FILIAL LOVE IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

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In his contribution to *Didache* 14:1, John Bechtold states that historically and foundationally the Church of the Nazarene placed filial love above the possibility of univocal doctrinal development. The focus needs to be on cooperation rather than on agreement.[1] The goal of this article is to support that view and to elaborate on it from a theological and ecclesiological perspective. I will argue that the Church of the Nazarene needs to have mechanisms in place to involve lay members in decision-making processes since filial love, or cooperation, is an expression of relational holiness.[2]

Wesleyan holiness theology is a theology of love

Like other theologies of love, a Wesleyan theology of love is based on the biblical revelation of a God whose essential nature is that of holy love.[3] Biblical passages such as Leviticus 19 or Matthew 5-7 underscore both the relational character of Christianity and the centrality of love. Based on these texts, Nathan Crawford argues that what makes a Wesleyan theology distinctive is that the starting point is not a specific doctrine or method, but rather a disposition and way of being: 'This disposition is one of love, both love of God and love of neighbour. [It is] a hermeneutic of love that begins from the place of both loving and being loved; this becomes the beginning point of any theology that marks itself as Wesleyan.'[4] In a similar way, Wesleyan scholar Kenneth Collins states:

> Faith, then, as great as it is, is not seated on the throne, and in one sense it will pass away in the world to come. But love, the greatest mark of the new birth, so celebrated in Wesley's practical theology, will never and can never pass away. The relation between faith and love is essentially instrumental, the one ever points to the other. That is, faith is in order to love. It is the servant of love. Consequently, the holy love of God so richly displayed in Jesus Christ is not only

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[1] John Bechtold, "In All Things Charity: Love, Unity, and Incarnational Truth," *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 14, no. 1 (2014), http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-14-1/1045-didache-v14n1-20-all-things-charity-bechtold, accessed 10/04/2015. In this article, I will refer to *philia*-love rather than filial love.

[2] This article is based upon my DMin thesis entitled 'Congregational Leadership in the Church of the Nazarene: a Redefinition in the Context of Essential Kenosis and Collaborative Governance.' The thesis has been submitted and accepted in August 2014 as fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Ministry at the Sydney College of Divinity, Australia.

[3] See the arguments advanced by H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 183-207.

[4] Nathan Crawford, "Sketching a Fundamental Wesleyan Theology: Pursuing a Hermeneutic of Love with Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana," in *The Continuing Relevance of Wesleyan Theology: Essays in Honor of Laurence W. Wood*, ed. Nathan Crawford (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 111-12.

the point of it all, the nature of true religion, but also the very substance of the Christian faith.[5]

Like Collins, Wesleyan theologian Donald Thorsen ties holiness and love together:

> If there is a particular word or theological concept one could use to describe Wesley's theology, then the words *holy* or *holiness* would seem obvious choices. . . . As indispensible as holiness is to Wesleyan theology, I think that love represents a more essential descriptor of Wesley's theological and ecclesiastical legacy.[6]

Nazarene philosopher and theologian Thomas Jay Oord also emphasizes a similar connection between holiness and love, simply stating: '[W]e are holy when we love wholly.'[7] Most of the Wesleyan scholars who consider Wesleyan holiness theology to be a theology of love, including Collins, Thorsen and Oord, draw on Mildred Bangs Wynkoop's book *A Theology of Love*, published in 1972.[8] In the opinion of Nazarene theologian Tom Noble, Wynkoop had a right interpretation of Wesley's theology:

> For him [John Wesley], as Mildred Bangs Wynkoop saw so clearly, holiness is not primarily a negative, freedom or purification from sin, but a positive. . . . Wesley's hermeneutic is not so much a 'hermeneutic of sin' or cleansing from sin: it is rather a 'hermeneutic of love.'[9]

The section above illustrates that for Wesleyans there is a firm connection between holiness and love, a connection clearly visible in the Holy Trinity. Nazarene biblical scholar Kent Brower states that '[i]f we are created as social beings in the image of the triune God, then our redeemed existence is to model the love that is the very essence of the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit.'[10] Mark Maddix suggests that modelling trinitarian love includes the mutual interdependence and the uniqueness of each person.[11] Noble, in applying this interdependency to the church, says:

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[5] Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 228. See also Gregory S. Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered: A Wesleyan Spirituality* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1997), 62.
[6] Thorsen is one of the co-authors of the following article: Sarah Heaner Lancaster et al., "What Makes Theology "Wesleyan"?," *Methodist Review: A Journal of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies* 1 (2009), 7-26, http://www.methodistreview.org/index.php/mr/article/view/14/40, accessed 11/10/2011.
[7] Thomas Jay Oord and Michael Lodahl, *Relational Holiness: Responding to the Call of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2005), 131.
[8] Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love; the Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972).
[9] T.A. Noble, *Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Theology of Christian Perfecting*, Didsbury Lecture Series (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013), 86.
[10] Kent Brower, *Living as God's Holy People: Holiness and Community in Paul* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2010), 49.
[11] Mark A. Maddix, "Laying the Foundation: Spiritually Forming Families," in *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, ed. Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 185. Although Maddix talks about love in families, one can

The doctrine of the Trinity as a community of interpersonal love suggests then that we are going to have to think of the church as *corporate*, modeled on the family, rather than as a "collective" modeled on the business organization or the state. Only in such a context can we think of human beings as "persons" rather than as "individuals." The communion or fellowship (*koinonia*) of the church is then understood *to be* in fact the communion or fellowship of the Holy Trinity. It is by the Spirit that we are able to say, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). And it is only within the loving fellowship of the church that "perfect love", that is to say, mature, whole-hearted, self-denying love, becomes a possibility.[12]

As a result of this brief exploration it can be stated that in Wesleyanism, love is interpreted as a way to respond to the biblical call to be holy like God is holy.

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Archetypes of love

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In my goal to focus on filial or interpersonal love, it is helpful to take a look at Oord's interpretation of the three general archetypes of love: *agape*, *eros*, and *philia*. The main question is how *philia*-love can be promoted within the local church in situations of dilemmas and potential conflicts. I will argue that pastors and church boards need to intentionally apply *philia*-love, with the goal of promoting overall well-being by establishing deeper levels of mutuality, reciprocity, and cooperation.

Oord acknowledges that *agape* is the form of love used most often by Christians identified with unconditional love.[13] In the 1930s, the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren sharply contrasted *agape*-love with *eros*-love (or self-love). Oord clearly indicates, however, that biblical authors use *agape* to convey a wide variety and sometimes contradictory set of meanings:

Neither the narrow claim that *agape* possesses a single meaning in the Bible nor the broader claim that one meaning of *agape* predominates in Christian Scripture finds textual support. . . . To be true to Christian Scripture, we should not talk about *the* biblical understanding of *agape* or think that *agape* is a definitively Christian form of love.[14]

Based on a word study, both within the Septuagint and the New Testament, James Barr came to the conclusion that the use of *agape* within the Septuagint (LXX) and the New Testament refers to both 'good' love (love for God, love for one's neighbour), 'bad' love (love for money, love of evil-doing), and 'neutral' love ('I love swimming' or 'I just love cheese'). In other words, the use of *agape* is theologically equivocal:

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visualize this picture in a church setting as well. Maddix presupposes that human beings are created by a relational triune God to be in significant and fulfilling relationships.

[12] Noble, *Holy Trinity: Holy People*, 220-21. Emphasis his.; cf. Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

[13] Thomas Jay Oord, *Science of Love: The Wisdom of Well-Being* (Radnor: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004), 8.

[14] Oord, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 32-39.

> Far from designating a special kind of love, a sacrificial or a personal love, the terms are equivocal about the sort of love that is meant. . . . This makes it highly improbable that the choice of these words has anything to do with a theological differentiation between one conception of love and another. And this is not confined to the LXX, for the same is true of the New Testament. . . . In the New Testament, then, as in the LXX, [*agape*] was theologically equivocal.[15]

Despite the various meanings of *agape* in Scripture, Oord is quick to say that *agape* carries significant rhetorical weight, and therefore it seems unwise to him 'to squander the value that this word has accumulated.'[16] Accordingly, Oord asserts that the use of *agape* needs to be clearly defined and that meaning should then be employed consistently. For Oord *agape* is a unique form of love in contrast to other forms because of its response to ill-being: '*Agape* repays evil with good. Other forms of love are not responses to ill-being; they are intentional responses to something else.'[17] Applied to Oord's definition of love, a definition of *agape*-love is: 'acting intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including God), to promote overall well-being when responding to acts, persons, or structures of existence that promote ill-being.'[18]

In a similar way, Oord specifies his definition of *eros*-love. In going back to Plato, Oord considers the core notion of *eros* its affirmation of value. Oord states that sometimes *eros* is defined as an inclination toward the lover's own wishes or orientation, and in this use *eros* is often called 'self-love.' Edward Vacek identifies *eros* in this way, when he speaks of *eros* as loving the beloved 'for our own sake.'[19] Oord considers this an unfortunate use of *eros*, because it ignores the truth that we can desire that value be increased in others for their sakes. Whereas *agape* repays evil with good, *eros* affirms the good perceived and promotes it, which leads to the following definition of *eros*-love: 'acting intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including God) to promote overall well-being when affirming what is valuable, beautiful, or excellent.'[20]

While Oord critiques Vacek for his interpretation of *eros*-love, he considers Vacek to be one of the most important contemporary scholars of *philia*-love. Most Christian authors, Vacek says, praise 'a self-sacrificing love or a love that works *for* the other; some praise a love by which we live *from* others; unfortunately, only a few argue at length on behalf of a love that means being *with* others.'[21] Thus, for Vacek, *philia* is love of the beloved for the sake of a mutual relation with the beloved: 'in *philia*, unlike pure *agape* and *eros*, there is a

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[15] James Barr, "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird*, ed. L.D. Hurst and N.T. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 12. Barr as well refers to the influence of Anders Nygren's book *Eros and Agape*. Barr makes clear how Nygren was not seeking to describe linguistic usage of *agape* and *eros*, but to draw a contrast between two profound theological motifs. The effect of his book on a large public was to leave them thinking that *agape* referred to self-giving and self-sacrificing love.
[16] Oord, *Defining Love*, 39.
[17] Oord, *Defining Love*, 44.
[18] Oord, *Defining Love*, 43.
[19] Edward Collins Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 157-58.
[20] Oord, *Defining Love*, 47.
[21] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 280. Emphasis his.

communal life which, so to speak, circulates between the members.'[22] As a corollary, Vacek uses a triple distinction to define the three archetypes of love. As already indicated, he considers *eros*-love to be love 'for our own sake.' *Agape*-love is, in contrast, 'for the sake of the beloved,' while *philia*-love is 'for the sake of a relationship we have with the beloved.'[23] Oord makes similar distinctions as he says '*Agape* is "in spite of" love: we express *agape* in spite of unloving actions of others . . . *Eros* is "because of" love: we express *eros* because of the good or beauty we encounter and . . . *philia* is "alongside of" love: we express *philia* as we come alongside of others to promote overall well-being.'[24] Oord weaves the coming alongside of others into his definition of *philia*-love, which results in 'acting intentionally in sympathetic response to others (including God), to promote overall well-being when working to establish deeper levels of mutuality, reciprocity, or cooperation.'[25] Oord states that

> [w]hat makes *philia* an act of love is its intentional response to promote overall well-being. What distinguishes it from the other forms of love is its cooperative aspect. While *agape* and *eros* may benefit from cooperation from others, these forms of love do not require cooperation. *Philia* is a form of love – rather than love itself – that expresses one's intentional response by cooperating with others to promote what is good.[26]

Oord, in his exposition on love, does not elaborate in depth on the practice of love in the local church. In their book *Relational Holiness*, Oord and Lodahl state that the church is to live and embody divine love and unity as found in the Trinity, as they refer to holiness as 'our active participation in the love between God the Father and God the Son through the power and the presence of God the Spirit . . . [which is] a dynamic sharing of self-giving, other-receiving love.'[27] In later publications, Oord integrates these thoughts into his Essential Kenosis theology as his alternative for Open and Relational theology. Essential Kenosis defines God's love as a steadfast and necessary love within the Trinity and with creation: divine relatedness is an aspect of the divine essence.[28] Essential Kenosis argues that because

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[22] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 286.

[23] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 157-58.

[24] Thomas Jay Oord, "Types of Love and Types of Exemplars: Implications for Virtue Science," in *Theology and Science of Moral Action: Virtue Ethics, Exemplarity, and Cognitive Neuroscience*, ed. James A. van Slyke, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 181-82.

[25] Oord, *Defining Love*, 50.

[26] Oord, *Defining Love*, 51.

[27] Oord and Lodahl, *Relational Holiness*, 98.

[28] Oord's scriptural foundation for his Kenosis theology is Philippians 2:7, where Pauls speaks about the self-emptying of Jesus. Other scripture references display a similar thought. For example, Diane Leclerc refers to 1 John 3:16 as she explains that in Wesleyan-Holiness theology, holy love in essence is kenotic. She raises the question: 'Is holy love so indefinable after all? John, again so simply but most profoundly, says in 1 John 3:16: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another." Love lays down one's life; love is willing to die; love "empties" the self "of all but love." This is the heart and soul and strength of love.' Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness; the Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2010), 285.

God's essential and eternal nature is self-giving love – *kenosis* – God cannot coerce.[29] In fact, prevenient grace as derived from God's eternal nature provides agency and makes possible free creaturely response. Therefore, in the following section, the focus is on *our* active participation in God's love. Since God initiates loving relationships, empowers creatures to love and provides possibilities for love, he calls creatures to choose those possibilities. Oord labels God's love, as envisioned in Essential Kenosis theology, 'cooperation-empowering grace.'[30] He explains:

> Our limited capacities as finite creatures make direct love of literally all creation impossible. We are not omnipresent. But responding appropriately to the One who is omnipresent and omniscient means we can love one, few, or many, and thereby cooperate with God to promote overall well-being.[31]

A critical part of Oord's Essential Kenosis theology is, therefore, the *creaturely cooperation* with God: 'Those called to missions – which includes us all – ought to follow the kenotic example of Jesus: we should express empowering, relational love.'[32] The fact that the expression of empowering, relational love often involves *creaturely self-limitation*, remains underdeveloped in Oord's Essential Kenosis theology.[33] Where Oord states that '*kenosis* suggests divine self-limitation,'[34] I argue that cooperating with God often implies human self-limitation as well.[35] To let go of unilateral control in decision-making processes (as an expression of empowering, relational love) is a form of self-limitation.

As stated previously, creaturely cooperation with God can be expressed in several ways, for example by showing *agape*-love. According to Oord, *agape*-love is a form of love

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[29] Thomas Jay Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010), 127. Oord defines coercion as 'completely controlling others.'

[30] Oord, *Nature of Love*, 126. Epperly has a similar opinion of *kenosis*. He understands the *kenosis*-power in Philippians 2:7 as 'a letting go of unilateral power.' Christ wants to partner with us in a relational, non-competitive way. See Bruce G. Epperly, "Infinite Freedom, Creativity, and Love: The Adventures of a Non-Competitive God," *Encounter* 71, no. 2 (2010): 51.

[31] Oord, *Nature of Love*, 119. Based on the Genesis account, Oord states that God not only invites creative cooperation, God blesses complex creatures with the capacity for co-creative fertility. God asks creatures to multiply and fill the earth.

[32] Oord, "God on a Mission: A Missional Theology," in *Missional Discipleship: Partners in God's Redemptive Mission*, ed. Mark A. Maddox and Jay Richard Akkerman (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 116.

[33] Separate from his elaboration on Essential Kenosis, Oord admits that love sometimes requires self-sacrifice. Oord, *Nature of Love*, 28.

[34] Oord, "God on a Mission," 114.

[35] From outside the Wesleyan scope, Peter Althouse argues the same as he says: 'Juxtaposing *kenosis* with the *imago Dei* suggests how the narrative image of the divine act of self-giving is exemplified in Jesus Christ, who likewise acts in sacrificial self-giving (exemplar) and inspires and motivates those who are committed to the way of Jesus Christ (collaborators) to act in altruistic and self-giving ways towards others who are relationally interconnected in community through the image and likeness of God (beneficiaries).' See Peter Althouse, "Imago Dei and Kenosis: Contributions of Christology to the Study of Godly Love," in *The Science and Theology of Godly Love*, ed. Matthew T. Lee and Amos Yong (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012), 72.

when confronted with the unloving actions of others. As my focus is on the decision-making processes within the local church, that might be the situation, but not necessarily so. My approach is broader. In this article, I will argue that pastors and church board members should intentionally reach out to others inside and outside the board when important decisions are at stake. Consequently, because of this suggested intentional coming alongside, *philia*-love is the appropriate form of love to explore in the context of the church.

Philia-love in the church

Vacek considers the church to be a corporate person with Christ as its head, in which church members should participate:

> [T]he Church not only necessarily must include great diversity within itself, it will also foster that diversity (1 Cor 12:12-31). Since individual Christians are members of the Church, they will of course accept the received identity of the Church (1 Jn 1:3). Since they are not the Church itself, they cannot make the Church whatever they want it to be. But since they participate in the Church, they must take responsibility for the ongoing formation of the Church's ever-developing identity. Both conformism and schism are failures of love. If genuine participation is present, there will be unity in difference between Christ and his Church and between the Church and its members. If genuine participation is not present, fanaticism, self-denigration, or totalitarianism results. . . . Thus, on the one hand, the Church should love its members. That is, it should unite its destiny with theirs and aim at their enhancement. Communities rightly have a special love for "their own". On the other hand, members should unite their destiny with the Church and direct themselves to its enhancement. . . . Individuals rightly give and receive in different ways, but "even those members of the body which seem less important are in fact indispensible" (1 Cor 12:22).'[36]

In terms of Oord's Essential Kenosis theology, Vacek addresses the *cooperative* implications for the church. Essential Kenosis affirms that we, empowered by God's prevenient grace, are invited to co-labour with God for good. Vacek refers to this co-labouring between God, the church and its individual members. However, Vacek also addresses indirectly the lack of creaturely *self-limitation*, when he addresses the failures of love in the church. Elsewhere Vacek stresses more clearly how love for the group may require self-sacrifice: 'This [self-sacrifice] arises not because the self is obliterated in the group, but rather because members so affirm the group that they freely yield to its good.'[37] Vacek is quick to acknowledge, however, that '[d]ifficult ethical questions then arise concerning when the individual should be subordinated to the interests of the group, or the group to the interests of the individual.'[38] More specifically and appropriate for this article, he says 'individual members are affected by the actions of their group, and, thus, individual members rightly are concerned about policy decisions of their group.'[39]

This dynamic relationship between the individual and the group is where *philia*-love is relevant. Vacek makes clear that 'Philia is distinguished from agape and eros by the

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[36] Vacek, Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 85-86.
[37] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 83.
[38] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 83.
[39] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 84.

mutuality of the relation it creates.'[40] And, 'in philia, unlike pure agape and eros, there is a communal life which, so to speak, circulates between the members.'[41] Vacek argues that the members of a community should foster the mutuality of relationships. In the context of my focus on how pastors and church board members should intentionally reach out to others inside and outside the board when important decisions are at stake, Vacek's following thoughts are beneficial. He states that in a community, because of *philia*-love, we need to consult fellow members 'not just because they may have better insights, but also because we want *their* views to influence and form our own.'[42] Vacek expresses his concern when people are unable or unwilling to receive the self-disclosure of people they should care about. Applied to the church, he comments:

> A church . . . that will not permit its members to speak is not a philia-based group. A God who will not listen cannot be a "friend". Philia requires all members, to the degree they are able, to try to disclose themselves to the others and to receive the others' self-disclosure.   . . . As church members, we want our leaders to take account of our own perspectives in the way they guide the Church.[43]

Finally, Vacek addresses the essential inclusion of vulnerability in *philia*-love. Vulnerability is an inclusion that can be absent from *agape*, since in *agape* the benevolent is self-sufficient in relation to the beneficiary. *Philia*, in contrast, includes a shared world and we must learn to give ourselves to others in mutual relationships. What we risk in mutuality is the identity we have thus far formed. We open ourselves to what is beyond our control.[44] Vacek acknowledges that mutuality includes the potential for conflicts. He states, therefore, that we 'need to learn when we are contributing to another and to the relationship, and when we are simply imposing our own perspective or needs.'[45] When we know the difference between the two, conflicts need not destroy the relationship: 'As a unity-in-distinction, a mutual relation should allow for and even foster differences.'[46] American Jesuit theologian Avery Dulles discusses this unity-in-distinction as he describes the dilemma of the institutionalization of the church. Dulles first acknowledges that the church could not perform its mission without some stable organizational features. Throughout its history, Christianity has always had an institutional side:

> It has had recognized ministers, accepted confessional formulas, and prescribed forms of public worship. All this is fitting and proper. It does not necessarily imply institutionalism, any more than papacy implies papalism, or law implies legalism, or a dogma implies dogmatism. By institutionalism we mean a system in which the institutional element is treated as primary. . . . A Christian believer may energetically oppose institutionalism and still be very much committed to the Church as institution.[47]

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[40] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 281.

[41] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 286.

[42] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 288. Emphasis his.

[43] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 290-91.

[44] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 291.

[45] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 294.

[46] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 294.

[47] Avery R. Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Classics, 2002), 27.

However, Dulles considers one of the dangers of institutionalization to be that 'the fullness of power [is] concentrated in the hands of a ruling class that perpetuates itself by cooption.'[48] According to Dulles, the members of the Church subject themselves to the duly appointed pastors. It binds theology too exclusively to the defence of currently official positions, and thus diminishes critical and exploratory thinking:

> Thanks to the governing authority of the shepherds, the faithful are kept from wandering into the desert and are led to the green pastures. . . . They have only to be docile and obedient, and to rely on the ministrations of the Church. . . . Clericalism tends to reduce the laity to a condition of passivity, and to make their apostolate a mere appendage of the apostolate of the hierarchy.[49]

In summary, the critique of Dulles towards the 'Church as Institution' is that a top-down approach of leadership reduces the involvement of lay people and prohibits cooperation.[50] From a similar perspective, Thomas O'Dea elaborates on what he calls the 'institutionalization of religion.'[51] He speaks about a fundamental tension between the sacred and the profane, differentiated in five dilemmas.[52] One of these dilemmas is the 'Dilemma of Mixed Motivation:'

> In the pre-institutionalized stage of a religious movement, the classical type of which is the circle of disciples gathered about a charismatic leader, the motivation of the followers is characterized by single-mindedness. . . . With the emergence of a stable institutional matrix, there arises a structure of offices – of statuses and roles – capable of eliciting another kind of motivation, involving needs for prestige, expression of teaching and leadership abilities, drives for power, aesthetic needs, and the quite prosaic wish for the security of a respectable position in the professional structure of the society.[53]

Within the Church of the Nazarene, the 'Association of Nazarene Sociologists and Researchers' has discussed these five dilemmas and the key question has been: what does institutionalization do *for* the Church of the Nazarene and what does it do *to* the

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[48] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 31.

[49] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 33-35.

[50] Others share the critique of the institutionalised church. Margaret Lavin, for example, states: 'If the church is not structured as a community, then we cannot possibly live the communion of the life of the triune God that can make this a reality. . . . Many, if not most, people today would say that the official church is synonymous with the institutional church. Yet one major difference between a community structure and an institutional structure is that communities foster relationships while institutions impose a series of self-alienating roles. There is no opportunity for loving relationships within the structures of institutions, and where there are no loving relationships there is no opportunity to imitate the triune God.' Margaret Lavin, *Theology for Ministry* (Toronto: Novalis, 2004), 135. Charles Taylor speaks about the 'bureaucratic hardening of the church.' Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 740.

[51] Thomas F. O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 1, no. 1 (1961): 30-39.

[52] These dilemmas are: 1) the Dilemma of Mixed Motivation; 2) the Symbolic Dilemma; 3) the Dilemma of Administrative Order; 4) the Dilemma of Delimitation; and 5) the Dilemma of Power.

[53] O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas," 33.

denomination? Kenneth Crow focuses on the Dilemma of Mixed Motivation, and his conclusion is that institutionalization has done more to the church than it has done for the church.[54] Crow describes that over the years he observed:

> [S]ome transformation of original goals and values from trust and spontaneous evangelism to control and safety. Another area of transformation of the original Nazarene goals and values may be a shift from seeking strong, creative leaders to selecting leaders who are unlikely to disturb existing structures and patterns. . . . [We] still select courageous, creative, great charismatic leaders. However, ecclesiastical politics and predictability appear to have become more important.[55]

Crow critiques the organizational structure of the Church of the Nazarene, characterized by top-down leadership. He states that top-down leadership affects the involvement of lay members as well as ministerial leaders, reducing loyalty to the institution and increasing apathy and withdrawal. Therefore, Crow pleads for a Christ-like attitude (*kenosis*) as presented by Paul in Philippians 2:1-11. A Christ-like attitude includes listening to the grassroots: 'If grassroots loyalty is to be reclaimed, members and pastors will probably need to become convinced that their opinions really count.'[56] A Christ-like attitude also includes a management style of servant leadership, since '[i]t would be particularly ironic and disturbing if the secular American culture changed from top-down to shared leadership in order to increase profits while the "servant leaders" of the church continued to defend existing oligarchies as unfortunate but inevitable.'[57]

Crow seems to advocate a reversion from the church as a bureaucracy to the church as envisioned by Phineas Bresee: a church in which Nazarenes are embedded in the structure, a church that is connectional with all its parts interdependent. In such a church, there is no top-down control or apathy. Instead, there will be shared leadership, involving lay members. I will conclude this article with how such an environment looks on the level of local Nazarene congregations.

Philia-love in decision-making processes

In general, congregational decision-making processes in the church are complex. On the one hand, there is a dynamic interaction between people given their attitudes, personalities, and personal opinions. On the other hand, decision-making processes are also determined by institutional rules and procedures and how people apply them. This dynamic interaction between people and different interpretations of rules and procedures occur on two levels. The first level is the church board. The church board is a representation of the congregational pluriformity, implying that board members (the pastor included!) have different personality styles, opinions, and values. They will also have diverging opinions on how to follow church ethics, rules and procedures. On a second level, a similar pluriformity will be present in the congregation at large. This variety of personalities and opinions is not

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[54] Kenneth E. Crow, "The Church of the Nazarene and O'dea's Dilemma of Mixed Motivation," http://nazarene.org/ministries/administration/researchcenter/papers/institution/display.html. Accessed 03/04/2014.

[55] Crow, "The Church of the Nazarene and O'dea's Dilemma of Mixed Motivation".

[56] Crow, "The Church of the Nazarene and O'dea's Dilemma of Mixed Motivation".

[57] Crow, "The Church of the Nazarene and O'dea's Dilemma of Mixed Motivation".

wrong in itself. In fact, in this article I have argued that it is a matter of love to value them and take them into deliberation.

However, according to the principles of 'Essential Kenosis' and servant-leadership, it requires from the pastor and members of the church board willingness to relinquish unilateral power and take other opinions into serious consideration. Pastors and church boards are not to take this sacrifice lightly. The horizontal, relational way of decision-making will be time consuming and less efficient than a vertical way of decision-making. It is a demanding style of leadership, initiating dialogues within different settings in the congregation. It involves asking many questions, being open to a wide variety of people and inviting them to share. This type of leadership demands of the leaders that they will need to expose themselves to one another and to members of the congregation. Sensitive issues need to be addressed and discussed, even when church rules and church ethics seem to provide the 'right' answers. Opposing opinions need to be addressed rather than ignored or suppressed. For the church board, transparency, self-renunciation, and vulnerability are the consequences of implementing *philia*-based decision-making processes. Members of the church board, the pastor included, make themselves vulnerable by intentionally reaching out to critical individuals or groups. They will be confronted with criticism, dominance, and expressions of distrust, which can easily lead to mutual accusations. To prevent that from happening the intentionally reaching out must be motivated by *philia*-love.

It needs to be made clear that decision-making based on cooperation also has its limitations. Not every type of decision-making is suitable for a collaborative approach. In general, collaborative governance is appropriate when the church is in the process of seeking a certain direction it wants to take. Collaborative governance is not appropriate when rather specific of even personal matters are at stake. Ideally, the church board together with the congregation at large will set the general parameters to be applied by the church board in particular situations and in specific circumstances. The following example of the eligibility of roles and tasks in the congregation will illustrate this. What are the criteria to serve on the church board or on different committees? Who can be a worship leader or musician? Does someone need to be a member of the church? Does a youth leader need to be a member of the church? And suppose he or she is living in a de facto relationship, either homosexual or heterosexual? Are there any restrictions for church ministry to a divorcee? It is likely that many individuals or even groups have strong opinions on these issues, regardless of what the *Manual* prescribes in the paragraph on church officers. I have argued in this article that it is not wise to suppress or ignore these voices. At the same time it is not desirable that diverging opinions come to the surface during annual meetings prior to the elections of church officers, since this will be harmful to the individual involved. Ideally, therefore, the church board needs to initiate a process of collaborative governance. The members of the church board should discuss the matter among themselves, and after asking one another confronting questions the board should be able to formulate a clear problem definition. After the internal deliberations the discussion will be opened to the congregation at large in several ways. Sermons can be focused on the topic, small group and Sunday School material can be developed, special church meetings can be organised, guest speakers can be invited. Critical individuals or groups need to be discovered and actively approached to make clear that their opinion counts. Ultimately, it is the church board's responsibility that a decision is made.

In this example and following Oord's definition of love, the process of collaborative governance is an intentional act to promote overall well-being. First, the process itself is an expression of *philia*-love. Second, with the parameters in place love is displayed toward the

Nominating Committee and toward a person standing for a particular position. Although the person might not agree with the parameters, they do provide clarity and transparency. The parameters prevent the person from becoming the focus of discussion and arguments during the annual meeting.

Next to this example other dilemmas can be distinguished in which the approach of collaborative governance is an appropriate way of showing *philia*-love in decision-making processes. What to do with the dilemma of having different styles of worship in place? How to deal with the consumption of alcohol? Two clear examples that can potentially cause divisions in the congregation. As long as no individual names are attached to dilemmas like these, a form of collaborative governance seems to be an applicable tool. To consider the appropriateness of integrating the horizontal management style into the church board's top-down leadership position, a number of questions need to be addressed. Among others the main questions are:

1) what is the dilemma?;

2) is a particular person directly involved in the dilemma and if so does the process of collaborative governance do harm to that person?;

3) what does the *Manual* state about the dilemma?;

4) what are the opinions of church board members, based on their relationship with God and the congregation?;

5) what are some of the opinions in the congregation?;

6) what is the exact problem definition?;

7) how will the church board balance the openness to the congregation with its leadership responsibility taking a decision?;

8) how will the outcome of the collaborative governance process and the decision taken be communicated to the congregation at large and be used as parameters in specific situations?

Conclusion

This article has argued that cooperation in congregational leadership has a strong legitimacy both from a theological and ecclesiological perspective. Thomas Jay Oord phrases his interpretation of a Wesleyan theology of love in a concept called 'Essential Kenosis.' This concept revolves around godly love inviting people to cooperate with God and fellow human beings to promote overall well-being. It requires *kenosis* or the 'self-emptying' from the pastor and church board to invite the congregation to be part of the decision-making process, since they relinquish power to unilaterally take certain decisions. Similarly, it requires *kenosis* from the church at large to engage in the process of collaborative decision-making and to be open to differing views on particular issues. However, this approach is not a guarantee for unity in the congregation and it does not provide the answers to sensitive dilemmas. The approach is a tool to express love in decision-making processes. For a variety of reasons it is possible that the collaborative process does not lead to a decision made in unity. From the perspective of the leadership team, with an intentional coming alongside, at least *philia*-love has been expressed during the process. But when collaborative governance

leads to a decision made in unity not only *philia*-love is applied, but trust, commitment, and shared ownership is affirmed.

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