Paul has described in those verses.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.²⁰

In MacLeod's view, verse 6-8 represent an illustration of the attitude of Christ bathed in humility, as do the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus.²¹ Thus, the purpose of the passage is to affect the attitudes or the mindset of the Philippian believers.

Verse 6

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped,

Verse 6 also holds two issues of debate. The first is the meaning of $\mu\omicron\phi\phi$ (nature) and the second is the meaning and result of the word $\rho\tau\alpha\gamma\mu\nu$ (to be grasped).

Since the exposition of J. B. Lightfoot in 1886, many commentators have adopted his view that $\mu\omicron\phi\phi$ referred to the essential nature of something or someone without respect to the outward manifestation. It is, as such, a metaphysical nature.²² Silva notes this is the classical use of the term as it was technically used in Aristotelian philosophy.²³ If $\mu\omicron\phi\phi$ is used in the classical sense in this passage, then Paul understands it to mean that by "being in the form of" Jesus was "the expression of the divine essence."²⁴ It is not as much as statement about the external form but of

¹⁸ Silva, "Philippians," 95.

¹⁹ MacLeod, "Exaltation of Christ," 309.

²⁰ NIV.

²¹ Bekker, "Philippians Hymn," 6.

²² MacLeod, "Exaltation of Christ," 313.

²³ Silva, "Philippians," 100.

²⁴ Charles M. Horne, "Let This Mind Be In You," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 3.2 (1960): 37-44.

essential attributes. This then, is as explicit a statement on the deity of Jesus as can be found in scripture. Furthermore, Melick points out that the “nature of God” parallels the phrase “equality with God.”²⁵

However, others such as Hawthorn²⁶ and Bandstra²⁷ have rejected the classical usage in favor of a Jewish background for interpretation. From this perspective, *μορφ* is used by Paul as a reference to Adam being formed in the image and likeness of God. As such, it says nothing of the deity of Jesus, but is further evidence of his humanity. Robbins observes, “From one angle, the NT writings exhibit an invasion of Hebrew Bible discourse into Mediterranean biographical historiography, epistle, and apocalypse. From another angle, they exhibit an invasion of Mediterranean biographical historiography, epistle, and apocalypse into Hebrew Bible discourse.”²⁸

Context, however, prevails as Paul intends to communicate the ultimate act of humility and obedience, namely, Deity who empties himself, takes on human form, becomes a servant, and dies an ignominious death. There is, as the chiasmic structure illustrates, an intention on the part of Paul to begin at the highest point, Deity in every sense of the Word, and then show the depth of humility through a downward progression to servanthood (*δουλου*, “slave”) and ultimately death itself, on a cross, no less. Out of that humility and obedience Jesus is exalted by the Father, restored to his rightful place, the “highest place,” and given a name above every name, so that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. Out of this drama, God the Father is glorified through his Son.

It is worth noting that Paul may have been intimately familiar with dramatic productions during that time. An article on the word *σκηνοποιος* (often translated “tentmaker”) in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* is very intriguing. In this article, the author notes that this word occurs only once in the New Testament (Acts 18:3), and can be found in extra-biblical sources only twice in the writings of Pollux (7, 189) and Hermes (515, 10f=Stob. I, 464, 7f). In Pollux, it refers to “one who moved stage properties” or a “manufacturer of stage properties.” In Hermes, the word is used “to express production for a dwelling appropriate for the soul.”²⁹

Why challenge the prevailing view that Paul was a tentmaker? First, because there is no compelling reason for adopting this translation, and second, because there is also no compelling reason for rejecting the use of *σκηνοποιος* by Pollux. Some have argued that Jews did not attend such productions and such a conscientious Jew, such as Paul, would not have engaged in such an association with the theater. However, it is

²⁵ Melick, *Exegetical and Theological Exposition*, 101.

²⁶ Hawthorne, “Philippians,” 82-85.

²⁷ Bandstra, “‘Adam’ and ‘the Servant,’” 213-216.

²⁸ Vernon K. Robbins, “The Invention of Christian Discourse” (a working draft, Department and Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University), <http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRC/ICD/IntroExpressibleJan2007.pdf>

²⁹ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 755.

also believed that Jews did not attend the Roman games, and yet Paul appears to have an intimate knowledge of and appreciation for athletic events.

Why is this important? It suggests that Paul was very familiar with the rhetorical use of language in spoken form and knew firsthand the power of the structure of language to affect an audience. Robbins argues that too often the biblical scholar is focused on the grammatical textual aspects of the scripture and therefore one forgets that this was predominately an oral/rhetorically oriented culture (the Epistles were written to be read in the churches), and we may be missing something by not hearing the scriptures.³⁰

This may also be an insight into why Paul would be fond of using hymns, homologies, doxologies, and other forms of rhetorical recitations as important parts of his epistles. It also suggests that Paul had a heightened appreciation of the drama of the life and death of Christ, and how that drama continues to be lived in the lives of believers.

In order for this drama to unfold, Jesus had to voluntarily empty himself by becoming a servant. Verse 6 states, *οχ ρπαγγυν γσατο τ εναι σα θε* (did not consider it robbery to be equal with God).³¹ The word *ρπαγγυν*, used only here in scripture, creates as many questions as answers. Is the word talking about actively grasping (robbery) or is it referring to holding on to something one already has? The meaning is negated by the word *οχ* (not). Should the Greek be translated, as the Authorized Version does, to say Jesus did “not consider it robbery to be equal with God”? Or should it be translated as the NIV does, to say that Jesus “did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”? (Presumably meaning, “grasped and held on to.”) Wilson concludes, Jesus “emptied himself of self by allowing the outward expression of his deity to become that of a servant rather than that of glorified deity.”³²

Verse 7

7 but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

Verse 7 also introduces questions. Specifically the word *κνωσεν*, translated “made of himself nothing” from the root *κενω* (to empty) which is from *κενς* (empty), gives rise to the question: What did Jesus empty himself of? The rest of the verse, through verse 8, defines the *κνωσεν*. “It includes all the details of humiliation which follow, and is defined by these. Further definition belongs to speculative theology.”³³

³⁰ Robbins, “Invention of Christian Discourse.”

³¹ NKJV.

³² Robert E. Wilson, “He Emptied Himself,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19.4 (1976): 281.

³³ Silva, “Philippians,” 104.

Jesus was deity in essence and form, but he “made himself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant, being made human in likeness.” This was a voluntary act by Christ in which he relinquished divine rights to assume a servant’s role and take on the likeness of humanity.

Verse 8

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

In verse 8, the full measure of Jesus’ attitude of self-abnegation, servanthood, humility, and obedience is completely exhausted. Bruce says “the rock bottom of humiliation was reached.”³⁴ He became “obedient to death.”

Silva believes that the phrase “even death on a cross” is an insertion by Paul into the hymn for the purpose of emphasis,³⁵ meaning, not just that Jesus died, but he died one of the most degrading forms of death known to the Roman world. However, Bruce disagrees that it is Paul’s insertion, arguing instead that this phrase is essential to the sense and the rhythm of the hymn³⁶ and is therefore original to hymn that Paul quotes.

Verses 9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

These verses depict the exaltation of Christ following his humiliation. The word “therefore” (Gk. *διο*, meaning, “consequently”) suggests that this exaltation was a response by the Father for the obedience of the Son. However, it might be also be translated, “subsequently,” implying that the exaltation was the next step in the

³⁴ F. F. Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary: Philippians*, Vol. 11. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1989), 71.

³⁵ Silva, “Philippians,” 108.

³⁶ Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 71.

progression and therefore not a reward, but a rightful restoration to the natural (μορφή) state of being.

III. THE MESSAGE OF THE HYMN TO THE PHILIPPIAN BELIEVERS

By employing a hymn, Paul was incorporating the power of the homology (early Christian confessions) of the faith community, and hymn (a homology set to music) that the believers in Philippi would be familiar with, to make a powerful point concerning the proper attitude of a representative of Christ. Bekker notes that such hymns had three functions in the early church, “[T]hey were employed in mutual teaching of new converts by antiphonal singing (Bruce and Simpson 1957, 285), they were the preferred medium of theological training (Selwyn 1969, 274) and they served as mnemonic, pedagogical devices in the formation of communal members (Guthrie, 1970, 551).”³⁷

Bekker looks at the social context of the Philippians, noting the obsession of that society with upward mobility and social status in Philippi. This very attitude had invaded the church, as evidenced by Paul’s words in 1:15-17:

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.³⁸

As well as 2:3, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” Paul’s exhortation not to operate out of selfish ambition and vain conceit suggests that this was already a problem in the church. The believers were not behaving as the counter-culture that they were called to be, but they had become enmeshed in the social and cultural ethos of the pagan community around them.

The purpose of Paul’s use of the hymn, then, is to challenge the Philippian believers to follow the example of Jesus, to empty themselves of “envy and rivalry,” “selfish-ambition,” and “vain conceit” and be filled instead with the attitude of Christ, who is the ultimate example of self-renunciation, humility, obedience, and service. This, and not demanding one’s rights and privileges, is the road to the approbation of the Father and the hope of eternal reward, including our exaltation (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-28, 3:21, 5:10).

Paul makes a similar statement in Galatians 5:22-26, referring to what he calls the fruit of the Spirit:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.³⁹

³⁷ Bekker, “Philippian Hymn,” 2.

³⁸ NIV.

³⁹ NIV.

The parallel of the Christ hymn may not be obvious at first, but Paul is also challenging the Galatian believers to avoid conceit, provocation, and envy (v. 26). Rejecting this lifestyle is done by those who “belong to Christ” and therefore have “crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.” That is, they have emptied themselves of those passions and desires, which are evident in “conceit, provocation and envy,” and have instead been filled with the “fruit of the Spirit” and therefore exemplify the attitude of Christ.

IV. THE MIND OF CHRIST IN THE MIND OF THE LEADER

Some of the would-be leaders of Philippi (as well as at Galatia) were driven by selfish ambition, that is, they had their own personal agendas, which had less to do with humility than it did with pride, and less to do with serving than it did with being served. They were guilty of envy and rivalry with one another, all while claiming to preach Christ.

However, far from building up the church, or expanding the kingdom of God, they were merely mirroring their surrounding environment when they should have exemplified Christ. Paul provides the example of Christ in this hymn as a “mimetic Christological model.”⁴⁰ In taking on the mind of Christ, they would be the types of leaders who would be effective in expanding the kingdom and in glorifying God. Agosto states that “humble sacrifice on behalf of the community is what Paul requires of leaders and all believers in Philippi.”⁴¹

Through the years of leadership study, there have been those who have studied “great leaders,” and many of these so-called great leaders were ambitious, envious, and conceited. Indeed, these attributes are sometimes identified in what is called charismatic leadership.⁴² Such leadership, while sometimes proving beneficial in an organization, is noted for the abuses as much for its success. Leaders like Hitler, Hussein, Manson, and Jim Jones come to mind as negative examples of this leadership style.

Existing in such a competitive global market as organizations are experiencing in this era, a competitive spirit and an “eye of the tiger” mentality are often desirable attributes in CEO candidates. However, after abuses in Enron and other business and political enterprises at the highest levels of leadership, there is a growing chorus of voices who would like to see more humility in the leader and a servant-leader

⁴⁰ Bekker, “Philippian Hymn,” 7.

⁴¹ Efraim Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 115.

⁴² Iiris Aaltio-Marjosola and Tuomo Takala, “Charismatic Leadership, Manipulation and the Complexity of Organizational Life,” *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counseling Today* 12.4 (2000): 146-158.

mentality.⁴³ One leadership management and change consultant observed, "I sense that there is a mood change when it comes to effective leadership. Hugely charismatic individuals with exceptional communication skills are being replaced by people who are finding their voice and, by virtue of their humility and quiet will, are inspiring others to find their voices."⁴⁴

The observations of this consultant are precisely what Paul is promoting—people who inspire others, not by virtue of ego and ambition, but by virtue of "humility and quiet will" encourage others to "realize their potential, and to make a difference."⁴⁵ As a trainer he says that what really annoys him "is the arrogant, unteachable spirit." Not only does such a person resist learning, he or she often impedes the learning of others around them.

Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbaniski define humility by three distinct, yet connected dimensions: (1) self-awareness—understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses, (2) openness—open to new ideas and ways of knowing, and (3) transcendence—exceeding one's usual limits so that one can forge a connection to a larger perspective.⁴⁶

When considering the attributes that Paul lists as the example of Jesus gave the church—servanthood, humility, obedience—one finds that there are some current leadership models that approach that example. Servant leadership, for example, is one such model. Russell and Stone's literature review identified nine functional attributes of servant-leadership:

1. Vision
2. Honesty
3. Integrity
4. Trust
5. Service
6. Modeling
7. Pioneering
8. Appreciation of others

⁴³ Dwight Friesen, "Hubbing: The 'Being' and 'Act' of Leadership Within Dynamic Christ-Clusters" (Unpublished paper, 2004): 1-40, <http://www.dwightfriesen.com/Dwight-Friesen-HubbingLeadership.pdf>; Jeremy Francis, "Say Goodbye to Charisma and Hello to Humility and Integrity," *Training & Coaching Today* (March 2006): 18; Bob Gunn, "Level Five Leaders," *Strategic Finance* 83.8 (2002): 14, 16; Leonard Hjalmanson, "Theological Reflections on Leadership" (Unpublished paper, 2006): 1-11, <http://nextreformation.com/wp-admin/resources/reflections.pdf>; J. Andrew Morris, Celeste M. Brotheridge, and John C. Urbaniski. "Bringing Humility to Leadership: Antecedents and Consequences of Leader Humility," *Human Relations* 58.10 (2005): 1323-1350.

⁴⁴ Francis, "Say Goodbye to Charisma," 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbaniski., "Bringing Humility to Leadership," 1331. (cf. Peter B. Vaill, *Learning As A Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996], 179.)

9. Empowerment⁴⁷

Dennis and Winston produced an analysis of Page and Wong's servant leadership instrument, which produced twelve categories, with the first three—"integrity, humility, and servanthood"—seen as fitting the "personality (being/character) component of the servant-leadership instrument."⁴⁸ These three categories, especially humility and servanthood, are clearly seen in the Christ hymn.

Likewise, Dennis and Bocarnea analyze the leadership assessment instrument developed by Patterson,⁴⁹ and find support for five of her seven factors. Her factors are: (1) *agapao* love, (2) acts with humility, (3) is altruistic, (4) is visionary for the followers, (5) is trusting, (6) is serving, and (7) empowers followers.⁵⁰

The analysis of Dennis and Bocarnea supported five of the seven factors but "failed to measure the factors of altruism and service."⁵¹ Love, humility, vision, trust, and empowering others remain viable factors in the servant leadership model and, therefore, the servant leadership model is closely aligned with the example of Jesus in the Christ hymn. There is, however, perhaps one more rung on the ladder as one descends toward leadership.

Hjalmarson notes that servant leadership is about more than serving. He quotes an unknown source as saying, "We have many leaders who serve . . . what we need are servants who lead."⁵² This level of leadership enters into the realm of *kenosis*, that is, of emptying one's self so as to become more receptive. Frederiks, who explores the implications of *kenosis* in the field of missiology, defines *kenosis* as the "voluntary act of self-emptying of that enables people to cross boundaries of power, caste, class, culture and religion."⁵³

To go to the *kenotic* level is risky. Frederiks notes that it embraces the risk of rejection, of suffering, and of having to give up pre-conceived ideas. "But taking the risk is necessary, in order to be truly other."⁵⁴ The willingness to take this risk requires trust, both trusting the followers and trust in God. Many leaders never descend to greatness in leadership because they do not trust those who follow enough to lift them above themselves. Jesus took the risk and was rejected, yet in the act of obedience and humility he was triumphant and ultimately exalted.

How does *kenotic* leadership translate into practice? It is a leadership that models the right behavior, empowers others, and engenders trust by promoting and praising others. It is leadership that knows what needs to be done and is willing to roll

⁴⁷ Robert F. Russell and A. Gregory Stone, "A Review of Servant Leadership Attributes: Developing a Practical Model," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 23.3 (2002): 147.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 145-157.

⁴⁹ Kathleen Patterson, "Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model" (doctoral dissertation, Regent University, 2003).

⁵⁰ Robert S. Dennis and Mihai Bocarnea. "Development of the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 36.8 (2006): 601-602.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 610.

⁵² Hjalmarson, "Theological Reflections," 3.

⁵³ Frederiks, "Kenosis as a Model," 216.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

up one's sleeves to get into the trenches with the employees to get it done. It is a leadership that maintains core values without sacrificing care and compassion for others. It is a leadership that can receive correction with grace, even when the corrective voice comes from the followers who trust the leader enough to voice correction. Finally, this leadership is motivated by the good of the people and the organization, and not by selfish ambitions and vain conceit.

The Philippian believers needed this letter of correction and counsel, and it is a very applicable model for modern leadership as well.

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