



The Kenosis of Jesus Christ: Model of the Christian Life According To Philippians 2:5-11

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Abstract: *In the ancient city of Philippi, resonant with echoes of a bygone prosperity, the apostle Paul wove an indelible narrative in his epistle to the Philippians. Penned during his Roman imprisonment, this literary masterpiece, nestled within the realm of captivity epistles, expresses gratitude to a church intimately entwined with Paul's challenges. At its core lies a profound theme – the "Kenosis of Jesus Christ," unraveling divine humility as expounded in Philippians 2:5-11. This theological journey delves into diverse interpretations by researchers, spanning epochs from the Church Fathers to contemporary theologians. While the Church Fathers grapple with the dual nature of Jesus, reformers and modern theologians provide nuanced perspectives, revealing the enduring relevance of kenosis. The ramifications of kenosis on Malagasy life manifest in humanitarian salvation, exemplified in the voluntary abasement and subsequent exaltation of Jesus Christ outlined in Philippians 2:5-11. This transformative power extends beyond theological discourse, influencing progress, national reconciliation, and ecclesiastical renewal in the daily life of Madagascar. Examining the compatibility of kenosis with Madagascar's development, we discern its potential as both a tool and an obstacle. As an effective tool, kenosis aligns with the true preaching of the Gospel and the lived experience of humility, fostering a trajectory toward societal flourishing. However, as an obstacle, it is manifested in the tolerance of injustice, and conflicting with the current societal situation. Kenosis emerges as a profound concept in Christian theology, inviting believers to embody the humility exemplified by Christ. The theological journey traverses diverse interpretations, illuminating the richness and complexity of this motif. In the context of Madagascar, kenosis catalyzes positive shifts in daily life, national reconciliation, and ecclesiastical renewal. This paradigm offers a transformative pathway for countries in progress, transcending economic metrics to embrace societal flourishing. The compatibility of kenosis with Madagascar's development calls for a recalibration of societal values, blending true Gospel preaching and humility to counter contemporary challenges and embrace the profound meaning of kenosis.*

Keywords: *Kenosis, Humiliation, Elevation, Lordship, Madagascar.*

I. Introduction

Philippi stands as a venerable testament to the ebb and flow of history, a city once adorned with wealth and prominence in north-eastern Macedonia. Yet, today, its existence is relegated to the annals of time, marked only by the solemn silhouette of a standing wall. A Roman colony from 42 A.D., Philippi holds a unique distinction—it was the inaugural European city where the gospel found its resonant voice, echoing through the corridors of antiquity.

The epistle to the Church of Philippi, a literary gem in the apostle Paul's corpus, bears an unmistakable imprint of distinctiveness. Penned during Paul's second journey with Sylvanus between the years 43-50 A.D., its echoes reverberate through the corridors of time as

Paul revisits the city during his third journey in the years 57-58 A.D. This epistle, nestled within the confines of what scholars term the "captivity epistle," serves as a poignant expression of gratitude from the depths of Paul's Roman imprisonment.

The threads that bound Paul to the Philippians were no ordinary filaments; they were woven with the fabric of mutual support. Philippi, a church intimately close to Paul's heart, stood as a beacon of assistance during his times of need. In the labyrinth of challenges, this assembly alone extended its helping hand, forging a bond so profound that opposition found scant footing. The authenticity of Paul's apostleship required no vindication before them, for they recognized the essence of his calling without the need for elaborate demonstration.

Within the tapestry of sacred texts, the Epistle to the Philippians distinguishes itself with a narrative thread woven into the loom of unparalleled Christian experience. Exegetes unanimously herald this epistle as a repository of profound truths, a revelation of the Christian ethos that transcends the ordinary. It beckons believers to anchor their faith in the crucified and risen Christ, the bedrock of salvation.

In the intricate explanation of this epistle, a central theme emerges—the "Kenosis of Jesus Christ." The humility of Christ, as elucidated in Philippians 2:5-11, becomes the touchstone of Christian life. "Kenosis," a term coined to encapsulate Pauline Christology, unravels the divine act of God humbling Himself. In the voluntary abasement of Jesus Christ, God's love unfurls, laying bare the path to salvation. Without the divine descent into humility, the tapestry of redemption remains incomplete.

The teaching resonates with the profound affinity Paul shared with the Philippians, a church that became the cradle of kenotic discourse. Amidst the ecclesiastical challenges posed by Judaism and the hubris of divisive elements within, Paul implores the Philippians to embrace the mind of Christ. The transformative power of humility, he contends, not only reshapes individual lives but becomes the fulcrum for communal well-being.

As the epistle extends its timeless wisdom, it beckons Christians, both in antiquity and today, to heed its call. The "mind of Christ" emerges as the lodestar guiding ethical conduct. The clarion call to emulate Christ's humility, however, echoes in a world that often remains ensconced in pride. The paradox unfolds—a Christian country languishes in poverty, its people mired in the contradiction of professing faith yet faltering in embodying Christ-like humility.

Madagascar, despite its Christian majority, grapples with the yoke of poverty, a stark reality that defies the transformative potential inherent in kenosis. The Apostle's exhortation to embody "en cristw"—to harbor the sentiments of Christ—resounds as a clarion call for personal and societal metamorphosis. The Christian landscape, instead of reflecting the sacrificial love of Christ, bears the scars of arrogance and megalomania.

The research undertaken seeks not merely to dissect the theological nuances but, more profoundly, to catalyze a seismic shift in the Malagasy psyche. Kenosis, the unexplored key to national development, beckons a change in mentality. It beseeches the Malagasy people to shed the cloak of ignorance and embrace the transformative power embedded in Christ-like humility.

The Epistle to the Philippians emerges as a timeless reservoir of wisdom, offering a roadmap for personal and societal transformation through the kenosis of Jesus Christ. The appeal to embody the mind of Christ transcends temporal boundaries, beckoning believers to forsake pride and embrace humility—a clarion call resonating not only in the hallowed halls of ancient Philippi but echoing across the epochs, urging humanity to redefine its trajectory through the transformative power of kenosis.

II. Review of Literature

Kenosis, a subject explored by scholars across epochs, has invited diverse perspectives from church fathers, reformers, and contemporary theologians. Theological luminaries, each with nuanced observations, delved into this Christological enigma, primarily centered on the dual nature of Jesus. The crux of discourse emanates from dogmatic considerations, sparking profound debates that transcend temporal boundaries. The theological tapestry of kenosis, woven through the lenses of varied scholars, reflects the perennial quest to fathom the mystery within the two-fold nature of Christ.

2.1 According to the Church Fathers

a. Those who accept that Jesus is both man and God

In the theological tapestry of early Christianity, luminaries like Athanasius, Tertullian, and Cyril of Alexandria engaged in profound contemplation regarding the dual nature of Jesus Christ. Athanasius, initially influenced by a Platonic perspective, underwent a transformative shift at the Synod of Alexandria in 362 AD, where he presided and championed the principle encapsulated in John 1:14: "The Word truly became flesh." (Kelly, 1968) This epochal gathering affirmed the inseparable unity of Jesus' divinity and humanity, dispelling any notion of annihilation. Cyril of Alexandria, in consonance with Athanasius, staunchly opposed Arianism by upholding the dual nature of Christ (Kannengiesser, 1989). Tertullian, too, affirmed Jesus' complete humanity, emphasizing the divine incarnation as the bridge enabling society to reach God (Arnold, 2004). Together, these theological stalwarts affirmed a profound mystery—Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, embodying two natures in harmonious unity for the redemption of humanity).

b. Those who denied Jesus' divinity

Within the theological currents of antiquity, a divergence emerged, positing Jesus as a mere mortal, born of Mary and Joseph, cast as a chosen prophet of God—a conception divergent from the biblical narrative (Kelly, 1968). This heterodox Christology, challenging orthodoxy, contends that Jesus, while human, was an elevated messenger, not the incarnate Son proclaimed in Scripture.

In the annals of theological dissension, Arianism surfaces as a doctrinal departure, rejecting Jesus' divinity (Kelly, 1968). The Arian stance, rooted in the repudiation of consubstantiality, asserts Jesus' inequality with the Father (Caroline, 2020)—eschewing the term "homoousios." According to Arianism, Jesus occupies a subordinate position, delineating a theological landscape where two distinct natures, divine and created, coexist. Arian Christology posits Jesus as a creature, a Son brought forth by the Father at a specific moment. This unique filial relationship affords Christ a quasi-divine status, challenging traditional Christian orthodoxy and engendering debates that resonated through ecclesiastical corridors for centuries. The Arian controversy, a theological crossroads, underscored the perennial quest to comprehend the ineffable mystery of Christ's nature within the intricate tapestry of Christian doctrine.

2.2 According to the Reformers

Among the stalwart Reformers, a harmonious accord resonates in their affirmation of both the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. John Calvin, a luminary in the Reformation, expounded on the necessity of the Incarnation for the consummation of salvation (Vahanian, 1989). In Calvin's theological symphony, sinners find a mediator in Jesus Christ, bridging the chasm between humanity and the divine. For Calvin, the dual nature of Jesus—both God and man—coalesces seamlessly, a singular person embodying the sacred mission entrusted to him.

Parallel to Calvin, Martin Luther, another Reformation giant, heralded the authentic duality of Jesus, embracing him as both true God and true man. Luther's theological anthem crescendos in the sovereignty of God, while also spotlighting the humanity of Jesus, notably unveiled in the crucible of suffering and death (Arnold, 2005). Luther's unique contribution, the "theologia crucis," illuminates the divine essence mirrored in Jesus' suffering, an intimate revelation inextricably tied to his sacrificial death.

Distinctive to Lutheranism is the legacy of the Giessen school (Vial, 2015), positing that Jesus intentionally veiled his divinity, a deliberate concealment amidst the self-sacrificial act. This nuanced perspective reveals a deliberate humility, with Jesus refraining from overt displays of divinity at the pivotal moment of self-offering. In this theological tapestry, the Reformers, unified in their affirmation of Jesus' dual nature, collectively resonate in the symphony of salvation—a melody of divine incarnation, suffering, and ultimate redemption.

2.3 According to Contemporary Theologians

In the hermeneutical landscape of contemporary theological discourse, the exegesis of Philippians 2:5-11 has become a focal point, generating spirited debate among scholars. A schism emerges, with divergent views on the ethical dimensions embedded within Paul's Christological hymn (Cuvillier, 2014; Kuen, s.d.). Some scholars contend that the hymn, commencing with the injunction in verse 5 for believers to embody the sentiments of Christ, remains detached from ethical imperatives. In their stance, Jesus serves as a theological archetype rather than a moral exemplar.

Contrarily, proponents of an ethical reading, exemplified by John Noel Aletti (Cuvillier, 2015; Jobin, 2010) and corroborated by Rosell Nebrede (Roder, 2014), assert that Paul's intent is unmistakably ethical. They posit that the hymn constitutes an impassioned call for the Philippian Christians to emulate Jesus, transcending theological abstraction to pragmatic honest guidance. This interpretative schism shapes the theological contours of the discourse, unveiling the intricate interplay between Christology and ethics.

This research endeavors beyond mere theoretical abstraction; its ambit extends into the realm of Malagasy daily life, delving into the ethical and social fabric of society. Rooted in an inter-epistemic approach, the study acknowledges the dynamic interplay between theological constructs and lived experiences.

Methodologically, the research navigates the rich tapestry of biblical texts through diachronic and synchronic lenses, discerning temporal evolution and synchronistic coherence. While the book remains a paramount tool, the research also contemplates the invaluable insights gleaned from interviews with diverse voices, enriching the scholarly discourse with the lived realities of those within the Malagasy context. In this intricate tapestry of theological exploration, the researchers navigate diverse currents, seeking not only intellectual illumination but also a transformative impact on the ethical and social ethos of the Malagasy people.

III. Results and discussion

3.1 The effects of kenosis in everyday Malagasy life

a. In the realization of humanitarian salvation

The main theme of Philippians 2:5-11 is Jesus' attitude to the salvation of the world: according to Paul, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were very important for the salvation of the world. Kenosis occupies an important place in Pauline theology. And this pericope shows us the importance of Paul's theology that Jesus had to die in order to be resurrected. He lowered himself to the lowest possible level, death on the cross.

b. The Lowering of Jesus Christ: Verses 5 to 8

In verses 6 to 8, Jesus lowered himself voluntarily. Verse 6: *ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ*, (Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a prey,) Philippians 2:6 unfolds a profound theological revelation, encapsulating the essence of Christ's divinity and eternal pre-existence. Paul, employing the metaphor "ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ" (in the form of God), transcends mere linguistic expressions, delving into the very core of Christ's being. This metaphor, far from suggesting a superficial resemblance, conveys a profound truth — Jesus, possessing the image of God, exists in intrinsic oneness with the divine. This image extends beyond external visage, delving into shared attributes and essence, compelling us to place Christ on the same elevated plane as God. The verse illuminates a timeless verity — Christ, co-eternal and co-equal with God, did not view equality with God as a prize to be seized; rather, it was an inherent reality. Thus, Philippians 2:6 serves as a theological compass, guiding us to recognize Jesus' divine starting point, where, from the genesis of creation, He bore the fullness of God's attributes and existed on the exalted plane of deity.

Verse 7: *ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος;* (But he emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men,) Jesus Christ' abasement begins.

1- 7a: In the sacred narrative of Philippians 2:7a-c, a profound theological odyssey unfolds, encapsulating the essence of Christ's self-emptying, known as "kenosis." This Greek term denotes a radical act of relinquishing, a voluntary stripping away of divine prerogatives (Prigent, 1998). In verse 7a, the divine identity undergoes a purposeful annulment—Christ, in an act of radical humility, renounces every entitlement, emptying Himself in a staggering display of selflessness.

2- 7b: taking the form of a servant (*μορφὴν δούλου*): Continuing this theological tapestry, verse 7b unfurls the paradox of Christ's equality with God juxtaposed with assuming the form of a slave. The term "doulos" transcends mere servitude, delineating the lowest echelon of societal hierarchy—the slave. Here, Jesus, though equal to God, willingly embraces a position of submission, obedient to the divine mission entrusted to Him. It is an incarnate humility, embodying servitude without divesting Himself of His divine essence (Focant, 2017)

3- 7c: Verse 7c reveals the zenith of this divine descent—the incarnation. Christ, taking on the likeness of humanity, fully experiences the spectrum of human vulnerability and need. Hungry, tired, and weeping, He immerses Himself in the intricacies of human existence, bridging the divine and human realms. This incarnation marks the culmination of "kenosis," as the Word becomes flesh, embracing the totality of human experience while retaining the

divine nature. In this kenotic journey, Christ, fully God and fully man, epitomizes the transcendent mystery of God-Manhood.

Verse 8: *καὶ σχήματι ἐύρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.*

(and, as for the figure, being found as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross).

In a profound display of voluntary humility, Jesus exemplifies unwavering obedience to God. His descent from divine equality to the nadir of crucifixion is a testament to his deliberate self-abasement. With resolute will, Jesus, once God, willingly submits to the lowest point of humiliation, embracing death on the cross. This sacrificial journey, marked by a divine fall, underscores his unswerving commitment to the redemption of humanity. In this extraordinary stoop, Jesus, equal to God, descends to the depths of degradation, epitomizing a divine humility that reaches its zenith in the transformative act of crucifixion.

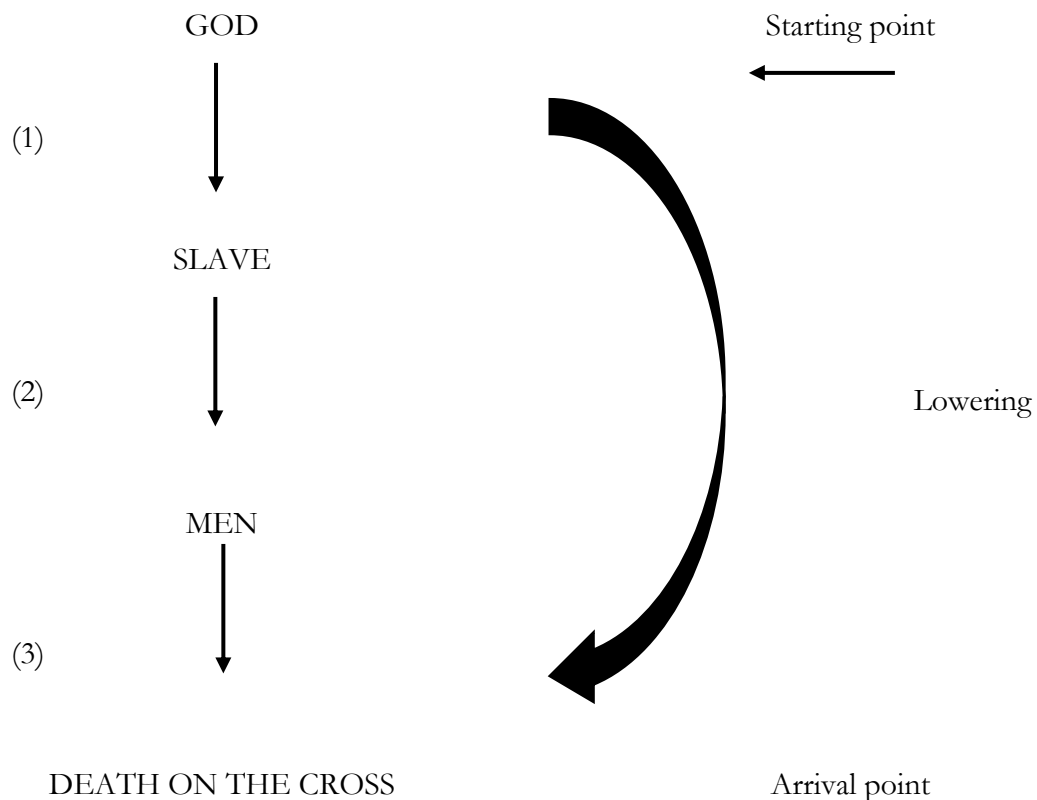


Figure 1. Lowering

c. The exaltation of Jesus Christ: verses 9 to 11

Here, God enters into action: God's restoration of Jesus' identity.

Verse 9: *Διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἔχαρισατο αὐτῷ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομάτων:* (Wherefore also God has sovereignly exalted him, and given him the name which is above every name;)

Thanks to Jesus' humility, God Himself exalted Him. He exalted him above all things and gave him the highest name. The name has two meanings:

- To define a person's existence
- To declare authority and power.

God gave him back his glory, power and authority.
 God made a great restoration in Jesus' life.

Verse 10: ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων,
 (That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,)

God plans for all men and creatures to accept Jesus' authority.

To bow before Jesus signifies the universal acknowledgment of His authority, dominion, and honor. Every creature, spanning realms beneath, upon, and beyond the heavens, unreservedly embraces His sovereignty and kingdom. The omnipotence inherent in the name of Jesus transcends all domains. In His earthly ministry, maladies and malevolent forces yielded to the potency of His name. Elevated by God, this authority prompted angels and humanity to genuflect, while demons quivered and retreated. The pervasive influence of the name of Jesus underscores a divine dominion that elicits reverence and commands obedience across the cosmic expanse.

Verse 11: καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς χριστός, εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.
 (And let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.)

Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 There will be a great declaration of faith or revelation of confidence in the world.

In the resounding echoes of Philippians 2:5-11, a theological tapestry unfolds, elucidating the exalted Lordship of Jesus Christ. All tongues, representative of humanity in its entirety, converge in unanimous acceptance of Jesus as Lord. This collective confession signifies a harmonious unity of minds, hearts, and convictions, affirming Jesus' elevation from the humble form of a slave to the sovereign Lord, exalted by the divine hand.

The designation "Lord" transcends earthly titles, claiming divine honor, and for Christians, this appellation is reserved solely for Jesus. In the crucible of Pauline theology, the hymn extends beyond verse 8, culminating in verse 11, portraying the complete restoration of divine honors to the once-humbled Jesus. The theological nexus between death and resurrection becomes evident, underscoring the transformative power inherent in the salvific mission entrusted to Christ.

Jesus' willingness to embrace death epitomizes a profound humility—a destruction of self that emanates from a profound love for humanity. His actions on the cross validate the sincerity of His words, "It is accomplished." The salvific mission, entrusted by God the Father, finds fulfillment not in eternal death but in the resurrection. This pivotal moment attests to the veracity of Jesus' words, elevating Him to the highest possible level.

The Malagasy people stand at a crossroads, where the transformative power of humility, kenosis, becomes the impetus for societal improvement. Christian ethos implores a departure from self-centered perspectives and egoism, advocating instead for a collective embrace of

humility and self-renunciation. The call to kenosis is a call to self-effacement — valuing others, considering ways to enhance lives, and fostering joint development.

Leaders, both in prominence and subservience, bear the responsibility of embodying humility. The mandate to annihilate and empty oneself becomes a potent weapon against the scourge of poverty in Malagasy society. Kenosis, lived authentically, becomes the catalyst for individual and societal elevation.

The transformative impact of kenosis extends beyond individual lives, catalyzing divine intervention for national rejuvenation. Humility becomes the cornerstone for rebuilding, improving, and elevating national sovereignty. Thus, the salvation of the country and the betterment of Malagasy lives hinge on a collective commitment to humility and self-renunciation.

In the symphony of kenosis, salvation is not merely an individual pursuit but a communal endeavor. Every act of humility, every renunciation of self-interest, resonates as a chord in the orchestration of national progression. The transformative power of kenosis, both as a personal ethos and a societal paradigm, stands as the divine antidote to the multifaceted challenges facing the Malagasy people, offering a pathway toward collective upliftment, societal betterment, and national rejuvenation.

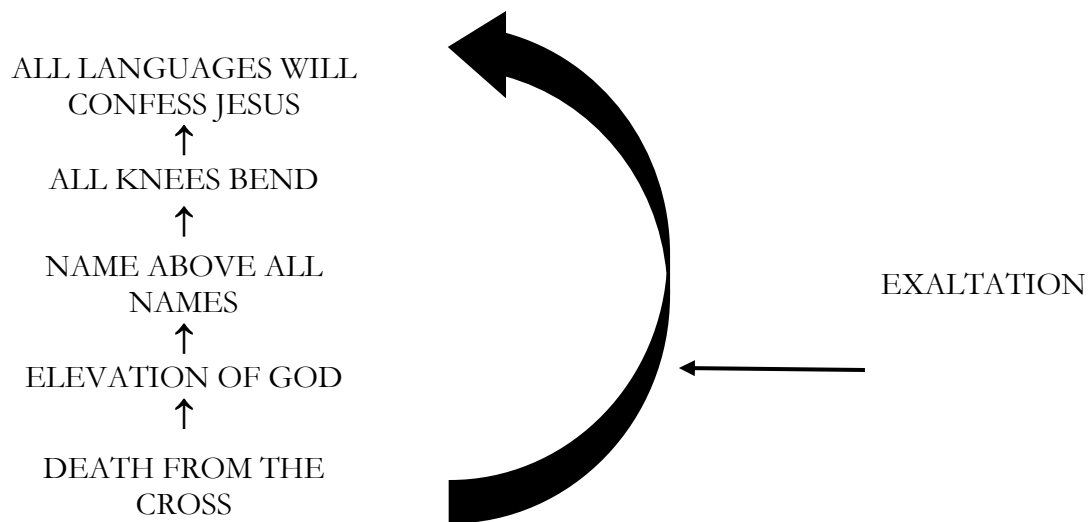


Figure 2. n° 2.2. Exaltation

d. Improving daily life in Madagascar

Countries in progress

In the preceding discourse, we articulated the transformative potential embedded in a change of attitude, a paradigm shift that extends its influence not only into the lives of Christians but also into the very fabric of the nation. Madagascar, akin to the United States, embraces Christianity as a cornerstone of its identity. Yet, despite this shared faith, the developmental challenges persist. The key lies in aligning the attitudes of Christian leaders and their subordinates with the exemplar of Jesus.

Convincing every Malagasy to embody kenosis, the self-emptying ethos of Jesus authentically, holds the promise of reshaping the national landscape. A collective embrace of

kenosis foretells the dissolution of selfishness, the cessation of conflicts, and the eradication of corruption. This transformation transcends the politics of the world, ushering in a governance model guided by the divine principles of kenosis.

In this utopian vision, a Malagasy nation practicing kenosis experiences unparalleled peace. Leaders, divested of self-interest, direct their energies toward national progress rather than personal enrichment. Kenosis becomes the impetus for altruistic actions, fostering economic development and political stability. The nation, freed from the shackles of individualism, embarks on a trajectory of collective advancement, propelled by the transformative power of self-emptying love.

e. National reconciliation achieved

In contemplating the current state of Madagascar, a nation marred by political divisions and fractured relationships, the urgent call for reconciliation reverberates through the annals of history. The year 2009 stands as a poignant marker, signaling the rupture of love and the onset of enmity among the Malagasy people. The once-cherished peace, for which they were renowned, lay shattered, demanding a collective pursuit of reconciliation.

The apostle Paul's declaration that "Jesus is our peace" resonates profoundly in this context. The sacrificial act of Jesus, submitting to death on the cross, unfolds as the transcendent catalyst for reconciliation—both between humanity and God and among individuals. The profound meaning of Jesus' cross lies in its representation of the restoration of harmony between God and humankind, as well as the reconciliation of human relationships.

The crucifixion becomes the linchpin for this reconciliation, obliterating enmity and bridging the chasm between God and humanity. The metaphorical wall of separation, entrenched in the human condition, crumbles under the weight of Jesus' self-emptying love. His death, an act of profound humility, becomes the epicenter of divine redemption, exemplifying a love so vast that it spans the breadth of humanity. To wield an impact on the nation, the Malagasy people must orient their collective mindset toward unity. The essence of this conviction is indispensable for experiencing the kenosis of Jesus—a self-emptying, sacrificial love that transcends personal interests for the sake of communal well-being.

Kenosis, in its practical application, demands self-denial. The obstacles to reconciliation—be they political ideologies, a sense of superiority, or an arrogant exclusivity of truth—must yield to the reign of tolerance. The life of kenosis, in this context, necessitates the acceptance of losing to others, cultivating humility, and eradicating the dormant seeds of pride and arrogance. Forgiveness, a central tenet of Jesus' sacrificial act, becomes a pivotal component in the journey toward reconciliation.

The example set by Jesus, who, despite possessing the image of God, humbled himself and tolerated human sin, serves as the guiding light. His crucifixion stands as the ultimate demonstration of love, a selfless act undertaken for the forgiveness of sins, the salvation of humanity, and reconciliation with God. In emulating this spirit of kenosis, a nation can aspire to overcome political, ideological, and personal barriers that hinder reconciliation.

Tolerance, humility, and forgiveness emerge as the cornerstones of the Malagasy people's collective kenotic journey. Divested of pride and political biases, fostering unity and

peace becomes the paramount objective. The scriptural encouragement to prioritize peace and love echoes the ethos of Jesus, a person of communion who esteemed these values.

Living kenosis emerges as the singular pathway to authentic reconciliation for the Malagasy people. It involves a profound transformation of individual and collective attitudes, transcending the barriers of self-interest and political discord. This paradigm shift, rooted in self-denial and sacrificial love, holds the transformative power to restore the nation's communal fabric, ushering in an era of peace, unity, and genuine reconciliation.

f. Renewed ecclesiastical mission

Kenosis, when embraced by the Church, becomes the catalyst for the elevation and renewal of its sacred ministry. Over time, pride and self-esteem have infiltrated the hallowed corridors, leading to lapses in fulfilling the Church's divine responsibilities and God's mission.

At the heart of the Church's mission lies the sacred duty of proclaiming the Gospel, a solemn charge bequeathed by Jesus Christ to His disciples in the wake of His resurrection. The vision espoused by the FJKM (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar) — "Madagascar to be a Christian country until 2118" (Irako, 2016) — underscores the paramount importance of prioritizing the evangelical message.

Religious leaders and the Church hierarchy, aware of this divine mandate, must ardently reflect on the meticulous execution of this Gospel proclamation throughout the nation and beyond. The linchpin for the success of this ecclesiastical renewal resides in the practice of kenosis. Pastors and servants alike must internalize the conviction that humility is the path to effective service. By humbling themselves before the splendor of the God of glory and in the midst of their fellow servants, the ministry of all will be carried out in the fear of God. This transformative process promises a paradigm shift in behavior and service, fostering an environment where judgment gives way to a harmonious pursuit of God's mission. No one will judge anyone.

3.2 The compatibility of kenosis with the development of Madagascar

In Jesus Christ's humbling, salvation and renewal find purpose. Authentic Christian embodiment of His life promises profound spiritual, daily, political, and social changes. Yet, a pivotal question emerges: "Is kenosis the paramount solution for Madagascar? Is it the exclusive pathway for the nation's development?" The exploration of such inquiries unveils the potential for theological insights to inform the pursuit of a transformative and holistic path for Madagascar's flourishing.

a. Kenosis is an effective tool for national development

True preaching of the Gospel

The essence and effectiveness of Gospel preaching lie not solely in its force but in the clarity and genuineness with which it unfolds the narrative of Jesus Christ. The Gospel, encapsulated in Christ's sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection for the redemption of humanity, beckons individuals to a transformative embrace of faith, leading them to a profound encounter at the sacred foot of the cross. The proclamation of the Gospel transcends mere verbal articulation; it necessitates a lived application woven into the fabric of daily existence.

Evangelism, as the conveyance of this transformative Gospel, mandates meticulous and truthful instruction about Jesus as the embodiment of the Gospel. Authentic and flawless

teachings possess the potential to sway hearts and minds, inducing a positive metamorphosis in individuals. The genuine proclamation of the Gospel instigates a profound metamorphosis in perspectives, lifestyles, and conduct, thereby charting a historic redirection in the trajectory of a nation.

The FJKM's solemn commitment to "preach the gospel fully throughout the island of Madagascar, a gospel that changes history" (Irako, 2021) underscores the seismic potential of Gospel proclamation to catalyze societal revolution. A nation subjected to the authentic heralding of Jesus Christ's Gospel experiences a radical transformation, diverging from its prevailing condition. The envisioned future for Madagascar transcends the shackles of impoverishment, envisioning a developed entity sculpted and elevated by the transformative power encapsulated in the Gospel.

In this theological paradigm, the Gospel becomes more than a message; it emerges as the dynamic catalyst propelling societal metamorphosis. Madagascar, navigating the currents of development and prosperity, finds itself profoundly aligned with the redemptive narrative woven into the message of Jesus Christ. The theological underpinning becomes a beacon guiding the nation toward a future shaped by the redemptive, transformative, and empowering currents inherent in the Gospel.

b. Living kenosis correctly

The Gospel, a reservoir of profound teachings on Christian ethics, underscores the transformative nature of embracing Christ. Paul's declaration, "If anyone therefore is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new," anchors Christian behavior in the transformative reality encapsulated by the phrase "in Christ." This preposition signifies not just a location but a profound identity grounded in Christ.

Christian ethics, as illuminated by the teachings of Jesus Christ, finds a quintessential characteristic in kenosis—a self-emptying humility. The call for humility resonates deeply with the Malagasy people, urging them to embrace a lifestyle permeated with humility. The embodiment of this virtue is crucial for aligning with the mind of Christ, as exhorted by Paul in verse 5, "So behave among yourselves, as is done in Christ Jesus."

The transformative power of adopting the mind of Christ holds the key to Madagascar's success. Emulating Jesus becomes a guiding principle for leaders and the populace alike, steering the nation toward the realization of its dream of development. The ethos of Christ's spirit becomes the compass directing and governing the country. The correlation is evident: a developing Madagascar corresponds to an improved standard of living for the Malagasy people.

Kenosis, therefore, emerges as the defining element of Christian and Malagasy ethics. While an exact replication of Christ's actions may be unattainable, the essence of humility, the foundational principle Jesus brought for salvation, must permeate daily lives. To be truly humble involves prioritizing others, valuing them above oneself, and considering their well-being with greater importance. This perspective, rooted in kenosis, begets love, respect, and a commitment to righteousness and goodness for others.

A Malagasy society imbued with the spirit of kenosis is poised for happiness, security, and peace on the land bestowed by God. The dissemination of the profound meaning of

kenosis becomes imperative, dispelling ignorance and paving the way for success. The endeavor necessitates not merely teaching about kenosis but persuading individuals to embrace faith in Jesus, the catalyst for authentic transformation.

Belief in Jesus becomes the gateway to genuine kenosis, and it is through the transformative power of this self-emptying humility that history draws closer to the divine plan. Kenosis is not a mere worldly policy; it transcends human tendencies, standing as God's instrument to align history with His redemptive purposes.

In the interplay of faith, humility, and the transformative power of kenosis, the Malagasy people discover the path to a brighter future—a future where the principles of Christ guide their actions, transforming their individual lives and shaping the destiny of their nation.

c. Kenosis is an obstacle to development in all areas

Tolerance of injustice

Kenosis, stemming from the Greek "keno," encapsulates the profound humility and self-emptying demonstrated by Jesus amidst persecution, vividly portrayed in Isaiah 53. This divine silence, a poignant testament to humility and tolerance, emanates transformative power when comprehended in its authentic essence. Regrettably, misconstrued, its consequences reverberate. The Malagasy adage, "Mandefitra manana ny rariny," subtly champions compromise over truth, cultivating an atmosphere where transgressions persist unopposed. This cultural disposition exacts a toll on Madagascar, impeding progress and perpetuating societal decline.

Authentic kenosis is not a call to passivity but a request to embody profound humility and discernment. As theologians, our duty is to elucidate the trajectory where kenosis fosters justice, truth, and societal prosperity. We are tasked with guiding nations away from the obscurity of compromise, directing them toward the resplendent radiance of righteousness. In comprehending kenosis, societies may emerge from the shadows, embracing a harmonious synthesis of humility, tolerance, and unwavering commitment to truth – a transformative odyssey towards a flourishing and just existence.

d. Contrary to society's current situation

There is a big difference between the mentality of the past and the mentality of the present. These 3 hypotheses are the causes:

Hypothesis 1: The character of the current community

The current condition of the Malagasy people is marked by the pervasive grip of poverty and the myriad challenges of daily life. A prevailing ethos of selfish individualism has encapsulated society, where each person exists in their isolated bubble, indifferent to the plight of others. Generosity and communal spirit have waned, and the landscape is dominated by a pervasive "Y" society—a symbol of the individualized paths people tread. The ubiquitous presence of headphones worn by individuals of all ages signifies a detachment from communal existence, reinforcing a mindset fixated on self-importance, leaving others unnoticed and disregarded in the collective journey of life.

Hypothesis 2: The evolution of technology

In the contemporary era dominated by technological advancement, the trajectory of development is undeniably influenced, bringing forth both benefits and detriments, particularly in the realm of human behavior, even within the Christian context. Technology, while providing convenience and connectivity, bears the risk of steering individuals toward an

unintentional drift into atheism. The semblance of self-sufficiency in technological prowess can breed a sense of superiority, prompting a denial of God's providence.

Amid the prevailing postmodern ethos, where the illusion of comprehensive human knowledge thrives, technology emerges as a double-edged sword. While ostensibly connecting distant individuals, it paradoxically fosters disconnection among those in close proximity. The pervasive individualism propagated by technology diminishes human relationships, stifles communal exchange, and nurtures a self-centered ethos. The deceptive notion that technological autonomy allows one to navigate life without reliance on others or divine guidance fuels egotism.

In this paradigm, some, ensnared by the prowess of technology, may assume god-like attributes, seeking mastery over the world and its intricacies. As researchers and innovators delve into the quest for control, arrogance can overshadow the acknowledgment of a higher power. In their pursuit of technological omnipotence, individuals risk neglecting the profound understanding that, despite technical prowess, there remains a transcendent God presiding above all realms of human endeavor.

Hypothesis 3: Ignorance of the meaning of Kenosis

The theological concept of "Kenosis," although absent as a specific term in the biblical lexicon, resonates deeply throughout the scriptures, encapsulating the profound principles of emptying, humbling, and shedding the self. Jesus Christ, while not employing the term overtly, consistently imparted the crucial tenets of humility and self-denial to his disciples, weaving a narrative that exemplifies the essence of kenosis.

For Christians, the acknowledgment of humiliation as an intrinsic facet of transformative spiritual growth is woven into the fabric of their faith. Nevertheless, the tangible embodiment of a life steeped in humility confronts adherents with a formidable challenge. The bias towards self-aggrandizement and the allure of recognition often cast shadows over the imperative to attribute glory to God. The struggle to disentangle oneself from the seduction of self-centered acclaim emerges as a significant hurdle in embracing the authentic essence of kenosis.

In this milieu, the pivotal significance lies in dispelling ignorance or misconceptions encircling the profound meaning of kenosis. The elucidation and comprehension of kenosis not only bring forth the core principles of Christian humility but also function as a guiding compass, steering believers away from the treacherous precipices of self-glorification. Instead, it cultivates a profound and transformative surrender of the self, aligning with the teachings of Christ. As Christians navigate the intricate journey of faith, the nuanced understanding of kenosis becomes a beacon, fostering a genuine humility that mirrors the self-emptying love exemplified by Jesus Christ, thereby fulfilling the essence of this profound theological concept.

IV. Conclusion

In the grand tapestry of Christian theology, kenosis stands as a profound concept that beckons believers to embody the humility exemplified by Christ. The journey through different theological epochs, from the Church Fathers to contemporary theologians, underscores the richness and complexity of this theological motif. While interpretations may differ, the essence of kenosis invites individuals and communities to a transformative surrender of the self for the greater good.

In the context of Madagascar, the effects of kenosis are palpable in the positive shifts observed in daily life, national reconciliation, and ecclesiastical renewal. This theological paradigm offers a way forward for countries in progress, charting a course toward development that goes beyond economic metrics to encompass societal flourishing.

The compatibility of kenosis with Madagascar's development is illuminated through the lens of true Gospel preaching and the lived experience of humility. The transformative potential of kenosis becomes a counterpoint to the challenges posed by contemporary society, technological evolution, and the ignorance surrounding its profound meaning.

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