

Unsettling Theology
The Theological Legacy of the Indian Residential Schools of Canada 1880-1970

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by

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Declaration

I, David Bruce Bryant-Scott, hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work, work of mine submitted elsewhere, or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

Signature:



Date: April 27, 2021

ABSTRACT

From the 1880s to the 1970s certain Canadian Christian Churches and Catholic religious orders were involved in the foundation and operation of the Indian Residential Schools. Funded by the federal government of Canada, these schools were part of an ongoing policy to assimilate and eradicate the Indigenous peoples in Canada. In retrospect these have been declared to be genocidal. At the time the church entities enthusiastically supported these schools, and apart from a few sexual predators, the majority of the workers were “good” people who felt that they were doing God’s work. What were the theologies that justified such involvement? How do “good” Christians get involved in genocide? What kind of theology might enable us today to not do something similar?

The first part of this dissertation reflects on the unsettling character of Levinas’s philosophy and develops his critique of western philosophy into a critical method. The second part surveys theologies that influenced the creation and operation of the residential schools, which is seen as a part of a larger colonial project predicated on the marginalization and assimilation of Indigenous peoples. This involves the consideration of the theological justification of the European settlement of North America, as well as the attitudes towards Indigenous peoples from 1500 to 1910. These theological concepts are subjected to the Levinasian critique, and they are found to contribute towards violence and genocide. The third part looks at kenotic theology especially in the writings of Bulgakov, Coakley, and others, and considers whether it can help Christians resist the totalizing of the earlier theologies, and work to heal and empower (it does).

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Preface to the Amended Submission

I am grateful for the opportunity of submitting an amended dissertation following the *viva* on October 19, 2019, and I thank the examiners for their careful analysis and recommendations. For those who were obliged to read the initial submission, this preface will serve as a brief guide to what is different.

I have attempted throughout to tie together more closely the three strands of the dissertation.

Sections of the first submission have been cut: the chapter on Balthasar is gone, much of the history of settlement in Canada has been removed, and I have omitted unnecessary biographical material, personal digressions, many of the appendices, and some discussions on methodology which were only loosely related to the topics at hand.

The Introduction now engages more fully with the work of Indigenous theologians and their allies. The academic backlash to post-colonial and decolonizing has been pulled out of footnotes and expanded. Part One has been entirely rewritten to focus on the unsettling character of Levinas's philosophy, and to argue why this is of relevance to Christian theology. Part Two, on the theologies justifying settlement and colonization, now follows a topical structure rather than a narrative based on historical developments. In Part Three the section on Bulgakov has been shortened and reorganised, and the critiques of the kenotic theology of Sarah Coakley by Lynn Tonstad and Karen Kilby are discussed in greater depth. Finally, the closing chapter has been entirely rewritten. The bibliography has been revised accordingly.

Introduction

Unsettling Theology as a Genre and Method



Figure 2: Emily Carr, "Indian Church" 1929 Oil on Canvas, Art Gallery of Ontario, Bequest of Charles S. Band, Toronto 1970 69/118 © Art Gallery of Ontario. Used with permission.

A) The Presenting Problem

This dissertation is a contribution to an emerging genre in theology that we might call *Unsettling Theology*. This approach to theology applies the critiques and positive proposals of postcolonial thought to specific situations which have theological content; in this case, it is addressed to Christian people who are settlers – the descendants of those who colonized and settled in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South America, and elsewhere.

The presenting problem is that of the legacy of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools (“IRS”), which, while funded by the Canadian federal government, were enthusiastically operated and supported from the 1880s until 1970 by the Canadian churches (precursor institutions started in the 1820s, also operated by churches). Between the late 1870s and 1985 some 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children in Canada were obliged to attend these schools. These institutions were organized by the federal government of Canada with the explicit purpose of assimilating these children into mainstream settler society – to get rid of the “‘Indian problem’ forever.” As Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, reported to the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Indian Act of the House of Commons:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone . . . Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.¹

¹ National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, volume 6810, file 470-2-3, volume 7, pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3).

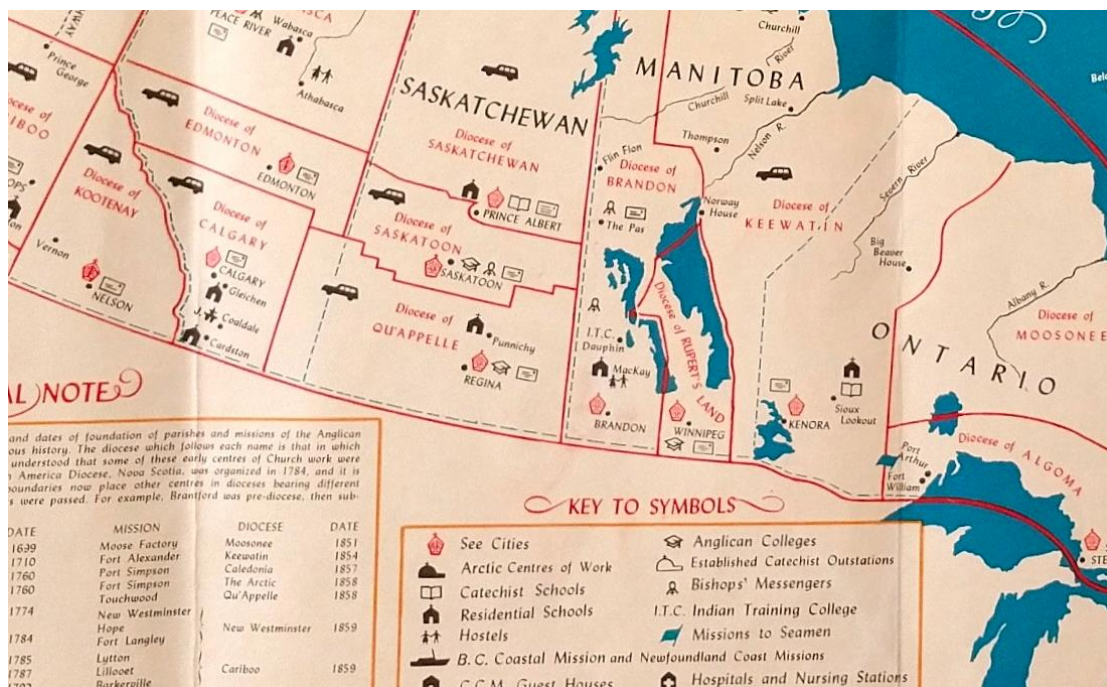


Figure 2: Detail from “A Map of Canada, Issued by the Department of Missions (M.S.C.C.) of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada” c. 1960. Courtesy of the Parish of St. Matthias, Victoria BC.

Sir John A. Macdonald (1815-1891) was the first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, and the foremost of the Fathers of Confederation. In the House of Commons, in May 1883, he stated:

When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write ... [T]he Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.²

² John Carleton, “John A. Macdonald was the real architect of residential schools” The Toronto Star, July 9, 2017, from <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/07/09/john-a-macdonald-was-the-real-architect-of-residential-schools.html>, accessed April 22, 2021.

Up until the early 1970s the schools were almost entirely staffed by missionary teachers – lay, ordained, and religious — from the main Christian denominations in Canada, primarily Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Church of Canada. These schools were prominently featured as ministries of these churches,³ and the hierarchy and many clergy and laity were enthusiastic about them.

The legacy of the Indian Residential Schools has been recognized by contemporary Canada as a stain upon its history. Europeans, mainly French and British, settled in what became Canada from the 17th century through to the present day, and efforts to educate and help Indigenous peoples adapt to the European societies seemed peaceful and beneficial. Indeed, many Indigenous leaders asked for help in education, and this was written into numerous treaties. However, in conception and implementation the results were horrific. The results of this policy included:

- The deliberate and forced loss of language and culture by a majority of attendees.
- Legally mandated apprehension and separation of children from their parents, as if they were abusive.
- Physical abuse by teachers and staff at the schools.
- Sexual abuse by a number of staff.⁴
- A failure to inculcate parenting skills.
- The exploitation of children for labour.
- Experimentation on the children for nutritional studies (no consent was ever received from the children or their parents).

³ See the detail of the map of the Anglican Church of Canada in 1960 on the previous page. After the schools stopped operation, many continued under direct federal management, and the last one closed in 1997.

⁴ At least 31 individuals were convicted of physical and/or sexual abuse, most of them being convicted after 1985. See The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “Appendix 3: Persons Found Guilty of Abusing Residential School Students”, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Volume One: Summary. Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Toronto ON: James Lorimer & Company, Ltd: 2015), pp. 365-368.

- The failure to provide basic necessities of food and shelter, and disregard for the prevention of disease, resulting in death rates of up to 69% in some years; these deaths were poorly recorded and parents were often not notified for months.
- The failure to actually train the students with useful skills.

The attempt to destroy Indigenous peoples failed. They have proven to be more resilient than expected. That said, the ongoing consequences of the Residential Schools continue. Today, in comparison to the Canadian population as a whole, Indigenous populations experience greater unemployment, higher poverty, a higher rate of incarceration, and a higher rate of alcoholism and addiction. Part of this is due to systemic discrimination in society and the justice system, but much of it must be credited to the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma. Although most of the schools closed in the late 1960s and '70s, the Indian Residential Schools continue to affect the lives of Indigenous peoples today.

The schools were part of a long sequence of efforts on the part of the Crown and its settlers to marginalize, discriminate against, assimilate, and destroy Indigenous peoples. Initially, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the First Nations were useful to the French and British settlers in extracting resources from the hinterlands, in developing the land, and in alliances against other European powers. To establish these often-beneficial relations they entered into treaties. These treaties meant different things to the signatories – on the part of the First Nations an acceptance that the new arrivals could share in the using of the land, but on the part of the settlers it meant an extinction of any Indigenous title. In the 1820s, after the War of 1812, the usefulness of Indigenous peoples to the British in wars against French and Americans declined, and the economy shifted from the extraction of beaver pelts to agricultural development. First

Nations in British North America were no longer treated as allies but as wards of the Crown. Treaties were broken or ignored as settlers expanded onto “Indian” lands. Legislation was passed, first by the Province of Canada in 185,7 and then in 1876 by the new Dominion of Canada, to “enfranchise” Indigenous men so that they would no longer be considered “Indians”. Under the Indian Act of 1876 the Crown defined who an “Indian” was, removing the determination of membership from the people themselves, and blurring major distinctions between the hundreds of First Nations. The movement of “Indians” was legally delegated to “Indian agents”, “white” men who exerted almost complete control over the reserves and the peoples. In place of traditional, partly hereditary leadership, the Indian Act imposed band councils with restricted powers.

Efforts at assimilation continued well into modern times. Starting in the late 1950s and through to the mid-1980s, in what is known as “the Sixties Scoop”, some 20,000 Indigenous children were apprehended from their parents and adopted by middle-class non-Indigenous families, on the basis that it was “in the best interests of the children”. Rather than being placed with relatives or families from their own culture and ethnicity, these children were encouraged to forget their past, even while they experienced discrimination in the schools and in employment because of their visible Indigenous looks.⁵ The Indian Act to this day continues to define who has status as an “Indian”.⁶ Up until the 1950s it was

⁵ Notably, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (and later, Prime Minister) Jean Chrétien and his wife Aline Chrétien adopted an Inuit boy around 1971.

⁶ A significant number of First Nations were excluded from being defined as “Indians”, thus unintentionally creating the category of “non-status Indians”. A comprehensive and critical guide to the Act is Bob Joseph’s *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with*

illegal for any “Indian” to hire a lawyer to advocate for land rights and Indigenous issues. Although considered subjects of the Crown, Indigenous persons could not vote in Canadian elections until 1960. The First Nations in Atlantic Canada and British Columbia, and the Inuit of Nunavut, have never signed formal agreements about land.

The situation is changing. Many Indigenous peoples point out, “We are still here.” The attempts at assimilation, although damaging, were unsuccessful. Indeed, Indigenous peoples have not only survived, but in many cases, are now thriving. This is due mainly to Indigenous activism. First Nations and other Indigenous persons have been successful in getting relief from the courts, particularly the Supreme Court of Canada. The creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999 resulted in the first high-level Indigenous-majority jurisdiction in Canada, as most of its people are Inuit and continue to speak Inuktitut. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is being incorporated into the laws of Canada.⁷ The University of Victoria Law School recently announced that in September 2018 it will take in its first students for a

Indigenous Peoples a Reality (Port Coquitlam BC: Indigenous Relations Press, 2018).

⁷ Not without controversy. Of the ten provinces, only British Columbia has passed a law incorporating it, in 2019. The federal government has introduced a bill to do the same at the federal level, and “Bill C-15 also shows several similarities to BC’s DRIPA, discussed in our earlier bulletin series. That said, there are several nuanced differences between the two pieces of legislation. Most notably, Bill C-15 does not provide for shared decision-making agreements with Indigenous governing bodies like its BC counterpart.” Amy Carruthers, Kevin O’Callaghan, and Madison Grist, “Canada: Federal Government Introduces UNDRIP Legislation” 16 December 2020, at <https://www.mondaq.com/canada/indigenous-peoples/1016528/federal-government-introduces-undrip-legislation%20accessed%20April%202022>, accessed April 22, 2021.

joint degree program in Canadian Common Law (JD) and Indigenous Legal Orders (JID).⁸ Many reserves have successful business development.⁹ The Indigenous languages of Cree, Ojibway, Innu/Montagnais, Oji-Cree, Mi'kmaq, Blackfoot, Inuktitut, and Dene all have populations that are large enough to sustain them. While most other Indigenous languages are in danger of extinction, great efforts are being made in schools and communities to resurrect them among children and youth. Indigenous peoples are finding new life in recovering their traditional laws, culture, languages, and spiritual practices.

The history of the IRS and the ongoing effects only came to be well known in the 1990s when the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples met and then issued its *Final Report*. A key submission to the Commission in 1996 was by John S. Milloy with what was later published as *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879-1986*.¹⁰ Milloy, a professor at Trent University, Peterborough Ontario, was one of the first historians to comprehensively catalogue the suffering of children in the schools. Subsequently lawyers, on the principle of vicarious responsibility, began suing the federal government and church entities on behalf of thousands of former residential

⁸ <https://www.uvic.ca/law/about/Indigenous/jid/index.php> accessed October 4, 2018.

⁹ For example, the Osoyoos Indian Band in south central BC has no unemployment and extensive business developments: Jake MacDonald, "How a B.C. native band went from poverty to prosperity", *The Globe and Mail* (May 29, 2014; Updated June 19, 2017) <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/clarence-louie-feature/article18913980/>, accessed July 28, 2018.

¹⁰ John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879-1986* (Winnipeg MB: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999). See also J. R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto ON: The University of Toronto Press, 1996) which is an earlier and more rambling narrative covering the same events.

students. Although most of the time the plaintiffs did not name incorporated church entities such as dioceses and religious orders, the lawyers for the federal government began to “third party” the religious bodies, naming them in responses and third-party filings, thus involving them in liability. When, after a couple of legal settlements, it became apparent a) that this threatened the continued existence of these religious bodies, and b) that the law courts were not the best means to achieve a quick resolution to the suits, the government, the churches, and the lawyers acting for the plaintiffs negotiated a comprehensive settlement which was finalized in 2006. It arranged for CAD \$2 billion compensation to be given to some 86,000 surviving former students. It also required the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (“TRC”) of Canada. The TRC, over a period of six years, held events and heard testimony from hundreds of former students and some staff. The denominations involved were present and involved throughout the TRC process. *The TRC Final Report* confirmed and expanded the evidence presented in Milloy’s *A National Crime*. As well, a National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (“NCTR”) was established at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave a heartfelt apology on the floor of the House of Commons in 2008. The churches and other political bodies have at various times since the 1990s offered apologies as well.¹¹

The TRC issued 94 Calls to Action. Number 49 states:

We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European

¹¹ In this dissertation see Appendix 3 for the apology of the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Appendix 4 for that of the Prime Minister. For all of the apologies see “Appendix 4 – Apologies” in the *TRC Final Report Volume One*.

sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*.¹²

Much attention has been given to the Doctrine of Discovery. Many church denominations have passed resolutions repudiating it.¹³ In 2019 Anglican Video produced the film “Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen lands, Strong Hearts.”¹⁴

All of this is progress. However, before the 1980s the churches were proud of their involvement in the schools at the time. Why did they see the schools as a positive good in spite of the evidence of harmful consequences? To what extent were they driven by their theologies? And if it was theological, are we in danger of repeating their errors in different contexts? How did these good people wind up doing evil things?¹⁵ How should Christians today deal with such a legacy?

It might be argued that the churches’ involvement was just the result of the colonialism and imperialism of the time – that it was not really theological, but social. What theology was involved, it might be thought, was simply subsumed into the general approach of the colonizing peoples. But this is naïve. If we believe that history is formed by more than economic forces or technological advancement, and that ideas do make a difference, then it is incumbent upon Christians to examine the ideas that supported the churches’ involvement then. *Unsettling Theology* is a contribution to this.

¹² TRC *Final Report Vol. 1*, p. 327.

¹³ Including The Anglican Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and The Religious Society of Friends, as well as The Christian Reformed Church in North America, The Episcopal Church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian Church (USA),

¹⁴ It may be found at

<https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/doctrineofdiscovery/>

¹⁵ The experiences of staff are described in TRC *Final Report Vol. 1*, pp.121-129.

B) *Unsettling Theology* as an Emerging Genre of Theology

There are two parts to the methodology of the emerging genre of what I am calling *Unsettling Theology*. First, it critiques the theological propositions and systems which supported colonial thought and resulted in genocide and oppression. Second, it proposes theological concepts that can both assist in addressing that legacy for churches now, and thus help avoid repeating such abuse. The first involves listening to the complaints and critiques of Indigenous critics themselves, and paying heed to what they ask of settler peoples; it involves post-colonial analysis, or decolonization. The second is more constructive theology done in that light.

“Unsettling” has a double meaning. The first is that it is used as a synonym for “decolonization”, or removing oneself from the colonizing influence of settlers. The second is that it is not supposed to be a comforting read, especially for the one benefiting from the colonization; it disrupts the assumptions or beliefs of the reader, challenging them to move on to a more critical and historically informed perspective.

The theme of “unsettling” is growing and developing in Canadian non-fiction literature dealing with settler-Indigenous relations. Among its first uses was in the title of Paulette Regan’s 2010 book *Unsettling the Settler Within*.¹⁶ That book has inspired several more works with “unsettling” in their titles: Arthur Manuel and Ron Derrickson’s *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up*

¹⁶ Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).

*Call*¹⁷ (2015); and Eve Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land and Settler Decolonization*¹⁸ (2016).

In *Unsettling the Settler Within* Regan, a historian and researcher for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reviews the history of the IRS and then argues that Canadians need to rewrite the histories told by settler peoples. These new histories incorporate the experiences and truth of Indigenous peoples. In the 1970s the role of Indigenous peoples in the history of Canada, as taught in high school and university, seemed to stop somewhere in the mid-19th century – it comprised the first chapter or two of a history book, and any subsequent mention more or less ended when the colonizers had turned the frontier into settlements.¹⁹ After having been important allies of the British against the American revolutionaries in the War of Independence and the War of 1812, First Nations such as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) seemed to drop out of the history of Canada. One was dimly aware of “Indian reserves”, and that the federal

¹⁷ Arthur Manuel & Ron Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015).

¹⁸ Eve Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land and Settler Decolonization* (Black Point NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2016).

¹⁹ An older example of this is Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History, Third Edition* (Toronto ON: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1969), where the last discussion of “Indians” takes place in 1885, on page 400 of a 762 page book. First published in 1947, this was the textbook that served a generation of undergraduates studying in the then emerging field of Canadian history; it continued to be published up until 1982. For a more recent example, see the late Desmond Morton's popular history *A Short History of Canada, Fifth Edition* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001). Desmond Morton was one of Canada's most eminent historians, having written thirty-six books, served as a Professor at the University of Toronto and McGill, and was a well-known public intellectual. There is one chapter – less than five pages – on First Nations in this history. They are almost always described in collective terms, and there is no real sense of the diversity among them. The Indian Residential Schools are only mentioned on p. 370 – a brief notice of the lawsuits arising against the religious entities and the federal government.

government, through the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs, had a responsibility towards them. The “rebellions” led by Louis Riel in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were described in terms of how they affected settlement, the building of the national railway, and the creation of provinces. Historians of Canada described a tale of benign expansion and exciting progress, where slowly diminishing First Nations were pushed aside as inconvenient occupiers of the land and inefficient stewards, but helped to become part of the larger project of the nation.

It was a selective and comforting history, one which began to be upset in the 1960 and 1970s, and which is challenged to the present day. Regan asks:

How can we, as non-Indigenous people, unsettle ourselves to name and then transform the settler – the colonizer who lurks within – not just in words but by our actions, as we confront the history of colonization, violence, racism, and injustice that remains part of the Indian Residential Schools legacy today?²⁰

Regan’s own answer to her question is that non-Indigenous Canadians need to let go of the myths of settler Canadians as “peacemakers’ and acknowledge the damage done. The development of a historical counter-narrative will allow for Indigenous and settler peoples to move beyond colonial relationships. Regan critiques the older historiography, and then proposes what a new one should look like.²¹

²⁰ Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, p. 11.

²¹ Good introductions to the history of Indigenous people’s include Arthur J. Ray’s *An Illustrated History of Canada’s Native Peoples: I Have Lived Here Since the World Began* and Allan D. McMillan’s venerable *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*. Both of these are written by settler academics teaching at universities in British Columbia. Charles Mann’s *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* is a popular but well informed review of the scholarly work done on Indigenous peoples in the Americas before contact. Settler-Indigenous relations in Canada are comprehensively addressed in J. R. Miller’s *Skyscrapers Hide The Heavens: A History of Native-Newcomer Relations in Canada*. An older work is the

In terms of Unsettling Theology, among those in Canada working in this genre are three Canadian authors coming from a settler background – Steve Heinrichs, Melanie Kampen, and Sarah Travis.

The collection of essays *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together*²² came out in 2013, and Part Two of that book is entitled “Unsettling Theology”. It was edited by Steve Heinrichs, Indigenous Relations Director for the Mennonite Church of Canada. In 2018 Heinrichs edited a similar book, *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization*.²³ Heinrichs put the first book together for adult study groups, ordinary Christians who wanted to look at Indigenous ways of knowing, and how they have interacted with the Church and Christian theology. The essays, poems, and art in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry* seek to begin to fill that vacuum. Half the authors are Indigenous from around the world, and half are settlers in North America. While many of the authors are academics, the texts are pitched more at

ground-breaking *A Long and Terrible Shadow* by Thomas Berger. James Daschuk writes authoritatively in *Clearing the Plains* on how the new Dominion of Canada under Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald cleared the Prairies in order to settle it with British and European immigrants. A First Nations perspective can be found in Thomas King’s popular and funny *The Inconvenient Indian*. It is an acerbic overview from someone who has worked as a university professor, a radio show host, and comedy writer. King’s *The Truth About Stories*, the transcript of his 2003 Massey Lectures on CBC Radio One, is a helpful informal introduction to the importance and relevance of written and oral traditions in the settle-Indigenous encounter. For a comprehensive introduction to the range of contemporary issues, the Métis author and lawyer Chelsea Vowel has written *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*. *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law and First Nations* by Dara Culhane examines how legal concepts such as terra nullius and terra incognita have played out in lawsuits in British Columbia over Indigenous title. See the bibliography for full bibliographic information.

²² Steve Heinrichs, editor, *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together* (Waterloo ON: Herald Press, 2013).

²³ Steve Heinrichs, editor *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2018).

the intelligent and curious adult reader, and not so much at students and scholars (although it is properly footnoted and well informed). Some of the authors are Christian, but several clearly are not, and still others are syncretistic (in the most charitable understanding of the word). *Unsettling the Word* contains reflections on Biblical passages that have been influential in justifying colonial settlement, as well as inspiring resistance to it by Indigenous people and their allies.

There is no clearly articulated methodology common to the essays, but there are some common basic assumptions at work. First, the starting point is the blunt recognition stated by James Cone that,

No threat has been more deadly and persistent for black and Indigenous peoples than the rule of white supremacy in the world. The logic that led to [genocide,] slavery and segregation in the Americas, colonization and Apartheid in Africa, and the rule of white supremacy throughout the world is the same one that leads to the exploitation of animals and the ravaging of nature. It is a mechanistic and instrumental logic that defines everything and everybody in terms of their contribution to the development and defense of white supremacy . . . For over five hundred years, through the wedding of science and technology, white people have been exploiting nature and killing people of color in every nook and cranny of the planet in the name of god and democracy.²⁴

Heinrichs says that he would like to put in more nuance, mainly to avoid demonization or guilt, and to redirect towards resistance and responsibility.

A second assumption in the essays is that Indigenous issues are connected to the land and sea, and the animals and plants that dwell upon and

²⁴ James Cone, "Whose Earth Is It Anyway?" in *Earth Habitat: Eco-Justice and the Church's Response*, eds. Dieter Hessel and Larry Rasmussen (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 24, quoted in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry* p. 19. See also the summary Cone presents in, "God and Black Suffering: Calling the Oppressors to Account", *The Anglican Theological Review*, Volume 90:4 (Fall 2008), pp. 701-712. A fuller statement can be found in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

within them. A consequence of this is to call into question some presumably settled institutions, such as private property and history as told in schools; the flip side of this hermeneutic of suspicion is the emergent importance of stories that have been handed down over the generations by Indigenous peoples. Some of the essays articulate Indigenous creation stories, thereby presenting an alternative to the way in which exploitative dominion and stewardship has been read out of the first chapters of *Genesis*.

Melanie Kampen has carried on the work suggested in *Buffalo Shout* in a more academic vein. Her unpublished MTS Thesis, *Unsettling Theology: Decolonizing Western Interpretations of Original Sin*²⁵, is an integration of theology and Indigenous knowledge that sets a high standard for anyone else seeking to work in this area. In 2014 Sarah Travis published her doctoral dissertation as *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*²⁶. As her title suggests, Travis's approach uses postcolonial theory to advance an approach to decolonization.

While many Indigenous people in Canada are applying the critiques of post-colonial theory to their situations,²⁷ I am not aware of any who are working specifically in theology. When I asked Professor Martin Brokenleg about this, his

²⁵ Melanie Kampen, *Unsettling Theology: Decolonizing Western Interpretations of Original Sin*, unpublished MTS Thesis, Conrad Grebel College in the University of Waterloo (Six Nations & Waterloo ON: 2014).

²⁶ Sarah Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014).

²⁷ For example, Marie Battiste, who grew up among the Mi'kmaw and now teaches in the Faculty of Education re-centres education from Eurocentric models to one that incorporates Indigenous humanities, sciences, and languages. *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon SK: Purich Publishing Limited, 2013)

answer was that the work is being done, but it is oral.²⁸ However, significant work has been done in the United States by Indigenous scholars and theologians.

These include the pioneering work of Vine Deloria in his book *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*,²⁹ and which Kampen used in her work. Originally written in 1972, Deloria's book went through two further revised editions in 1992 and 2003. While the book is deeply polemical and has more than a few problematic issues,³⁰ Deloria argues three points that remain influential. First, he argues that that Christianity was complicit in the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Second, he suggests that time and space are typically conceived differently in "American Indian tribal religions" than in the monotheistic, Abrahamic religions.³¹ Finally, the spiritual connection of Indigenous peoples to their lands

²⁸ The Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg is a clinical psychologist, comes from the Rosebud Sioux Nation in South Dakota, and taught in the Native American Studies department at Augustana University in Sioux Falls ND and was the director of the Native Studies Programme at the Vancouver School of Theology. He was ordained in The Episcopal Church of the United States, the third generation of clergy in his family; interestingly, he also spent some time as an Orthodox priest.

²⁹ Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion, Second Edition* (Golden CO: North American Press, 1992). The book is on the reading lists of many Indigenous studies courses.

³⁰ The chief problems are a) he selectively uses traditions from various Indigenous "religions" in North America to construct what he calls a pattern in "American Indian tribal religions", without paying attention to their differences; b) he ignores evidence that does not add to his thesis; c) he seems to buy into fringe pseudo-scientific theories such as those of Immanuel Velikovsky and "ancient astronauts" authors such as Zecharia Sitchin (but this may be him playing a "trickster" role); d) his descriptions of Christianity are selective and dependent upon a few Protestant theologians (Paul Tillich, Oscar Cullman, and Harvey Cox) and popular television evangelists, but largely ignores Catholicism; and e) he does not engage with Indigenous people who are committed Christians. With respect to c), he may have deliberately adopted something of a "trickster" identity, a rhetorical approach common in some First Nations. Deloria was the son and grandson of Sioux Episcopalian priests, and studied theology in a Lutheran seminary.

³¹ Deloria believes that European thinkers promotes "time" to the exclusion of "space", and so have no real feel for "place". In contrast, Indigenous people have

leads to a primordial form of “environmentalism”, while European Christianity has been driven by an exploitative, profit-oriented reading of Genesis 2, which has led to environmental degradation.

These concerns are echoed by George Tinker, a Lutheran pastor, Professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions at Iliff School of Theology, Denver CO, and a member of the *wazhazhe* (Osage Nation, a people originally from the Mid-West and now mainly in Oklahoma). He critiques Liberation Theology for being focused on categories of “class” and “time” and regards the Marxian-inspired analysis as limited, not taking into account cultural and spiritual differences. As Terrence Ranger quotes and paraphrases him in a summary paragraph, Indigenous spiritual experience finds that

“God reveals God’s self in creation, in place or space, not in time.” There is no priority of revelation, no chosen people. Revelation is here and now, with Native Americans called “to image ourselves as mere participants in the whole of creation, with respect for and reciprocity with all creation, and not somehow apart from it and free to use it up at will.” Tinker’s is a total critique of the theological assumptions of nineteenth century missionaries. Christianity cannot make an impact on the First Peoples, he argues, until it abandons its insistence on the control and transformation of nature. It must cease emphasizing Time and come to understand how to deal with Place.³²

a strong and spiritual connection to land – they do not so much own it, as it owns them. While this is undoubtedly true of many American Christians, he does not acknowledge the complexity and the long history of these terms in Christian and secular European discourse.

³² Terrence Ranger, “Christianity and the First Peoples” in *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change (Studies in Christian Mission)* edited by Peggy Brock (Leiden NL: Brill, 2005), pp. 15-32; p. 18, quoting from George Tinker, “The Full Circle of Liberation: An American-Indian Theology of Place” in *Ecotheology: Voices North and South* edited by D. C. Hallman (Geneva CH: WCC Publications, 1994), pp. 218-226.

Tinker addresses in different ways both his “White” American Lutheran brothers and sisters, as well as the broader community of Indigenous peoples in the USA.

To the latter he states:

First of all, our Indigenous theologies must be explicitly and unashamedly political. They will necessarily include analyses of the historic and ongoing oppression of our peoples. Our theologies must deal with the residual effects of colonialism, conquest and even genocide. This is to say that we must be clear about how we came to be where we are today in the increasingly mapped territory of the globalization of capital.

Secondly, we must find ways to reclaim our own Indigenous identities.

... Thirdly, our theologies must focus on rebuilding our national (Indigenous) communities and not on building churches.

... Finally, our theologies must totally deconstruct the theological discourses of the colonialist euro-western churches that have missionized and continue today to missionize our peoples. This has to be our starting point before we can reconstruct useful ways of organizing our lives together as Indigenous communities.³³

For Tinker this means, among other things: recovering the Indigenous approach towards *Place* as prior to that of *Time*; reestablishing the traditional relationship to the ancestors; renewing the practice of the vision quest; and an understanding that, before the Europeans showed up with their version of the good news, the Indigenous peoples already had a relationship with the Creator. Deconstructing the theological discourses of the colonists means calling into question such seemingly universal structures as “law and gospel”, “original sin”, “fall and redemption”,³⁴ and even recasting the Trinity into a Tetrad, a structure common in much Indigenous thought in North America.³⁵ He argues that “salvation” in

³³ George Tinker (Tink Tinker), “Towards an American Indian Indigenous Theology”, *The Ecumenical Review* (12/2010, Volume 62, Issue 4), pp. 340-351.

³⁴ Of course, these are largely *Lutheran* universal categories.

³⁵ George Tinker, “Towards an American Indian Indigenous Theology”, pp. 343-344.

particular must give way to the much more traditional “Indian” ideal of personal, communal, and eventually cosmic balance.³⁶

To “White American Lutherans” Tinker says that they

must move beyond a simplistic verbal bondage to their historical rootedness in the European church reformation and its sixteenth-century German language and move toward a contemporary reformation that is relevant to today’s world with all of its diversity of languages, peoples, cultures, and value systems—along with the political movements of empire and colonialism that have dotted the landscape for the past five hundred years and continue today in that peculiar form of U.S. empiric hegemony called globalization.³⁷

Thus, in addition to some of the things already noted above, he calls into question the Lutheran attachment to *sola scriptura*, *The Book of Concord*, use of the term “Lord”, and the tendency to place humanity at the centre of creation, instead of seeing us as simply one part.

Richard Twiss of the Sicangu Lakota comes from an Evangelical background, but is no less critical of Christian colonists than Deloria and Tinker. In *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*³⁸ (2015) he engages in the critique of the dominant theologies that justified the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples in the name of Jesus and civilization. On the constructive side he describes his activities with Wiconi International and the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies in recovering First Nations practices and integrating them into Christian life. Notably, these include: sweat lodges; pow-wows; Indigenous

³⁶ George Tinker, “Decolonizing the Language of Lutheran Theology: Confessions, Mission, Indians, and the Globalization of Hybridity”, *Dialog*, 2011, Volume 50, Issue 2, p. 195.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 195.

³⁸ Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*, edited by Ray Martell and Sue Martell (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

art forms; Indigenous dances; the burning of sweetgrass, sage, tobacco, or cedar in the context of prayer; Indigenous singing; drumming; and the use of Indigenous names for the Creator.

Randy S. Woodley, a Keetoowah Cherokee and director of Indigenous and Intercultural Studies at George Fox University, Portland OR, grounds a Creation Theology in a variety of Indigenous traditions and the Bible in *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*³⁹ (2012). As much a critique of western secularism as Christian theology, it is possibly the most positive of the various books in this field that have come out in the past ten to fifteen years. He suggests that the Indigenous understanding of “harmony” is the same as the biblical idea of *shalom*. He recovers the idea of creation as being good, discusses the value of practical wisdom informed by experience, and the importance of being grounded in the land and others in relationships of harmony and not exploitation. Significantly, he seeks to shed the identity of Indigenous peoples as merely victims, and to see them as a people empowered towards *Shalom* in part from a critical understanding of old traumas towards but also rooted in commonly held “Native American understandings.”⁴⁰

Mark Charles, of Navaho and Dutch ancestry, working with Soong-Chan Rah of North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, wrote *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*.⁴¹ Just published in 2019, it is a thorough examination and critique of the Doctrine of Discovery and

³⁹ Randy S. Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012).

⁴⁰ Woodley, pp. 91-93.

⁴¹ Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019).

other theologies that justified the settlement of the United States. This dissertation, mostly written before their book was published, features some of the same critique, in Part Two.

Interestingly, American legal scholars, when looking for the origins of the justification of the taking of land from its original inhabitants, have turned to theology. The pioneer in this was Robert A. Williams, Jr. and his book *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest* (1990).⁴² A more recent work is *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*⁴³ (2008) in which Steven T. Newcomb discerns that property law in the USA is grounded in Christian thought. Both authors rely on Chief Justice John Marshall's 1823 US Supreme Court decision in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*.⁴⁴

Outside of North America there are individuals in the post-colony, descended from settlers, who are carrying out forms of Unsettling Theology. In South Africa Gerald O. West has explored

what it means to work for liberation as a white South African. Doing white theology in a black frame, requires socially engaged biblical scholars and theologians, those who have been (re)formed, partially, by the collaborative interracial liberatory praxis of the struggle against white supremacy, to participate in and contribute to an anticipatory socialist culture wherein religion in general and Christianity in particular are resources for farther social transformation, especially on the economic terrain. This, of course, was the liberatory project envisaged by both Tanzanian Ujamaa Theology and South African Black Theology, and they continue to provide resources for our collaborative work.⁴⁵

⁴² Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest* (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁴³ Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008).

⁴⁴ *Johnson v. M'Intosh* 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823) at <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/21/543/#tab-opinion-1922743> accessed July 29, 2020. See Part Two for a full discussion of this.

⁴⁵ Gerald O. West, "Review of Grau, Marian, 2011. *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion*," *Journal of Theology for Southern*

In Australia Mark G. Brett, Professor of Hebrew Bible at Whitley College, University of Melbourne, has written *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire*.⁴⁶ Brett considers texts that have been used to justify liberation and colonization. While seven chapters are on the Hebrew Bible, as one might expect from a Hebrew professor, he also has two chapters on Jesus and the New Testament. In his conclusion he points towards a critical reappraisal of how scripture and theology has been used, and refers to Levinas, kenosis, and Coakley's reflections on kenosis as possible ways forward, but he does not develop this in any detail.⁴⁷ He does affirm that

A necessary feature of postcolonial theology will be the advocacy of practices of repentance that not only confess to the collusion of Christianity and colonialism but, as a consequence, *resolutely resist new temptations to exercise mastery over others* . . . As the Catholic philosopher Gianni Vattimo has suggested, Christian praxis needs to be reconstituted around the *kenosis* suggested by Phil. 2.7 . . .⁴⁸

Among the most thoughtful of monographs doing postcolonial theology is *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (2011) by Marion Grau. Her book

traces visions of taking and tracing, imperially sanctioned theft, rape and robbery, but also instances and possibilities of gifting and receiving beyond the positional dualities of perpetrator and victim, colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed.⁴⁹

Africa 146 (July 2013), pp. 170-171. He expands on this in "White Theology in a Black Frame: Betraying the Logic of Social Location", *Living on the Edge: Essays in Honour of Steve De Gruchy, Activist and Theologian*, edited by James R. Cochrane, Elias Bongmba, Isabel A. Phiri and Desmond P. van der Water (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2012).

⁴⁶ Mark G. Brett, *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire* (Sheffield UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009).

⁴⁷ Brett, pp. 178-204.

⁴⁸ Brett, p. 182.

⁴⁹ Marion Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (London UK: T&T Clark, 2011), p. 12. She is originally from Germany, now teaches in Norway, but did her PhD at Drew University in New Jersey, and taught at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific from 2001 to 2015

This takes her through a cross-disciplinary consideration of missionary history in Aotearoa/New Zealand, South Africa, and Alaska. She discerns what she calls *polydoxy*, which refers to the reality that the goods news has always had multiple meanings with many opinions (δόξα) about it.⁵⁰ In contrast to the dualism of orthodoxy-heterodoxy, this approach to mission notes that, as one digs into the particularities of these histories, it is not possible to make simple judgements of “It is good” or “It is bad”; although the gospel may begin as a means of oppression by settlers, it can emerge as a subversive tool of resistance by Indigenous peoples. Thus, Grau finds that the gospel can function as a kind of trickster knowledge that can comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.⁵¹

The author of this dissertation, like Kampen, Travis, and Regan, are non-Indigenous Canadians who take seriously the legacy of colonialism and imperialism and assume that this requires not only the reclaiming of land and autonomy by Indigenous peoples, but also corresponding changes for settler peoples as well. All of us emphasise the need to listen to the voices of Indigenous peoples that have historically been suppressed. Kampen, Travis, and I also see the importance of engaging with the historic doctrine of the church. In the case of Kampen this is a critical review of the teaching of original sin; in Travis’s case it is the doctrine of the Trinity, especially as a perichoristic phenomenon; and in this dissertation I do an overview of relevant settler theologies.

Our approaches are coloured by our different experiences. Kampen lived with Pauingassi First Nation, an Ojibwe speaking people in Manitoba. My

⁵⁰ Grau, p. 38-39.

⁵¹ Grau, p. 283.

experience has been as a visiting Anglican priest among the 'Namgis First Nation and Dzawada'enuxw, both Kwak'wala speaking peoples at the junction of the north end of Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia. As well, I have benefited from conversations with urban Indigenous from the Anishinabe, Cree, Lakota, Tsimshian, and Heiltsuk peoples. Travis's main experience with Indigenous peoples appears to have been in India, and so she is more global in her outlook than either Kampen or I, but she notes the presence of urban Indigenous in Toronto, where she now teaches.

There are commonalities and differences among our approaches. Travis engages less with Indigenous knowledge and more with postcolonial theory, and uses Moltman's Social Trinity as a means to decolonize preaching and theology. Kampen examines original sin within a framework of time and history, and contrasts that with Indigenous knowledge that begins with relationality and space. Relying on Augustine, she suggests that the biblical sources for original sin would read by Indigenous in a way that contributes more to a sensitivity to relations between people and with the environment. My approach inductively identifies the theologies that justified colonialism and imperialism and then proposes kenotic theology as a means of reconfiguring Christian theology from a totalizing type of thought to one that is humble, respectful, accepting of difference, and oriented towards empowering the oppressed.

Kampen, because of her direct knowledge of and learning from Indigenous teachers and elders, is well placed to take Indigenous ways of knowing and use them to inform theology. Travis does not do this, and I am hesitant to presume to know any significant Indigenous epistemology. As Patricia Vickers notes, even "if a linguist can speak a[n Indigenous] language

flawlessly, it does not automatically follow that a linguist will *think* like an Indigenous speaker.”⁵² A non-Indigenous academic who uses Indigenous frameworks of thought may draw conclusions that would never be made by Indigenous persons. This can come awfully close to a kind of cultural appropriation, and non-Indigenous scholars must be wary of this.

Instead, non-Indigenous theologians need to hear the critiques and then contemplate alternatives. This involves us not only in a critical appreciation of our own narratives, but also a recovery of traditions that have been historically marginalized or obscured by dominant trajectories of thought and practice. This brings us to Post-Colonial Theory, the philosophical critique of Emmanuel Levinas, and kenotic theology.

C) Post-Colonialism, Decolonization, and the Backlash

Unsettling Theology is a sub-genre of postcolonial theology. In the canon of post-colonial theory three names stand out: Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), Edward Said (1935-2003), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (born 1942). Fanon, a psychiatrist and philosopher, used Marxist-Leninist theory to argue that violent resistance by natives to colonialism was not only justified, but was cathartic. Fanon, born in the Caribbean island of Martinique and the descendant of African slaves, emigrated to metropolitan France in the 1940s and then to Algeria in the 1950s. His main work was *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of*

⁵² Patricia Vickers, *Ayaawx (Ts'mseyn ancestral law): the power of Transformation*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Victoria: University of Victoria, 2008), p. 42.

the Earth, 1961).⁵³ Edward Said, born in Jerusalem and raised in Egypt and the United States, was a Palestinian American professor who taught English at Columbia University. *Orientalism* (1978)⁵⁴ critiqued what Said understood to be the European creation of “the East”, which in literature and other texts minimized the diversity of the cultures of Asia – from Turkey to India to China and Japan – and described it all as backwards, mysterious, idolatrous, and uncivilized, as well as ripe for development and transformation in the image of the “West”. This justified the conquest, subjugation, and exploitation by Europeans, who were seen as progressive, honest, rational, morally righteous, and the apex of civilization. The premises of *Orientalism* were later developed more generally in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).⁵⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a Bengali feminist professor of comparative literature now at Columbia University, published the article “Can the Subaltern Speak?”⁵⁶ in 1983. The term “subaltern” was used by Italian Marxist theoretician Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) as an alternative to “proletariat”. While there are discussions about whether Gramsci meant to distinguish subaltern from the proletariat in general, by the 1970s the term was being used in South-East Asia to describe the majority population of India who were not part of the post-colonial elite. Grounded in Foucault and Derrida (she translated his *On Grammatology*), she emphasized the importance of those marginalized and most oppressed to be able to speak, and

⁵³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* translated by Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin Books, 1967).

⁵⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism (25th Anniversary Edition)* (New York NY: Vintage Books, 1994).

⁵⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York NY: Vintage Books, 1994).

⁵⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 66-111.

for those interested in empowering them, to listen to them. The challenge comes in that the marginalized often find themselves adopting Western modes of thought in order to express themselves; Spivak suggests that one must call into question the very ways of knowing that imperialism imposes upon the colonized. In particular she emphasized the voices of women, the extremely poor, the historically enslaved, and those speaking non-Western languages. She calls into question the “essentializing” of groups, as if descriptions of characteristics could capture the diversity within any collective, but did advocate the adoption of a strategic essential identity in order to move forward the interests of the “subaltern.”

Postcolonial theory addresses the unfinished task of decolonization. The term “decolonization” goes back to the post-war era when the great empires of the British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese were dismantled. Members of the majority Indigenous populations took control of the territory of newly independent states in the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, India, and eastern Asia. Too often the unfinished work of decolonization is to undo the perpetuation of the colonial mindset by the new rulers – because the new Indigenous elite, having been educated and promoted by the former colonial powers, continue to think and behave like the old regime - “meet the new boss, same as the old boss.” On a superficial level this might be seen in the perpetuation of English barristers’ wigs in African nations, but, more deeply, there may be a resistance to the raising up of Indigenous culture and values. As well, western political ideologies – Marxist-Leninism, say, or liberal capitalism - may be adopted by the new ruling elite and imposed on societies without taking note of the Indigenous values and realities. Postcolonial theory works to unsettle the Indigenous elite by calling

into question the inherited epistemologies and categories of thought that were left behind by European colonialism. A key issue is whether the global economic system, encouraged by free trade, results in a new form of colonization, and whether it reinstates the colonial mentality which Fanon wrote about.

Decolonization is more complex in those parts of the world where the colonists and successive waves of immigrants became the majority (i.e. Canada, the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Latin America). Indeed, one might wonder whether it is possible. How can one decolonize when the colonizers never left? For Indigenous peoples the goal is to claim back their autonomy, culture, and land despite being a minority. For the settler peoples, decolonization involves a change of perspective – a *μετάνοια*, a change of mind, or, to use the religious sense, a repentance.

Taiaiake Alfred, a Kahnawá:ke of the Kanien'kehá:ka Haudenosaunee (Mohawk Iroquois), and founding director of the University of Victoria School of Indigenous Governance, describes decolonization as the

cumbersome and expensive . . . mechanics of removing ourselves from direct state control and the legal and political struggle to gain recognition of an Indigenous governing authority.⁵⁷

The danger in this process is that one may get so caught up in the process that they do not pay enough attention to “the end goals of the struggle”; Indigenous leadership may accommodate itself to Western cultural values, economic systems, and politics.⁵⁸ Self-governance along lines or within bounds determined by the remaining colonists is not enough – autonomy requires the reclaiming and

⁵⁷ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, Second Edition* (Don Mills (Toronto) ON: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 26.

⁵⁸ Ibid, and p. 28.

re-imagination of culture, spirituality, and governance.⁵⁹ Echoing Fanon, Alfred believes that “[s]tructural and psychological decolonization is an intellectual process as well as a political, social, and spiritual one.”⁶⁰ Social Work professor Michael Yellow Bird of the Arikara and Hidatsa nations in North Dakota states that decolonization involves the

. . . restoration of our cultural practices, thinking, belief, and values that were taken away or abandoned (during our colonization period) but are relevant and/or necessary for survival and well-being.⁶¹

Perhaps the most searching reflection on Indigenous decolonization is described in *Decolonizing Methodologies*⁶² by Maori professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, of the Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou. Tuhiwai Smith writes that the Maori struggle for decolonization involves five conditions or dimensions:

The first I would define as a **critical consciousness**, an awakening from the slumber of hegemony and the realization that action has to occur.

The second condition I define as a way of **reimagining** the world and our position as Maori within the world, drawing from a different epistemology and unleashing the creative world. This condition is what enables an alternate vision; it fuels the dreams of alternate possibilities.

The third is concerned with ways in which different ideas, social categories and tendencies **intersect**: the coming together of disparate ideas, the event, the historical moment. This condition creates opportunities; it provides the moments when tactics can be deployed.

The fourth condition I have defined simply as movement or **disturbance**: the distracting counter-hegemonic movements or tendencies, the

⁵⁹ This is a critical issue in deciding who speaks for Indigenous groups – is it the hereditary chiefs, or the officials elected to Band Councils under the Indian Act?

⁶⁰ Alfred, p. 178.

⁶¹ Michael Yellow Bird, *Indigenous Social Work* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2008), quoted in Lisa Monchalin, *The Colonial Problem: An Indigenous Perspective on Crime and Justice in Canada* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2016), p. 293.

⁶² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, Second Edition* (London UK: Zed Books, 2012 and Dunedin NZ: Otago University Press, 2012).

competing movements which traverse sites of struggle, the unstable movements when the status quo is disturbed.

The fifth is the concept of **structure**, the underlying code of imperialism, of power relations. This condition is grounded in reproducing material realities and legitimating inequalities and marginality. . . . these five dimensions help map the conceptual terrain of struggle. The categorical terms being used are not of the same type and have not been motivated by a particular 'model'. Rather, they reflect the multiple positions, spaces, discourses, languages, histories, textures and world views that are being contested, struggled over, resisted and reformulated by Maori.⁶³ (*emphasis added*)

Tuhiwai Smith's description of the Maori struggle for decolonization is translatable to other Indigenous contexts. It is a methodology that Indigenous activists will recognize. But can it also be used by non-Indigenous settlers who wish to decolonize?

Of the five conditions or dimensions, the first and the latter three can be translated to a settler context. With respect to the first, a privileged settler can awake from the slumber of hegemony to see that action is required; in the third dimension, such a person can also see intersections providing opportunities for action; he or she may perceive the disturbance or unsettling of the status quo and a *καιρός* moment for change, which corresponds to the fourth dimension or condition; and finally, they may see the structure that produced them and gave them material and social privilege, and then seek to change it.

What is not so clear is how the second dimension might work for a settler, the work of reimagining oneself in an alternate vision. It is doubtful whether a settler can or should enter into the embodied, epistemological stance of an Indigenous person. This involves actual lived experience. A "white" American can understand why the movement *Black Lives Matter* has emerged in 2016 and

⁶³ Tuhiwai Smith, p. 201. Paragraphs, italicization, and emphasis mine):

burst into prominence in 2020, but they will experience it in a vastly different way from an African-American – especially if they are pulled over by the police. A western male might comprehend *#MeToo*, but he does not have the visceral understanding that is brought about by incarnate existence as a woman. In Canada, a sensitive settler might know about *Idle No More* (a grassroots movement that started in 2012 in opposition to the Harper government’s omnibus legislation that affected treaty obligations), but they have probably no direct experience of discrimination and the uncompensated exploitation of their land.⁶⁴

The condition or dimension of re-imagination is thus beyond the capacity of a settler, at least as constructed by Tuhiwai Smith. A settler attempting to become like an Indigenous person smacks of fraud or cultural appropriation. While settlers might participate in Indigenous ceremonies, learn the language, and perhaps live with an Indigenous people, the fact that they can return to being a settler at any time and not endure the usual discrimination and marginalization, means that they will have a fundamentally different experience.⁶⁵ In some cases a settler might be adopted by an Indigenous family, but even when participating in the web of relationships and obligations they will still manifest themselves as working with a somewhat different worldview. Just as the “stolen children” – Indigenous children adopted into settler families in the

⁶⁴ See <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>, accessed October 29, 2018.

⁶⁵ Individuals who have claimed to be Indigenous but were really settler include the conservationist and author Grey Owl in the 1930s (born Archie Belaney in East Sussex in 1888) and contemporary author Joseph Boyden. See Jorge Barrera, “Author Joseph Boyden’s shape-shifting Indigenous identity”, at <https://aptnnews.ca/2016/12/23/author-joseph-boydens-shape-shifting-Indigenous-identity/> accessed April 23, 2021.

'60s and '70s – never really assimilated into settler society, so it is difficult for a settler to really assimilate into an Indigenous people.⁶⁶

So how does a settler reimagine the world and their place in it? If it is, in fact, possible to decolonize the colonizer, it involves considerable struggle and discomfort, a significant change in identity. A way to do this is described in this dissertation. First, it involves a significant reappraisal of received traditions, the rejection of that which has proved oppressive and genocidal. Much of this involves listening to the critiques of others, and not leaping to apologetics or defense. In this work it adopts an unsettling approach rooted in the critique of Western philosophy by Emmanuel Levinas. Second, it reaches back to reclaim the tradition of kenosis in Christian theology, and imagine what things would look like if church and society restructured itself in accordance with it. Kenotic theology calls Christians not just to have faith in Christ, but to have the mind of Christ, pulling them beyond issues of mere salvation of one's self to concern for others; it calls into question institutions, dogma, selfishness, power, the justification of violence, dignity, and security.

It must be noted that there has been significant pushback against the post-colonial critique of colonialism. Niall Ferguson's has argued in both in a television series and the book *Civilization: The West and the Rest* that western Europe (and its settler colonies turned nations) developed six "killer apps" that allowed it to dominate the rest of the world, namely 1) competition between nations, 2) the scientific revolution, 3) the rule of law and representative

⁶⁶ It is not an accident that when Indigenous Cree and Ojibwe/Anishnabe intermarried with fur traders, the result was neither settler or First Nations, but Métis, an interstitial people.

government, 4) modern medicine, 5) consumer society, and 6) work ethic (as understood by Weber).⁶⁷ This “Western package”, he argues, “still seems to offer the human societies the best available set of economic, social, and political institutions.”⁶⁸ Recently, Prof. Bruce Gilley of Portland State University argued that colonialism was never as bad as its critics claimed.⁶⁹ Gilley argues that anti-colonial critiques have done greater damage to the Third World than colonialism ever did, and he proposes a new form of colonialism. His paper created a firestorm of academic anger. Gilley in turn has been challenged by many, including Sahar Khan of the Cato Institute, who described it as problematic because “it is empirically and historically inaccurate, misuses existing postcolonial scholarship, and largely ignores interdisciplinary approaches to the study of colonial legacies.”⁷⁰

In a similar vein Nigel Biggar is leading the McDonald Centre’s project *Ethics and Empire* at Oxford University, which is holding a series of closed seminars examining attempting

1) to trawl the history of ethical critiques of ‘empire’; 2) to test the critiques against the historical facts of empire; and thereby 3) to garner possible ethical resources for contemporary deployment.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (New York NY: Penguin Books, 2011), p. 13.

⁶⁸ Ferguson, p. 324

⁶⁹ in “The Case For Colonialism”, *Third World Quarterly*, 2017 at <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1369037> (accessed January 31, 2018).

⁷⁰ “The Case Against “The Case for Colonialism”” (at <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/case-against-case-colonialism> accessed January 31, 2018).

⁷¹ <http://www.mcdonaldcentre.org.uk/ethics-and-empire> accessed January 31, 2018.

This was announced shortly after Biggar wrote an Op-Ed piece for *The Times* entitled “Don’t feel guilty about our colonial history”.⁷² The approach of Biggar and the project has been called into question by many colleagues at Oxford and beyond. Their fundamental points are two-fold. First, history is not generally concerned with making judgements about good and evil – those decisions belong to the field of theology(!). Second, the subsequent failures of some post-colonial regimes do not justify the oppression and genocide of the prior colonial ones.⁷³ Indeed, there is evidence that a long history of exploitation by a colonial power predisposes the successor state to corruption and deprivation.⁷⁴

Among those who worked in the schools there is often a muted sense of grievance, and the generation of a counter-narrative. Ronald Niezen of McGill University is one of the few people to have been able to gather the recollections

⁷² Nigel Biggar, “Don’t feel guilty about our colonial history”, *The Times* November 30, 2017 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/don-t-feel-guilty-about-our-colonial-history-ghvstdhmj>.

⁷³ “Ethics and empire: an open letter from Oxford scholars, December 19, 2017” <https://theconversation.com/ethics-and-empire-an-open-letter-from-oxford-scholars-89333>, accessed July 30, 2020.

⁷⁴ The classic, data-filled essay on the deleterious effects of slavery on modern Africa is Nathan Nunn’s “The Long-term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2008) 123, pp. 139–76. The immediate effects of the slave trade on Africa, dispelling the idea that the disruption was minimal, is described by Babacar M’baye in “The Economic, Political, and Social Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa” *European Legacy* (2006), 11:6, pp. 607-622. Building on Nunn, Travis Wiseman delineates the long-term effects of slavery on Africa in “Slavery, Economic Freedom, and Income Levels in the Former Slave-exporting States of Africa” *Public Finance Review* 2018, Vol. 46(2) pp. 224-248. Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou describe the negative effects of the partition of Africa by colonial powers in “The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa”, *The American Economic Review*, July 2016, Vol. 106, No. 7, pp. 1802-1848. The arguments that colonialism benefited the people of India are refuted in Shashi Tharoor’s polemical *Inglorious Empire – What the British did to India* (London UK: Hurst Publishers, 2017). For a dispassionate history of the East India Company in India, see William Darymple’s *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (London UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

of retired Oblates Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, Catholic brothers and clergy who worked at many of the schools. He reports

at no point in my conversations with them was there a direct, considered discussion of the sociopaths and predators . . . Instead the former school workers emphasised their positive experience . . . the good intentions, the making do with little, the care, the sacrifice, the love, and hockey.⁷⁵

The TRC did indeed focus on the testimony of former students of the IRS, and many of them did talk about kind staff. However, the memories used in the construction of the counter-narrative are contradicted by repeated witnesses made by survivors in the public sessions. The Oblates' memories are all too selective, and the counter-narrative sounds much like the initial justifications for the schools in the first place.

The recent arguments justifying colonialism are similar to the justification made by economists in the 19th century for free-trade and the deliberate absence of government regulation. That argument goes something like this: "In the long run, a free market will be more efficient and productive than one that is regulated or otherwise influenced by political concerns. Shocks in the marketplace are necessary corrections and part of the creative destruction of capitalism, and the inconveniences suffered in the short run by individuals are nothing compared to the glory of what will be achieved in total in the long run." However, as Maynard Keynes noted in 1923, "In the long run, we are all dead", highlighting his belief that the markets must be regulated. Otherwise, in the short term, they will traumatise workers, business owners, and investors.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ronald Niezen, *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential School, Second Edition* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 141-142.

⁷⁶ "But this *long run* is a misleading guide to current affairs. *In the long run* we are all dead. Economists set themselves too easy, too useless a task if in

Academics creating apologies for colonialism and imperialism tend to diminish the tragedies of past suffering and naively assume that such problems have been overcome.

All of this being noted, there is a danger in caricaturing both the Indigenous peoples and colonizing peoples of the past and the present. It is all too easy to characterise one side or the other as “noble” and “good” and the other as “depraved” and “evil.” Indeed, the five centuries of interaction is complex and varied, and within the various nations and peoples there are those who rapidly assimilated, those who resisted strongly, and many in between. That the situation in North America led to the overwhelming domination by the settlers was never a foregone conclusion, and it was not always a one-way interchange. “In many cases they eagerly sought from [the traders] what they perceived as useful new tools, technologies, goods, and foodstuffs.”⁷⁷ Likewise, in speaking about the church and a people it is not an “us” and “them” issue. While some indigenous people rejected the forms of Christianity presented to them, many came to a genuine and sincere belief, without being forced, without being assimilated, and with a keen sense of the threat posed by the institution and the IRS. One of the greatest strengths of the churches in Canada is the vital presence of Inuit, Cree, Blackfeet, Oji-Cree, Nisga’a, Haida, Gwich’in, Naskapi, Métis, and many other peoples.

tempestuous seasons they can only tell us that when the storm is past the ocean is flat again.” John Maynard Keynes, *A Tract on Monetary Reform* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1923), p. 80.

⁷⁷ Sergei Kan, *Memory Eternal* (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. xxi.

D) The Structure of this Dissertation

This dissertation is a contribution to the emerging genre of Unsettling Theology, and it has three parts.

Part One begins with the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. The introductory paragraphs describe the surprising affinities between his insights and the needs of an unsettling theology. Levinas is the philosopher who calls into question the whole of western philosophy and the way it has manifested itself as the handmaid of violence. His mature thought in *Otherwise than Being* is described, and from that it becomes clear that no philosophy, or theology, or political thought, is ever complete in itself, but has a tendency to assert its coherence in the face of opposition. His critique of western philosophy is summarised, and generalized as a critique of any form of thought; the unsettling philosophy can now be used to decolonise the theologies that are presented in the second and third parts. As far as I can tell, no one has done this before.

Part Two, starting from the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples over the past five centuries, engages in a critique of the theologies which empowered and enabled colonialism. It considers the attempts at assimilation, the loss of land and autonomy, and genocide, and the theologies behind them. While significant work has been done on the Doctrine of Discovery, I identify distinctive elements that have often been thrown together under that one category, as well as noting others that have not been identified in the discussions before. These are subjected to the analytical tools developed in Part One. While the Doctrine of Discovery has received significant attention, no one has

distinguished it from the other six justifications, and so, while this part is very much dependent on other scholars' work, the collation of these theologies is original.

In Part Three I consider kenotic theology as one means of addressing the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools. Whereas the seven themes identified in Part Two clearly lead to violence and genocide, the theology built on the pouring out of Christ into human form has the potential of moving in the opposite direction. Kenoticism as a theology lifts up humility, it celebrates being for the other, and it eschews violence. After a quick review of some of the recent discussion around Philippians 2.5-11, I discuss the kenotic theology of Sergei Bulgakov, referencing some of his 19th century precursors. Bulgakov is important because he transplanted kenotic theology from the dry realms of German Protestantism and British academic theology into the traditions of Orthodoxy, from whence it has come back into Catholicism and Anglicanism. Bulgakov also expanded kenosis to the Holy Trinity, and related it to creation and salvation, as well as the theosis of Christians.

I then move on to a consideration of Sarah Coakley and her achievements in the development of kenoticism, and what some of her colleagues say about that – in particular, Karen Kilby and Linn Marie Tonstad. This dissertation reviews their critiques, but gives Coakley a more sympathetic hearing than they do. Finally, I weave all of this together with the Indigenous post-colonial theologies already mentioned, with concrete suggestions for future research and action in theology and the church. All of this is again related back to the critique by Levinas developed in Part One; while his philosophy is not prescriptive of any

particular ethics, kenotic theology is found to be congruent with the limitations he discerns in human thought and action.

Part One: "Cette inquiétude, *meilleure* que le repos"

Chapter One: The *Other* Other

A) Why Levinas?

Why start a theological reflection on the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools with the thought of Emmanuel Levinas?

First, the experiences of Levinas parallels that of the Indigenous peoples of North America, in that both experienced genocides. Levinas conceived his philosophical approach in the shadow of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. His parents and siblings were murdered by the Nazis in Lithuania, and his mother-in-law in France was deported to a concentration camp and murdered. While Levinas himself spent the war as a French prisoner of war, his wife and child went into hiding in France.⁷⁸ While attempts at explaining *Ha Shoah* were

⁷⁸ Levinas survived the war because he was a conscripted soldier in the French army, governed by the Geneva Convention. After his capture by the German army in 1940 he spent the remainder of the war in a prisoner of war camp, albeit one for Jewish POWs. His wife and daughter survived in France because they were protected by friends and, later, by the sisters of a Vincentian convent outside Orléans. His mother-in-law, who had come from Lithuania to live with them in Paris, was deported and killed in 1943. In Lithuania his parents, two brothers, and father-in-law were also murdered, most likely machine-gunned after the German Army Group North overran Kovno in the summer of 1941.

For more on Levinas's life see the following: Levinas himself outlined his life and work in "Signature", written in 1963 and revised in 1976, in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* trans. by Seán Hand (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), pp. 291-295. Perhaps the best overall biography is Saloman Malka's *Emmanuel Levinas: His Life and Legacy*, trans. by Michael Kigel and Sonja M. Embree (Pittsburgh PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006). Simon Critchley has prepared a useful chronology in "Emmanuel Levinas: A Disparate Inventory" in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* ed. by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. xv-xxx. Samuel Moyn's *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas Between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2005) is a brilliant description of Levinas' intellectual development from 1923 to 1961.

attempted in his lifetime and afterwards, Levinas felt strongly that attempts to make sense of it all was impossible. To attempt a theodicy is blasphemy. In place of rational certitude, pious rationalizations, or dispassionate historiography, Levinas holds up the testimony and witness of the dead and the survivors, which cries out to us today for justice.

The Indigenous peoples of Canada have experienced a genocide, too – a seemingly “kinder, gentler” one spread out over five centuries, and sometimes done with the best of intentions, as will be described in Part Two – but genocide nonetheless. What Duncan Campbell Scott called the “Indian problem” in Canada had its parallels in “the Jewish question” in Germany and Europe. Despite the passing of many decades and many efforts at healing and reconciliation, the horrific legacies of both of these are as yet unresolved, and have an ugly habit of resurfacing. So, the way in which Levinas called into question Europe’s philosophies may offer a clue to how to respond to the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. It is not about justifying or explaining the evil of the past, it is about responding to the witness of suffering.

A second reason to begin with Levinas is that his philosophy is annoying. He is the unsettling figure of western philosophy who stands inside the guild house of the philosophers and quietly, but firmly, points out to its members, “You are missing something.” He is disquieting, not just because he is hard to understand, but because his “Big Idea” -- “Ethics as First Philosophy” -- comes across as an indictment of the usual concerns of academic philosophers. He upsets the preoccupations of analytical philosophers, existentialists, and ontologists. By arguing that the tradition of Western philosophy is an attack upon transcendence, Levinas points to the *other* other, which cannot be

assimilated, which is beyond comprehension, which is not even acknowledged. He calls attention to the blind spot of western philosophy.⁷⁹ Phenomenologists describe aspects of human consciousness that ordinarily escape attention, and Levinas is the most radical phenomenologist of them all.

In a parallel way, Indigenous leaders and activists unsettle the settler's narratives and institutions, in education, politics, law, the economy, and in social relations. Indigenous activists argue for land and autonomy, and so are an annoyance to the majority population, who wonders why they cannot just get on with things as they are. After all, is Canada not one of the best places in the world?⁸⁰ Indigenous activists say no, pointing to problems with drinking water on reserves, broken treaties, racism, the high rate of murder among Indigenous women, explicit and implicit racism among police, and slow progress in treaty negotiations. They reject incorporation into the settlement project called Canada, arguing that this is something being imposed upon them. They are other than the

⁷⁹ In vertebrate biology, the blind spot is the place in an eye where the optic nerve passes through the optic disc, and thus there are no photoreceptors there. We do not normally notice this, because the spot is off to the side in the field of vision, and the brain conspires to cover it up with processes that fill in the blank. Indeed, the blind spot was not documented until 1660. Edme Mariotte, a French Roman Catholic priest, studied optics and colour perception, and discovered the blind spot in 1660. See "Edme Mariotte (1620 -- 1684): Pioneer of Neurophysiology" by Andrzej Grzybowski and Pinar Aydin, *Survey of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (July-August 2007), pp. 443-451. See also Frank H. Durgin and Srimant P. Tripathy, "On the filling in of the visual blind spot: some rules of thumb" *Perception*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 827-840.

⁸⁰ "Canada is the No. 1 Country in the World, According to the 2021 Best Countries Report", *US News and World Report*, April 13, 2021, at <https://www.usnews.com/info/blogs/press-room/articles/2021-04-13/canada-is-the-no-1-country-in-the-world-according-to-2021-best-countries> accessed April 24, 2021.

diversity and plurality called forth in the term “multicultural.”⁸¹ By not going away, the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools, as one part of a long history, calls into question all the norms of Canadian settler society, as well as the inherited universal claims to normativity of European society and its institutions. It points to the blind spot in the vision of the Canadian project. The legacy is uncanny and disorienting.

Dealing with the legacy of the IRS is necessarily postcolonial and decolonizing. The work of Levinas, too, is postcolonial; he wrote concerning Edmund Husserl and phenomenological method that

In spite of his intellectualism and his conviction about the excellence of the West, Husserl has thus brought into question the Platonic privilege, until then uncontested, of a continent which believes it has the right to colonize the world.⁸²

By this “Platonic privilege” is to be understood Plato’s approach which seemed to be omnivorous, with nothing outside of its purview, but which Levinas saw as simply the arrogance of his dialectic which assimilated everything into its worldview. Levinas draws a straight line from this kind of thinking to colonialism.

Thus, Levinas is unsettling. He not only unsettles the philosopher, but also the theologian, especially any who sees themselves as rooted in Greek philosophy. He argues that Western philosophy has the tendency to destroy transcendence, and so it is in conflict with the Hebrew Bible and the traditions of

⁸¹ Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states, “This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.”

⁸² Emmanuel Levinas, *Signature*, written in 1963 and revised in 1976, in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* trans. by Seán Hand (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), pp. 291-295; p. 292.

the rabbis in the Talmud, which, in contradistinction to Western philosophy, are always pointing to the transcendent.⁸³ Thus, he challenges Jews and Christians who try to reconcile Athens with Jerusalem, directing them to something irreducible that cannot be assimilated. Likewise, by directing the attention of settlers to that which is outside of their world Indigenous activists unsettle the universal claims of the political, philosophical, cultural, and theological assumptions of settlers in Canada, the United States, and other settler states.

B) *Otherwise Than Being*

Levinas is best known for two books: *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise Than Being* (1974).⁸⁴ Most people seem to come to Levinas through the first book, and do not appreciate how much he revised his approach in the second. This is a bit like trying to discuss Wittgenstein's philosophy as if he never wrote anything after the *Tractatus*. Because Levinas's mature thought is found in the later book, I will focus on his thought as reflected in *Otherwise than Being*.

While Levinas sees the trajectory of Western philosophy as destructive of transcendence, he does see the transcendent jutting from their writings, now and

⁸³ See Eli Schonfeld, "Levinas and the Bible" in *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas* edited by Michael L. Morgan (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 385-400.

⁸⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini, Essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961); *Totality and Infinity: An Essay in Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquensne University Press, 1969).

Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: M. Nijhoff, 1974); *Otherwise Than Being, Or Beyond Essence* translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquensne University Press, 1998).

again, here and there. Thus, he sees it briefly in Plato's *Republic* Book 6. 509b, in the phrase ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, from which he takes the title of *Otherwise than*

Being:

καὶ τοῖς γινωσκομένοις τοίνυν μὴ μόνον τὸ γινώσκεσθαι φάναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ παρεῖναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπ' ἐκείνου αὐτοῖς προσεῖναι, οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι **ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας** πρεσβεία καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος.⁸⁵

Therefore, you should also say that not only do the objects of knowledge owe their being known to the good, but their being is also due to it, although the good is not being, but superior to it in rank and power.⁸⁶

Now, because the term came from Plato, Jean-Marc Narbonne tentatively describes Levinas as a modern Neoplatonist and suggests that he “makes possible the marriage of the Greek and the Judeo Christian”.⁸⁷ This is incorrect; Levinas has no interest in marrying the Greek and the Jew, and his understanding of “otherwise than being” is quite different from any Platonic description of “the Good”. Whereas Plato acknowledged that which transcends being, it was still framed in the forms, an ontology which can be captured in words and essences; Levinas explicitly eschews the ontological and essences. More importantly, Levinas rejected any sense of *participation*. In *Totality and Infinity* he contrasts the totality of the Greek philosophers with the idea of creation *ex nihilo* as something which “expresses a multiplicity not united into a

⁸⁵ <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0168%3Abook%3D6%3Asection%3D509b> accessed August 26, 2020.

⁸⁶ Plato, *Republic* translated by G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Ltd, 1992), p. 182. As far as I can tell, *autrement qu'être* is Levinas's own translation of ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας.

⁸⁷ Jean-Marc Narbonne, “Levinas and the Greek Heritage” in *Levinas and the Greek Heritage & One Hundred Years of Neoplatonism in France* by Jean-Marc Narbonne and Wayne J. Hankey (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), p. 88.

totality.”⁸⁸ What Rudolf Otto called the “wholly other” cannot, for Levinas, be a subject of participation, because that would negate the alterity and become a totality.

Levinas was an observant Orthodox Jew, and he worked in Jewish institutions until his fifties. As a philosopher he asserted that he was not a *Jewish* philosopher as such, and that his work had significance for everybody, regardless of faith or its absence. That said, he never denied that his critique originated from ideas in Judaism. Thus, creation *ex nihilo* expresses a concept alien to Greek philosophy, because for him it did not involve totality and participation. Levinas saw the great task of Jews in Europe as “to express in those principles about which Greece knew nothing.”⁸⁹ By this he does not mean the actual languages, but what he found to be the utterly ethical orientation of Judaism as contrasted with the ontological grounding of Western philosophy.⁹⁰

Jacques Derrida understood this quality of Levinas’s philosophy. At the end of his review of *Totality and Infinity* in “Violence and Ethics,” Derrida

⁸⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 104. See also Francisco J. Gonzalez “Levinas Questioning Plato on Eros and Maieutics” in *Levinas and the Ancients* edited by Brian Schroeder and Silva Benso (Bloomington & Indianapolis IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 40-61; pp. 53-54; and in the same volume Michael Naas, “Lending Assistance Always to Itself: Levinas’ Infinite Conversation with Platonic Dialogue”, pp. 79-102; p. 99 note 5.

⁸⁹ Levinas, “Assimilation and New Culture” (1980) in *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures* translated by Gary D. Mole (London UK: Continuum, 2007), p. 193.

⁹⁰ This is discussed at length by Robert Gibbs in *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), especially chapter 7. Also, Michael Morgan, *Discovering Levinas* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 387-395. His clearest discussion is in his Talmudic commentary “The Translation of Scripture: From the tractate *Megillah, 8b and 9a-9b*” (1986) in *In the Time of Nations* translated by Michael B. Smith (London UK: Continuum, 2007), pp. 22-42; especially p. 42. See also the interview transcribed in the same book as “On Jewish Philosophy”, pp. 151-166; p. 156-157.

suggests that, for Europe, Judaism functions as something infinitely other, and that “we live in the difference between the Jew and the Greek.”⁹¹ In the last paragraph of the essay Derrida invokes James Joyce’s character of Leopold Bloom: “Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet.”⁹² He does this in order to consider what it means for Levinas to couple Judaism and Hellenism in their alterity. This is no Hegelian synthesis, but a contrast of, on the one side, philosophy tending towards totality, and on the other, Jewish religion which resists totalization.

Levinas’s earlier book, *Totality and Infinity* has two issues. The first is that many people read it as if it were Martin Buber’s *I and Thou*.⁹³ This is because Levinas’s language is still too ontological, something he attempted to undo in *Otherwise Than Being*. The erroneous reading is all over the secondary literature. Simon Critchley correctly states in *The Trouble With Levinas* that “his work has been reduced to a number of slogans about “the ethics of alterity,” “the Other” (capital O), and so on.”⁹⁴ Diane Perpich notes the difficulty of applying Levinas in

⁹¹ Jacques Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas” in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 79-153 (notes pp. 311-321); pp. 152-153.

⁹² James Joyce, *Ulysses Annotated Student Edition* with an Introduction and Notes by Declan Kiberd (originally published 1922; London UK: Penguin Books Ltd, 1992), p. 622.

⁹³ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (1923, 2nd Edition 1957) translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970). Hilary Putnam contrasts them in “Levinas and Judaism” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, pp. 33-62; p. 37-39.

⁹⁴ Simon Critchley, *The Trouble With Levinas*, edited by Alexis Dianda (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 133. Critchley notes other problems, including “Levinas’ fundamental problem is “how do we “escape the burden of simply being stuck with ourselves until we die?” (p.134); that “Levinas’ conception of the self in substitution [as given in *Otherwise than Being*] . . . is not sufficient to answer in order to provide an answer to” his fundamental problem . . . above (p. 135).

“Don’t Try This at Home: Levinas and Applied Ethics.” She observes that, in the so-called Third Wave of Levinas research, his philosophy is being applied to political science, cinema studies, nursing, animal rights, post-colonial theory, and, yes, even theology. The title expresses her concern – that many people read Levinas’s dense texts, don’t understand them as phenomenological description, and quickly move to apply it as normative ethics. She writes:

Levinas’s notion of “the face of the other” is misinterpreted where it is invoked as a direct source or origin of ethical responsibility; correspondingly, that his writings are misunderstood if they are read as a constructivist ethics that offer ethical norms that can be put to work in caregiving professions; and finally that his work is not a defense of our inherently ethical nature nor a guarantee of our ethical responsibility.⁹⁵

Levinas does not say anything to any particular ethical system, and thus it is very hard to apply Levinas’s thought and actually make it do any work. B. C. Hutchens tried to connect Levinas’s thought with consequentialism and deontology, and found it to be impossible. He writes in *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*:

It suffices to say that Levinas and contemporary normative theory are exclusionary. If we treat the “ethics of ethics” as a metaethical body of criteria for evaluating the cogency of normative ethics, then we would be bound to reject both consequentialism and deontology. In the main they appear to make precisely the kinds of errors Levinas denounces in modern Western rationality. Alternatively, the agenda of normative ethics (to determine the moral worth of conduct, etc.) is not something to which Levinasian ethics can make any contribution.⁹⁶

As noted above, Perpich states that Levinas’s metaethics cannot be a direct source or origin of ethical responsibility; Levinas does not claim that humans are in practice ethical, much less are inherently ethical, and his

⁹⁵ Diane Perpich, “Don’t Try This at Home” in *Totality and Infinity at 50* edited by Scott Davidson and Diane Perpich (Pittsburgh PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012), pp. 127-152.

⁹⁶ B. C. Hutchens, *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York NY/London: Continuum, 2006), p. 38.

metaethics does not guarantee our being ethical.⁹⁷ His metaphysics of ethics only argues that, if there is such a thing as consciousness, phenomenologically prior to it is the ethical.

So, Levinas appears to be impractical, misinterpreted, subject to eisegesis, and taken to be that which it is not.⁹⁸ For many, this is enough to dismiss Levinas as not worthy of attention, and to move on to other philosophers of ethics.

Certainly, the statement made of Heidegger by the late Roger Scruton might also be made of Levinas: “It is formidably difficult – unless it is utter nonsense, in which case it is laughably easy.”⁹⁹ Richard Rorty, in an exchange with Simon Critchley, confessed that he did

“not find Levinas’s Other a useful tool for ethical deliberation” . . . and cannot “connect Levinas’s pathos of the infinite with ethics or politics” since the latter have to do with “reaching accommodations between competing interests” and it simply is not clear how Levinas’s descriptions of the other contribute to the project.¹⁰⁰

However, the trick to understanding Levinas is to note what he thought he was doing, and be clear what he was not doing. Again, he was arguing that over and against all rational argument and justification was the ethical, which was invariably compromised in the speech and behaviour of human beings, but

⁹⁷ Diane Perpich, “Don’t Try This at Home”, pp. 127-152.

⁹⁸ A New York Times article on Levinas and the refugee crisis in 2016 by Aaron James Wendland, “What Do We Owe Each Other”, (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/01/18/what-do-we-owe-each-other/>) accessed February 3, 2016.) makes the same error. The title, probably assigned by a headline writer and not Wendland, is not Levinasian; the whole point of Levinas’s ethic is that the relation between one’s self and another is utterly disproportionate – mutuality is not Levinasian.

⁹⁹ Roger Scruton, quoted in Jeff Collins, *Understanding Heidegger* (London: Icon Books, 2012), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Rorty quoted in Diane Perpich, *The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 4.

could not be escaped. While it could be ignored, it could not be reduced to a mere inconvenience or matter of mores or social science.

This brings us to the second problem, alluded to above, which is that *Totality and Infinity* is still too ontological. Derrida's major critique in "Violence and Metaphysics" is that, while Levinas is attempting to leave the climate of ontology, he was nevertheless still being ontological – to reject Heidegger Levinas was still using Heideggerian categories. As the 1960s wore on, Levinas (undoubtedly due to Derrida's critique) came to the same conclusion – that the perspective of *Totality and Infinity* was still too ontologically oriented, and that his understanding of the relationship of the other to the self might be read as a Husserlian intentional object. The result of this revision was *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (1974), which is an attempt to restate his central idea in de-ontologized language. The book was previewed in a series of lectures and essays between 1968 and 1972, and in revised form appeared as *Otherwise than Being*.

What was the problem that Derrida found? Fundamentally it is about language. In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas describes the self in its self-enjoyment and autonomy, and does so in a fairly conventional phenomenological way. The difficulty arises when he describes the relation of the other to the self. It is a relationship of transcendence, and yet Levinas continues to use ordinary language, albeit in a phenomenological way. As Michael Morgan puts it, commenting on Theodore de Boer's reading of Derrida's essay:

In Derrida's terms, Levinas's philosophy suffers from an "inner antimony. It would discuss a realm beyond being in language which can be used to describe being only." In short, Levinas can never leave the domain of totality, of thought, of language. Or, to put it differently, the relation between persons can take place only within totality; nothing

transcendent can be thought or spoken of. If philosophy speaks, it speaks within totality, and if Levinas claims for philosophy a speech about the face, that, too, occurs within totality. We cannot stand where we stand and reach beyond in thought and speech.¹⁰¹

In his writings after the early 'sixties Levinas tends to drop the language of "the face" and instead moves on to talk about *substitution*. Instead of talking about the Other as though it were one phenomenon among others, he describes the pre-intentional categories of *sensibility, proximity, exposure, the saying and the said, and substitution*. He retains the language around responsibility and the infinite, but grounds it, not in the encounter with the other, as a kind of disruption of the self in time, but in a primordial description of the subject. Levinas's strategy is not to suggest ideas that transcend thought and language, but to describe the anarchic preconditions of consciousness that allow for thought and language. He is obliged to use language, but what he points to is before language, before reason.

Levinas states in his prefatory note to *Otherwise than Being* that the central concept is "substitution".¹⁰² Robert Bernasconi in his essay "What is the question to which 'substitution' is the answer?" notes that the concept is enigmatic;¹⁰³ he jokes that the answer to the title of his essay might be, "What is the most obscure philosophic concept of the twentieth century?" The fundamental reason for this enigmatic obscurity is that, in his attempt to evade ontology, Levinas is subverting the thematization of what he is saying, especially

¹⁰¹ Michael Morgan, *Discovering Levinas* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 304.

¹⁰² Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. xlvii.

¹⁰³ Robert Bernasconi, "What is the question to which 'substitution' is the answer?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, pp. 234-251, p. 234.

the kind of language he used in *Totality and Infinity*. To put it in Derridaian terms, he is deconstructing his discourse as he goes along.

The idea was first presented in the essay “Substitution” in 1968, and in a revised form it is the central chapter, Chapter IV, of *Otherwise than Being*. It is a description of the self, but not a self interrupted by the other, as in *Totality and Infinity*. It is a self that is primordially oriented towards the other before the encounter with the other in time. Thus, the other can no longer be seen as a theme which is represented in me. Levinas describes the subject in *proximity*, which is not a spatial description, “not a state, a repose, but, a restlessness, null site, outside of the place of rest.”¹⁰⁴ Levinas uses a variety of terms to describe this proximity: it is an obsession with the other,¹⁰⁵ which is not reducible to any kind of consciousness; and the object of the obsession, the other, is not an intentional object in the Husserlian sense.¹⁰⁶ It is anarchic, in the sense that it “undoes thematization, and escapes any *principle*, origin, will, or ἀρχή, which are put forth in every ray of consciousness.”¹⁰⁷ For Levinas a key point is not that we *know* the world but that we *live* in it. Where Heidegger and others emphasise the conscious nature of being human and equate consciousness with life and meaning, Levinas points to what humanity requires in order to generate consciousness, and sees that as constitutive of life and meaning.

Substitution is “an activity behind the absolutely anarchical passivity of obsession.”¹⁰⁸ Substitution is constitutive of human subjectivity; the oxymoron

¹⁰⁴ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 83-84.

¹⁰⁶ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁷ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁸ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 113.

of “an activity” which is “passive” suggests the pre-conscious nature of this. He writes:

I exist through the other and for the other, but without this being an alienation. I am inspired. This inspiration is the psyche. The psyche can signify this alterity in the same without alienation in the form of incarnation, as being-in-one’s skin, having-the-other-in-one’s skin.¹⁰⁹

Levinas is concerned that substitution might be taken as a kind of nihilism, as an extinguishing of oneself in favour of the other. So, he calls it an inspiration, an evocative phrase that brings to mind the account of human creation in Genesis 2, where lifeless matter comes to life with the breath of God. In Levinas’s telling the life-giving is not God, but the constitution of subjectivity where the subject is oriented towards the other, and finds signification and meaning in the other. I substitute the other for me in me, in my embodied self. That orientation requires response in language, and thus gives rise not just to responsibility but also meaning.

Levinas uses hyperbolic language to describe the effects of substitution. He describes the responsibility in the self as a persecution, in which the subject is a hostage.¹¹⁰ He also describes it as a martyrdom.¹¹¹ Because it is prior to dialogue and thematization it is a responsibility that is infinite and universal, so that the subject is *always* responsible. In lectures and interviews as well as in *Otherwise than Being* he quotes Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *Brother Karamazov*: “Each of us is guilty before everyone for everyone, and I more than others.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 114-115.

¹¹⁰ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 111-112.

¹¹¹ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 146.

¹¹² For an extended discussion of Levinas’s use of this quotation, see Alain Toumayan, ““I More than the Others”: Dostoevsky and Levinas”, *Yale French Studies*, No. 104, Encounters with Levinas (2004), pp. 55-66.

Levinas uses this strong hyperbolic language to underline and re-underline what he sees as the strength and quality of this responsibility. This is not a responsibility and ethic that one chooses:

The responsibility for the other can not have begun in my commitment, in my decision. The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the hither side of freedom, from a “prior to every memory,” an “ulterior to every accomplishment,” from the non-present par excellence, the non-original, the anarchical, prior to or beyond essence.¹¹³

Thus, Levinas is not suggesting that people ought to be responsible, or to substitute themselves for others in martyrdom, or to consider themselves as hostages under perpetual persecution. Levinas is, as a phenomenologist, descriptive, not prescriptive. What he is describing is a subjectivity in which responsibility is an assumption prior to discourse and any action. Without it there is no meaning, no significance, just a *tohu-vabohu* of sound and fury signifying nothing. This anarchic responsibility does not prescribe action, but judges it and calls it into question.

C) Sériature

In “The Saying and the Said” in Chapter 1.3 of *Otherwise than Being*, and a large part of Chapter II, Levinas uses language to try and make his point about the limitations of language.¹¹⁴ *Saying* is proximity and exposure prior to discourse and thematization - it is a subjectivity which is invoked by an

¹¹³ *Otherwise than Being*, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ *Otherwise than Being*, pp. 5-7, 37-59. Levinas introduced the idea in “Au delà de l’Essence” in 1970 in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (August –September No. 3, 1970) and developed it in “Le Dire et le Dit” in 1971 in *Le Nouvelle Commerce*, cahier 18-19 (Spring 1971), 1971, pp. 19-48.

Otherwise than being. The *Said* is precisely a subjectivity that sees things in terms of essences and beings, and turns the anarchic Saying into themes that can be manipulated and turned against the convictions of the Saying. In the *Said* the “Otherwise than Being” becomes Being, or a being. The Saying is ethical, and commands the self to responsibility; the *Said* is a game in which we play with words, concerning ourselves with essences and meanings. While we cannot do without language and the *Said*, it has a tendency to betray the ethical character of the Saying.

Levinas takes Heidegger’s *Dasein*, the being in the world that is aware of Being, but then pushes past the verbalizations of what that is, to what is prior to it, and describes in the conditions of consciousness the priority of an ethical which gives meaning to everything.

Levinas always claimed that his approach was that of phenomenology – the same tradition as that of Husserl and Heidegger, with whom he studied. In principle this meant paying attention “to the thing itself” in intuition,¹¹⁵ although in practice this looked different for Levinas and each of his teachers. The virtue of such a practice is that it put aside the centuries-old questions that bedeviled philosophers. Thus, rather than getting caught up in Descartes’s skeptical method leading to certainty, considering causality in Hume’s skepticism, and Kant’s belief that one cannot know the thing in itself, phenomenology takes as a given the phenomena of human consciousness in the world and seeks to describe how human meaning is received and generated. It looked behind the usual constructions of being human – history, knowledge, essences, causality – and

¹¹⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Volume 1* (1900/1913) translated by J. N. Findlay (London UK: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1970), p. 168.

looked at how phenomena and the embodied human were related. Many of the problems of mind and body, epistemology, the thing-in-itself and representation – are all put aside as the results of faulty methods. In this phenomenological method is similar to Wittgenstein and the bewitching of language, and his belief that the role of the philosopher was to explain away such problems.¹¹⁶

Levinas came to believe that ontology itself was not fundamental, as Heidegger asserted in *Being and Time*, but that before it was the ethical. As already mentioned, in *Otherwise Than Being* this resulted in his descriptions of substitution, the saying and the said, and proximity and sensibility. It also meant that these descriptions were paradoxical, pointing to the saying while using the language of the said. Derrida recognizes this and describes as *sériature*, a typical Derridan neologism signifying “une série de ratures (ou de retraits)” -- a series of erasures or withdrawals.¹¹⁷

D) The Possible, Real Significance of Levinas’s Philosophy to Christian Theology

Levinas’s philosophy does not have, and cannot have, the significance that many Christian writers seem to think it should have. Just as Levinas’s metaethics cannot be a direct source or origin of ethical responsibility, so it is an inappropriate place to look for any kind of foundation of theology. While

¹¹⁶ Richard Rorty described Wittgenstein and Heidegger as passing “each other, in mid-career, going in opposite directions.” See “Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the Reification of Language” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* edited by Charles Guignon (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 337-357; p. 339.

¹¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am” in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1* edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 143-190; p. 167 & p. 175.

interpreters of Heidegger may be able to erect upon his approach to fundamental ontology a Christian existentialism,¹¹⁸ it should be, *a priori*, impossible to do that with Levinas's metaethics. In the essay "God and Philosophy" Levinas goes as far as his philosophy will allow, which is not very far at all: if we look for the divine that is wholly other, we will be deflected to the trace we find in another person, a trace we might call the image of God.¹¹⁹ Thus, for Levinas, discussion about God will invariably lead to our relations with other people, or human ethical behaviour. Otherwise, we are committed to thematic language about the Divine with all of its problems and unending discussions. For Levinas the paradigm of religious language is not a systematic theologian such as Aquinas, but the discussions of in the Talmuds and their commentaries, seemingly fulfilling the old quip that, when you get three rabbis in a room, you will emerge with five opinions. The apparent necessity for coherence in the rational theology of Christians is not as strong in Talmudic literature, where various opinions and thoughts exist in tension and contradiction.

All this considered, Christian theologian might note a few things in Levinas's writings that may provoke some useful reflection. Here are three.

a) Levinas and Apophatic thought

First, his kind of pointing - in which the ethical is otherwise than being, and talking about it in positive terms requires erasure - resembles apophatic

¹¹⁸ As John Macquarrie did in *Principles of Christian Theology, 2nd Edition* (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1977).

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, "God and Philosophy" (1975), in *Of God Who Comes to Mind* translated by Bettina Bergo (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 55-78; especially p. 66.

thought. In apophatic theology one argues for both the affirmation of the qualities of the Divine and their negation. Pseudo-Dionysius wrote:

Since it is the Cause of all brings, we should posit and ascribe to it all the affirmations we make in regard to beings, and, more appropriately, we should negate all these affirmations, since it surpasses all being. Now we should not conclude that the negations are simply the opposites of the affirmations, but rather that the cause of all is considerably *prior* to this, beyond privations, beyond every denial, beyond every assertion.¹²⁰

It is not clear that Levinas ever made a true study of apophatic theology, but he does seem to have arrived at a similar structure of thought. Michael Fagenblatt goes so far as to argue that Levinas, especially in his writings on Judaism, engaged in an ethical negative theology. Fagenblatt traces this not through Christian negative theology, but Maimonides, whom Levinas definitely did read.¹²¹ Because of his philosophical orientation, there are some significant differences between Levinas's approach and that found in Christian apophaticism. One is that it is characterized by a far stronger negation than is usually found in Christian writers. Another is that he does not automatically identify the *otherwise than being* with God, but, at best, with the deflection to another person. Whereas the Christian apophatic is most likely to be moved to contemplation and worship, in Levinas's understanding a human being becomes restless with the awareness of their responsibility, and then decides whether to act on it.¹²² Fagenblatt observes that in Levinas's approach negative theology

¹²⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* I.2 (1000B), in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), p. 136. Italic emphasis added.

¹²¹ Michael Fagenblatt, "Levinas and Maimonides: From Metaphysics to Ethical Negative Theology" in *Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy*, Vol 16, (2008) (1), pp. 95 - 147.

¹²² In Part Three I note that Coakley's idea of kenosis in wordless contemplative prayer does lead to action.

“works in practice, but not in theory.” By this he draws on Maimonides who believed that

without the turn to ethical or political action the acquired intellect would correlate with its divine object, and the latter would thereby lose its sense of radical transcendence.¹²³

Thus,

In order for the love of transcendence to be practiced, the love must release the object from the grasp of knowledge, release it even from the concept of an object. “Transcendence owes it to itself to interrupt its own demonstration.”¹²⁴

Christian apophaticism tends to be doxological and mystical, whereas Levinas’s approach deflects to practical ethics. This might be something for a Christian to consider, and in Part Three I suggest it may be a missing link that connects the Sarah Coakley’s contemplative “power-in-vulnerability” with action.

b) From the Apophatic to Kenotic

A second thing that a Christian theologian might note is that, if one grasps Levinas’s point, one has to let go of certain things, such as certainty. As Fagenblatt points out, negative theology is always a practice of humility.¹²⁵ If Levinas is correct, we will be aware of our responsibility, but we will not necessarily know how to enact it. Thus, moral correctness in any activity will always be tentative. Any system of ethics devised by humans will be necessarily incomplete, just as Gödel’s theorems demonstrate the incompleteness of the axioms capable of modelling arithmetic. While we might refine various types of

¹²³ Fagenblatt, p. 121. The quotation is Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. 152. Fagenblatt suggests that this makes Levinas, like Maimonides, something of a Neoplatonic, but I would argue that he is a long ways from Plotinus, mainly because Levinas has no concept of *participation*.

¹²⁴ Fagenblatt, p. 121.

¹²⁵ Fagenblatt, p. 123.

ethics in order to help us consider what to do, there is no obvious and absolute conclusion when it comes time to act. Or, to put it in theological language, we can never have the omniscient knowledge of God so that we can act purely ethically – we will always be acting on a hunch.

If this is the case, then one's efforts in acting towards another might be humble and not arrogant, focused on the other and not on one's self, and knowing that one might risk an action and find it fail. The implications of Levinas's philosophy may lead to a mindset that is compatible with kenotic theology, which is the focus of Part Three of this dissertation. If one is unsettled, if one is experiencing that restlessness which is better than rest, this may lead Christian settlers to critique the theologies that justified settlement, and towards a Christ who empties himself, who voluntarily becomes a slave of all, who is humble and obedient, and who loses his life in order to gain it.

c) Judaism as a Blind Spot for Christian Theology

Finally (and this will take several pages to explain), something else that might occur to a Christian theologian is that there is a parallel with a major issue in the relationship of Judaism with Christianity; just as Levinas describes an orientation of the anarchic self towards the *other* other, so Christianity has a terrible time sorting out its relationship with Judaism. Christianity (and its secularised successor in Europe) is perplexed and restless when confronted with the persistence of the children of Israel and their non-acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.¹²⁶ Judaism is perceived as a problem to be solved, to be reconciled to

¹²⁶ I am indebted to Johannes Hoff for this insight.

Christian understandings of salvation, whereas it may, in fact, not be resolvable, and does not want or need to be resolved.

The persistent, continued existence of the Jews perplexed thinkers from ancient to modern times. Why were they still present and multiplying when the pagan faiths of Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Celtic and Germanic Europe had faded away? Did not the Church replace the Synagogue? Arthur Hertzberg in a review of Paul Johnson's *A History of the Jews* notes

the classic Christian explanations of the continued existence of the Jews are well known: they were, and are, a stiff-necked people who rejected Christ; they must continue to exist until they expiate that sin and become Christians; until then the Judaism that continues to exist is, by definition, narrow and inferior. In much more sophisticated versions, this older, theological assessment of Jews and Judaism has persisted into the modern age. As orthodox belief waned in recent centuries, a reverse attack was leveled. Postbiblical Jews and Judaism were declared, on supposedly objective grounds, to be uncreative or even subversive. [Arnold Toynbee in *A Study of History*] coined the gibe that Judaism is a "fossil" civilization; it lives, but only as an uncreative deviant that is now irrelevant to culture and history.¹²⁷

Historically, the main way Christians dealt with this was to adopt a successionist (supersessionist) theology. There are a variety of ways in which this has been expressed.¹²⁸

One option is to just ignore Judaism after the time of Jesus. John Bright does this implicitly in *A History of Israel* (originally published in 1959). It covers the history of God's people from the Bronze Age down to the end of the Second Temple era – when Jesus shows up - at which point it concludes with a chapter

¹²⁷ Arthur Hertzberg, "Trying to Answer the Ancient Questions" (review of *A History of the Jews* by Paul Johnson), *The New York Times*, April 19, 1987 from <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/09/03/specials/johnson-jews.html>, accessed March 24, 2021.

¹²⁸ Susannah Ticciati summarises these in "The Future of Biblical Israel: How Should Christians Read Romans 9-11 Today?" in *Biblical Interpretation Vol. 25* (2017), pp. 497-518; pp. 500-508.

entitled "Towards the Fullness of Time."¹²⁹ While Bright acknowledges that Judaism continued to develop with the creation of the Talmud, he places that difference within a Christian context, and suggests that it is merely the negative response to the question of Jesus, "Who do you say that I am?" Bright does not read the Tanach as a set of texts with its own integrity and context within Judaism, and with a rich hermeneutical tradition in the Talmud, but as the Old Testament, a prologue to the New Testament. This is an act of totality.

Another option is violence. In supersessionist theology the Jewish other is often seen as defective, diseased, and must be eradicated. The destruction of the Temple is seen as God's judgement on the Jews for their rejection of Jesus. The Gospel of John is read as a text supporting anti-Judaism, blaming the Jews for his death. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel is read as referring to all Jews, whether in the 1st century or the present.¹³⁰ Frequently it is rooted in an anti-Jewish reading of Romans:

It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. *Romans 9.6-9*

¹²⁹ John Bright, *A History of Israel, Third Edition* (Philadelphia PA: Westminster Press, 1981).

¹³⁰ And not, as some would suggest, the collaborationist chief priests and scribes and their followers, or a mob from the people of Judea. Daniel Boyarin, a Jewish Talmudic scholar, argues that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel is misread; the Gospel of John is a Jewish document and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is a term being used to distinguish one group of Jews among the many forms of Judaism at the time. See "The Ioudaioi and the Pre-history of 'Judaism,'" in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel*, edited by Janice Capel Anderson, Philip Sellew, and Claudia Setzer (*JSNTSup 221*) (Sheffield UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 216–39. A summary of the different perspective can be found in Ruth Sheridan, "Issues in the Translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 2013, Vol. 132, No. 3 (2013), pp. 671-695.

As Ticciati notes, this passage has been read in supercessionist terms, and between the two Israels

one [is] to be identified with the Israelites of whom Paul speaks in 9.1-5, his kinsfolk according to the flesh (9.3), and the other a 'true Israel', which the following verses will go on to characterise as children not of flesh but of promise (9.8-9), ultimately identifying them with the gathering of Jews and Gentiles that we now know as the church (9.24). Paul's argument, on this reading, is that the Israelites' rejection of Christ is not a sign that God's word has failed, since God's promises did not ultimately have them in view but rather the church. Thus the church, as true, spiritual Israel, replaces Israel according to the flesh as the covenant partner of God.¹³¹

This leads to a totalized form of thinking which believes that the Jews are obstinate and delusional. At best they are irrelevant, and at worst they must be attacked and destroyed. Thus, no less a significant Christian theologian as Martin Luther advised rulers

to set fire to their synagogues or schools . . . that their houses also be razed and destroyed . . . all their prayer books and Talmudic writings . . . be taken from them . . . that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb . . . [let us] eject them forever from the country.¹³²

Luther's anti-Judaism was a reflection of the Christian attitudes of his time, but it also served as an authoritative influence on subsequent Christian thinkers and leaders. In a secularised form it evolved in the late 19th century into antisemitism, and moved from theological categories to those of race and disease. The steps from Luther's advice in the 16th Century to *Ha Shoah* in the 20th are short and few.

A third option, developed in the wake of the Holocaust, is to argue for two paths of salvation, one for the Jews, and another for those who follow Christ. This

¹³¹ Ticciati, p. 501.

¹³² Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies" (1543) Part IX, translated by in *Luther's Works, The Christian in Society IV, Vol. 47*, edited by Franklin Sherman, translated by Martin H. Bertram (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1971), 268-78.

approach is also rooted in Paul's discussions in chapters 9 to 11 in the *Letter to the Romans*. Paul writes,

God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew . . . I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in . . . And so all Israel will be saved . . . for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
Romans 11.2, 26, 29

There are two forms of this third option. In the first, it is suggested that in the fulness of time, the Jews will see the light, become Christians, and thus become part of the church. However, this is really just a kinder, gentler form of supersessionism.

The second form of this third option is more radical, in that it suggests that God will just save the Jews, regardless of their attitude towards Jesus.

Pamela Eisenbaum argues that this interpretation is what Paul actually thought and was trying to say in Romans 9 - 11¹³³ Thus, the Gentiles are grafted onto the vine of Israel, and it is not the case that the Jews become part of the church. This end-time salvation does not imply that all the Jews will convert to some form of Christianity, because the salvation of the Jews in the First Century meant something else; as NT Wright points out,

within the [Second-Temple] worldview we have described there can be little thought of the rescue of Israel consisting in the end of the space-time universe, and/or of Israel's future enjoyment of a non-physical, 'spiritual' bliss . . . Rather, the 'salvation' spoken of in Jewish sources of this period [the Second Temple] has to do with rescue from national enemies, restoration of the national symbols, and a state of *shalom* . . . For first-century Jews it could only mean the inauguration of the age to come,

¹³³ Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not A Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York NY: HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 251-255. Robert Jewett in his *Hermeneia* commentary on Romans comes to the same conclusion, that the free "gifts and the call of God are without regret" (Romans 11.29 – translated by the NRSV as "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"). See Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2009), pp. 701-702, 709.

liberation from Rome, the restoration of the Temple, and the free enjoyment of their own Land.¹³⁴

Eisenbaum suggests that, from Paul's perspective, it is true that his fellow Jews have not recognised that the end times have begun. The end times require that the full number of Gentiles must come in as part of the ingathering of the nations, as prophesied by Isaiah. Once they have been gathered, then "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11.26). That the Son of Man would have a role in accomplishing this is, for Christians, obvious, but it is not thereby implied that all the Jews will be saved by professing the kind of faith in Jesus that Gentile Christians have, or that a Jew such as Paul had. All Israel will be saved because of God's love for them, period.

The good thing with this approach is that it is not genocidal or violent, and it claims to respect the integrity of Judaism. The problem with this third approach is that it can still be totalizing. While it may look better to say that the Gentiles are being grafted onto the vine of Israel, instead of saying that the church has replaced the synagogue, it is still enveloping Judaism within a theology of Christianity. It fails to see that Judaism functions as a blind spot for Christianity – that it may not be resolvable within Christian soteriology.

Even in this, supersessionism may return in a more subtle form, as a debate between Jews and Christians over who has the purest lineage. Ticciati

¹³⁴ NT Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God (Volume One of Christian Origins and the Question of God)* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 300. This is highlighted by Mark D. Nanos in *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letters* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 275, n. 102.

writes, concerning the “partings” model of the parallel development of Judaism and Christianity:¹³⁵

it brings with it a supersessionist dynamic by reintroducing an apparently self-evident or natural continuation of biblical Israel as one of the branches of the split, by contrast with which the other branch can only be a supersessionist innovation . . . ethnicity is the default (whether consciously espoused or not), since purity of lineage is sure-fire, unchanging identifier.¹³⁶

It seems that in any attempt to provide a coherent narrative to the partings, aspects of totalizing thought emerges.

Ticciati argues for a three-stage theological reading of Romans 9-11. The first stage adopts the non-supersessionist reading, which appears to be a growing consensus. The second stage suggests that the term “Israel” must be read expansively and inclusively, and that within the one “Israel” is much variety. Building on the work of Tommy Givens, she states that, if Israel “is ‘the people that remembers the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as its own’ in whatever form and however tenuously”, then Israel

embraces not only Christians, Jews and arguably Muslims, but even those ‘secular’ nations that have modelled themselves as the new Israel. In short, no claimants to the name Israel can be discounted.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ In the past twenty-five years there has been a recognition that the historical development of Christianity and Judaism was far more complex and intertwined than previously imagined. The separation of the two religions came much later than thought – not in the First Century, but not until the Fifth and Sixth Centuries, by which time Christianity was able to use the violent forces of the Empire to enforce its paramount position. See Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), and the essays in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* edited by Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

¹³⁶ Ticciati, p. 504-505.

¹³⁷ Ticciati, pp. 511-512.

The final stage builds on Barth's reading in his *Romans*, and suggests that the church

has itself become hardened Israel, no longer the marginal gathering around the apostles of Christ, but a well-established institution which cannot escape the kind of systemic corruption for which the prophets called Israel of old to account.¹³⁸

Ticciati's approach is valuable in that it sidesteps the debatable mapping of contemporary Jews and Christians onto Paul's language "not all Israel" and "Israel". It also forces Christians into self-criticism, rather than condemning others. However, does it still try to resolve that which is unresolvable?

This is the basic issue. Christianity, with its universal claims, with its rationality rooted in Greek philosophy, and with the support of the state, has too often manifested itself in violence and the rejection of that which it cannot assimilate or resolve. It is caught in an impasse today because, on the one hand, it wants to respect the authenticity of Judaism as God-given means of accessing the Divine, but at the same time it implicitly wants to undermine that integrity by folding the Jews into a Christian narrative of salvation history. Thus, if it is not to try and destroy Judaism or ignore it, or to just enfold it in its own systems of thought, Christianity must acknowledge its blind spot with regard to the children of Israel. This part of soteriology is always going to be incoherent.

This brings us back to the reason Levinas's approach may be important for Christians, especially as one looks at, say, the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools. The continued presence of the Indigenous peoples in settler Christendom undermines the coherence of the stories we tell to reassure

¹³⁸ Ticciati, p. 512. See Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, translated from the Sixth Edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 332.

ourselves that our governments and institutions are good and rational, and that everything will work out for the best. Just as the Jews are a blind spot in European Christianity, so the Indigenous peoples are for Christians in places like Canada and Australia. We are missing something, and it cannot be resolved into our current way of thinking. If we persist with the effort, we end up with totalizing thought.

E) Levinas's Critique of Totality

This, then, brings us to the particulars of Levinas's critique of Western philosophy. Now, while it is paradoxical for Levinas that he is required to use language to describe that which is beyond language, the good news is that this paradox is not present in critiquing Western philosophy. Since Western philosophy tends to exalt language, the critique offered of it in *Totality and Infinity* did not require quite the same kind of rewrite that Levinas's more positive work had to go through after Derrida's comments in "Violence and Metaphysics".

What was the central point of Levinas's critique? He wrote:

The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy. Individuals are reduced to being bearers of forces that command them unknown to themselves. The meaning of individuals (invisible outside of this totality) is derived from the totality. The unicity of each present is incessantly sacrificed to a future appealed to bring forth its objective meaning. For the ultimate meaning alone counts; the last act alone changes beings into themselves. They are what they will appear to be in the already plastic forms of the epic.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 21-24.

Levinas sees this character in western philosophy from Thales (c. 624 – c. 546 BCE) onward, and so just about every philosopher is guilty of this, up to and including, of course, Heidegger. In modern times the classic totalizing philosopher is Hegel, who viewed the whole of history and the cosmos in terms of Spirit working itself out through a dialectic that was progressing towards ever higher states. In Hegel nothing escapes the dialectic – when something is differentiated from another thing – a thesis and antithesis – they are in an opposition and call to each other,¹⁴⁰ but are then resolved into another thesis.

Michael Morgan describes Levinas's approach this way: for Levinas

all philosophy, whether traditionally metaphysical or epistemological or more contemporary forms of transcendental phenomenology, is idealist and acknowledges nothing transcendent in itself, no Other. This conclusion applies to Heidegger, too, and to recent attempts to understand pre-philosophical life as it is lived, the so-called *Lebenswelt*. In short, Levinas understands all Western philosophy, whether metaphysical, epistemological, or ontological, to be totalizing or imperialistic in this way.¹⁴¹

Levinas restates his critique in *Otherwise Than Being*:

Western philosophy and the State, which have issued out of proximity, nonetheless refute it in discourse absorbed in the said and in being, in ontology: the history of Western philosophy has not been the refutation of skepticism as much as the refutation of transcendence. The logos said has the last word dominating all meaning, the word of the end, the very possibility of the ultimate and the result. Nothing can interrupt it.¹⁴²

Levinas connects this trajectory of Western philosophy with the totalitarianism of the State:

Does not the coherent discourse, wholly absorbed in the said, owe its coherence to the State, which violently excludes subversive discourse . . . The interlocutor who does not yield to logic is threatened with prison or

¹⁴⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 53.

¹⁴¹ Michael Morgan, p. 96-97.

¹⁴² Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, p. 169.

asylum.¹⁴³

What are the characteristics of totalizing philosophy?

First, it is an *egoism*, that is, the primary relationship of a person is with himself or herself.¹⁴⁴ It is an *egology*, an unwavering attempt to swallow every other into the self, thought, or reason.¹⁴⁵ It is the naïve self that denies the immediacy of the sensible and instead deals with mental representations as if they are the real. It is the ignorance of an alterity in the self that does not acknowledge that the nucleus of the ego is cored out.¹⁴⁶ In the language of *Otherwise than Being*, it has no exposure or proximity.

Second, *Egoism* becomes the occasion for the sacrifice of the others; on the larger scale, it is the Totality which provides the philosophical basis for a totalitarianism regime, such as Nazi Germany or Stalinist Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* sees the Other as being at an infinite height, utterly unknowable; the self as configured by Totality looks down on others, and seeks to control them, and is unknowingly itself controlled.

Third, plurality is suppressed.¹⁴⁸ The Other is subsumed into a singular totality. This suppression is carried out by a use of force – by violence and killing, if necessary. A totalizing philosophy, like Heidegger's ontology, is a philosophy of power, which issues in the State, and results in injustice and inhumanity.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁴ Dermot Moran *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 320.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Morgan, p. 90.

¹⁴⁶ Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁷ Michael Morgan, p. 16-17.

¹⁴⁸ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 221.

¹⁴⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p 46, *Otherwise than Being*, pp. 131-135.

Fourth, in the context of Totality, the Other is experienced a limit on one's freedom; in Totality this is not a good thing, but a threat.¹⁵⁰ Levinas reads Heidegger as saying that freedom is the ability of remaining in the same in the midst of the other; knowledge, for Heidegger, is a resistance to justice, and obedience to Being.¹⁵¹

Thus, the solution to the limitation of the ego's freedom is found by overwhelming the other to the point of annihilation; this is peace as understood by Totality – a cessation from violence, the quiet of the dead.¹⁵²

Sixth, truth, however derived by the self, is situated in an impersonal reason, which sustains itself and justifies itself as a "divine order."¹⁵³ It has an ontological quality which bars it from being questioned by the needs of others.

Next, while truth has an ontological character, morality and ethics are subservient to it. What is considered to be good is reduced to one topic amongst many within a totality of being, and may be a mere matter of necessity. Questions of morality are referred to psychology.¹⁵⁴

Finally, history is an abstract concept turned concrete and anonymous, so that whether past or future, history judges humanity, not the other way around. Social relations become enacted in the destiny of sedentary peoples, the possessors and builders of the earth.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 222-224

¹⁵¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 45.

¹⁵² Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, pp. 306

¹⁵³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 87, also *Otherwise than Being*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁵⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 225.

¹⁵⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 46.

This list gives us eight characteristics of totalizing thought. If one thinks of it as an old-fashioned photo negative, one can construct a table contrasting totalizing thought with non-totalizing thought, or at least a kind of discourse that tends towards non-totalizing and undermines that which is totalizing. Such a table is below.

The left-hand side of the table shows a mode of thought in which ethics is subservient to Totality, whereas the right-hand side presents ethics as first philosophy. The first four terms on the right-hand side and the sixth and seventh should be familiar from the discussion earlier in the chapter, and because they refer to the anarchic conditions that make meaning and consciousness possible.

1	Egoism	Exposure/Proximity/Exteriority/ Alterity – anarchic orientation to the other.
2	Totality	Infinity
3	Suppression of the Other, leading to violence	Substitution
4	Freedom as not being imposed upon by others	Inescapable, unlimited responsibility; “persecution”.
5	Peace is achieved through subjugation	Peace manifested in fecundity.
6	Truth as objective and rational	Truth approached as both ethical and beyond being, through dialogue and dialectic.
7	Morality as psychology	Ethics as First Philosophy
8	History is ordained by the horizon of Being.	Diachrony – history as eschatological.

Table 1: Totalizing Thought and Non-Totalizing Thought

The fifth term is “peace manifested in fecundity, which is a roundabout way of stating that real peace is found in love, grounded in the never-satisfied desire for the Other that which is creative (perhaps procreative); it is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of positive generation.

The eighth term uses the strange term “diachrony”. The word seems to have first been used primarily in Saussurian linguistics to suggest a language as it evolves through time, as opposed to synchronic, which is what a language is at one particular moment. The two terms have moved over to anthropology and evolutionary biology.¹⁵⁶ Levinas does not use the term this way, though. In his use it refers to how the self relates in time. The normal mode in totalizing philosophy is to represent oneself in the present against the horizon of meaning, and likewise project representations of history from the past and what might happen in the future to the self. In diachrony past, present, and future are not representations but others who are of concern to me (or, in the language of *Otherwise Than Being*, the consciousness of the self is conditioned to substitution). Thus, we have an obligation to the future, and we are ordered towards it before we even arrive and beyond our deaths. Levinas calls it “eschatology” because it is beyond history and about the judgement of how we exercise our responsibility here and now.¹⁵⁷

While it might appear to be a set of binaries, the table is not really so. While the left-hand side is thoroughly thematized in the history of Western philosophy and any number of systems of thought, from political science to theology to history, the right-hand side is pointing to that which is otherwise than being, the transcendent beyond being, metaphysically prior to it, and is the source of meaning. It is an ideal which transcends verbalization, and is found in one’s self as a precondition for consciousness and communication.

¹⁵⁶ Oxford English Dictionary

¹⁵⁷ Michael Morgan, p. 216, 222-225.

E) Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Levinas is a useful partner in Unsettling Theology. He has the potential of being the unsettling philosopher *par excellence*, and the *restlessness that is better than repose* also unsettles the theologian and settler. His approach suggests that apophatic theology and kenotic theology are less likely to lead to violence and genocide. In the next section we will describe several types of theologies that have been used to justify injustice, and in the third section we will see how kenotic theology may assist us in the decolonization of settler and imperial minds.

Part Two: Genocidal Theologies
Chapter Three: Some Preliminaries

A) Introduction



Figure 3: Windows in the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Diocese of British Columbia, Anglican Church of Canada), Oak Bay, British Columbia, Canada

What were the theologies of mission which informed the operations of the Indian Residential Schools?

This is a simple question which does not yet have a standard, well documented answer. I will not attempt to provide a full history, as this dissertation is an interdisciplinary work integrating philosophy, history, and theology, and a full history of the theologies of mission described in this Part awaits the work of proper academic historians working in archives with fonds of

primary documents. That said, an inductive study of secondary literature, with some verification by a brief excursion into archival documents, provides a provisional suggestion of what those theologies are.

The presentation is presented topically. I have identified seven themes in the theologies which were used to justify the Indian Residential Schools:

- a. The Doctrine of Discovery.
- b. Providence
- c. Eschatology.
- d. The Mandate to Develop.
- e. The Struggle With Evil.
- f. Fulfillment Theology.
- g. The Difficulty of Communicating the Gospel in Indigenous Languages.

Among the primary resources in determining such theology in the Canadian context is *Canada's Missionary Congress: Addresses Delivered at the Canadian National Missionary Congress, Held in Toronto, March 31 to April 4, 1909, With Reports of Committees*.¹⁵⁸ On a more global level the records of the World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, provide a comprehensive overview of the theologies in operation across the Protestant world. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 produced 8 volumes of reports sent to all of the delegates, and a ninth volume recording the proceedings sent out after the conference.¹⁵⁹ From these texts I have derived a number of

¹⁵⁸ *Canada's Missionary Congress: Addresses Delivered at the Canadian National Missionary Congress, Held in Toronto, March 31 to April 4, 1909, With Reports of Committees* (Toronto: Canadian Council, Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1909).

¹⁵⁹ The WMC Edinburgh 1910 produced 8 volumes of reports sent to all of the delegates, and a ninth volume recording the proceedings sent out after the conference: *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Reports of Commissions I-VIII and vol. IX The History and Records of the Conference together with Addresses Delivered at the Evening Meetings* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier; and New York, Chicago, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910). The standard history is Brian Stanley *The World Missionary Conference 1910* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009). The chair of the conference, the American John H. Mott wrote *The Decisive Hour of Christian*

characteristics of these theologies. As well, I have examined a handful of books written at that time in preparation or under the influence of the Conference. To verify that there is a congruence between what is said at Edinburgh in 1910 and what was happening in the schools I went into archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon in Vancouver BC to review some of the reports of missionaries from the 1870s to 1910s, as well as addresses and sermons given in missionary societies in that era.¹⁶⁰ While this is, then, a largely derivative account, the composition and arrangement of it is new.

B) Was It Genocide?

I have described the Indian Residential Schools as part of a campaign of assimilation by the Canadian federal government, and another part in a longer history of genocide. But was the operation of the Indian residential schools really

Missions (Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, The Young People's Forward Movement Department, 1910). Because of the centenary in 2010, a secondary literature contrasting missionary theology in 1910 and 2010 has emerged, including: Stephen Bevans, "From Edinburgh to Edinburgh: Toward a Missiology for a World Church" in *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Issues* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), pp. 1-11, and Ian M. Ellis, *A Century of Mission and Unity: A Centenary Perspective on the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2010).

¹⁶⁰ For illustrative purposes I will draw on: *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society Annual Sermons and Reports from North-West Canada Missions and British Columbia Missions* in 1869, 1894, 1897, 1903, 1915; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel *The Mission Field* 1862, 1863, 1870; George Hills (1st Bishop of British Columbia) *Columbia Mission Special Fund* (London, 1860) and *Diary* 1860-1861; Diocese of New Westminster *Monthly Record* 1889, 1890, 1893, 1894, 1895; *The Bishop's Address to the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1902. *Report of the Executive Committee to the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1901.

genocide? This should be discussed before going further; “genocide” is a pretty strong word, and one wants to use it correctly and only when justified

I answer this question in the affirmative. To understand this one needs to look at the history of the term and the *UN Convention on Genocide* (1947). Article 2 states:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) **Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.**¹⁶¹

The statements by Sir John A. Macdonald and Duncan Campbell Scott in the Introduction suggests that there was intent on the part of the Canadian federal government to destroy Indigenous peoples by absorbing them into the dominant colonial population. The chief means was through the Indian Residential Schools, and the Indian Act enabled the legal apprehension of children from their parents for this purpose; this would seem to be a clear fulfillment of 2.e in the Genocide Convention. As well, there was a callous indifference to mortality among the children apprehended, leading to their deaths; this would seem to satisfy 2.a, “Killing members of the group.” It might be argued that the government and churches did not try deliberately to kill the children, but the impression created is that the project was one of “assimilate or die trying.” In some years the mortality rate in certain schools was as high as 50%. It is clear that both physical

¹⁶¹ <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html> accessed on May 22, 2017. Emphasis added.

and mental harm was inflicted on the children by the unchecked use of physical punishment and indifferent control of sexual predators, thus contravening 2.b. It is more debatable whether 2.c or 2.d apply, but the schools were part an overall trajectory of domination by colonists that marginalized the Indigenous peoples and did result in considerable physical destruction by the loss of their lands and systemic discrimination.

The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) in 1944 in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Lemkin was born a Jewish Pole in the Russian Empire and as a young man studied philosophy in Germany and law in Poland, becoming a prosecutor. Fascinated by atrocities, he sought to understand from a legal perspective the mass murders he knew took place against the Armenians in the Great War and afterwards, and the human-created famine in Ukraine in the 1930s. He escaped from Poland to Sweden after the beginning of the Second World War, and made his way to the United States in 1941 where he taught and consulted with the US government. While not fully aware of the Holocaust at that time (although he lost 49 members of his family in it), he had read Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and was aware of his desire to destroy the Jews and to expand German settlements into Ukraine and Russia. He wrote:

Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization of the area by the oppressor’s own nationals.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation – Analysis of Government – Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), p. 79, quoted in Haifa Rashed & Damien Short “Genocide and settler colonialism: can a Lemkin-inspired genocide perspective aid our understanding of the Palestinian situation?”, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 16:8, (2012), pp. 1142-1169; p. 1143.

In the wake of the Holocaust it is sometimes assumed that genocide means the attempt to completely eradicate a “race”, as Hitler intended towards the Jews, but in fact, as originally contemplated by Lemkin and as written up in the Convention, it involved destruction “in whole or in part”. In common parlance *genocide* is associated with the Holocaust, and there is a tendency to read its unique aspects into *genocide*. Lemkin, however, had an expansive understanding of genocide, and gave as an example of religious genocide the persecution of Polish Catholic clergy by Nazi Germany.¹⁶³ He wrote:

Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killing of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.¹⁶⁴

Lemkin drafted the original convention and sought to include linguistic and cultural entities as protected groups but this was negotiated out by the diplomats, and so the final text only covers a “national, ethnical, racial or religious group”.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ David B. MacDonald & Graham Hudson, “The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada” in *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 45:2 (June/juin 2012), pp. 427-449; p. 433.

¹⁶⁴ Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, p. 79, quoted in Rashed & Short, p. 1143.

¹⁶⁵ MacDonald & Hudson, p. 434.

There is now an entire academic field concerned with genocide studies (Yale University, Clark University, and the University of Minnesota, for example, all have programs). Recent literature has considered the relationship of colonialism and genocide and its applicability to the Indian Residential Schools.¹⁶⁶ The conclusion is that the term does apply, although it is unlikely that any legal case could ever be successfully brought against any party, given the passage of time.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that the Indian Residential Schools was an example of *cultural genocide*. The commissioners wrote:

The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.”

Physical genocide is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and *biological genocide* is the destruction of the group’s reproductive capacity. *Cultural genocide* is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

In its dealing with Indigenous peoples, Canada did all these things.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ In addition to MacDonald & Hudson, “The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada”, see also: Leslie Thielen-Wilson, “Troubling the Path to Decolonization: Indian Residential School Case law, Genocide, and Settler Illegitimacy” in *Canadian Journal of Law and Society/Revue Canadienne Droit et Société* Volume 29, no. 2, pp. 181-197; and Andrew Woolford, “The Next Generation: Criminology, Genocide Studies and Settler Colonialism” in *Revista Critica Penal y Poder* 2013, No. 5 (September) pp. 163-185.

¹⁶⁷ TRC Final Report Vol. 1, p. 1.

There has been pushback against this kind of language. Payam Akhavan, professor of law at McGill University and a former United Nations war crimes prosecutor pointed out in 2013 that cultural genocide was not included in the UN Convention on Genocide, and so using it outside of that well-established legal usage is not helpful. On the other hand, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Right Honourable Beverley McLaughlin, approvingly used the term in a speech just prior to the publication of the TRC Final Report.¹⁶⁸ Eminent columnist Lysiane Gagnon critiqued the Chief Justice's terminology on several counts: first, she felt that in using "inflammatory language" that McLaughlin presented a possible bias that would be problematic when cases involving Indigenous issues came before the court; second, that "the colonization was actually less brutal and cruel in Canada than in the United States and Latin America, or many other parts of the world" and so the word "genocide" is inappropriate; and third, that, condemning our colonial forbears is a kind of presentism, "an intellectual bias by which past events are analyzed outside their historical context, in the light of today's values."¹⁶⁹ In defense of McLaughlin Ken Coates, Professor at the University of Saskatchewan wrote:

the Chief Justice is only stating what is clearly in the minds of judges, lawyers and aboriginal people across the country. There is no use sugar-coating Canada's mistreatment of Indigenous peoples and communities. The country did mean, aggressive and destructive things – albeit often

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Brean, "Cultural genocide' of Canada's Indigenous peoples is a 'mourning label,' former war crimes prosecutor says", *National Post*, January 15, 2016, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/cultural-genocide-of-canadas-Indigenous-people-is-a-mourning-label-former-war-crimes-prosecutor-says> accessed May 22, 2017.

¹⁶⁹ Lysiane Gagnon, "McLachlin's comments a disservice to her court, and to aboriginals", *The Globe and Mail*, Jun. 10, 2015 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/mclachlins-comments-a-disservice-to-her-court-and-to-aboriginals/article24879482/> accessed May 22, 2017.

after convincing itself that it was moral, just and forward-looking in doing so.¹⁷⁰

Regardless of whether or not McLaughlin's comments are prejudicial, Lysiane Gagnon's other two criticisms do not stand up. First of all, pleading that "Canada was nicer to the Indians than the Americans were" suggests an ignorance of recent historiography. Yes, the history is different, and Canadians prided themselves on being a kinder, gentler nation, but this is a self-serving narrative that ignores demonstrable facts. Second, the accusation of "presentism" is only accurate if no one at the time pointed out the injustice. In truth, numerous individuals did challenge the IRS system and the apprehension of children, beginning with: the children who ran away, sometimes at the cost of their lives; many of the First Nations parents themselves who hid the children from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;¹⁷¹ missionaries who criticized the requirement that children live away from their parents and were also aware of the cultural loss, and physical and sexual abuse;¹⁷² and medical officers who were horrified at the high mortality rates.¹⁷³ These voices, however, were disregarded and marginalized, as they did not fit the dominant narrative.

¹⁷⁰ Ken Coates, "McLachlin said what many have long known", *The Globe and Mail*, May 29, 2015 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/mclachlin-said-what-many-have-long-known/article24704812/> accessed May 22, 2017.

¹⁷¹ Active resistance by children and parents is detailed in *The TRC Final Report, Vol. 1*, pp. 114-121.

¹⁷² For example, Frederick Du Vernet, who was the second Bishop of Caledonia in north-west British Columbia, and the inaugural Archbishop of British Columbia from 1915 to 1924, rejected the purposes of the IRS and wrote letters on behalf of Haida, Ts'ymsyen, and Nisga'a parents in unsuccessful attempts to get their children returned. See Pamela E. Klassen, *The Story of Radio Mind: A Missionary's Journey on Indigenous Land* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), p. 212.

¹⁷³ Dr Peter Bryce was appointed a medical inspector in 1904 and by 1907 was reporting that the mortality rates in some schools were as high as 50%. His recommendations for improvements were ignored, and he was forced to retire in

This dissertation takes the view that it is appropriate to call the Indian Residential Schools a form of genocide. As is typically the case, it was different from other recognized genocides. It was not the industrialized mass murder of the Jews in the Second World War with paramilitary death squads and death camps, grounded in Hitler's belief that Jews were a genetic plague upon humanity. Nor was it the sudden, intense ethnic conflict of neighbour upon neighbour in Rwanda of 1994, a mass murder by the Hutus against the Tutsis. It is perhaps closest to the Holodomor, the famine in the Ukraine in 1931-32 created by the Soviet Union. It is similar because, while one may debate the intentionality of the Soviet leadership, the reality is that the government was indifferent to the death of millions as it followed its ideological goals. This was compounded by a tendency to see Ukrainians as the same as Russians – any ethnic, cultural, or linguistic differences were ignored, and those who advocated for them were persecuted and murdered. Likewise, the Canadian federal government considered Indigenous cultures, languages, and spiritualities to be of no moment, and worked towards complete assimilation regardless of the cost in suffering and death.

1921. He subsequently published a book attacking it in 1922 entitled *The Story of a National Crime*. See J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, pp. 133-134.

Chapter Four: The Doctrine of Discovery

A) Johnson v. M'Intosh

The term “Doctrine of Discovery” goes back to the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Johnson v. M'Intosh*.¹⁷⁴ The judgement in the case was written by Chief Justice John Marshall, and he was joined by the six other justices. It dealt with the ownership of land in the State of Illinois, and the apparently competing claims of ownership between William M'Intosh and the descendants of Thomas Johnson. M'Intosh believed he had the better claim, as he bought the land in 1818 from the United States government. The Johnson family argued that they had the prior claim, as Thomas Johnson in 1775 bought the land from the Piankeshaw, an Algonkian-language speaking people who lived at that time in what is now Indiana and Illinois. The court found for M'Intosh, on the basis that only the federal United States (or its predecessor, the Crown) had the right to purchase land from Indigenous peoples, or otherwise extinguish Indigenous title. *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, then, is at the core of US federal Indian law, and “Federal Indian law is the lynchpin of property law in the United States.”¹⁷⁵ It “influenced the definition of Indigenous land rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand” and so may also be taken as a clear statement of British law in the 19th and 20th century colonies and dominions.¹⁷⁶ While all court decisions claim to not be making new law but simply applying the law as it is written and

¹⁷⁴ *Johnson v. M'Intosh* 21 U.S. 543 (1823) US Supreme Court. “M'Intosh” is apparently pronounced “Mackintosh”, despite the way it is spelled.

¹⁷⁵ Peter d'Errico, “Forward” in Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land*, pp. ix – xiv; xii.

¹⁷⁶ Blake A. Watson, “The Impact of the American Doctrine of Discovery on Native Land Rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand”, *Seattle University Law Review*, Vol. 34, pp. 507-551; p. 508.

understood in the common law situation, *Johnson v. M'Intosh* has the virtue of clearly enunciating the basis for the taking of land from Indigenous peoples over the previous 331 years and the subsequent 198.¹⁷⁷

It is a legal doctrine grounded in religious claims. Marshall begins by acknowledging that, at the beginning of the 17th century, the land

was held, occupied, and possessed, in full sovereignty, by various independent tribes or nations of Indians, who were the sovereigns of their respective portions of the territory, and the absolute owners and proprietors of the soil; and who neither acknowledged nor owed any allegiance or obedience to any European sovereign or state whatever:¹⁷⁸

The land was not empty of inhabitants, and so Marshall does not use the concept of *terra nullius*, which is the principle of international law holding that if a land is both unclaimed and empty of inhabitants, it belongs to whoever gets there first and populates it.¹⁷⁹ While some saw North America as being empty as compared to Europe, the Doctrine of Discovery assumes Indigenous title prior to contact.

The arrival of Europeans in North America affected this sovereignty.

Marshall writes:

On the discovery of this immense continent, the great nations of Europe were eager to appropriate to themselves so much of it as they could respectively acquire. Its vast extent offered an ample field to the ambition and enterprise of all; and the character and religion of its inhabitants afforded an apology for considering them as a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might claim an ascendancy. The potentates of the old world found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the inhabitants of the new, by bestowing on them civilization and Christianity, in exchange for unlimited independence. But,

¹⁷⁷ For other descriptions of the Doctrine of Discovery, given from the perspectives of Indigenous peoples in the United States, see *Unsettling Truths* by Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah, and Chapter Two of Richard Twiss's *Rescuing the Bible from the Cowboys*.

¹⁷⁸ *Johnson v. M'Intosh* 21 U.S. 543 (1823), 3d.

¹⁷⁹ Terra Nullius was a far more important idea in the colonization of Australia than North America. See Brenna Bhandar, "Title by Registration: Instituting Modern Property Law and Creating Racial Value in the Settler Colony", *Journal of Law and Society* Volume 42, Number 2, June 2015, pp. 253-282.

as they were all in pursuit of nearly the same object, it was necessary, in order to avoid conflicting settlements, and consequent war with each other, to establish a principle, which all should acknowledge as the law by which the right of acquisition, which they all asserted, should be regulated as between themselves. This principle was, that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.¹⁸⁰

Marshall notes the bulls issued by Popes as part of the foundation of the claim, but further asserts that the Doctrine of Discovery was an agreed-to principle to which the European powers bound themselves. He fails to note that the principle did little to actually stop war among the imperial colonizers, but these conflicts (which almost always started in Europe, and whose continental and sea battles dwarfed the ones in the Americas) all acknowledged the Doctrine of Discovery; if one conquered a new territory in North America, the treaty finalizing the distribution of land was between the European sovereigns, not with the Indigenous peoples. The tradeoff for the people already inhabiting the land was that, as subjects of the new powers, they would become civilized and Christians. Marshall describes three ways in which the Crown obtained sovereignty – conquest, purchase, or consent.

The “conqueror model” is described by Steven Newcomb as being the source of the plenary power of the US government, and “it is embedded in the cultural consciousness of the dominant society of the United States.”¹⁸¹ It goes back to the earliest settlement of what became British North America. In 1609 Robert Gray, rector of St. Bennet Sherehog in Cheapward, London¹⁸² published a

¹⁸⁰ *Johnson v. M’Intosh* 21 U.S. 543 (1823).

¹⁸¹ Newcomb, p. 23.

¹⁸² Founded in the 12th century, the church building was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 and not rebuilt; the parish was absorbed into St. Stephen’s, Walbrook.

sermon dedicated to the newly founded “Adventurers for the plantation in Virginea”. While advocating conversion on the Indigenous peoples, Gray had no difficulty noting that the English settlers were like the Israelites under Joshua entering into Canaan and dispossessing the inhabitants, with a mandate to slay idolaters. The “Indians” had no title to the land, “but only a general residence there, as wild beasts have in a forest.” A note of competition with Catholicism was also rung – if the English Protestants did not take the land then the Spanish or French Papists would surely do so.¹⁸³

Robert A. Williams, Jr. writes,

More so than even Spanish imperial discursive practice, Elizabethan colonial discourse fused nationalistic religious fervor with nationalistic economic interests to define and energize England’s errand into the American wilderness.¹⁸⁴

The eminent English jurist Sir Edward Coke argued in a decision in 1608 that English Common Law distinguished between friendly aliens and enemy aliens. Friendly aliens, he declared, were foreigners with whom England was not at war, who could hold property, and initiate legal action in English courts. Enemy aliens were those with whom the Crown was at war, and these divided into two types, *pro tempore* and *perpetus*. The English Crown could be at war with Spain, but might also make peace with it – that was the first type. However, Coke believed that infidels were perpetual enemies:

But a perpetual enemy (though there be no wars by fire and sword between them) cannot maintain any action, or get anything within this realm. All infidels are in law *pepetui inimici*, perpetual enemies (for the

¹⁸³ Robert Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London England: William Welbie, 1609), quoted in John Parker, “Religion and the Virginia Colony 1609-10” in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America 1480-1650* edited by K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. N. Hair (Liverpool UK: Liverpool University Press, 1978), pp. 245-270; 253-256.

¹⁸⁴ Williams, p. 185.

law presumes not that they will be converted, that being *remota potentia*, a remote possibility), for between them, as with devils, whose subjects they be, and the Christian, there is perpetual hostility, and can be no peace.¹⁸⁵

For Sir Edward, Indigenous peoples were outside the law, and short of assimilation, could never be part of it.

The Doctrine of Discovery incorporates this sense that Indigenous peoples, being non-Christian, were to the European nations what the Canaanites were to Israel under Joshua, a people fit for conquest, to the point of extermination, if needs be, genocide, and divinely so.

B) The 16th Century Catholic Justification of Colonisation

As mentioned, the theological justification of the conquest of the Americas by Europeans was partly grounded in Papal bulls. In 1452 Pope Nicholas V issued *Dum Diversas* which authorized King Alfonso V of Portugal “full and free power, through the Apostolic authority by this edict, to invade, conquer, fight, subjugate the Saracens and pagans, and other infidels and other enemies of Christ”.¹⁸⁶ Included in the text is not only the right to take the “possessions of the king or prince or of the kings or princes” but also “to lead their persons in perpetual servitude.” The bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1455 confirms the earlier bull and establishes a Portuguese monopoly on conquest and trade south of West

¹⁸⁵ Williams, p. 200. Coke was deeply influential in the legal professions in British North America and, after the American Revolution, in the United States; his *Institutes of the Laws of England* was a textbook well into the 19th century.

¹⁸⁶ Nicholas V, *Dum Diversas* from <http://unamsanctamcatholicam.blogspot.ca/2011/02/dum-diversas-english-translation.html> accessed January 17, 2017.

Africa. It states that this is done that “the salvation of souls, increase of the faith, and overthrow of its enemies may be procured thereby”.¹⁸⁷ The discoveries of Columbus were protested by Portugal, as they claimed that as an agent of the Spanish throne he had infringed on their sphere of influence. With alacrity, and under the influence of Spain, the Pope issued *Inter caetera*¹⁸⁸ in 1493 which granted Isabella and Ferdinand “all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south” of a line of longitude 300 miles to the west of the Azores.¹⁸⁹ The purpose of this was so

that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.¹⁹⁰

Interestingly, the Bull notes that “these very peoples living in the said islands and countries believe in one God, the Creator in heaven” and so it is hopeful for their conversion, and so the Catholic monarchs are enjoined:

you should appoint to the aforesaid mainlands and islands worthy, God-fearing, learned, skilled, and experienced men, in order to instruct the aforesaid inhabitants and residents in the Catholic faith and train them in good morals.¹⁹¹

While some have seen in these bulls a grant of land, it is probably better to read this as a papally endorsed duopoly for Portugal and Spain “to exploit certain

¹⁸⁷ Nicholas V, *Romanus Pontifex*, from <http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-romanus-pontifex.html> accessed January 17, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Alexander VI, *Intera caetera* from https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Inter_Caetera accessed January 17, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ The line was adjusted by Spain and Portugal independent of the Pope in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and subsequent ones. One result of the line being drawn was that Portugal claimed a right to exploit the easternmost point of South America, which led to the establishment of Brazil.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

maritime routes that they had pioneered, and to engage in trade and conquest in regions where they were the first Europeans to visit.”¹⁹² Spain rapidly made the most of the endorsement in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the northwest coast of South America.

In the 16th century other nations of Europe decided to send expeditions across the Atlantic to the New World and to colonise; these included not only England and France, but also the Dutch Republic, Sweden, Scotland, the Knights of Malta, and even the Baltic Duchy of Courland. All of these jurisdictions ignored the Papal Bull’s duopoly, but used the same justification. John Cabot (originally Zuan Chabotto of Venice) explored the north-east coast of North America on behalf of Henry VII of England in three voyages in 1496, and 1497, and 1498-1500;¹⁹³ his royal charter empowered Cabot and his sons:

full and free authority, faculty and power to sail to all parts, regions and coasts of the eastern, western and northern sea, under our banners, flags and ensigns . . . to find, discover and investigate whatsoever islands, countries, regions or provinces of heathens and infidels, in whatsoever part of the world placed, which before this time were unknown to all Christians. And that the before-mentioned . . . may conquer, occupy and possess whatsoever such towns, castles, cities and islands by them thus discovered that they may be able to conquer, occupy and possess, as our vassals and governors lieutenants and deputies therein, acquiring for us the dominion, title and jurisdiction of the same towns, castles, cities, islands and mainlands discovered¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Brian Slattery, “Paper Empires: The Legal Dimensions of French and English Ventures in North America” in John McLaren, A. R. Buck, and Nancy E. Wright *Despotic Dominion: Property Rights in British Settler Societies* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), pp. 56.

¹⁹³ Evan T. Jones and Margaret M. Condon, *Cabot and Bristol’s Age of Discovery: The Bristol Discovery Voyages 1480-1508* (Bristol UK: University of Bristol, 2016), p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ First Letters Patent granted by Henry VII to John Cabot , 5 March 1496 from <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Maritime/Sources/1496cabotpatent.htm>, accessed January 20, 2017.

The English charter assumes that it is acceptable for a Christian monarch to empower others to conquer non-Christian lands. Likewise, the charter of the French king to Jacques Cartier on his third voyage to what would become Canada stated:

Having the desire to hear and to have knowledge of several countries that are said to be uninhabited, and others that are **possessed by savage people, living without knowledge of God and without use of reason**, sending to discover the said countries by several good pilots, and others of our subjects of good understanding, knowledge and experience, who have brought us several men whom we have long held in our kingdom, instructing them in love and Fear of God and his holy law and Christian doctrine, with the intention of bringing them back to those countries with many of our subjects of good will, in order more readily to induce the other peoples of these countries to believe in our holy faith . . . ¹⁹⁵
(*emphasis added*)

Not only conquest was acceptable, but so was kidnapping, provided the end was to further the faith.

The theology done in the 16th century has its roots in medieval theology. In the 16th century and for centuries before, the fields of theology, law, and political policy were all directly related, and most of the time carried out by ordained members of the church. In *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*¹⁹⁶ Robert A. Williams, Jr. makes a compelling argument that the intellectual arguments for settler's control of Indigenous people and territory is rooted in the theological discourses of the Middle Ages.

¹⁹⁵ Commission de François 1er à Jacques Cartier pour l'établissement du Canada, 17 octobre 1540, from [https://biblio.republiquelibre.org/Commission de Fran%C3%A7ois 1er %C3%A0 Jacques Cartier pour l'%C3%A9tablissement du Canada. 17 octobre 1540](https://biblio.republiquelibre.org/Commission%20de%20Fran%C3%A7ois%201er%20%C3%A0%20Jacques%20Cartier%20pour%20l'%C3%A9tablissement%20du%20Canada%2017%20octobre%201540) accessed February 14, 2016. Translation by DBBS.

¹⁹⁶ Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest* (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Four centuries before Columbus the popes were establishing a line of thought that led directly to the papal bull of 1493. Arguments with secular authorities over investiture and simony led Popes Leo IX (1049-1056) and Gregory VII (1073-1085) to assert Rome's authority over the appointment of clergy. Following from the Church's mandate to convert the world, Gregory perceived that the pope had a frontierless jurisdiction not only in spiritual matters, but in secular things as well.¹⁹⁷ This claim to universal jurisdiction influenced the direction of Europe's reception of Roman law that began in 1084, when the Camaldolese monk Gratian wrote the *Decretum*, a concord of canon law. This influential work allowed the church to become an efficient and highly organized body, and a system of ecclesiastical justice was developed which overlapped and influenced secular law.¹⁹⁸ A major principle in this was the primacy of the chair of Peter in all things. Under Urban II (1088-1099) this primacy was used to authorize the Crusade to recover Jerusalem.

The rediscovery of Aristotle and Cicero by theology in the next two centuries acted as a mild brake on these claims. The concept of natural justice in the *Nicomachean Ethics* created some subtleties that were not previously part of Catholic political theology. Innocent IV (1225-1274), a generation before Aquinas, wrote on the conditions in which Christians could justly wage war against infidel nations. It was already acknowledged, on the basis of Augustine's just war theory, that a sovereign could attack a realm which had previously been Christian but was now under non-Christian rule. Here was the justification for the Iberian *Reconquista* and the Crusades. However, what about infidels who

¹⁹⁷ Williams, pp. 18-24.

¹⁹⁸ Williams, pp. 26-27.

lived in land that had never been Christian? Aquinas argued that God had given them an innate sense of the good and justice and, while deprived by not having God's revelation or a true knowledge of the divine, nevertheless were capable of reason and so through natural law could exercise dominion. Innocent IV, on the other hand, asserted that the Pope had jurisdiction over them in law, if not in fact.¹⁹⁹ This perspective was supported by "a divinely oriented, totalizing epistemology. . . According to Innocent 'there is only one right way of life for mankind, and . . . the papal monopoly of this knowledge makes obedience to the Pope the only means of salvation.'"²⁰⁰ Williams summarises the pre-Columbian situation thus:

For "moderns" such seemingly arcane and desiccated remnants of a once-vital form of legal consciousness might seem to hold little relevance for our examinations of the desacralized fabric of the West's contemporary legal conceptions of American Indian rights and status. But Innocent's efforts at synthesizing the Church's most ancient discursive traditions on the nature of papal power with the ascendant naturalistic discourse of the later Middle Ages would continue to exercise a profound influence on Western colonizing legal thought. Spun from this Old World medieval loom were threads of ideas that came to inform all the later European-derived legal thought on the rights and status of the Indigenous inhabitants of the New World.²⁰¹

Spain and Portugal, in the early period of contact, were at the end of a long process of transformation from a Western Christendom of a medieval type, where the spiritual and the temporal were frequently independent and at odds with one another, to an imperial form, where the crown and the Church were united. To a great extent this was the ideology thought necessary for the reconquest of the Islamic al-Andalus by the northern Christian kingdoms that

¹⁹⁹ Williams, p. 45.

²⁰⁰ Williams, p. 46.

²⁰¹ Williams, p. 49.

evolved into Portugal and Spain. Just as the caliphate they fought against united religion and politics, so the reconquering nations came to a rigid alliance of domestic Catholicism with the crown and army.²⁰² This was aided by a relatively weak papacy, from whom the Spanish and Portuguese crowns received greater and greater concessions and powers over the local church. There arose a kind of “temporal messianism’ in which the destiny of the nation and the destiny of the Church were believed to be united.”²⁰³

Christian prelates and European sovereigns became closely allied and intertwined, whether Catholic or Protestant. Sovereignty was justified through the doctrine of the divine right of kings. Even in post-Enlightenment secular nations sovereignty remains mystical, being grounded in a people or “the Crown”. The political scientist Carl Schmitt wrote that,

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts . . . for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver. . . [and t]he exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology.²⁰⁴

The theological roots of sovereignty go some way to explaining how, long after modern constitutionalists in the Americas had abandoned the theology of divine

²⁰² While this describes the general trend over the first half of the second millennium, the actual situation was actually far more complex, with Muslim states aligning with Christian ones against other Muslims, and Christians and Jews serving in Islamic military and government. See María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York NY: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company, 2002).

²⁰³ Enrique Dussel, *A History of the Church in Latin America, Colonialism to Liberation (1492-1979)* translated and revised by Alan Neely (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 41-46.

²⁰⁴ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology, Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, translated by George Schwab (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005) (originally published in 1922 in German), p. 36. Schmitt later became an enthusiastic and unrepentant Nazi.

right of kings, the sovereign power of the Crown (or of the people of the republic) is simply assumed as a foundational part of the law; it is a taboo and not to be questioned. For some jurists the only issue in modern jurisprudence seems to be whether the territory is burdened with “aboriginal rights”.²⁰⁵ The Crown in British North America did not need to justify its seizure of territory and the parceling of it out to settlers; simply declaring its control and effecting it through the bureaucracy of the Colonial Office and the Government in the colony made it real.

The preeminence of the Crown in North America, and afterwards, the sovereign power of the federal union of the United States, as affirmed by *Johnson v. M’Intosh*, is rooted in common law. Robert A. Williams, Jr. asserts that it goes back to the Conquest of William I in 1066, in which the Duke of Normandy took control of all land within the realm; all title is subsequently derived from the Crown. Combined with the theological-legal proposition that the sovereign is perpetually at war with infidels, regardless of whether there is actually violence,

²⁰⁵ See, for example, the discussion of Chief Justice Allan McEachern, the trial judge in *Delgamuukw v British Columbia*, on extinguishment (p.408):

I say this because the colonial legislation so clearly appropriated all the land of the colony to the Crown and made provision for its alienation firstly on the authority of the Governor according to English law and subsequently pursuant to legislation. That, in my judgment, is completely inconsistent with any continuing aboriginal ownership interest. As to intention, the dispatches passing between the Governor and the Colonial Secretaries in London, and legislative action taken, make it clear and plain first that the colony was to be thrown open for settlement; secondly that all the land of the colony belonged to the Crown in fee, and thirdly that only a grant from the Crown could create an ownership or proprietary land interest in the colony.

Quoted in *Delgamuukw v. BC*, Supreme Court of Appeal , June 25, 1993 [210] <https://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdb-txt/ca/93/04/1993bcc0400.html>, accessed November 21, 2018.

this established the preeminent role of the Crown in dealing with the Indigenous.²⁰⁶

C) 16th Century Challenges to the Doctrine of Discovery

The right of conquest by the Spanish in the Americas did not go unchallenged. However lofty the ideal of Catholic evangelization was, the reality was mass murder, rape, kidnapping, enslavement, the taking of land by force, and indifference to disease. These facts were denounced as early as 1511 in Santo Domingo, Hispaniola, by the Dominican Father Antonio Montesinos. Francisco de Vitoria wrote on it in the 1520s. The best-known early opposition to Spanish cruelty is that of another Dominican priest, Bartolomé de Las Casas,²⁰⁷ who became Bishop of Chiapas in 1544. Starting in 1537 he and other Dominicans in New Spain argued against the right of the Pope to authorize the conquest of the New World, and that the Spanish monarch needed to restore to the Indigenous peoples their lands. According to Las Casas, while it was acceptable to preach the gospel to unbelievers, the only way that the Kingdom of Spain could justify its sovereignty was through the voluntary acceptance of Christianity, not by forced conquest.

²⁰⁶ Williams, pp. 251-255. Williams is writing about the situation in the pre-revolutionary colonies, and contrasts this “Norman Yoke” with a more Lockean natural law approach. However, the “Norman Yoke” framework continued to be applied in the loyal colonies of British North America and the later Dominion of Canada.

²⁰⁷ The most extended discussion of the theology of Las Casas is to be found in the unpublished 2016 PhD dissertation of Thomas Francis Xavier Varacalli at Louisiana State University: *The Thomism of Bartolomé de Las Casas and the Indians of the New World* (2016). LSU Doctoral Dissertations. 1664. http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/1664

This was contested by the generation of Spanish who had conquered Mexico and Peru, and they sought to have Las Casas arrested and dismissed. The primary means of settlement and exploitation by the Spanish was the *encomienda*, which originated in the *Reconquista* as a grant from the monarch to a vassal for the enslavement of a specific group of people; it typically included a land grant as well. Las Casas had emigrated as a child with his father from Spain to Hispaniola and his father received just such a grant; likewise, as a young man, so did Las Casas. However, after joining the Dominicans, he turned against such methods. A frequent traveler across the Atlantic, he brought the traumatic history of colonization to the attention of successive Spanish monarchs, who occasionally issued mitigating proclamations that were poorly observed in the Americas. Under Las Casas's influence the Spanish crown issued in 1542 "The New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians", the main terms of which meant a) the grant of any *encomienda* ended on the death of its holder, meaning that they could not be inherited, and b) that the Indigenous people must be freed, could no longer be treated as slaves, and if they worked on an *encomienda* they must be paid. These provisions were largely ignored in New Spain (Mexico), and resulted in a revolt in Peru; they were repealed in 1545.²⁰⁸

It famously came to a head in 1550-51 in the Valladolid Debate. One of Las Casas opponents, a lawyer and lay theologian named Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, presented arguments for the current policies in one week, while Las Casas

²⁰⁸ Manuel Giménez Fernández, "Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Biographical Sketch" in *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and His Work* (DeKalb IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), edited by Juan Friede and Benjamin Keen, pp. 67-126; pp. 94-103.

followed the next week. The debate was heard by a board of lawyers and theologians, who after several months issued an inconclusive decision in a report to the King. The remainder of this section spends some time examining the debate, as both Sepúlveda and Las Casas argued on the basis of Thomist theology; as such, they display the range of Spanish Catholic missionary theology in the middle of the 16th century, a range which influenced all subsequent missionary theology, including Protestants.

Sepúlveda based his arguments on a Christianized version of Aristotelian chain of being, using medieval anthropology to justify slavery or being treated as children. Aristotle wrote in the *Politics*:

Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have, such a principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend a principle; they obey their instincts. And, indeed, the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freemen and slaves, making the one strong for servile labor, the other upright, and although useless for such services, useful for political life in the arts both of war and peace. . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter, slavery is both expedient and right.²⁰⁹

Aquinas, following Aristotle, wrote in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

[5] On the same basis, there is also found an order among men themselves. Indeed, those who excel in understanding naturally gain control, whereas those who have defective understanding, but a strong body, seem to be naturally fitted for service, as Aristotle says in his *Politics* [I, 5: 1254b 25]. The view of Solomon is also in accord with this, for he says: "The fool shall serve the wise" (Prov. 11:29); and again:

²⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 1254b-1255a translated by Benjamin Jowett (Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 1885).

“Provide out of all the people wise men such as fear God... who may judge the people at all times” (Exod. 18:21-22).²¹⁰

In the *Summa Theologica* I 96a4 Aquinas concludes that while there may have been a hierarchy in the state of innocence, slavery as such is opposed to that situation; slavery is possible only in a fallen world. In *Summa Theologica* II-II 57a3 Aquinas understands slavery not to be something ordained by God and hence natural in that sense, but as something “conventional” among human beings. Aquinas believes that slavery benefits both master and slave, in that “it is useful to this man to be ruled by a wiser man, and to the latter to be helped by the former.”²¹¹

Sepúlveda made four detailed arguments justifying the conquest of the New World and the enslavement of the peoples in the *encomienda*. In the first, he argued that the Spanish Crown was entitled to do so in order to free the people from being barbarians. He described them as being inferior to the people of Spain,

In prudence, talent, virtue, and humanity they are as inferior to the Spaniards as children to adults, women to men, as the wild and cruel to the most meek, as the prodigiously intemperate to the continent and temperate, that I have almost said, as monkeys to men.²¹²

²¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 81.5-6 translated by Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1975).

²¹¹ *The Summa Theologiæ of St. Thomas Aquinas, Second and Revised Edition, 1920, Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province*, translated anonymously by Fr. Laurence Shapcote O.P. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1920).

²¹² Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Demócrates, Segundo o las justas causas de la guerra contra los indios* edited by Angel Losada (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Francisco de Vittoria, 1951), p. 33, quoted and translated in Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians* (DeKalb IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 84. See also Ángel Losada, “The Controversy between Sepúlveda and Las Casas in the Junta of Valladolid” in *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History*, pp. 279-308.

Sepúlveda argued that the Indigenous peoples of the Americas were barbarous on four grounds: a) they did not have true rulers or governments – they were essentially pre-social, b) they lacked writing, c) they lacked any civilized technical skills, and d) they were violent and bloodthirsty. Las Casas was easily able to contest the first, as both the Aztec and Incas had quite complex governments with laws and practices which, like most nations, were sometimes good and sometimes bad. They were capable of writing, which Las Casas would have known from having been among the Mayans in Oaxaca.²¹³ Las Casas believed that the architecture of the cities of Mexico painting, and needle-work contained within them, were as good if not better than that of “all the nations of the known world.”²¹⁴ Indeed, he points to the number of golden and silver artifacts taken to Spain from the New World that demonstrated the skill and artistry. Finally, while he did not deny that the Indigenous peoples could engage in war and savage violence, he held that “the Spaniards, in their treatment of the

²¹³ “When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, the Zapotec language was still being spoken and there was still writing in Oaxaca, but it does not appear to have resembled the ancient Zapotec writing.” Andrew Robinson’s *Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World’s Undeciphered Scripts* (New York NY: Thames & Hudson, 2009), p. 247. See also the chapter on Mayan glyphs, pp. 104-138, especially the final paragraph on p. 138 “What cannot be doubted, though, is that thanks to the Maya decipherment we know that American history does not begin with the arrival of Columbus or the Pilgrim Fathers, four or five hundred years ago, as everyone thought less than half a century ago. In fact, it is two millennia old, and increasingly it can be studied with the same amount of seriousness as the history of ancient Egypt or ancient Greece.” The Inca of South America did not have writing as such, but they had a highly developed form of accounting that was recorded on knotted string (*quipus*); a very detailed introduction can be found in Gary Urton’s *Inka History in Knots: Reading Quipus as Primary Sources* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2017).

²¹⁴ Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 74.

Indians, “have surpassed all other barbarians” in the savagery of their behavior.”²¹⁵

Sepúlveda’s second argument for the just war against the Indigenous people was that the Indians committed crimes against natural law. In a dedicatory letter to Philip II thirty years after the contest in Valladolid he restated that “they are absolutely lacking in any knowledge of letters, do not know the use of money, generally go about naked, even the women, and carry burdens on their shoulders and backs, just like beasts for great distances.”²¹⁶ However, they were not merely brutes, but engaged in

execrable and prodigious sacrifices of human victims to their devils; it may also be seen in their eating of human flesh, their burial alive of the living widows of important persons, and in other crimes condemned by natural law, whose description offends the ears and horrifies the spirit of civilized people. They on the contrary do these terrible things in public and consider them pious acts. The protection of innocent persons from such injurious acts may alone give us the right, already granted by God and nature, to wage war against these barbarians to submit them to Spanish rule.²¹⁷

Las Casas responded to this 16th Century version of the justification of war on humanitarian principles²¹⁸ by arguing that Spaniards had no jurisdiction over “Indians.” Citing “authority after authority” he argued that unbelievers do not come under the competence of the church:

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 83.

²¹⁶ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, quoted in Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 86. Of course, the New World, with a few exceptions, was lacking in animals that could be domesticated and be used to transport, with the notable exception of the camelid llamas and alpacas. See Jared Diamond’s *Guns Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 157-175.

²¹⁷ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, quoted in Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 86.

²¹⁸ Of course, in the 20th Century, this was the justification used by the Clinton Administration and NATO for the interventions in the Bosnian War in 1992-1995 and in the Kosovo War in 1999. It was also the argument being urged on the Obama Administration from 2011 to 2013 for the United States to get involved in the Syrian Civil War.

Since the Church does not punish the unbelief of the Jews even if they live within the territories of the Christian religion, much less will it punish idolaters who inhabit an immense portion of the earth, which was unheard of in previous centuries, who have never been subjects of either the Church or her members, and who have not even known what the Church is. . . . There is no crime so horrible, whether it be idolatry or sodomy or some other kind, as to demand that the gospel be preached for the first time in any other way than that established by Christ, that is, in a spirit of brotherly love, offering forgiveness of sins and exhorting men to repentance.²¹⁹

Sepúlveda's third argument is a variation on the second, namely that the Spanish Conquest is justified to punish and stop the Indians from committing crimes against innocent persons – killing them in sacrifice to idols, eating their bodies, and killing missionaries. Las Casas argued that the Indians did not do such things, but that even if they did, they might be justified(!).²²⁰

The evidence does suggest that the Aztecs did engage in human sacrifice.²²¹ Their creation story, and that of their neighbouring nations, described the gods voluntarily bleeding so as to give life in this, the Fifth Age of the world; human sacrifices were the ritual response to the gods' sacrifice. The victims were typically captured warriors or captives from other nations. They were not alone in this – what the Aztecs did to the Tepenec and Acolhua, the Tepenec and Acolhua did to each other, as well as to the Aztecs. As horrific as it may seem to 16th or 21st century sensibilities, ritual homicide was an established convention in central Mexico, and accepted as normal by the peoples. It was

²¹⁹ Bartolomé de Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians* translated and edited by Stafford Poole (DeKalb IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), pp. 78, 79, 96, quoted in Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 88.

²²⁰ Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 89.

²²¹ Caroline Dodds Pennock, "Mass Murder or Religious Homicide? Rethinking Human Sacrifice and Interpersonal Violence in Aztec Society", *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (141), *Controversies around the Digital Humanities* (2012), pp. 276-302.

hardly unique in this – human sacrifice was practiced by ancient Germans, Gauls, ancient Britons, ancient Romans, Phoenicians and Carthaginians, in pre-Islamic Arabia, some ancient Chinese states, and pre-Vedic India. A recent cross-cultural analysis of societies based on ninety-three Austronesian peoples which practiced ritual homicide analyzed “the social control hypothesis” according to which “human sacrifice legitimizes political authority and social class systems, functioning to stabilize such social stratification.” The study, using statistical methods, found “strong support for models in which human sacrifice stabilizes social stratification once stratification has arisen, and promotes a shift to inherited class systems.”²²² Catherine Dodds Pennock, noting that the estimates of sacrifices by Spanish conquistadors and colonists are fantastic, concludes that something between 1000 and 20,000 might have been executed in any given year at multiple temples at the peak of the Aztec Empire.²²³

As in the second argument against Sepúlveda, Las Casas argued on a variety of fronts. Among them he stated that Christian princes and the Church held no jurisdiction over infidels, and he called upon scripture and Aquinas to make this point.

He then went on to offer a pragmatic point – that the gospel will not be received by the Indigenous at the end of a gun barrel; he repeated the theme of

²²² Joseph Watts, Oliver Sheehan, Quentin D. Atkinson, Joseph Bulbulia, and Russell D. Gray, “Ritual human sacrifice promoted and sustained the evolution of stratified societies”, *Nature Vol. 532 (Apr. 14, 2016)* pp. 228-231.

²²³ Pennock, p. 283. Pennock points out that at the same time the Spanish Inquisition “was practising the horrific rituals of the autos-da-fé, ritual executions which sent their victims not to a privileged afterlife but to an eternal damnation” (p. 295). The estimated number of executions in the territories of the Spanish Crown varies, but is at least 2000 persons between 1480 and 1520, according to Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision, Fourth Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 68.

his *The Only Method of Preaching the True Faith*: “What does the gospel have to do with firearms? What does the herald of the gospel have to do with armed thieves?”²²⁴ When missionaries had been killed by *Los Indios*, it was in self-defense because the missionaries were accompanying the rapacious soldiers who waged war against them.

He agreed that human sacrifice to idols was an error, but it was an understandable error that arose because the Aztecs were ignorant of revelation. They rationally had arrived at human sacrifice because a) they knew something of God by natural reason, although it was tainted by superstition, b) they knew that sacrifice was due to God, and c) they also knew that nothing was more valuable to sacrifice than a human life. He believed that the error should be judged leniently, and let the punishment fall to God, not the Spanish authorities. Finally, perhaps anticipating Kierkegaard by three centuries, he wrote, “It is not altogether detestable to sacrifice human beings to God, from the fact that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice to Him his only son.”²²⁵ In Las Casas’s view, human sacrifice, piously if erroneously offered, was a lesser horror than a war of conquest, enslavement, and genocide. The Aztecs did not know any better; the Spaniards did know better, but did not act as if they did.

Sepúlveda’s final argument was one common at the time, and drew on the Parable of the Great Banquet, in which the lord of the feast commanded his servants to go and force people to come in: “Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.” (Luke 14.23). To

²²⁴ Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 90-91.

²²⁵ Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 95.

Sepúlveda this was a clear dominical mandate to use force to spread the faith.

Las Casas denied that the parable justified any such thing, questioning

that the gospel (which is good and joyful news) and the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed with arms and bombardment, by subjecting a nation with armed militia and pursuing it with the force of war. What do joyful tidings have to do with wounds, captivities, massacres, conflagrations, the destruction of cities, and the common evils of war?²²⁶

Las Casas did not deny that Christian rulers and the Church had the right to try and punish heretics, but he emphasized that infidels could not be considered as such. Ritual proclamations in the Spanish language on American beaches by the chaplains of conquistadors, inviting the natives to convert to Christianity, did not magically convert the Indigenous from infidels to heretics.

This short survey of a theologico-political disputation in 1550 in Valladolid reveals several themes. The first is that there was a range of opinion about how best for Christians to proclaim the gospel to *Los Indios*. Sepúlveda, who never crossed the Atlantic, justified the wars of conquest on anthropological and theological grounds, rooted in the Aristotelian philosophy and the Thomism of the day. Las Casas, on the other hand, with a direct experience of the conquest and of the Indigenous peoples, argued from those same grounds and roots that the Spanish war of conquest in the New World was severely compromised by the violence and rapacity of the conquistadors and their complicit missionaries. He argued that they contradicted the form and content of the good news of Jesus Christ, and so the imposition of the *encomienda* was inevitably resisted by *Los Indios*.

²²⁶ Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One*, p. 96.

It is important to note that Las Casas made his points in the middle of the 16th century. His arguments were subsequently published and had distribution throughout Europe. The reason to note this is to prevent the modern argument of “presentism”, that we should not judge past generations too harshly because their moral failings. The fact that Las Casas and others challenged the validity of the conquests and enslavement virtually from the beginning of settlement in the Caribbean and in the Americas suggests that we can, from our perspective five centuries later, also call them into question.

The theologico-political anthropology of Sepúlveda and Las Casas can be summarized in the following table.

Sepúlveda	Las Casas
The Indigenous are barbarians; no writing, no technology, no true government, violent. They are wild, cruel, and like monkeys.	The Indigenous are civilized; have forms of writing; significant architecture, crafts; complex governments, no more violent than other countries. In some respects, such as urban planning, they are more advanced.
The peoples of the New World are naturally suited to slavery.	The Indigenous are no more suited to slavery than any other humans; they have been enslaved as a result of unjust war, not nature.
The Spanish are civilized, have writing, true technology, proper government, use violence only in just war.	The Spanish have used violence to murder and subjugate a people over whom they have no jurisdiction.
The gospel may be forced by violence on a barbarous people.	Violence may not be used to force the gospel on a people who have not previously been evangelized; there is a distinction between heretics and infidels. The gospel must be preached peacefully, open to suffering rejection, as Jesus did.
The Indigenous peoples are idolatrous and so deviant.	The Indigenous peoples have a knowledge of God through nature and reason, and so while in error,

	is not so by their will but by a lack of revelation.
The Indigenous people are lawless.	The Indigenous peoples have a knowledge of right and wrong from natural reason, and this is encoded in their customs and laws.

Table 2: The Theologico-Political Anthropologies of Sepúlveda and Las Casas

By all accounts Las Casas had no influence on subsequent English and British colonialism. While it was a sensation on the Continent, it was virtually ignored in the British Isles. A copy of his writings is to be found in a library inventory from London in 1583, but virtually no mention is made of his work in contemporary colonial promotional literature. Instead, it recommended the repressive Spanish approach which Las Casas argued against.²²⁷

The Canadian lawyer and human rights activist Thomas A. Berger featured him positively in his overview from 1991 *A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas since 1492*, and his short account of the debate at Valladolid has been influential on subsequent historians.²²⁸ However, Berger acknowledged that Las Casas was, at heart, a European who still wanted the Indigenous peoples to submit to Spanish rule and become Christians.²²⁹ For Daniel Castro at Southwestern University in Georgetown TX, this means we must carefully parse what exactly Las Casas was saying:

Las Casas's characterization as an anti-colonist is a valid one, considering his opposition to the colonial aspirations of the conquistadores and encomenderos. At the same time this in no way diminishes or alters the

²²⁷ Loren E. Pennington, "The Amerindian in English Promotional Literature 1575-1625" in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America 1480-1650* edited by K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. N. Hair (Liverpool UK: Liverpool University Press, 1978), pp. 175-194; p. 182-184.

²²⁸ Thomas Berger, *A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas since 1492* (Vancouver BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), pp. 15-25.

²²⁹ Berger, p. 23.

significance of his role as an instrument of imperial power and domination . . .²³⁰

As Castro sees it,

The main difference between Las Casas and the other colonists was his deeply seated belief that the implementation of imperialism – political, economic, and ecclesiastical – could be accomplished through nonviolent means, a departure in form but not in essence from the basic beliefs of his contemporaries. Ultimately, the friar, like many modern intellectuals, failed to address the natives' alienation and socio-cultural dislocation implicit in the forced process of conversion to an alien faith and an alien way of life.²³¹

The danger is that one might read Las Casas as a 16th century precursor to Liberation Theology, in that he advocated on behalf of the oppressed and poor. Like Liberation Theology, Las Casas sought a third way as an alternative to a struggle between a distant centralized power exerting overwhelming influence, and the violent, local antagonism of oppressor and oppressed.²³² However, in celebrating Las Casas we need to be careful that when exalting the very meager results of his efforts in the 16th Century, we do not fail to actually listen to Indigenous voices in the 21st.

D) Summary

The Doctrine of Discovery is a theological and legal principle that justifies conquest and the assertion of sovereignty by Christian powers from Europe over non-Christian lands. The doctrine incorporates an assumption of the superiority

²³⁰ Daniel Castro, *Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé de Las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 152.

²³¹ Castro, p. 179.

²³² Castro, p. 180.

of the Christian religion, the righteous use of violence in the establishment of sovereignty in the name of evangelism, and the characterization of European colonists as a new Israel conquering a new Promised Land, exterminating the local Canaanites when in the way. The original inhabitants were to be converted, if at all possible, and while persuasion could be used, enslavement and kidnapping could be part of that process. If they resisted, they were to be moved, or exterminated.

The Doctrine of Discovery was seen as evil and genocidal already in the 16th century. It still has its apologists today. For that reason, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued among its calls to action number 49, which states:

We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*.

While the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* have been formally repudiated by some denominations,²³³ the churches need to do a comprehensive examination of *all* the theological ideas which were in play in colonization. This takes us beyond the Doctrine of Discovery, into the next chapters.

How does the Doctrine of Discovery do when submitted to the Levinasian criteria of pp. 78-80 above? Well, not surprisingly, not well. It can be read as a kind of a collective egoism, one in which a community manifests an interest in itself, but not another. It looks down on the Indigenous, seeing it as the other suitable for slavery or extermination. The pluriform society created by the

²³³ For example, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada passed such a motion in 2010. <http://archive.anglican.ca/gs2010/resolutions/a086/> accessed September 3, 2018.

contact of Europeans with the Indigenous is tolerated only so long as it is advantageous in the larger game of European politics; when, by the early 19th century, First Nations were no longer needed as allies but were impediments to civilization, they were dispossessed of their land and moved to distant, small, unproductive tracts of land, with a disregard for the cost in lives; or they were simply exterminated. Peace was achieved when the “west was won” by arms. The history of First Nations was ignored or depreciated, and only Europeans had a place in meaningful time; the Indigenous peoples belonged to a past era, and got in the way of civilization.

Levinas developed his critique of Totality, of Western philosophy, in the shadow of the *Shoah*; it is not surprising that Doctrine of Discovery, the lynchpin of the European settlement, satisfies all of the criteria by which he passed judgement.

Chapter Five: Providence and Eschatology

Divine providence is the “foreknowing and protective care of God; divine direction, control, or guidance” as well as “God . . . as exercising prescient and beneficent power and direction.”²³⁴ It is revealed to us in scripture, for “Biblical history is directed by divine providence toward the realization of the Kingdom of God.”²³⁵ As human beings we try to discern God’s providence, and although it may not always be obvious, people will find God’s hand in a myriad of events.

In the past five hundred years divine providence has been seen in two ways highly relevant to the settlement of European colonizers. First, in the mostly unintended destruction of Indigenous peoples by disease, which cleared the way for settlement. Second, in the rise of European empires, to which was added in the late 19th century the emergence of a powerful United States, which always had a general belief in its own unique divine destiny.

A) The Providence of Plagues

From the earliest times of English settlement on the Atlantic Coast of North America, epidemics were seen as providential. John Winthrop (1587-1649), the great Puritan leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony argued in 1629 that “God has consumed these [Indian] nations in a myraculouse plague

²³⁴ Oxford English Dictionary.

²³⁵ Diogenes Allen, “Philosophy” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 538.

whereby a great parte of their country is left voyd and without inhabitants.”²³⁶

This was echoed in 1631 by John Smith of the Jamestown settlement in Virginia.²³⁷

The single most profound effect of contact on the Indigenous peoples was the introduction of diseases – smallpox, measles, influenza, and tuberculosis – to peoples who had no immunity. Scholars argue about the mortality rates in the decades after contact; in 1966 Henry F. Dobyns calculated it to be as high as 95%, with something between 80 and 100 million dying.²³⁸ While these numbers are disputed, what is clear is that even a conservative estimate assumes that tens of millions of people lived in the Americas, and that at least a third to a half of them died off as these diseases raced ahead of the conquistadors and settlers.²³⁹

In 1519, central Mexico had an Indian population estimated to have been 25 million. By 1523 only 17 million Indians survived; in 1548, only 6 million; in 1568, 3 million. By the early seventeenth century, the number of Indians of central Mexico scarcely reached 750,000; that is, only three percent of the population before the conquest . . . It is estimated that the Indian population of Peru fell from 9 million before Columbus to 1.3 million by 1570 . . . This demographic disaster is without parallel.²⁴⁰

The epidemics spread through Indigenous peoples at various places and times.

Among the last to be hit were the nations on the Pacific Northwest. At what later became known as Holland Point, in Victoria BC, at the southern end of Vancouver

²³⁶ John Winthrop, *General Observations* (1629), p. 113, quoted in Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607–1876* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 28.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 25.

²³⁸ Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus, 2nd Edition* (New York NY: Vintage Books/Random House, 2011), p. 106.

²³⁹ Mann, *1491*, pp. 150-151.

²⁴⁰ Thomas W. Berger, *A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas since 1492* (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1999), pp. 28-29.

Island,²⁴¹ there was a large fortified village of the Songhees people. This village had been occupied off and on for some 800 years. According to Grant Keddie, curator of Archaeology at the Royal British Columbia Museum, a smallpox epidemic came in the 1780s, resulting in its abandonment, some sixty years before the colonist of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived: "In the 1920s Saanich Chief Tommy Paul recalled the stories of the "great plague . . . six generations back", where so many died there was "nobody to nurse the sick or bury the dead".²⁴² In 1792 Captain George Vancouver explored Puget Sound in what is now the State of Washington.

He found a charnel house: deserted villages, abandoned fishing boats, human remains "promiscuously scattered about the beach, in great numbers." Everything they saw suggested "that at no very remote period this country had been far more populous than at present." The few suffering survivors, noted Second Lieutenant Peter Puget, were "most terribly pitied . . . indeed, many have lost their Eyes."²⁴³

After the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were established in 1849 another smallpox epidemic erupted in 1862, during the Cariboo Gold Rush. "There are estimates that more than 30,000 of the approximately 50,000 people living in B.C. at the time died. First Nations believe there were many more, and the death toll much higher."²⁴⁴ At the northern end

²⁴¹ This ancient village was located some 600 metres from where much of this dissertation was written.

²⁴² Grant Keddie, *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees People as seen by Outsiders 1790 – 1912* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2003), p. 16. See also Keith Thor Carlson, *The Problem of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) pp. 91-96 who places the epidemic in the year 1782, although he allows that it may have been followed by smaller outbreaks in the wake of the original devastating occurrence.

²⁴³ Mann, 1491, p. 123.

²⁴⁴ Dene Moore, "B.C. First Nations mark small pox anniversary" published in *Metro News/Canadian Press*, August 6 2012,

of Vancouver Island, amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw people, "epidemics caused an estimated population decline of up to 78 percent between the 1840s and 1881."²⁴⁵

Such mortality created unimaginable upheaval, whether in the 16th century in Mexico or the 19th in British Columbia. It weakened the social structures in place, allowing the Indigenous peoples to be more susceptible to conquest and removal. Cities, towns, and villages were abandoned as populations died off. Survivors from diverse peoples banded together, sometimes being adopted by the more powerful nation and given the names of families who had become extinct. With so many sudden deaths, many cultural traditions that were handed on orally from one generation to another came to an abrupt end. The traditions of the elders were called into question in the face of disease, and many chose to adopt what appeared to be the more powerful religious practices of the settlers. African slaves were imported to replace the Indigenous people who were enslaved and died off; had the mortality not been so extreme the Atlantic slave trade would not have become so important to the colonization of the New World.

Some of the settlers deliberately infected the Indigenous peoples. The best known example of such germ warfare was at Fort Pitt (later Pittsburgh) by the British in 1763, and involved the distribution of blankets and other goods

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2012/08/06/b-c-first-nations-mark-small-pox-anniversary.html> accessed January 16, 2017.

²⁴⁵ Leslie A. Robertson with the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, *Standing Up With Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), p. 121.

infected by smallpox.²⁴⁶ The colonizing authorities were not upset by the effects of disease, as the illnesses overwhelmed the Indigenous peoples and made it easier to settle. In the case of the 1862 epidemic on Vancouver Island, while the principle of quarantine was well understood, colonial authorities nonetheless expelled infected Indigenous peoples from Victoria and other settlements, thereby spreading the disease to the First Nations villages. In his controversial book *The True Story of Canada's "War" of Extermination on the Pacific*,²⁴⁷ Tom Swanky states that Francis Poole, sent by George Cary, the attorney general of the colony under Governor James Douglas, dropped off infected men in the Tsilqot'in territory, which ultimately killed some two-thirds of the people.²⁴⁸

Missionaries and traders were often oblivious of their own role in the spreading of disease. James Daschuk notes that in the late 1830s, at the same time that the Hudson's Bay Company was conducting a smallpox vaccination program ranging from the Missouri to the Mackenzie, its agents were inadvertently infecting communities with influenza and other diseases. Measles was spread from an 1846 Roman Catholic mission at Frog Portage (in what is

²⁴⁶ David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), pp. 152-155.

²⁴⁷ Tom Swanky, *The True Story of Canada's "War" of Extermination on the Pacific plus The Tsilhqot'in and Other First Nations Resistance* (Burnaby BC: Dragon Heart, 2012). The Tsilqot'in people live in the interior of British Columbia north-east of the Kawkwaka'wakw. Swanky also speculates that the Rev. John Sheepshanks, an Anglican missionary, deliberately inoculated Indigenous peoples along the Fraser River with virulent vaccine, in order to kill off the non-inoculated; this conclusion is based upon oral traditions of illness in the interior. Robin Fisher, a Canadian professor of Indigenous history, challenged Swanky's use of sources for some of his claims in *BC Studies* 182 (Summer 2014), pp. 217-218.

²⁴⁸ Gary Geddes, *Medicine Unbundled: A Journey Through the Minefields of Indigenous Health Care* (Vancouver BC: Heritage House Publishing, 2017), pp. 71-72.

now northern Saskatchewan), and killed at least eighteen people who attended mass. Twenty-nine new Indigenous Anglicans died at Lac La Ronge.²⁴⁹

God's providence was not restricted to North America. In the 19th century it came to be identified with the laws of classical economics, leading to theological arguments for the reduction or elimination of tariffs and the loosening of regulations, and thereby allowing free markets. This alliance of "free trade" with God's laws was part of the repeal of the Corn Laws in Britain, and it pitted many nonconformist merchants against the entrenched interests of the landed aristocrats of the Church of England.²⁵⁰ Economic liberalism received divine sanction from clergy:

Such Christian political economists as Thomas Malthus,²⁵¹ Edward Copleston²⁵² or John Bird Sumner²⁵³ viewed mass poverty, like epidemic disease or crop failures, as part of the providential order of society – forms of divine chastisement, which provided harsh but necessary lessons to the laboring poor concerning the importance of sexual abstinence before marriage, delayed marriage, thrift, hard work and foresight.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Daschuk, pp. 70-71.

²⁵⁰ Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire, 1815-1914* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 146-151.

²⁵¹ Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) was a Church of England priest who served in parishes and wrote on economics before becoming a professor at the East India College. His best known work on the relation of population and poverty influenced Charles Darwin.

²⁵² Edward Copleston (1776 -1849) was successively Oxford Professor of Poetry, Dean of Chester, and Bishop of Llandaff. He wrote and published letters to Prime Minister Peel on poverty and "value".

²⁵³ John Bird Sumner (1780-1862), an evangelical, rose through the Church of England from being a master at Eton College to Archbishop of Canterbury. As a young man he endorsed Malthus and John Stuart Mill, and believed that poverty "is the natural lot of many, in a well-constituted society, but is necessary, that a society may be well constituted." *Treatise on Creation, Vol. II*, p. 92, quoted in Nigel Scotland, "John Bird Sumner in Parliament", *Anvil Vol. 7, No. 2*, 1990, pp. 144.

²⁵⁴ Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire, 1815-1914*, p. 150.

During the Irish famine of 1845-1847 divine providence was invoked on both sides. Some saw it as a punishment of the Catholics resisting the truth of Protestantism, whereas others saw it as a judgment on Britain for its mismanagement of the island. By 1857 some saw it as a providential event hastening improved agriculture and a smaller population.²⁵⁵ In truth, there were many Britons, both within the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, as well as in nonconformist churches, and Parliamentarians, who were horrified by the suggestion that God's will was being done in the massive numbers of dead, but their efforts at relief were too little and too late. Their ineffectiveness was a sign of a greater adherence to the alliance of free trade and Protestantism.²⁵⁶

The anonymous author of the 1860 fundraising pamphlet for the Columbia Mission notes that "excuses [for the sad state of Indigenous peoples] have been built upon the assertion that "it is their fate to die out and make room for the stronger race.""²⁵⁷ The author attacks the idea, implying that Europeans were responsible for "the starvation, European diseases, and sporting murders, by which they have been mown down" – but clearly, his was a minority opinion.

²⁵⁵ Stewart J. Brown, p. 205.

²⁵⁶ Stewart J. Brown, pp.152-159.

²⁵⁷ *Special Fund Obtained During a Ten Months' Appeal by the Bishop of Columbia since his Consecration in Westminster Abbey on the Twenty-Fourth of February, 1859, with a Statement of the Urgent Need Which Exists For Sympathy and Support in Aid of The Columbia Mission* (London UK: R. Clay, 1860), from the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon.

B) The Providence of Empire

A common thought in 19th and 20th Century popular theology was that God had chosen the peoples of United Kingdom to rule over much of the world. Stewart J. Brown examines this in detail in *Providence and Empire, 1814-1914*.²⁵⁸ The victories of the British Empire over Napoleonic France in 1815 included a parallel massive expansion in the Indian subcontinent, the taking of South Africa from the Dutch, and the planting of colonies in Australia. These were all proof of God's plan that was being worked out through the British. Brown quotes the Scottish Anglican clergyman and CMS missionary Claudius Buchanan's influential sermon of 1809, *The Star of the East*: "It should seem that as if God had selected this nation, as formerly his chosen people Israel, to preserve among men a knowledge of true religion."²⁵⁹ As the 19th century continued with further victories, such as that of the United Kingdom against the Russian Empire, "Providence . . . had blessed British arms in the Near east and ensured the permanence of British dominion in India."²⁶⁰ If there were occasional setbacks, they, too were considered to be part of the plan.²⁶¹

To their great credit a small group of English evangelicals in the first half of the Nineteenth Century led the movement for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and then the abolition of slavery itself within the British Empire in 1833. This campaign, in which the minority evangelicals managed to gain the support

²⁵⁸ Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire, 1815-1914* (London: Routledge, 2013).

²⁵⁹ Stewart J. Brown, p.8.

²⁶⁰ Stewart J. Brown, p. 198.

²⁶¹ Stewart J. Brown, p. 205.

of the people of the United Kingdom and then of Parliament, attacked entrenched economic interests (including that of the Church of England) on the basis of Christian morals and humanitarianism. It gave a moral weight and justification to imperial expansion²⁶² (providing an argument which is still made today in its defense).²⁶³ The Opium War of 1839-1842 between the United Kingdom and the Empire of China was justified on the basis of it providing an opening into the Middle Kingdom for Christian missionaries. While many evangelicals condemned the war as immoral, given that it was about selling addictive drugs that destroyed the lives of its users, others felt that bringing free trade through imperial expansion (regardless of what that trade was in) was part of God's providence. It prepared the way for the good news as well. In the long run, Christian converts would refrain from opium, and all would be well.²⁶⁴

Starting in the 1850s assumptions about the guidance of divine providence began to be challenged. Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* presented a history which was governed, not by divine design or holy goals, but by indifferent chance and accident.²⁶⁵ The writings of historians of the early church from Germany and France were calling into question the orthodoxies of faith. By 1860 it was observed that the identification of free trade with the gospel was not as strong as it had been.²⁶⁶ However, this simply resulted in the dual responses of either attacking secular evolutionists, or accommodating the new

²⁶² Brown, pp.77-79.

²⁶³ For example, Nigel Biggar and the McDonald Centre's project *Ethics and Empire: The British Empire* "suppressed the Atlantic and African slave-trades after 1833" at <http://www.mcdonaldcentre.org.uk/ethics-and-empire> accessed February 8, 2018.

²⁶⁴ Stewart J. Brown, p. 145.

²⁶⁵ Stewart J. Brown, pp. 226-234,

²⁶⁶ Stewart J. Brown, pp. 205-206.

thought in subtle ways. There was always the response of simply ignoring it. Providentialist language continued to be used in Gladstone's campaigns in the 1880s, celebrating the British Empire's mission to spread "freedom", which many read as a mandate to promote Christianity.²⁶⁷

The author of the Columbia Mission Report of 1859 treats as providential that, in both the Gold Rush of 1849 in California and subsequent ones in British Columbia, that English speaking peoples were able to establish themselves, and not Spanish speaking Jesuits or French speaking peoples, which he saw as despotic and lacking proper laws. Foreseeing a time when a railway would connect the British colonies on the Pacific coast with Canada (i.e. Canada West and Canada East, since 1867 known as Ontario and Quebec), he writes:

It may be seen therefore that Providential circumstances are now brought to bear upon British Columbia, which are developing a country whose future influence in the world the wisest statesman cannot venture to estimate, and whose prospects, in days of such rapid progress at the present, are both wonderful and solemn.²⁶⁸

In 1867 Bishop George Hills, the first Bishop of British Columbia, appointed the Rev. John Booth Good to be a missionary among the Nlha7kápmx at Lytton, where the Thompson River meets the Fraser River. Good had previously served settler communities in Nova Scotia and in Nanaimo, in the Colony of Vancouver Island. Good was deeply influenced by the Tractarians, and worked through the local bishop and used the sacraments as markers of Christianization.

Interestingly, the Nlha7kápmx had previously welcomed the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate ("OMI"), for whom they built a chapel, but the

²⁶⁷ Stewart J. Brown, pp. 323-324.

²⁶⁸ *Special Fund*, p. vii.

brothers and clergy of the OMI did not establish a permanent presence, only visiting every few months. This was perceived as a kind of neglect, and so the Nlha7káp̓mx invited Bishop Hills to appoint a priest. On the face of it this accords with the Pauline call from Macedonia, “Come over to Macedonia and help us,” and was seen by Good and Hills as equally providential. In Good and Hills’s eyes, Nlha7káp̓mx history was being enfolded within a God-driven European history.²⁶⁹

Language of providence remained potent right up to the 1910 World Missionary Conference, and the precursor gathering in Toronto, the *Canadian National Missionary Congress* of 1909. The chairman, Newton W. Rowell, in an address to the Congress on “Canada’s Opportunity at Home and Abroad”²⁷⁰ had an expansive view of the potential of his nation based on the size of its territory and its success in attracting immigrants. He saw the hand of God in modern European expansion, just as he saw it in the arrival of Jesus Christ and the gospel in the time of the Roman Empire, when Europe was united by roads and commerce and at peace. The opportunity Canada had was to be a Christian nation at home and ever more able of influencing foreign lands; this was God at work.

At the World Missionary Conference in Edinburg of 1910 there is a theology of providence runs throughout, but it is not the easy equation with the

²⁶⁹ See Brett Christophers, *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Culture in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia* (Vancouver BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1998).

²⁷⁰ *Canada’s Missionary Congress: Addresses Delivered at the Canadian National Missionary Congress, Held in Toronto, March 31 to April 4, 1909, with Reports of Committees* (Toronto: Canadian Council, Laymen’s Missionary Movement, 1909), pp. 39-47.

rise of Empire or commerce that had existed in the previous century. The seventh commission, on *Missions and Governments* was entirely devoted to these issues. Each commission produced a volume of reports before the Conference. In the *Missions and Governments* volume the author of the section on India noted that, although at times the government officials forbade the entry of missionaries into some areas and vassal states, “the Government of India is, in the opinion of most Indian missionaries, so manifestly an agent of Divine Providence, that they will hesitate long and prayerfully before feeling themselves called to defy the restraints it places upon their activity.”²⁷¹ In another section the author wrote more bluntly,

Believing as we do that in the Providence of God the strong and enlightened Christian nations of Europe and America have acquired dominion over so many other races, not that they may enrich themselves, but that these races may, under their tutelage, learn to appreciate and appropriate the blessings of Christian civilization, we desire to record our regret that this conviction so little influences the conduct of some Christian nations and individuals . . .²⁷²

While there was some recognition that some governments and officials were challenging the divine commission, it was nevertheless felt that overall and through the missionary societies God’s will was being done.

[God] has entrusted enormous powers to Christian nations. His providence has opened the approach to the non-Christian countries, determined the order of their occupation, and developed agencies and influences which facilitate the spread of Christianity.²⁷³

One of the main authors of this volume of reports was Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), a captain in the US Navy who is now best remembered for two

²⁷¹ *The Report of Commission 7: Missions and Governments* (Edinburgh UK and London UK: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, and New York NY, Chicago IL, and Toronto ON: The Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), p. 32.

²⁷² *The Report of Commission 7*, p. 115.

²⁷³ *The Report of Commission 1*, p. 359.

hugely influential books on sea power from 1660 to 1812. Mahan believed in the providential role of nations; in his view, the annexation of the Philippines in 1898 was part of a divine strategy to incorporate East Asia into Christendom.²⁷⁴ In a devotional book published in 1909 he echoed earlier colonists in suggesting that the English entered America just as Israel entered Canaan, to redeem the land from French absolutism and “from the Red Indian”, so that the result is

a haven for the needy and oppressed of all races, and that the traditions of liberty, law, free institutions, have thus become the possession of many kindreds to whom they were unknown in their former homes.²⁷⁵

Providence, then, appears to be every bit a major assumption of settler Christians and their imperial governments as the Doctrine of Discovery. Not only did the European nations, by virtue of their shared Christian character and advanced civilization, have the right to claim the lands they colonized, but God foreknew and planned for this to happen. Of course, the world is fallen, and so not everything went as it should have – there was too much emphasis upon making money, the selling of alcohol and other drugs, and little concern by the powers in charge about disease and starvation among the original inhabitants – but the arc of history tended towards the triumph of European imperialism and the Christian civilization that followed upon it.

C) The Eschatological Dimension of Evangelism

Eschatology is one of those areas of theology that excites some Christians, and just as many seem embarrassed about it. Lip service is paid to “Christ will

²⁷⁴ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, p.252.

²⁷⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Harvest Within: Thoughts on the Life of the Christian* (Boston MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1909), p. 119.

come again” while others suggest that only a hermeneutic that ends in a realised eschatology is acceptable. Biblical scholars argue about whether Jesus was himself looking towards the end times, as Albert Schweitzer argued over a hundred years ago, or whether that was written into the synoptic gospels under the influence of Paul and his letters.

Regardless of these disputes, it is notable that historically many people involved in evangelism and missionary work were oriented towards the Last Days as described in scripture. One can begin with Patrick, for example, who was a foreign missionary working among an Indigenous people who were never part of the Roman Empire, unlike their British cousins to the east. Behind the hagiographies and myths is a very real historical figure who left two short written works, namely *Confessio* and *Epistola militibus Corotoci*. It was a Christian mission to an indigenous people, and some of the themes that he touches on resonate sixteen centuries later.

Thomas O’Loughlin has identified several of those theological themes in *Discovering Saint Patrick*.²⁷⁶ The first is that Patrick describes himself in terms of space and time as being “in the uttermost parts” “on the edge of the eschaton”.²⁷⁷ This four-dimensional mental map for Patrick situates himself in the narrative of evangelization. The gospel is being preached, according to Acts 1.8, “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Acts of the Apostles is structured in this way, with Rome in Chapter 28 representing “the end of the earth”. For Patrick, if Jerusalem was the centre of the world, then the

²⁷⁶ Thomas O’Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick* (New York NY/Mahweh NJ: Paulist Press, 2005).

²⁷⁷ O’Loughlin, pp. 72-78.

areas of the Roman Empire moving west and north represent the lands of the previous centuries of evangelization. In his childhood in Britain Patrick was on the outermost edge of Christian faith, but beyond that was pagan Ireland. In taking the gospel to Ireland, beyond which there was no more known land, Patrick was participating in the fulfillment of Jesus's words in Acts. He believes that this should trigger the second coming of Jesus, the judgment of the world, and the coming of the new heaven and a new earth, for he believes he is living in "the last days" which for him is not an empty phrase. As O'Loughlin points out, in the *Confessio* Patrick strings together three biblical quotations that he understood as his mandate to preach:

"Go therefore," now, "and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always even to the close of the age." [Matthew 28.19-20]

And again, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the entire universe. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." [Mark 16.5-6].

And again, "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the entire universe, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come." [John 19.37]²⁷⁸

While we might think of Patrick as being in the distant past, in his own mind he was at the end of a long pilgrimage of preachers going back from himself to the apostles. This perspective also typifies many of the missionaries who worked more than thirteen centuries later, beyond the oceans, in lands which Patrick never dreamed of.

²⁷⁸ O'Loughlin, p.161. The translation is by O'Loughlin from Patrick's Latin *Confessio*, not from any current English translation based on original Greek in the New Testament.

Jump forward fifteen centuries and eschatology was very much a topic of discussion among Evangelicals. In the 19th Century there were two types of millennialism. All believed, following Revelation 20, that “the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan” would be bound “for a thousand years”, and that the martyrs who “had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands”, would come to life and reign “with Christ for a thousand years.” Millenarians divided over what would precede this millennium.

Most of those who looked for the coming millennium were “post-millenarians”; that is, they believed that the world was advancing steadily, under the guidance of providence, towards the millennium. Theirs was the optimistic view of human prospects; they believed in gradual but steady improvement.²⁷⁹

This would seem to be the kind of eschatology that emerged at the World Missionary Conference in 1910 – optimistic and looking to fulfill the mandate to preach the gospel to all the world, thereby hastening the coming of the kingdom. However, Stewart Brown notes that there was another, darker kind of eschatological expectation, called “pre-millenarianism”.

For them there was no prospect of real improvement in this world. Most people would spurn the gospel offer, and the world was destined to become ever more violent, selfish, cruel, confused, anarchic, and sinful, until, at the time prophesied in Scripture, Christ would come again in glory . . . They looked for signs of the Second Coming. One of these signs, they believed, would be a revival of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, including prophecy, healing, and inspired speech.”²⁸⁰

This darker vision of the Last Days proved more influential in the 20th century, as it was incorporated in the Charismatic renewal and Pentecostal movements.

²⁷⁹ Stewart J. Brown, pp. 70-71.

²⁸⁰ Stewart J. Brown, p. 71.

The hope of the missionaries attending the World Missionary Conference in 1910 could be summed up by the title of a book by the chair of the Conference, John R. Mott. Mott was an American Methodist and a leader in the YMCA, the Student Volunteer Movement, and a founding father in 1895 of the World Student Christian Federation.²⁸¹ He coined the watchword for European evangelism – “The Evangelization of the World in this Generation”²⁸² – in the 1880s when he was still a student,²⁸³ and it gained great currency. The Archbishop of Canterbury Randall Davidson closed his opening address with the prophecy “it may well be that ‘there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see,’ – here on earth, in a way we know not now, -- ‘the Kingdom of God come with power.’”²⁸⁴ The eschatological prophecy from Mark 9.1 was reinterpreted and applied to the delegates and their generation to herald the dawning of a new age.²⁸⁵

Mott himself understood that the watchword was catchy but was not to be interpreted literally. He doubted that western nations were truly governed by the principles of Jesus Christ; consequently, evangelization must mean more than that the world became like the European and American nations. He denied that the phrase referred to the literal coming of Christ. Instead, the motto was to be understood that this was a way to underline the urgent responsibility of each generation to preach the good news. It was not a prediction – it was more about

²⁸¹ Ellis, p. 22.

²⁸² John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1900).

²⁸³ Ellis, p. 16.

²⁸⁴ World Missionary Conference Vol. IX: *History and Records of the Conference Together With Addresses Delivered at the Evening Meetings*, p. 150.

²⁸⁵ Stanley, p. 2.

what ought to be done.²⁸⁶ However, while Mott surrounded the watchword with qualifications, these were not always understood; it was clear that some understood it in a more literal sense.

Progress in evangelism was not a simple matter of always going forward; the Conference was held in a context that was filled with tension. On the one hand the delegates were part of an ever-advancing European Civilization, one that had seemingly conquered most of the world. On the other they were all too aware of the challenge presented by the “awakening of the Orient”. This awakening was seen in multiple ways. Obviously the welcoming and making of converts was seen as an awakening by the delegates to the Conference, but the rise of nationalism and the use of science in these countries was more ambiguous. This ambiguity can be seen in the Western reaction to the defeat of the Russian Empire by Japan – a concern that non-Christian populations might challenge the hegemony of the West, by learning its technology and sciences and putting them to use in war and national liberation. An expectation of hope accompanied by a wariness of change was in the air.

Some of this sense of missed opportunity can be seen in the Columbia Mission Report of 1860, where the author quotes Bishop George Hills from the year before, in his initial plea for monetary subscription:

In addition to the white populations of settlers and gold miners Columbia and Vancouver (i.e. the mainland and the island) are especially the abode of the north American Indian. There in the far West, beyond the fastness of the Rocky Mountains, are some 75,000 natives, as in a last resting place, and there at length the white man has reached this remnant of a fading and unhappy yet noble race. They lie trembling at the feet of Christian England, her last opportunity of mercy to the Indians.

Their conversion and settlement is a subject of the deepest interest.

²⁸⁶ Mott, p. 9-10.

If they are to pass out of the family of man, let history tell of Christian efforts, and of sympathy towards them, and not of massacre and blood, a result, alas! hitherto, of the contact between the Red man and the European settler.

. . . the aid of the patriotic and the faithful is earnestly entreated in raising funds for the following purposes: . . . 5. Erection and support of mission institutions for the settlement, conversion, education, and industrial training of the natives.²⁸⁷

Bishop Hills, already in 1859, recognizes how poorly the mission to Indigenous peoples has gone over the previous three centuries. England has a last chance to do the right thing by them by converting and educating the remaining ones in British Columbia.

D) Conclusion

Providence and eschatology are both about God's action in the world; the former tends to look back over time and discerns God's hand in world events, such as plagues and the rise of European empires. Eschatology looks forward, discerning signs in the present that indicate how the future will unfold. Unlike the Doctrine of Discovery, there is nothing inherently wrong with either providence or eschatology. However, the way in which both were used by European Christians in the process of settlement is deeply problematic.

The idea that God's hand was in the rise of European empires, at the expense of Indigenous peoples and the loss of their land and autonomy, is a self-serving form of egoism. First Nations are fated to get sick and die off, that's just the way it is. Plagues are God's ways of preparing the way for civilization and

²⁸⁷ *Special Fund*

Christianity, which are seen as superior, and should not have to coexist with preexisting cultures. Providence, seen solely from the perspective of the Europeans, becomes a justification for the suffering of others, violence against them, or disregard. There is a rejection of pluralism and an acceptance that innocent others must suffer if European settlers are to prosper. Likewise, a focus on the End Times is not eschatological in the sense of Levinas, but is rather a representation to one's self of the community of a goal that is in the future; one is motivated to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth no so much for the sake of the people who receive it, but to hasten the coming of the Messiah and to ensure one's own salvation. It is a rescue mission, as it were, but the value of it is in the intention, not the actual result. The evangelist is absolved of the blood of the unbelievers if they have proclaimed the good news to them.

Chapter Five: The Mandate to Develop and The Struggle With Evil.

In this chapter we discuss two more related theological themes that were used to justify settlement. The first is the mandate to develop, which is grounded in the expulsion from Eden and the command to Adam to cultivate the land. For the settlers of New France and British North America, God commanded them to take the land and not only exploit it, but develop it; anything less would be irresponsible. After settlement was well advanced the mandate to develop was extended to the Indigenous peoples themselves, as a responsibility and a debt. The second is the struggle with evil, which is related to the first because in pre-Enlightenment thinking the wilderness was the domain of anarchy at best, and demonic forces at worst.

A) The Mandate to Develop: Planting Seeds, Harvesting Souls

The first “Indian Residential Schools” in Canada were attempted during the French regime between 1620-1680 by the *Récollets*, a French Franciscan order in New France.²⁸⁸ However, the efforts were unsuccessful: “The school was a failure: parents were reluctant to send their children, and the students were quick to run away and return home.” Later efforts by the Jesuits and the female order the Ursulines “in New France met with no greater success.”²⁸⁹ These first

²⁸⁸ See J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, pp. 39-60, and CBC News (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), “A timeline of residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, , <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-timeline-of-residential-schools-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-1.724434>, accessed October 23, 2017.

²⁸⁹ *Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Final Report Volume 1*, p. 50.

attempts at assimilation in the name of civilization and Christendom foundered on the permeability of the frontier and the fact that the Indigenous did not count the benefit worth the cost.

The theology of the Jesuits and *Récollets* in New France was grounded in a Tridentine form of Aquinas's teaching on grace and nature. Like Las Casas they believed that "God gave all humans, including pagans, help in the form of grace to perform meritorious action."²⁹⁰ This was in contrast to the Jansenists, who following a strict Augustinian position, denied "that non-Christians could perform moral or meritorious acts, or have any innate knowledge of God."²⁹¹ The *Récollets* and Jesuits differed on methodology, however. The former wished to have the indigenous nations join the settlers in the St. Lawrence Valley, learn French, become farmers, inter-marry, and merge with them. It is in this context that they started the first residential school. The Jesuits, on the other hand, went to the Wyandot and did not expect them to change their culture or way of living. Indeed, Jean de Brébeuf and his brethren sought to learn the Wyandot language first before expecting them to be able to hear the good news. In that respect they were following in the way of Ignatius Loyola.²⁹²

However, as Carole Blackburn demonstrates in *Harvest of Souls*, the Jesuits did not regard the indigenous way of life as equal to or just different from

²⁹⁰ Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Mission and Colonialism in North America 1632-1650* (Montreal QC & Kingston ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), p. 24.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Blackburn, p. 23.

French life. A series of oppositions emerge in her analysis of the *Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*.²⁹³

First, the land is described in the *Relations* as wilderness, and its inhabitants as *sauvages*.²⁹⁴ “Wilderness” is not a neutral term – it suggests a land that is beyond civilization and is underutilized. The gift of Christian Europe to the New World was to redeem it and make it fruitfully productive, capable of sustaining more people than the slash and burn agriculture of the Iroquoian and Algonquian peoples, which needed to be supplemented by hunting and gathering. The land needed to be subdued, echoing Genesis 1.28-29:

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

When expelled from Eden Adam is required by God to till the ground, and so the Jesuits looked at the vast forests as simply so much land that needed to be cleared. The 17th century Jesuits did not have the romantic notions of nature put forth by philosophers, writers, artists, and conservationists in the 18th and 19th century – the forests were the raw wilderness into which God had thrown humanity, and only through labour would it be subdued.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ *The Jesuit Relations* were annual reports of the Jesuits in New France back to their superiors in France. As is in the nature of such things, they were made public and were intentionally written as fund raisers and to attract missionaries. They were published from 1632 to 1682.

²⁹⁴ Blackburn, pp. 42-69.

²⁹⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Wordsworth, John Turner, and Caspar David Friedrich are illustrative of Romanticism. Canadian author Margaret Atwood argued that Canadian literature is not characterized by such romanticism, and is likewise nothing like its American descendant, Transcendentalism. Her 1972 book *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1972) states that most Canadian literature (at least up until 1972) dealt with the struggles of “bare survival in the face of “hostile” elements and/or

The French word *sauvage* is derived from the Latin word *silvaticus*, meaning a forest-dweller. By the 17th century it also implied “not cultivated, tame, or domesticated” and “rude and fierce.”²⁹⁶ The model of the contrast between the civilized French and the *sauvages* of New France was that of Cain and Abel. Cain was the violent hunter-gatherer whose sacrifice was not accepted by God, whereas the sacrifice of the pastoralist Abel was acceptable. Paul Le Jeune SJ used agricultural metaphors to describe the mission work bearing fruit in baptism and a harvest of souls.²⁹⁷ The various parables of the kingdom incorporating metaphors of seed and harvest were never far from the minds of Brébeuf and his brethren.

By being in the untamed wilderness the indigenous peoples were also out of history, and timeless. Their customs were considered unchanging. In contrast, the Jesuits, like Patrick 1300 years before in Ireland, considered the preaching of the good news to wild peoples on distant shores to be part of a historical trajectory described in the Bible, culminating in the end of the world described in Revelation.²⁹⁸

A second opposition is that of “Law and Government” to “the wicked liberty of the Savages”.²⁹⁹ Whereas the French arrived with a hierarchical system

natives” and moving on to the survival of embattled peoples under foreign regimes – whether the French Catholics under the Protestant English, or modern Canadians subject to American economic power. It is described as presenting the “garrison mentality” – anything outside the walls of the fort is a threat. Her book has been criticized for being Toronto-centric, selective in its evidence, and weak on Francophone and immigrant authors, but it does seem to represent much literature in Canada. .

²⁹⁶ Blackburn, pp. 45-46.

²⁹⁷ Blackburn, p. 47.

²⁹⁸ Blackburn, p. 49.

²⁹⁹ Paul Le Jeune SJ, *Jesuit Relations 5:177* quoted in Blackburn, p. 75. The opposition is found in Blackburn Chapter 4, “Law and Order”, pp. 70-104.

of government and written laws, the indigenous peoples of New France – i.e. the Wyandot (Huron), Innu (Montagnais), Anishinabe (Algonquin), Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), and the Mi'kmaq (Micmac) – had a relatively flat structure and sets of unwritten customs which operated within the peoples and governed relations between them. To the French settlers these unwritten customs, coming from no sovereign authority and dependent on persuasion, looked like anarchy.

An example of this involved the murder of two French settlers by two Innu in 1617, which followed after one of the settlers assaulted one of the Innu men. Without question it was a planned and intentional murder, and by the laws of France the two men should have been tried and executed. Representatives of the Innu instead acknowledged the wrong and offered reparation payments, as was traditional among them. As the settlement was still new and fragile, and as the founder Champlain was away in France, the community, to the consternation of the *Rècollets*, agreed to the reparations. When Champlain returned, he deplored the resolution, fearing that it threatened the authority of the King. Subsequent homicides by indigenous peoples against settlers were likewise confused, and usually resolved along pragmatic lines.

In time, as the mission among the Wyandot developed, Jean de Brébeuf came to see that reparations were “scarcely less efficacious than the punishment of death elsewhere.”³⁰⁰ However, that appreciation did not mean that they approved of it. For the Jesuits in New France Christianity meant submission to God and, ideally, a Christian monarch. To Jérôme Lalemant, S.J. the Wyandot seemed singularly resistant to such submission: “I do not believe that there is

³⁰⁰ Blackburn p. 89.

any people on earth freer than they, and less able to allow the subjection of their wills to any power whatever.”³⁰¹ Religious attitudes were coordinated with political perspectives, and the Wyandot’s reluctance to be politically subservient made religious submission difficult. The Wyandot reacted with horror when the Jesuit missionaries suggested that they use corporal punishment on their children.³⁰² Leadership among the Innu and Wyandot was based on persuasion, social standing, and charisma. Women were autonomous and were not submissive to their husbands. Separation and divorce were common, as was polygamy.³⁰³ Instead of seeing these differences in form and content as a complex system of law and governance comparable to what the French missionaries knew from home, they saw it as signs of anarchic depravity.³⁰⁴

In the 17th century, then, we see the missions driven by the desire to develop New France – to tame the wilderness as Abel did, and to transform the forest-dwellers into a “civilized” people. The Jesuits and the people of New France felt they had a God-given mandate to do so.

This sense of the need to develop continued into the 19th century. In Church Mission Society Report 1862³⁰⁵ the Rev. A. C. Garrett described over several pages, in an area north-east of Victoria, Vancouver Island, his CMS funded work with those he described as “the heathen”. In addition to conducting church

³⁰¹ Blackburn p. 92.

³⁰² Blackburn p. 94.

³⁰³ Blackburn, p. 98.

³⁰⁴ Patricia Vickers in her unpublished PhD dissertation describes a west coast example of these unwritten customs: *Ayaawx (Ts’mseyn ancestral law): the power of Transformation* (Victoria: University of Victoria, 2008).

³⁰⁵ *The Mission Field Vol. VII, April 1, 1862* pp. 89-94, from the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon.

services, he operated an Indian day school. There were two groups – the local First Nations and those from further north. The local indigenous lived in five different communities around Victoria, and they all spoke a common language he calls “Tsawmus” (which must be the Lekwungen or SENĆOTEN version of Coast Salish). Garrett confesses that he is not yet fluent in the language, but is able to use the Chinook jargon (a pidgin borrowing from many indigenous languages and using many French and English loan words). The other group, in Garrett’s mind, are the northerners who speak a variety of mutually incomprehensible languages, and so he uses the Chinook jargon with them. Like his predecessors in New France, he sees the biblical metaphor of seed and harvest being applied to them.

In the Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society – 95th Year (1894)³⁰⁶ an Archdeacon Phair describes how in the 1860s, when he came to the Ojibway of the Winnipeg River in Manitoba,

Here, if anywhere, the strong man armed kept his palace. Noisy Indians by day, the conjuring drum by night, made me feel I was where Satan’s seat was. Once in a while I would have a visit from a conjuror with four or five wives. The night of heathen darkness was indeed dense, but in God’s good time, the light came.³⁰⁷

He was pleased to report that after thirty years the demon-possessed seat of Satan had been transformed:

twelve miles of a beautiful river, with houses on either side, gardens cultivated, churches and school-houses along its banks, and the Sabbath observed in a way that might well be an example to white people in older lands.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, Ninety-Fifth Year, 1893-94* (London UK: Church Missionary House, 1894), from the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 236.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 237.

Archdeacon Phair appears to have been successful in not only making over the Ojibway in the image of England, not just as it was, but as it ought to have been. Here we find combined the theologies of the mandate to develop and of the struggle with evil.

The Report of Commission 1 to the 1910 World Missionary Conference included this statement about missionary work in Canada with Indigenous peoples (and probably written by Canon L. Norman Tucker, General Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada):

The Indian population of the Dominion of Canada, according to the Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ending March 31, 1909, is 111,043 . . . It is difficult to state to what extent they have been evangelised . . .

In addition to the regular evangelistic work of these Churches, the Anglicans and Methodists have each three medical missionaries with hospitals among the Indians in British Columbia. The unsanitary mode of living and the vices of civilization have wrought havoc among the Indians. These conditions are met to some extent by effective medical mission work.

The great correlating missionary agency among the Indians is education. In this department the Dominion Government assumes a large share of responsibility, and it is urged by influential leaders of most of the Churches that the Government should bear the entire financial responsibility for the education of the Indians, who are Government wards under treaty. However, the Churches are so anxious to maintain a religious influence over their respective Indian communities that they are willing to share in the expense of their education so as to retain the right of nominating the teachers.

While the Government is contributing generously to Indian education, and while the Churches are giving much attention to this work, it must be admitted that the results are yet far from satisfactory. Some system of compulsory education and some method of preventing educated Indian youths from lapsing into the dependent and uncivilized life of the reserves, seem essential.

Lack of sense of religious responsibility on the part of the Indians is an unfortunate feature of nearly all Indian missions. This is only in accord with the pauperizing influence which Government treaties have brought to the Indian race. Every effort should be made to develop religious self-

support and activity. In districts where mission work among the white population is contiguous to Indian communities, the two should be brought as closely together as possible. In this way a spirit of Christian fellowship and brotherly emulation might be stimulated and at the same time a good deal of missionary money and life might be saved for more needy fields.³⁰⁹

This long extract illustrates several aspects of the missionary approach to the indigenous peoples of Canada. On the one hand, there is a sense that western civilization has “wrought havoc;” the author is undoubtedly thinking of the sins of alcohol and gambling, but also the deprivation of their traditional way of life and confinement to reserves. However, the author sees the solution in education, and compulsory education at that; there is no sense that First Nations had any method of education,³¹⁰ or that traditional ways of passing on customs and knowledge were valuable. Treaties were seen as unjust not because the governments failed to live up to their terms, but because they made the Indigenous partners dependent upon the government, and could remain in their “uncivilized” ways. The author paradoxically states that the churches, in order to maintain a religious influence over the First Nations, “are willing to share in the expense of their education” but then goes on to complain that progress has been slow, and that he wishes to free up the funds now going to the IRS to go “for more needy fields”. There is a sense here that much time, effort, and expense has been put towards the education and development of First Nations, so that they might self-supporting, but that this has been resisted; there is no inquiry into why there might be resistance to assimilation.

³⁰⁹ *Report of Commission 1: Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World*. pp. 260-262.

³¹⁰ Traditional methods of education are described in J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, pp. 15-38, as well as in Marie Battiste, *Decolonizing Education*.

Canon Tucker, in a speech on “Canada’s Debt to the Missionary” at

Canada’s Missionary Congress stated:

Every one feels that the native Indians of Canada have a special claim on us; for we have inherited this great country from them and we have deprived them of their livelihood and too often demoralized them with our whisky, our diseases, and our vices. Again it is the missionaries who have enabled us as a nation to discharge our debt to the Indian. They followed him within the Arctic circle and to the shores of the Arctic sea to give him the bread of life. And the result has been that the relations between the Indians and the Government of Canada have been relations of unbroken peace. Even in the two Riel rebellions the Christian Indians could not be induced to take up arms and join the rebels. There have been no Indian wars in Canada, and no stain of Indian blood has been left on the pages of our national history.³¹¹

Missionaries to the settlers, both protestant and catholic, influenced the Maritime Provinces³¹² and Quebec to become “law abiding and progressive, moral and religious”, thus repeating the expectations of the Jesuit missionaries two centuries before of domesticating the land and erecting hierarchical structures.

Note that Canon Tucker, one of the key people involved in the management of the Indian Residential Schools, regards any “debt” to the Indigenous peoples by settlers as being discharged by evangelization. No accounting is made of the loss of language and culture, or the disruption of families by the apprehension and segregation of children. Alcoholism, disease, and other vices are put down to bad influence, but no connection is made from these problems to the efforts at Christianization and assimilation. In a history written in 1908 Canon Tucker writes:

³¹¹ *Canada’s Missionary Conference*, pp. 92-98. Canon Tucker is conveniently forgetting that the Cree were a major part of the second Riel “Rebellion”, and that along with Riel, six Cree leaders were executed.

³¹² i.e. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

These [residential] schools, carried on with a zeal and devotion that are beyond all praise, cannot fail to have produced the most blessed moral and spiritual results. But they, too, have had their limitations. They have not succeeded, as it was hoped they would do, in equipping the rising generation of Indians for the battle of life, with the moral qualities of industry and self-reliance; and, for their financial support, they have imposed on the authorities of the Church a heavy burden of toil and care. But it should not be beyond the power of the Church, acting in concert with the Government, to place the whole question of Indian education on a basis that will result in training the Indian eventually to take his proper place as a free, independent, and self-reliant citizen of the Dominion of Canada.³¹³

There was another understanding of the First Nations in terms of the mandate to develop that was more prevalent in the United States – a threat and an obstacle. Indeed, one might argue that this approach to Indigenous peoples was hardwired into the republican culture. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 stated,

it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them. or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds.³¹⁴

This declared that the British colonies on the east coast were to develop within their colonial boundaries, stopping at the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. The Quebec Act of 1774 built on the Royal Proclamation by annexing the “Indian Reserve” to the Province of Quebec. The Act also accepted the reality of Catholicism in the Province of Quebec to an extent not permitted in Great Britain

³¹³ L. Norman Tucker, *Handbooks of English Church Expansion: Western Canada* (Toronto ON: The Musson Book Company Limited and London UK & Oxford UK: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1908), pp.42-43.

³¹⁴ <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370355181092/1370355203645>, accessed November 13, 2017. The Royal Proclamation is part of the Constitution of Canada, and is specifically referenced in Section 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

or Ireland, and it approved the continued use of the French civil code law inherited from New France.³¹⁵ These actions were perceived by colonists on the American seaboard as “intolerable” and the King of Great Britain was accused in the Declaration of Independence:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies; He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

To put it another way, the well-known opening lines of the Declaration of Independence –

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness

- must be read in a Lockean framework, in which people with common law property gained from their own labour are superior to a people who do not have such a conception. Thus, in the eyes of the Declaration’s authors and signers, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec Act were contrary to natural law, preserving land for such inferiors.

Robert G. Parkinson demonstrated in his magisterial *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution*³¹⁶ that an American identity was created in the 1770s by the propagation of stories in revolutionary broadsheets about the threat of slave revolt and attack from the Indians.

³¹⁵ To this day Quebec uses a European style civil code for all non-criminal law; the rest of Canada uses common law.

³¹⁶ Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

Inasmuch as the Declaration of Independence is a key text in American Civil Religion, it defines the Africans and African-Americans who were slaves and the First Nations as the permanent “Other” to the American people; the indigenous and the enslaved are “un-American” and threats to be managed. In the case of the slaves, it meant ensuring that they could not rise up and attack their masters. In the case of the First Nations, it meant assimilation, pushing them off the land, or extermination. Each of these trajectories meant the marginalization and diminution of the “American Indian”. James Fennimore Cooper’s 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans* epitomizes the expectation that as the frontier moves west the indigenous peoples will die out.³¹⁷ The God-given mandate to the American people to expand westward, their Manifest Destiny, justified revolt against the British King and Parliament and the extermination of their allies.

In 1779 a combined force of Patriot and indigenous troops were sent by Washington to destroy the Haudenosaunee villages loyal to Britain in the Finger Lakes region of central New York, and by winter some five thousand refugees had fled this ethnic cleansing westwards to Fort Niagara.³¹⁸ When Washington defeated the British at Yorktown the North government at Westminster fell, and peace was settled by the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The Treaty makes no mention of the indigenous peoples of North America, and the British renounced all claims on the land between the thirteen colonies and the Mississippi River. The

³¹⁷ Of course, they survived. The Mohicans appear to be based on a confusion by Fennimore of the Mohegan of Connecticut (now best known in New England for operating the Mohegan Sun Casino), and the Mahicans of the Hudson River Valley, who having been forced west now reside mainly in Wisconsin. See *James Fenimore Cooper: The Leatherstocking Tales Vol. 1* (LOA #26) (New York NY: The Library of America, 1985).

³¹⁸ Ray, pp. 130-131.

Haudenosaunee who fought with the British then demanded and received in compensation for their lost lands the Haldimand Grant around the Grand River and elsewhere around Lake Ontario.

Grounded in this mandate to develop, the work of the Founding Fathers continued with the othering of slaves and indigenous. The Constitution proper declared that “Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned . . . by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons” (Article I, Section 2.3); slaves were the “other persons” and valued at three fifths of a free person. The Second Amendment declared, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz argues that these militias were fundamentally about citizens having the right to form into militias and having free rein to attack the perceived threats of indigenous peoples and rebellious slaves.³¹⁹ The effects of this continues to this day, with ongoing violent results.

B) The Struggle With Evil

We have seen earlier how Sepulveda argued that the Indigenous peoples of what became Central America were barbarous and evil, in particular, because of their human sacrifices to idols. This suggested that the settlers were involved

³¹⁹ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment* (San Francisco CA: City Lights Books, 2018).

in a struggle against malign evil forces in an enchanted world, much as their forebears had been in the reconquest of Spain.

The Jesuits in 17th century New France saw the evangelization of the Wyandot in terms of a struggle between themselves and the forces of evil. While the French settlement of the St. Lawrence River valley did not involve a conquest such as was experienced in Mexico and Peru,

the *Relations* are replete with a rhetoric of conquest and possession in the name of a universal Christendom. A key feature of this rhetoric was the Jesuits' representation of themselves as soldiers of Christ, engaged in the liberation of a country ruled and oppressed by Satan.³²⁰

The diseases which spread through the people, and yet left the Jesuits healthy, were seen in this pre-medical period as sent from the devil. The Jesuits were accused by the Wyandot of witchcraft because the people fell ill, yet the clergy spent hours with the sick and did not themselves succumb. When the Wyandot initially refused to receive the Christian faith, the Jesuits saw disease as God's punishment upon them; subsequently attacks by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and crop failures were attributed to God's wrath. These trials and misfortunes were seen as "a necessary and important step in the establishment of Christianity in North America, just as they had been in Europe and Asia."³²¹

The Jesuits followed Paul to "become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some" (1 Corinthians 9.22), by living with the Wyandot and learning their language. However, they could not shake off their presuppositions and training. Learning the language was not enough. Their theology presumed a struggle with the forces of evil, in which they as soldiers of

³²⁰ Blackburn, p. 123.

³²¹ Blackburn, p. 117.

Christ would suffer from the attacks of Satan, just as Jesus did, and the people would suffer from God's wrath until they turned to Christ, just as the Europeans' forebears had suffered. Regardless of the quality of life enjoyed by the Wyandot, they were seen as being part of a depraved primeval wilderness like that encountered by the first humans when expelled from Eden. As Christ encountered the devil in the desert beyond the wilderness, so the Jesuits encountered Satan in the forests of what became Ontario.

The missionary movements in the British Isles and the colonies emerged at the same time as the middle classes produced by the Industrial Revolution. While many nonconformists were denied political power because of the Test Acts, they could nevertheless influence national affairs by their involvement in domestic, colonial, and foreign missions. Likewise, women could exercise some influence by their participation as fund-raisers and as missionaries themselves. In 18th Century England "Sunday Schools" opened which, in order to teach Christianity, had first to teach its pupils how to read – a not unimportant thing in an age prior to universal education. This domestic "civilizing" mission naturally transferred to the efforts of missionaries in the colonies.³²²

Alison Twells argues that behind the evangelical impulse, *pace* any sociological analysis of missionary history, is "a specifically Christian, evangelical, and sometimes millenarian sensibility." The Bible was at "the centre of Christian missionary and philanthropic practice."³²³

At the root of the motivation to take the 'good news' to the heathen both at home and in non-Western cultures was the belief that Christ belonged

³²² Alison Twells, *The Civilizing Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The "Heathen" at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 4-5.

³²³ Alison Twells, pp. 16-17.

to all of humanity and his message could be understood by all. The missionary method, beginning with the proclamation, moving through teaching, conversion, baptism and the making of a church community, was grounded in the belief that exposure to the Bible would produce a new Christian subject, transforming individuals and cultures.³²⁴

Twells notes the texts which controlled the missionaries' understanding:

Both model and inspiration for the missionary enterprise derived from the work of the apostles. The *New Testament* is a missionary document; the gospels promote different understandings of mission. The emphasis of Luke, for example, is on Jesus's "boundary breaking compassion", and in particular his association with the poor, with women, tax-collectors and Samaritans and other marginalized people. The "Great Commission" of Matthew 28.18-20, used by Carey in his *Enquiry* (1792), urged missionaries to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . ." Foremost of all, the letters of St. Paul to the Romans formed the foundational text of the missionary impulse. Romans 1 . . . is the passage of the Bible most often quoted by missionary evangelicals. Beginning with Paul's assertion that Jews and Gentiles are equally in need of salvation, Romans 1 provides a strongly-worded indictment of heathen life, describing the thankless, vain and foolish peoples of the world outside Christendom whose "ungodliness" led them not only to "a reprobate mind" but to lives filled with "all unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness, maliciousness." They were "full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity"; were "whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful . . ." (Romans 1.29-31)

What missionaries saw, on encountering the "heathen" at home or pagans of another culture, was the world as described in Romans 1, refracted through the lens of eighteenth-century British culture. Paul's depiction of the heathen world informed missionary expectations of their subjects and provided an interpretive framework for their encounters. . . . Paul was their model and England . . . became seen as a chosen nation. By the 1820s, missions were "emblematic of national virtue"; by the 1840s and 1850s, widespread acceptance of Protestant narratives about chosen communities informed the English civilizing mission.³²⁵

In Carol L. Higham's *Noble, Wretched, & Redeemable* we find the most comprehensive description of Protestant missionary work in North America in the 19th century. It is primarily about the creation of the image of the "Indian" in

³²⁴ Ibid, pp. 17-18.

³²⁵ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

that time by missionaries, and she finds little difference in their writings between those in the United States and those in the Dominion of Canada. She writes that, "Missionaries entered the North American frontiers with images of the 'noble savage' dancing in their minds, only to encounter what they began to call 'wretched Indians.'"³²⁶

The image of the "noble savage" developed in the eighteenth century. Starting with the biblical assumption that all humanity was descended from Adam and Eve, the conclusion was that they shared "the same basic characteristics as all other humans" and when "confronted with the prospect of conversion to Christianity, Indians would respond like Europeans and their North American counterparts." In the wake of the Enlightenment, "The noble savage was thought of as an ideal of mankind without the institutions, in his natural state, awaiting the proper environment in which to be shaped and raised."³²⁷ In Europe two trajectories of thought emerged – one that saw the "Indians" as a kind of fallen people pregnant with potential for assimilation to Christian civilization, and another that saw it as an uncorrupted humanity, which was then used to condemn the unnatural extravagances of Europe.³²⁸ As reports continued to come back from missionaries, and the governments in the United States and British North America/Canada dealt with indigenous peoples in different ways, the "fallen people" image was replaced by a sense of racial difference, which deemphasized a common origin or common traits. By the

³²⁶ Carol L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, & Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Albuquerque NM: University of New Mexico Press & Calgary AB: University of Calgary Press, 2000), p. 31.

³²⁷ Higham, p. 33.

³²⁸ Higham, p. 34.

1850s in Canada the environment was deemed to have created an “inferior people”, whereas in the US differences were deemed to be caused by genetic origins.³²⁹

Missionaries in the latter part of the 19th century stood between the marginalized indigenous peoples on reserves (Canada) and reservations (US), and the governments that put them there. The missionaries saw their efforts as a kind of rescue mission. In their eyes, the various First Nations, whether initially deprived or noble savages, were being corrupted and neglected by the settlers and government policies. Missionaries invoked “white guilt” over the Indian’s downfall,³³⁰ and at the same time tried to preserve a role for themselves. This came into play when the federal government in Canada set up the Indian Residential Schools, in that the various church entities saw an opportunity to act on behalf of western civilization to “save” the people by remaking them in the image of the West.

In 1862 the Rev. A. C. Garrett near Victoria, Vancouver’s Island, notes that the northern peoples are “warlike” and “savage”. He names several problems in addition to the linguistic ones: that the peoples are migratory, and that “vice in all its appalling and deadly forms rages with uncontrolled power.”³³¹

³²⁹ Higham, p. 37. Of course, this was a “scientific” explanation for the already established “othering” of both slaves and “Indians”. Darwin’s *The Origin of the Species* was published in 1859, and *The Descent of Man* in 1871. Darwin rejected the idea that the different “races” were actually species, and what later came to be called “Social Darwinism” would have appalled him.

³³⁰ Higham, p.180.

³³¹ *The Mission Field Vol. VII, April 1, 1862* pp. 89-94, from the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon.

In 1909 at *Canada's Missionary Congress* Robert E. Speer, of The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, was invited to give a preparatory essay on The Great Commission. He wrote that

The great Commission is not the foundation of our missionary obligation . . . [it] rests on the character of God, on the universality of the Gospel, on the unity and the need of all humanity.³³²

Speer goes on to note that the obligation stated and defined in the Great Commission had several implications. First, “the finality and the authoritativeness of the Christian religion.” Other religions and traditions “are not an inspiration to, they are an incubus upon, the religious nature of mankind . . . Christianity has [not] anything to learn from any other faith.” Thus, “We need, my friends, the stiffening which this view will give us in our Christian life and work at home.”

Second, the Great Commission lays emphasis

on action and power, not on reflection or on defensive apologetic . . . The way by which the Gospel was to be safeguarded, in our Lord's view, was by a wholesome hygienic reflex influence of conquest and action and power . . . If we have a Gospel that was meant of God to subdue the world, the best way in which we can convince the world that that Gospel has a right to be propagated everywhere and to conquer the world is by using it for its predestined end.

In Speer's opinion, stagnant churches beset with heresy become so because they are no longer focused on the mission of the Church.

His third point is that the Great Commission gave the Church “a great and living cause”. Speer believed that the early Christians “realized that they had been called to a mighty war – a mighty war to last for generations and

³³² *Canada's Missionary Conference*, pp. 5-12.

88generations.” The early church did not plan a campaign or develop strategies, but “They saw the thing to be done, and with all their lives they struck.”

The violent, martial language of Speer is striking, especially with the knowledge that four years later most of his listeners would have been involved in the Great War. The demonic language often applied to indigenous beliefs appears again, and Speer’s Calvinistic predestinarianism becomes an end that justifies the means.

C) Conclusion

Just as providence and eschatology can be distinguished from the Doctrine of Discovery, so the Mandate to Develop and the Struggle with Evil can be described apart from it. What all these theological ideas do is provide yet further justification for what people at the time both resisted and condemned; again, there is nothing inherently wrong in struggling with evil or education and development of land, but it was the way in which these themes were used that has proven genocidal.

In Levinasian terms, the mandate to develop and the struggle with evil can be seen as another extension of a collective egoism and a desire to satisfy one’s own needs over those of others. Thus, there is little attention paid to the discourse of others or their needs, and their use of the land and their customs are described as uncivilized, savage, anarchic, depraved, demonic, and wretched. The ways of the First Nations are seen as largely incompatible with those of civilization and Christianity. The Mandate to Develop requires the unimpeded access to land and resources, and so totalizing peace is established with the violence of revolution, suppression, and “well regulated militias”. The debt or

responsibility of settler nations to First Nations is discharged by developing them through education and assimilation, make the other the same. Indigenous peoples, in the scheme of history established by the horizon of [European] Being, are a primitive state of development that must be changed. Resistance is exasperating and downright wrong.

Chapter Six: Fulfillment Theology and The Difficulty of Communicating the Gospel in Indigenous Languages

The next two theological themes are not as important or prevalent as the previous five, but, as they emerged out of the inductive analysis of the primary and secondary sources, it is worth examining them. They are Fulfillment Theology, which is an early 20th century approach to the multiplicity of faiths that were becoming better known. Related to this was the understanding of “race” and “nations” which would not become problematic until after the Second World War. The other theme is that of the difficulty missionaries had in communicating the gospel in anything other than their own language, which became a rationale for extinguishing Indigenous languages and teaching English.

A) Fulfillment Theology

At the 1910 Edinburgh Conference we hear of the idea that Christianity is the fulfillment of the religious urge common to all humanity. Just as Aristotle understood that reason was common to all humanity, and just as Thomas Aquinas believed that reason would lead to some recognition of a god, so “Fulfillment theology” saw the different religions as products of human reason, but in a hierarchy, from primitive to civilized, with Christianity at the top. This is in contrast to older and competing views like that of Speer, delivered the year before in Toronto, which asserted that there was nothing to be learned from other religions, as they were demonic.

Fulfillment Theology can be seen in *The Report of Commission IV: The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*. The chair of the commission, editor of the Report, and the author of its conclusions was David S. Cairns, Professor of Systematic Theology at the United Free Church, Aberdeen.³³³ As Brian Stanley points out, he was an unusual person to chair the Commission, as he had no missionary experience. Also, by the standards of the time, Cairns would have been considered on the liberal end of the theological spectrum:

Cairns' reading of [Anglo-Catholic & socialist] F. D. Maurice and John MacLeod Campbell, and the impact of a summer spent as a student in Marburg at the feet of the Ritschlian theologian, William Herrmann, had led him to forsake the orthodox Calvinism of his Presbyterian upbringing for an immanentist theology of the universal fatherhood of God; he had come to believe that the Kingdom of God was embryonically present in all humanity, but completely expressed only in the life and teachings of the perfect Son, Jesus. Applied to the theology of religions, this perspective seemed to imply that signs of God's presence could be found in all human religiosity, albeit intermingled with inevitable error and corruption. The task of the missionary, therefore, was in a sympathetic spirit of human inquiry to identify "points of contact" in non-Christian religions and then to use them to draw adherents of other faiths towards the full revelation of truth found in the Christ who was the perfect manifestation of the fatherhood of God.³³⁴

In the conclusion to the Commission IV report Cairns sets out a hierarchy of religions in the five fields of Christian evangelism from which the Commission received correspondence. In this he was influenced by the early "science of comparative religion". First, at the bottom, is "Animism":

To the animist the world is peopled by many unseen beings, who are envious of the living, and who, unless propitiated, strike them with disease or calamity. The whole life of the animist therefore lies under an incubus of terror. He may propitiate some, but he cannot propitiate all. Ancestor worship is at best a palliative but not a full deliverance, and therefore there arises an intolerable division of life.³³⁵

³³³ Stanley, p. 208.

³³⁴ Stanley, p. 212.

³³⁵ *The Report of Commission 4*, pp. 218-219.

Next are the Chinese religions, which Cairns sees as similar to the dying faiths of ancient Greece and Rome. He writes that

we have at the foundation a primitive native mythology and ancestor worship, and superimposed upon it we have the Confucian morality and Buddhism in its northern and also in its sectarian form."³³⁶

The Japanese religions are similar, but overlaid with a profound nationalism through Shinto.³³⁷ Islam is seen as a version of Judaism transplanted to the Arabian desert, maintaining the worst of Jewish legalism. According to Cairns, in Islam Allah is seen as a despot, and not a loving Father.³³⁸ He has a higher opinion of Hinduism, seeing parallels between Hindu philosophy and Alexandrine theology, but he also sees this as the influence of Christians on Vedanta (!). He discerns a kind of theism in Vedanta, but sees it in conflict with a more pervasive polytheistic pantheism.³³⁹

Cairns reaches two conclusions. The first is that an iconoclastic (sic) approach is to be rejected, but rather that "the true attitude of the Christian missionary to the non-Christian religions should be one of true understanding and, as far as possible, of sympathy . . . that the missionary should seek for the nobler elements in the non-Christian religions and use them as steps to higher things".³⁴⁰ Second, "along with this generous recognition of all that is true and good in these religions, there goes also the universal and emphatic witness to the absoluteness of the Christian faith." For Cairns this is not a contradiction; he

³³⁶ *The Report of Commission 4*, pp. 229.

³³⁷ *The Report of Commission 4*, pp. 229-236.

³³⁸ *The Report of Commission 4*, pp. 236-259.

³³⁹ *The Report of Commission 4*, pp. 248.

³⁴⁰ *The Report of Commission 4*, p. 267.

denies that interest in other religions requires relativism; and he rejects the idea that all religions are equal.³⁴¹

Cairns regards the religious practices of non-Christian lands through European categories. For example, it is debatable whether “Hinduism” was a meaningful term until the modern British arrived in India, but as the category “religion” was used to differentiate pagan, Christian, Jew, and Muslim, it was applied to the incredibly diverse practices and beliefs found the Indian subcontinent.³⁴² Also, while Cairns does not discuss Judaism as such, he is clearly a supersessionist (as were, admittedly, virtually all Christians of the era), and he applies the same kind of thinking to other religions as to Judaism.

Within the Report of Commission VII is a hierarchical understanding of nations and races. The writing of this was driven by two lay Americans, both Episcopalians and neither of whom were missionaries. Seth Low (1850-1916) was a former mayor of Brooklyn and New York City, as well as President of Columbia University and chair of Tuskegee University in Alabama. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) was the other, whom we have already met. Both men had been delegates to the 1899 Peace Conference at The Hague.

Low and Mahan describe five levels of civilization, which may be categorized as follows:³⁴³

³⁴¹ *The Report of Commission 4*, p. 268.

³⁴² See, for example, Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science, and Empire: Classifying Hinduism and Islam in British India* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³⁴³ *Report of Commission VII*, pp. 89-90

“(a) those of low civilization, but independent;”	“The absolutely independent savage chief, representative of group (a), has disappeared; and the ethical and prudential rules governing the dealings of missionaries with such potentates, though intensely interesting as a study of character, need not occupy the attention of this Commission.”
“(b) those of higher civilization, and independent;”	“Persia and China”
“(c) those of low civilization, under Christian rule or influence;”	“African protectorates”
“(d) those of higher civilization, under Christian rule or influence;”	“India”
“(e) those of the highest international rank.”	“Japan”

Table 3: Low & Mahan’s Five Levels of Civilization

Commission VII does not directly address where the Indigenous peoples of the Dominion of Canada fit; presumably at one time they were (a) but were by 1910 considered to be (c). Although some three centuries separate the World Missionary Conference from the 1550 debate in Valladolid, there is an echo of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda’s use of the chain of being here.

The World Missionary Conference was, by the standard of the times, relatively enlightened about “race”. While language of “race” is everywhere in the various reports, it is used in the ways that “ethnicity” and “nationality” would be used today. Thus, there is a “British race,” and distinctions are made between the “white race and the coloured races”, and also “advanced and primitive races”. Language about “savage” peoples is common. Race is seen as mutable – the whole point of evangelization, after all, was to convert and transform the person – but some “races” were seen as relatively more resistant and intransigent, and others were seen as vulnerable. Nevertheless, there is also a sense in which race is unchanging and has certain constant characteristics. Brian Stanley notes that

contemporary Christians look back at the Conference and view with great sympathy for its “enthusiasm for indigenous agency and cultural diversity in the expression of the Christian faith, and its opposition to imperial exploitation of indigenous peoples”. However, “the questionable assumptions of racial essentialism and differentiation were foundational to” those very pronouncements.³⁴⁴

The combination of these two systems of classification reveals the hierarchical categorization of the world, with “white” Anglo-Saxon Protestant Christians at the top – which reflected the makeup of the participants at the Conference. The vast majority of the delegates were male Europeans and Americans, or the male children of European and American missionaries born in the mission fields. Stanley notes that “of the 1,215 official delegates, 509 were British, 491 were North American, 169 originated from continental Europe, 27 came from the white colonies of South Africa and Australasia, and . . . 18 from Asia.”³⁴⁵ The few Indigenous delegates from India, China, Korea, and Japan were visibly present, but very much in the minority. There were also 207 female delegates, but their voices were minimal.³⁴⁶ Brian Stanley, in his history of the conference, tries hard to determine whether there was anyone from Africa of recent African descent present at the Conference, and concludes that there was one, namely the Rev. M. C. Hayford, D.D.³⁴⁷ Hayford was a westernized African of both African and European descent. There were also six American delegates with

³⁴⁴ Stanley, p. 309.

³⁴⁵ Stanley, p. 12.

³⁴⁶ Stanley, p. 73.

³⁴⁷ Stanley, pp. 97-102. The interesting point here is that sub-Saharan Africa was probably the part of the world that became most Christian in the hundred years following.

African descent, and despite their ancestors having been in the Americas for centuries, they were lumped in with Hayford.

B) The Difficulty of Communicating the Gospel in Indigenous Languages

Carole Blackburn in her study of the Jesuits in New France identified a third opposition that had both ecological and sociological dimensions, which presented itself in the difficulty of translation. Brébeuf's companion Paul Le Jeune SJ wrote:

As they have no true religion nor knowledge of the virtues, neither public authority nor government, neither Kingdom nor Republic, nor sciences, nor any of those things of which I have just spoken, consequently all the expressions, terms, words, and names which refer to the world of wealth and grandeur must necessarily be absent from their vocabulary.³⁴⁸

Jérôme Lalemant, S.J. echoed this remark in 1648 with greater specificity:

Not only do words fail them to express the sanctity of our mysteries, but even the parables, and even the more familiar discourses of Jesus Christ are inexplicable to them. They know not what is salt, leaven, stronghold, pearl, prison, mustard seed, casks of wine, lamp, candlestick, torch; they have no idea of Kingdoms, Kings, and their majesty; not even of shepherds, flocks, and a sheepfold.³⁴⁹

At face value, then, the attitude seemed to be that a full understanding and acceptance of the gospel required a corresponding acceptance of European hierarchies and values. According to Lalemant and Le Jeune, the Wyandot (Hurons) simply did not have the conceptual language for Christian faith.

This would be a surprise to the millions of Canadian schoolchildren who grew up singing the *Huron Carol*, which was apparently written by Jean de

³⁴⁸ Paul Le Jeune S.J., *Jesuit Relations* 7:21, in Blackburn, p. 102.

³⁴⁹ Jérôme Lalemant, S.J. in *Jesuit Relations* 20:71, in Blackburn p. 103.

Brébeuf S.J. himself in 1642.³⁵⁰ Also, a century earlier Las Casas did not find this to be an issue (although, admittedly, the indigenous societies of Mexico were more hierarchical). While much recent historiography dealing with indigenous peoples in the Americas and in Austronesia suggests that the original peoples

³⁵⁰ *The Huron Carol* was translated into French at the end of the 17th century and preserved in both Wyandot and French. In English it is best known in a rather romanticized translation by Jesse Edgar Middleton. In Canada it is regularly sung at Christmas services, and it has been recorded by any number of settler and indigenous musicians from Canada. See *Common Praise* (Toronto ON: Anglican Book Centre, 1998) Hymn 146, and “Huron Carol Translation With Pronunciation Guide” at <https://penguinpoweredpiano.wordpress.com/2013/05/03/song-translation-huron-carol-by-heather-dale-huronwendat-and-canadian-french/> accessed 26 April 2021.

Wyandot (Huron) (First 3 verses)	Literal Translation	Middleton Translation (1926)
Ehstehn yayau deh tsaun we yisus ahattonnia O na wateh wado:kwi nonnwa 'ndasqua entai ehнау sherskwa trivota nonnwa 'ndi yaun rashata Iesus Ahattonnia, Ahattonnia, Iesus Ahattonnia	Have courage, you who are human beings: Jesus, he is born The okie spirit who enslaved us has fled Don't listen to him for he corrupts the spirits of our thoughts Jesus, he is born	"Twas in the moon of winter- time When all the birds had fled, That mighty <u>Gitchi Manitou</u> Sent angel choirs instead; Before their light the stars grew dim, And wandering hunters heard the hymn: "Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, In excelsis gloria."
Ayoki onki hm-ashe eran yayeh raunnaun yauntaun kanntatya hm-deh 'ndyaun sehnsatoa ronnyaun Waria hnawakweh tond Yosehf sataunn haronnyaun Iesus Ahattonnia, Ahattonnia, Iesus Ahattonnia	The okie spirits who live in the sky are coming with a message They're coming to say, "Rejoice! Mary has given birth. Rejoice!" Jesus, he is born	The earliest moon of wintertime Is not so round and fair As was the ring of glory On the helpless infant there. The chiefs from far before him knelt With gifts of fox and beaver pelt. Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, In excelsis gloria.
Asheh kaunnta horraskwa deh ha tirri gwames Tishyaun ayau ha'ndeh ta aun hwa ashya a ha trreh aundata:kwa Tishyaun yayaun yaun n-dehta Iesus Ahattonnia, Ahattonnia, Iesus Ahattonnia	Three men of great authority have left for the place of his birth Tiscient, the star appearing over the horizon leads them there That star will walk first on the bath to guide them Jesus, he is born	

Table 4: *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* in Huron & English

could not accept Christianity without a collapse of their own cultures and beliefs, Terrence Ranger points out that the evidence of the modern “Aboriginal Revival” suggests the opposite - that the recovery of indigenous perspectives and practices actually enables the adoption of Christianity.³⁵¹

Carol Higham reports the difficulties many 19th century Protestant missionaries encountered when translating scriptures and liturgies. In 1884 it was suggested that the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands off the north-west coast of BC had “no word in their language which signifies the praise or adoration of a Supreme Being” and that as a result they were “devoid of religion.”³⁵² In 1837 a missionary to the Lakota stated that “ideas of ‘joy,’ ‘grief,’ ‘courage,’ and ‘cowardice’ “seem not to be found in the minds of a Dakota, and can with difficulty be made to enter there.”³⁵³ On the other hand, John Booth Good praised the language of the Thompson Indians as a “surprisingly rich, euphemistic and expressive tongue, abounding in abstract and metaphysical terms, with a superabundance of synonyms.”³⁵⁴ Fundamentally the problem missionaries encountered was not a “poverty of language” but the sharp difference between an oral and written culture; whereas written cultures lend themselves to abstraction and generalizations, oral cultures tend to be rooted in the concrete, the narrative, and the particular. The failure of the missionaries to

³⁵¹ Terrence Ranger, “Christianity and the First Peoples” in *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change (Studies in Christian Mission)* edited by Peggy Brock (Leiden NL: Brill, 2005), pp. 15-32.

³⁵² Higham, , p. 79.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Higham, p. 80.

see these types of categorical differences led them to perceive indigenous peoples as depraved and uncivilized.³⁵⁵

C) Conclusion

Racism is the principle that one subgroup of human beings is somehow superior to the other. The seven theological ideas that contributed towards supporting the IRS and the genocide of Indigenous peoples all have aspects of racism, but it becomes most apparent in these last two. In a time when mere nationality was seen as conveying racial characteristics, the members of the 1910 World Missionary Conference reinscribed racial differences even as they appeared to be liberal in requiring missions to be taken over by those recently converted. The hierarchies of religion and race established the peoples of Europe and the Americas – and especially those of British descent – as the natural leaders and rulers of the world. The difficulty some of them had in expressing themselves in other languages demonstrates their own inability to separate the good news from their own cultures, reading into their sacred scriptures and traditions their own biases.

Cairns, Low, and Mahan purport to be expressing something objective and rational in their religious and racial hierarchies, so in Levinasian terms they are expressing a totalizing truth, one that is based in their own privilege and Eurocentric egoism. The missionaries who found it difficult to preach the gospel in the language of their target audiences were experiencing the others as

³⁵⁵ Higham, p. 83.

limitations upon their ability – their freedom – to be effective. Consequently, it was necessary to apprehend the Indigenous peoples as children and force them to think as settlers did, speaking the English language, learning British history, and adopting the mores of the British Isles. In their view, the benefit of receiving the gospel outweighed the drawbacks that ensued following being separated from family and culture.

This brings us to an end of the survey of the seven theologies which informed the missionaries who operated the IRS. These theological ideas encouraged otherwise good Christians in the belief that God wanted them to help in the centuries-long assimilation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada, and the destruction and assimilation of Indigenous peoples elsewhere. They genuinely believed that God called them to reach out in charity to those they saw as impoverished, deprived, and uncivilized. Resistance was seen as irrational and probably demonic, and contrary to the obvious providence of God in favouring the European nations.

The point of examining this history goes beyond recognising the church's complicity in this genocide, and the need for repentance. Apologies have been made, restitution has been paid, and church leaders have sought healing and reconciliation between the institutions of the church and those of Indigenous peoples, and growing understanding between communities. However, true repentance as *μετάνοια* requires a repudiation of not just the Doctrine of Discovery, but also of the six other themes that I have identified, and any others that emerge. Care must be used when invoking the cause of evangelism and the idea of providence, for while they may be good things as such, when used in the furtherance of one's own group to the detriment of others, it perverts the gospel.

Theologians and ordinary Christians need to continue to examine the structures that reinscribe or are biased towards the old ways of thinking, and commit to change them. Whereas the approach of the churches towards the IRS was fundamentally one of charity, the new approach towards relations of Indigenous and settler peoples inside and outside the church should be one of justice. The next part of the dissertation is a suggestion that the theology of kenosis is one way for the church and Christians to go.

Part Three: Kenotic Theology as a Response to Totality

Chapter Seven: Kenosis in the Bible

A) Introduction

As suggested in the chapter on Levinas, this part of the dissertation argues that kenotic theology is the kind of theology that is not likely to justify or lead to genocide, but to healing. It should assist us in the decolonization of settler and imperial minds. It survives the critique of totalizing thought as developed in Part One.

The New Testament was written by a colonized people. Kenotic theology, rooted in the New Testament, comes out of a context of colonization, and is opposed to imperialism in a way that does not simply mimic the oppressors, but transcends it. This makes it potentially less prone to totalization. Across the hermeneutical spectrum, from people such as N. T. Wright on one end to Dominic Crosson at another, we find it to be a starting point that the gospel of Jesus stood in opposition to the good news being proclaimed by the Roman Empire. This appears to be more than just a reading into the First Century texts of Twentieth Century Liberation Theology, but it is actually, demonstrably there. Jesus is ο Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων and the kingdom of God is utterly unlike the imperial rule of Caesar. Jesus is never violent, but models a humble, servant leadership. He is put to death by the Roman Empire under Pontius Pilate, at the instigation of his allies among the Jewish collaborators. This explains why oppressed peoples, whether African-Americans, South Africans under apartheid, or Indigenous peoples today,

have found so much power in the good news and its roots in the liberation of Israel. It also means that a post-colonial reading of kenotic theology is in order.

Now, kenotic theology has not always been popular in modern times; it was forcefully condemned by Pope Pius XII in 1951. He wrote

There is another enemy of the faith of Chalcedon, widely diffused outside the fold of the Catholic religion. This is an opinion for which a rashly and falsely understood sentence of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (ii, 7), supplies a basis and a shape. This is called the kenotic doctrine, and according to it, they imagine that the divinity was taken away from the Word in Christ. It is a wicked invention, equally to be condemned with the Docetism opposed to it. It reduces the whole mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption to empty the bloodless imaginations.³⁵⁶

Likewise, Eugene Fairweather of Trinity College, Toronto wrote a theological appendix in F. W. Beare's commentary on Philippians in 1959 arguing that kenotic Christology was not to be found in the Patristic authors, and agreed with Beare's argument that one should not read too much into Paul's use of the word.³⁵⁷

Since then there has been an explosion of interest in kenosis. In recent times it has moved from being about the Incarnation and is now often described as a basic characteristic of God. The late John Polkinghorne edited a book on creation as kenosis;³⁵⁸ Stephen Evans edited one on *Exploring Kenotic Christology*;³⁵⁹ and there are various books relating kenosis to service, the

³⁵⁶ Pius XII (Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli, 1876-1958), *Sempiternus Rex Christus, On the Council of Chalcedon* (1951), 29. Arguably he was condemning merely the less orthodox and more liberal versions of kenotic theology, and not the ones that are discerned among the Fathers of the Church.

³⁵⁷ Eugene R. Fairweather, "Appended Note: "The "Kenotic" Christology"" in F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on The Epistle to the Philippians* (London UK: Adam and Charles Black, 1959), pp. 159-174.

³⁵⁸ John Polkinghorne, editor, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 2001),

³⁵⁹ C. Stephen Evans, editor, *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2006).

priesthood, preaching, and theological anthropology. David Law even found kenotic Christology in Kierkegaard.³⁶⁰ Further, kenotic theology has the virtue of being rooted in scripture and tradition, and thus is presumably orthodox.³⁶¹

Among the more important recent discussions about kenotic theology in the Catholic church are those that have arisen out of *Faith in a Secular Age: Disjunctions between Religion and People*, a research project involving Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George F. McLean, on (among other things) “exploring new models of social and communal reality which focus on difference, kenotic powerlessness, sacramentality of life, and multiple competencies.”³⁶² The conference arose out of a double crisis in the Catholic Church. The first is that of “[t]he phenomenon of secularization since the Reformation and the beginnings of modernity” and the consequent “four existential disjunctions” identified by Taylor between the public and religious spheres of life.³⁶³ The second is the ongoing revelations around the world of clergy sex abuse in the Catholic church in which “the teacher and shepherd has become traitor to the flock and criminal before the law as it reflects the public conscience. This is to be not merely

³⁶⁰ David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³⁶¹ This question is explicitly addressed by Stephen T. Davis in “Is Kenosis Orthodox?” in *Exploring Kenotic Theology*, pp. 112-138; he answers in the affirmative.

³⁶² From “Faith in a Secular Age: Disjunctions/Conjunctions between Church and People, December 1-2, 2012, Washington, DC: Report” at <http://www.crvp.org/projects/december-2012.html> accessed November 27, 2018. The conference resulted in the book *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* edited by Charles Taylor, José Casanova George F. McLean, part of *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series VIII. Christian Philosophical Studies, Volume 1* (General Editor: George F. McLean) (Washington DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012).

³⁶³ *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, p. 1.

bankrupt, but grotesque.”³⁶⁴ This conference was followed by another at Heythrop College which resulted in another book, *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*.³⁶⁵ In these books kenosis is seen as a response to a failure of morality in the church, which is parallel to my argument. I will refer to the essays in this second book later in chapter nine.

Kenosis has slipped out of theology into philosophy and beyond. Jacques Derrida in *Sauf le nom/On the Name* writes that a kenosis of language is needed to allow a new way of speaking about God.³⁶⁶ Kenosis is a theme in comparative religion (Christianity/Buddhism),³⁶⁷ studies on sexuality,³⁶⁸ architecture,³⁶⁹ and literary criticism.³⁷⁰

The popularity of kenosis should not blind us to the fact that it is rooted in 19th century theological controversies. The claim of its biblical roots makes for a complex analysis. There are in fact many kenotic theologies, and as John Henry Newman would advise us, we would be wise to view this from an historical perspective. Kenosis interacts with twenty centuries of Christology,

³⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

³⁶⁵ *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*, edited by Anthony J. Carroll, Marthe Kerkwijk, Michael Kirwan, and James Sweeney (as *Western Philosophical Studies, VIII Christian Philosophical Studies, VIII*) (Washington DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015).

³⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida, “Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)” in *On the Name* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 35-88; pp. 56 & 71.

³⁶⁷ Sallie B. King, “Kenosis and Action: A Review Article” in *Buddhist-Christian Studies 12* (1992), 255-261.

³⁶⁸ David T. Williams “Kenōsis in sexuality”, *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 2013, Volume 34, Issue 1, pp. 1–7.

³⁶⁹ For example, Randall Scott Lindstrom *Kenosis Creativity Architecture*, unpublished PhD dissertation, School of Architecture and Design, University of Tasmania August 2015

³⁷⁰ For example, Jennifer Kilgore-Caradec, “Kinesis, Kenosis, and the Weakness of Poetry” *Revue LISA / LISA e-journal* 05/2009, Issue Vol. VII – n°3, pp. 35 – 49.

anthropology, ethics, Trinitarian theology, metaphysics, and cosmology. In a short review such as this one cannot be other than selective.

I start in this chapter with a discussion of the so-called “Philippian Hymn” found in Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2 verse 5-11. By way of a summary of contemporary historico-critical scholarship it will look at the passage through N. T. Wright’s exemplary work. As Levinas has been described by Graham Ward as having a kenotic philosophy, I pause at the end of this chapter to consider whether that is an accurate description. In the next chapter I examine how Sergei Bulgakov in the ‘thirties and ‘forties, building on work done by earlier kenoticists but operating in the context of Orthodox theology, expanded kenotic theology from Christology to encompass Trinitarian theology and cosmology. In the chapter following I consider the writings of feminist theologian Sarah Coakley and her careful examination of kenosis in contemporary writing, as well as recent critiques of this work. I return to some of the authors in the collection *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*. Finally, I consider some of the authors mentioned in the Introduction and try to explain why a kenosis-shaped theology may be appropriate for Indigenous Christians but is even more important for settler people doing theology.

B) The Biblical Text of Philippians 2.5-11

The word *kenosis* comes from a passage in Paul's Letter to the Philippians, the so-called *Philippian Hymn*. The context in the letter is as follows.³⁷¹

⁵ τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ⁶ ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ⁷ ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος: καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ⁸ ἑταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ .	⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.
⁹ διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἔχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα, ¹⁰ ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, ¹¹ καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.	⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, *kenosis* is a perfectly ordinary Greek word meaning “emptiness”; the verb form translates into English as *vacate*, *evacuate*, and *deplete*. In Philippians

³⁷¹ Text according to the *The Greek New Testament, Third Edition* (New York NY: American Bible Society, 1975), p. 684. English translation is the New Revised Standard Version. There are no significant textual issues in this portion of Philippians; for two very minor ones, see Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 613.

2.7 ἐκένωσεν is a 3rd person singular indicative active aorist of κενόω. It has a noun form, κενούς, which is the masculine plural accusative used in the Song of Mary in Luke 1.53: “he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away **empty**”.

Why does Paul bring in this theme of self-emptying? In the context of Philippians it is evidently a form of encouragement to them to, as the preceding verses put it,

be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2.2-4)

The exhortation continues afterwards:

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. (2.12-15)

In the rhetorical structure of a letter this description of Christ’s kenosis is part of the *paraenesis* or moral exhortation. Paul writes the letter while he is in prison (1.13), and the Philippians are concerned and send him financial aid (4.18). As well, Paul is opposed by Jewish-Christians having authority from the Jerusalem church, and this opposition is creating divisions in the churches for which Paul feels responsible.³⁷² This has not created divisions in Philippi yet, but Paul is worried about it, and so he mentions them in 1.15-17, 1.28, and 3.2, and believes that only if the Philippians continue to follow Paul and the example of Jesus will

³⁷² Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Press, 1989), translated from *Paulus, der Heidenapostel. Bd. 2: Antipaulinismus im frühen Christentum* (Göttingen 1983).

they be able to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (1.12). Paul's use of this passage, then, is primarily ethical – by being like this, his readers will have God working within them, enabling them “both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (2.13).

Κενόω is a verb used by Paul; it is not used by any other author in the New Testament. In addition to Philippians 2 he uses it as follows:

a) Romans 4.14: εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι, **κεκένωται** ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία (If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is **null** and the promise is void); *the NRSV translates it as “null”, but the AV/KJV translates it as “void”;*

b) 1 Corinthians 1.17: οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ **κενωθῇ** ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ (For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not **be emptied** of its power);

c) 1 Corinthians 9.15: Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων. Οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί· καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ– τὸ καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς **κενώσει** (But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will **deprive** me of my ground for boasting!); *the NRSV translates as “deprive”, the AV/KJV as “make void”;*

d) 2 Corinthians 9.3: ἔπεμψα δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν **κενωθῆ** ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, ἵνα καθὼς ἔλεγον παρεσκευασμένοι ἦτε (But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been **empty** in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be);

Paul's use in other letters suggest that his use of ἐκένωσεν in Philippians should be understood as part of his ordinary speech and not as some unusual technical word. It is typically used in a negative sense, as a *something* which is becoming *emptied* (or has the potential of becoming emptied).

Following Lohmeyer's essay "Kyrios Jesus" (1927), a majority of 20th century scholars and current scholarship concluded that Philippians 2.5b-11 was pre-Pauline and probably a hymn sung by the early Christians; this remains the opinion of many influential scholars of the past quarter century, such as John Reumann and the late James D. G. Dunn.³⁷³ If this is so, then the contextual ethico-rhetorical use of Paul recedes, and the original statement becomes more of a doxological, soteriological, and emphatically Christological work (as the title of the 1998 collection *Philippians 2: Where Christology Began* suggests). N. T.

³⁷³ Carolyn Osiek calls it the "general consensus" in *Philippians Philemon* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), p. 56. See also R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi, Philippians ii.5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967); F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1959); Ralph P. Martin & Brian J. Dodd, eds., *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998) (which includes an essay by James D. G. Dunn which affirms the pre-Pauline character); John Reumann, *Philippians (Anchor Yale Bible Vol. 33B)* (New Haven CN & London UK: Yale University Press, 2008).

Wright in 1986 reviewed the literature on the passage and presented in “ἄρπαγμὸς and the Meaning of Philippians 2: 5-11” a chart organizing the variety of opinion about the “Philippian hymn” and the impact it has on the translation into English of key words. Wright observes that some see the hymn as being derived from pre-Christian gnostic mythology, others accept a Jewish gnostic influence, others regard it as more influenced by a transformation of Adamic typology, and “equality with God” is variously interpreted as referring to attributes, status, and humanity in the image of God.³⁷⁴

Wright is not convinced that there ever was a “Philippian hymn”. There is no documentary evidence for its pre-Pauline existence, so those who argue for Paul’s use of a previous composition have to base it on linguistic and stylistic evidence questions.³⁷⁵ Gordon D. Fee points out five problems with the case for the “pre-existence” of the hymn: 1) there’s really nothing like it in either Greek or Hebrew poetry; 2) what looks like “poetic language” to a 20th century scholar is not necessarily poetry; 3) ὃς (*hos* or “who” in 2.6) is perfectly normal and not an awkward connective indicating a quotation (as in other supposed parallels); 4) these passages read more as structured prose than poetry; and 5) the arrangement of the text into “lines” is likely more the product of biblical scholars than any ancient writer, as evidenced by the lack of verbs in some of the supposed lines.³⁷⁶ It may simply be the case that Paul is rehearsing a passage

³⁷⁴ N. T. Wright, “ἄρπαγμὸς and the Meaning of Philippians 2: 5-11”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, Vol. 37, Pt. 2, October 1986, pp. 321-352.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 342-343.

³⁷⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 40-46.

that he himself has formed into a chiasmic structure in his own previous preaching.³⁷⁷

In a measured statement Peter Oakes writes:

I think that Paul has taken his beliefs about Christ's self-lowering (2 Corinthians 8.9), his obedient death (Rom. 5.19), and his exaltation (1 Corinthians 15.24) and has carefully crafted a rhetorically powerful Christological reinforcement to his call in 1.27-2.4 to stand firm and united.³⁷⁸

While the New Testament scholarly consensus is less monolithic than it once was, it is clear that the passage in Philippians nests three different purposes: it is Christological in content, doxological in form, and it is used as an exhortation to particular ethical behaviour. Paul does not separate these purposes, but uses them all at once, which should suggest that his readers should as well.

Regardless of what one makes of the original text in Philippians, it is evident that the theme of humility and lowering oneself for others is present in other passages written by Paul and in other texts of the New Testament. The passage in Philippians 2 is not uniquely kenotic; 2 Corinthians 8.9 has a similar thought:

for you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. *2 Corinthians 8.9*

³⁷⁷ Some who argue for the pre-existence of the hymn claim to discern a Gnostic origin. The problem with that claim is that it is doubtful whether the "Gnosticism" to which they refer in ever existed in ancient times. Karen King argues that "Gnosticism" is really a scholarly reconstruction from the 19th and 20th Centuries. It collects into one category a vast variety of writings that in retrospect came to be seen as not "orthodox" and "catholic"; it thus reproduces the biases of the modern scholars. See Karen King, *What is Gnosticism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

³⁷⁸ Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 210.

In this case the Corinthians benefit from the impoverishment of Jesus. In his earlier *First Letter to the Corinthians* Paul states:

For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. *1 Cor 1.22-29*

In this case Paul seems to elide the humiliation of Christ - which is seen by the world as both foolishness and weakness - with that of the lowly, despised, weak, and non-wise status of most of the Corinthians. Their adherence to Jesus is revealed as true wisdom and strength.

In her essay, "Can an Enslaved God Liberate?"³⁷⁹ Sheila Briggs focuses on the fact that Christ has taken on the form of a *slave* (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών). She observes that Philippians 2.5-11 is not about slavery as a social institution - it neither supports it nor challenges it. Rather, it uses slavery as a metaphor to describe what Jesus was emptied into. Slavery is social death, and she quotes sociologist Orlando Patterson on the subject:

The slave is violently uprooted from his milieu. He is desocialized and depersonalized. This process of social negation constitutes the first, essentially external phase of enslavement. The next phase involves the introduction of the slave into the community of his master, but it involves the paradox of introducing him as a nonbeing.³⁸⁰

Most importantly, she observes that

³⁷⁹ Sheila Briggs, "Can an Enslaved God Liberate? Hermeneutical Reflections on Philippians 2:6-11", *Semeia* 47 (1989), pp. 137-153.

³⁸⁰ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 38, in Briggs, p. 144.

the identification of Christ with a slave is ruptured in the Philippians text itself. Christ's enslavement diverges from the social reality in a crucial aspect which constituted slavery in distinction from other forms of human service. Christ's enslavement is *voluntary* and its quality of free choice is underlined by the linguistically peculiar phrase of v. 7 "he emptied himself" (eauton ekenōsen).³⁸¹

An essential aspect of the emptying of Christ Jesus, then, is its voluntary aspect.

Take that away, and it may only be a meaningless suffering.

Kenotic theology can also be found in the non-Pauline texts of the New Testament. In his essay in *Exploring Kenotic Christology* Gordon Fee does just that.³⁸² He points to Hebrews 1.3 where Christ is presented as the heir of God and as creator, but then to 5.7-9 where he is a suffering human high priest:

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Fee is absolutely correct in stating that the passage only works if the human experience was intensely real for Jesus, and not just some sort of modeling for human edification.³⁸³

The synoptics have the theme as well:

Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all. *Mark 9.35 & parallels*

To the rich young man: You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me. *Mark 10. 21 & parallels*

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you

³⁸¹ Briggs, pp. 146-147.

³⁸² Gordon D. Fee, "The New Testament and Kenosis Christology" in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, edited by C. Stephen Evans (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 25-44.

³⁸³ Fee, "The New Testament and Kenosis Christology", p. 36.

must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. *Mark 10.42-45 & parallels*

In the synoptic gospels Jesus is presented as fully human, and totally dependent upon God the Father. For the most part his miracles are focused on others in healing, feeding, and exorcism. He is humble and obedient, and his suffering is seen in the passion narratives. In Mark and Matthew Jesus cries out on the cross the first lines from Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This desperate cry is not found in Luke, but in the scene in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prays: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done” (22.42). The eschatological nature of kenosis and its conjunction with justice is found in the Song of Mary (Luke 1.46-55), in which she says:

... he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant . . .
the Mighty One has done great things for me . . .
... he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

Arguably, the pattern of kenosis – humility identified with God’s favour, resulting in the exaltation of the righteous, with a corresponding scattering and casting down of the high and mighty – is not just a schema for the Incarnation, but for salvation in general.

The Gospel according to John is the gospel of glory, but the glory is coincident with the cross. While one could never derive a kenotic Christology from the Fourth Gospel, it does not shy away from the presentation of the Cross, or deny the reality of Christ’s human suffering and death. The conjunction of Christ’s suffering with glory and exaltation urges the reader to reassess what

was going on. The union of divine and human transforms the meaning of otherwise obviously appalling events.

Reading Philippians 2 with John 1, one can view the pre-kenotic Christ as ὁ Λόγος. Others might go further and identify it as the Logos of Greek philosophy or Philo of Alexandria. This is not necessary, as Daniel Boyarin argues in “The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John”; the roots of the pre-existence of the Word can be derived from First Century Judaism without having to turn to Plato or some reconstruction of Middle Platonism.³⁸⁴

Some contest whether Paul has a belief in the pre-existence of Christ, and if so, what the nature of that pre-existence is. They point out that in Philippians it is not really clear what the “form” of God is and what “equality with God” entails. The passage might be read, contrary to tradition and Christian orthodoxy, to argue that Paul understood Jesus to have been adopted as the Christ. The emptying out, then, was not about Incarnation as such, but the humble obedience of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God following on some event in his earthly life, such as his baptism. Boyarin’s article on Jewish Binitarianism would seem to undercut the persuasiveness of such a line of thought.

The interpretation of Philippians 2.5-11 is contested, then. The ontological meaning of ἐκένωσεν is not transparent, although the rhetorical purpose is. The work of the Councils of the Fourth through Seventh centuries was partly an effort to clarify the nature of God and human in Christ. In the

³⁸⁴ Daniel Boyarin, “The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (Jul., 2001), pp. 243-284. This was not surprising given that the History of Religions School and Rudolf Bultmann (who accepted their conclusions) was largely made up of pre-1945 Protestant Germans, who were, if not anti-Semitic, still wary of attributing much in Christianity to Judaism.

chapter on Bulgakov we will encounter his belief that the taking up of kenotic theology is an unfinished task that the Patristic authors left to succeeding generations.

Something which is implicit in kenotic theology is the presumption that sacrifice is voluntary. While the death of Jesus might be viewed metaphorically as a sacrifice as it would have been at the Temple, in which a lamb or bullock or other animal is slaughtered, the sacrifice of Jesus is greater because it is a *self*-sacrifice. All of the texts of the New Testament emphasise that it was the choice of Jesus, and that he was obedient to the Father in offering himself, and not simply receiving a punishment from Pontius Pilate. Pilate and the Sanhedrin's unwitting cooperation in carrying out God's will is ironic and important, but not determinative of the status of the sacrifice. Jesus chooses to suffer with humanity, with the oppressed, and so there is solidarity, but the texts and metaphors in the divine drama of Holy Week go beyond that. For example, in the Letter to the Hebrews Jesus is seen as the great High Priest entering the heavenly Temple, as a Moses accomplishing an Exodus in Luke, and as the one in control of all the events in John. It is for this reason that an act of kenosis cannot be forced upon someone. It must be taken on willingly and without external compulsion. No one has a duty or obligation to suffer, but one may empty oneself out for the sake of a higher goal. Fetishizing the suffering itself does not make for a healthy, empowering theology.

C) Six Major Issues

David Law identifies six critical issues for kenotic theologians.³⁸⁵

1. *Object of kenosis*: What features of the divine nature does the Logos renounce on becoming a human being?
2. *Duration*: Is kenosis temporary during the thirty-some years of the incarnation only, or is it something that continues after the resurrection?
3. *Human Nature*: Is there an affinity between the divine and human which allows the human to receive the divine?
4. *Trinity*: What is the connection between kenosis and the immanent Trinity? Does it reveal something important about the relationships of the three persons of the Trinity? Does the emptying of the divine into human change the inter-Trinitarian relations?
5. *The Logos and the Cosmos*: While the Word is flesh, what happens to the action of the Logos on the world? Is Jesus just not conscious of the cosmic activity? Is the Logos on auto-pilot? Does another person take over?
6. *The Three States*:
 - a. How exactly does the Word move from pre-existence to existence as human, from the state of pre-existence to the state of humiliation?
 - b. How does Christ re-appropriate the divine attributes in moving from the state of humiliation to the state of exaltation?
 - c. What happens to the human nature of Christ in the state of exaltation?

³⁸⁵ David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology*, pp. 60-63. These build on Sarah Coakley's careful distinguishing of issues present in the history of kenotic theology but are not always made explicit.

- i. If the human nature can be combined with the divine in exaltation, then why is a kenosis in the state of humiliation necessary?
 - ii. Does the assumption of the human nature into divinity not change God?
- d. How does the Word stay the same in all three states? Is the state of exaltation the same as the state of pre-existence? What does the state of humiliation add to the pre-existent state?

D) Levinas and Kenosis

In the past few years a number of theologians have written on Levinas and kenosis. Thus, Graham Ward describes Levinas's philosophy as being an "ethics of kenosis."³⁸⁶ Marie Baird of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh defends Levinas's philosophy of religion from Gianni Vattimo's critique by reference to Levinas's writings on kenosis.³⁸⁷ Renée van Riessen of Leiden University published a book entitled *Man as a Place of God* with the subtitle *Levinas' Hermeneutics of Kenosis*.³⁸⁸

The curious thing about all of this is that nowhere in his philosophic writings does Levinas actually use the term "kenosis." He comes close in a few

³⁸⁶ Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 158.

³⁸⁷ Marie L. Baird, "Whose Kenosis? An Analysis of Levinas, Derrida, and Vattimo on God's Self-Emptying and the Secularization of the West" in *The Heythrop Journal Volume 48* (2007), pp. 423-437.

³⁸⁸ Renée D. N. van Riessen, *Man as a Place of God: Levinas' Hermeneutics of Kenosis* Vol. 13 of Amsterdam Studies in Jewish Thought (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2007).

places, but doesn't quite get there. This is not an accident. Levinas made a sharp distinction between his philosophical works and his "confessional writing," and this is more than just a notional distinction. It is probably safer to say that Levinas's metaphysical ethics may lead to a kenosis shaped ethics, rather than to say that it is actually kenotic.

Graham Ward reads *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being* together, and so does not seem to appreciate the significance of the anarchic manner in which the ego is cored out. Relying on the Levinas's language of the Face of the Other he compares it to how Barth relates the human being to Jesus; Ward does not describe the involuntary, pre-voluntary aspect of substitution.³⁸⁹ Thus, one cannot call it an ethics of kenosis, because it is not actually ethics as normally understood, but the metaphysical establishment of ethics prior to ontology.

Levinas claimed that his philosophy, while related to his Judaism, was nevertheless of universal significance, and stood on its own merits without reference to Judaism or any faith. It is precisely because of this that a non-religious person like Derrida, who was deeply influenced by Levinas, was able to engage in what appeared to be philosophy of religion and write on religious issues, even though he himself was basically an agnostic.

After publishing *Otherwise than Being* in 1974 Levinas wrote a series of articles on the philosophy of religion. These were collected and published in 1982 as *Of God Who Comes to Mind*. Levinas seems to accept the Kantian view that the existence of God is not demonstrable. In keeping with his own

³⁸⁹ Ward, p. 158.

philosophy, he would argue that the only way one can discuss God in terms of reason alone is in the method of phenomenological subjectivity and ethics. God is not a being “out there” or “in here,” God is not a substance or a “ground of being.” Rather, in the holy height of the infinite obligation of the self to the other we discern a trace of the divine, which is both a presence and an absence.

I see no evidence of the use of the word *kenosis* in his philosophic writings. One does find it in three of his writings on Judaism.

a) “Judaism and Kenosis”. In this essay from 1985 he notes that divine incarnation, as described in the Prologue of John and as he understood it to be found in Philippians 2, is alien to Jewish thought. Nevertheless, as in Christianity, kenosis for Levinas is about the humility of God. He observes a number of passages from the Hebrew Bible in which God “comes down” and then moves into the Talmudic discussions which identify humility with God. The rest of the essay (70%) deals with the writings of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1759-1821) in his posthumous work of 1824, *Nefesh Hahaim*. Rabbi Chaim was a Litvak, like Levinas – that is, an Orthodox Jew from Lithuania suspicious of Hasidic Judaism, which they felt was too emotional and tended to idolise its rabbis.³⁹⁰

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin in *Nefesh Hahaim* describes a cosmology in which the divine, “the power of the master of all powers is subordinate, to a certain extent, to the Human.”³⁹¹ Through the Torah and through ethical action “God reigns only by the intermediary of an ethical order, in which one being is

³⁹⁰ This is certainly the case today in Chabad-Lubavitch and the late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

³⁹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, “Judaism and Kenosis” in *In the Time of the Nations* trans. by Michael B. Smith (London UK: The Athlone Press, 1994), pp. 114-132 (122).

answerable for another.”³⁹² In addition, referring to Proverbs 15.8, God requires prayer: “The prayer of the upright is his desire.” Levinas writes:

The goal of all prayer remains the need of the Most High for the prayers of the just, in order that he may make exist, sanctify, and elevate the worlds . . . The suffering self prays to alleviate the “great suffering” of God who suffers, to relieve the suffering of God, who suffers both for man’s sin and for the suffering of his atonement . . . Precisely therein lies atonement: in that measure in which God’s suffering exceeds my own.

Thus, Levinas argues that Rabbi Chaim sees prayer not only to God but for whom prayer is offered – the kenosis of God. It is only through being a prayer for this kenotic God who suffers with humanity that prayer for oneself is justified.³⁹³

b) Kenosis is also discussed briefly along these lines of prayer in an interview with Angelo Bianchi.³⁹⁴

c) Renée van Riessen of Leiden University finds it also in Levinas’s article “A Man-God?”³⁹⁵ This article was originally a talk Levinas gave in 1968 at a gathering of Catholic intellectuals. He states the idea that is discussed later in “Judaism and Kenosis,” namely that God humbles God’s own self “to dwell with the contrite and the humble” as Isaiah puts it (57.15), but the “proximity of God”

³⁹² Levinas, “Judaism and Kenosis”, p. 126.

³⁹³ Jürgen Moltmann finds kenosis in Rabbinic Judaism and the Old Testament. After the destruction of the Temple in 587 BC the שכינה (*shekinah*, the rabbinic word for “the indwelling of God”) “has been the comrade on the way and the companion in suffering of the homeless Israelites. The people suffer persecution and exile, and God’s indwelling suffers with them.” He also finds it in Abraham Heschel (1907-1972) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). See Jürgen Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World”, pp. 137-151 in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* ed. by John Polkinghorne pp. 137-151; pp. 142-144. It is not clear to me if Rosenzweig ever used the term “kenosis”; if he did, it may be an influence on Levinas.

³⁹⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, “Who Shall Not Prophecy?” (1985), translated by Bettina Bergo in *Is It Righteous To Be ?* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); pp. 219-227; pp. 226-227.

³⁹⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, “A Man-God?”, *Entre Nous: On Thinking of Others*, translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 53-60.

is to be found “in the countenance of my fellow man.” In other words, he is stating his philosophy of religion which later gets more full exposition in “God and Philosophy.” In “A Man-God?” he connects this trace of God, a proximity which is also an absence, to the substitution of the self for the Other. While he does not use the word “kenosis”, arguably he is describing a kenotic relation of the self with the Other that parallels the kenosis of God which he perceives in the Other, and which Christians believe took place in Christ Jesus.

So apart from these three passages, why does Levinas not use the word kenosis more?

Here are two suggestions. The first is that he saw kenosis as a loaded word – too strongly connected to Christian theology to do much work in either Judaism or philosophy. While willing to write at least one article on the subject, he knew that it was controversial.

The second reason is that he probably recognized the fundamentally voluntary nature of Christian kenosis, and understood this was alien to his understanding of the ethical emerging from the anarchic, preverbal ego that is cored out. The otherwise than being, the ethical, does not depend on our volition. Our fundamental responsibility towards the other is not a theme to be negotiated, but a transcendent predisposition.

If we recognize the ethical and then seek to act upon it in our conscious relations we may indeed begin to pour ourselves out in a sacrificial way, but this does not describe every ethical act for Levinas. He often said that his idea of the ethical was no more complicated than saying, “Après vous, Monsieur” – and it is hard to see this as a great act of kenosis.

What is probably better is to say is this: that Levinas's anarchic, preverbal orientation towards others, described in the self-deconstructive language of as a "Saying" and as "Substitution", allows for a kenotic ethics. One can choose to be kenotic and thereby ethical; one does not get to choose whether the ethical is or is not. This is where Ward and others miss the mark. It is not an accident that, when Levinas does explicitly talk about kenosis, he does so in the realm of religious practice, which is something one enters into and within which one is constantly making judgements about how to act.

Chapter Eight: The Kenotic Theology of Sergius Bulgakov



Image 4: *The Philosophers* (Portrait of Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov) by Mikhail Vasilyevich Nesterov (1862-1942), 1917. Public Domain.

A) Introduction

In the 1920s and '30s, Sergius Nicolaevich Bulgakov³⁹⁶ (1871-1944) wrote a series of works in which kenoticism was discussed not simply in terms of

³⁹⁶ The transliteration of Russian words and names into the Latin alphabet can vary. Bulgakov's first name at birth was Сепреѣ, usually transliterated as *Sergei*, although Rowan Williams prefers *Sergii*, and others still *Sergey*. Upon ordination Bulgakov adopted an older form of his first name, *Sergius*. I will follow the practice of Boris Jakem and use *Sergius*.

the Incarnation, but extended to the Holy Trinity. As an Orthodox theologian he rooted his presentations in the ancient fathers, but he derived the initial ideas from 19th century German, Scottish, and English theologians. Whereas his immediate predecessors in Britain were working in liberal Protestant traditions, Bulgakov sought to ground his writings in Orthodoxy, making it acceptable for Orthodox and Catholics in both the west and the east. For this reason, Bulgakov is probably the most important author on kenotic theology in the past one hundred years. Writing in Russian and exiled in Paris from the 1920s until his death in 1944, he was largely unknown in the English-speaking world until relatively recently. Boris Jakem has translated many of his works, beginning with *The Lamb of God*³⁹⁷ in 2008.³⁹⁸

B) Bulgakov's Predecessors in Kenotic Theology

Bulgakov read widely in theology in German, French, and English. It was not considered proper for Orthodox theologians to rely on non-Orthodox authors, and so while informed by them, his presentation had to be grounded in

³⁹⁷ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God* (originally published as *Агнец Божий* in 1933), translated by Boris Jakem (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008).

³⁹⁸ I do not enter into the controversies of Bulgakov's Sophiology, which he sees as being a necessary mediation between the economic Trinity and creation. It strikes me as wrong; while sympathetic to his desire to understand how the economic and the immanent relate with creation, his description of Sophia seems to suggest that it is something other than another way to talk about the Logos, which of course is the second person of the Trinity. Also, I agree with Hans Urs von Balthasar as seeing his Sophiology as distinct and separable from his kenotic theology. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter* translated by Aidan Nichols (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 1990), pp. 35 and 46 notes 69 & 70.

acceptable Orthodox writers and an issue that grows out of Orthodoxy. Thus, his books usually start with patristic authors, identify an unresolved problem, and then continue the argument with speculation and engagement with more recent writers. Nevertheless, he reveals his knowledge of the German and British authors on page 220 of *The Lamb of God* in a long footnote. He contrasts the dogmatic orthodoxy of the 19th century Germans with the trends of the Anglo-American theologians, which he thought incorporated liberalism and rationalism.

Bulgakov's affirms the extension of a theology of kenosis from the incarnation to the immanent Trinity. He was not the first to do this. Arguably, G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) did it first, and all kenotic theology of the 19th century and down to the present works in the shadow of his approach. In *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) Hegel describes the dialectical working out of Absolute Spirit in history. Part of the significance of Hegel is that he established that philosophy and theology had developed over time, and that they were part of historical processes. While not necessarily adopting his methods, in his wake theologians and biblical scholars began in a more concerted way to understand how dogmas arose and the factors that informed their evolution.

Part of Hegel's description in the *Phenomenology* includes a description of the immanent Trinity:

There are therefore three moments to be distinguished: *Essence; being-for-itself* that is the otherness of essence and for which essence is; and *being-for-itself that is self-knowing in an other*. The essence intuits only itself in its being-for-itself; in this self-relinquishing, it is only at one with itself, is the essence's knowing of itself; it is the word, which, when spoken, relinquishes the speaker and leaves him behind as emptied and hollowed out, but which is likewise immediately interrogated, and it is only this hearing-and-interrogating-of-itself that is the existence of the word. In that way, the differences which are rendered are likewise

immediately dissolved as they are rendered, and they are equally immediately rendered just as they are dissolved, and the true and the actual are this very movement circling around within itself, is the being-for-itself which excludes itself from the essence. This movement in itself expresses the absolute essence as spirit.³⁹⁹

The words *self-relinquishing, emptied and hollowed out* strongly suggest that kenosis is a critical part in his understanding of the dialectic of absolute spirit.

Hegel also sees kenosis as a part of Incarnation, an emptying of the absolute into the particular, from the universal into thinghood, which then necessitates its death. Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost is described this way in his dialectic:

Death is transfigured from what it immediately means, i.e., from the *non-being of this singular individual*, into the *universality* of spirit which lives in its own religious community, dies there daily, and is daily there resurrected.⁴⁰⁰

Peter Hodgson notes:

Hegel himself does not use the terms “immanent” and “economic” and the reference to Trinities is misleading. The economic Trinity overreaches and includes the immanent Trinity as the first of its moments. Thus a more accurate designation is that of the *inclusive* or *holistic* Trinity.⁴⁰¹

Hegel believed that he had improved on the ancient descriptions of the Trinity.

Hegel does not attend to any of the technicalities of the classical trinitarian debates—the questions, for example, of the *homoousian* (the equality or identity of being) of the Son and the Spirit with the Father, or of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son. These debates and their categories (one substance, two processions, three persons, four relations, five characteristics, etc.) remain at the level of representational fictions from Hegel's perspective and do not adequately grasp the logic of trinitarian relations.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (paragraphs 770-771) edited and translated by Terry Pinkard (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 441.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, (paragraph 784), p. 450.

⁴⁰¹ Peter C. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading of the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 130.

⁴⁰² Ibid, p. 134

Following his death Hegel's interpreters split into various camps, including the "right" Hegelians who understood his philosophy as being a philosophical theology entirely compatible with the dogma of Lutheranism, and the "left" Hegelians who understood him as having propounded a humanistic doctrine concerning the historical emancipation of mankind.⁴⁰³ More problematically, his descriptions of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, all seemed to challenge the immutability of God and move towards a kind of modalism. While there are defenders of his Christianity and orthodoxy today, the fact is that many were uncomfortable with his redescriptions.⁴⁰⁴ Bulgakov himself regarded Hegel's understanding of the divine to be pantheistic, and therefore unacceptable.⁴⁰⁵

While incapable of escaping Hegel's influence, the German theologians of kenosis in the 19th century - the ones that that Bulgakov approved of - tended to more conventional language that unequivocally adhered to orthodox dogma. Notably, in his list of approved theologians he avoids the Danish theologian Hans Lassen Martensen (1808-1884), probably because he hewed too closely to Hegel (it was not because he wrote in Danish, because his works were translated into both English and German, which Bulgakov read). Among the Germans he notes the writings of Gottfried Thomasius (1808-1875), Wolfgang Friedrich Gess (1819-1891), Karl Theodor Albert Liebner (1806-1871), and Johannes Heinrich

⁴⁰³ See the summary in Paul Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/hegel> accessed Sept. 1, 2020.

⁴⁰⁴ David Brown *Divine Humanity: Kenosis and the Construction of a Christian Theology* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), p. 224.

⁴⁰⁵ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 120 & 134.

August Ebrard (1818 – 1888). He also notes four French authors, among them the New Testament scholar Frederic Louis Godet (1812-1890). For these theologians and biblical scholars the emphasis was upon the relationship of kenosis and the incarnation. Bulgakov's approach is to take kenotic theology out of the hands of 19th and 20th century Protestants and treats it as an unresolved issue for the ancient Greek Christians.

C) An Unresolved Issue from the Fifth Century

a) Unfinished Business

Bulgakov treats kenotic theology as an unresolved issue from the era of the seven Ecumenical Councils. He begins by discussing several patristic authors. First, he turns to Cyril of Alexandria (376-444). In *On the Incarnation of God the Word* Cyril reads Philippians 2 as a factual impoverishment or diminishment in which "the limitless one is contained by flesh." Cyril uses the language of *hypostasis* and *prosopon*, arguing that in the one person of Jesus Christ there was one hypostasis of two natures. However, Bulgakov is unsatisfied by what he considers Cyril's failure Cyril to explain how the hypostatic union is accomplished.⁴⁰⁶

Next, Bugakov boldly invokes Nestorius (386-450), Cyril's contemporary, and theological opponent, who was condemned at the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). Nestorius felt that the language of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* needed to be clarified. According to Bulgakov, Nestorius could not conceive of a

⁴⁰⁶ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, pp. 31-32.

nature without a corresponding hypostasis or prosopon. Thus, he argued that there were two hypostases or persons, that were then united in the person of the union. The problem was that

his notion of *person* is just as obscure as St. Cyril's notion of *hypostasis* . . . Nestorius accused St. Cyril of confusing the natures, while St. Cyril accused Nestorius of doubling the persons in Christ. They posed and solved in different ways the problem of the *divine-humanity* as the union of the divine and human natures . . . [Nestorius's] formula "I separate (distinguish) the natures, while uniting the adoration" precisely expresses the idea of unity *in* duality and *in the presence of* duality, in contradistinction to St. Cyril's unity *from* duality or *according to* duality.⁴⁰⁷

Nestorius used what Bulgakov calls *communication prosperum* in his doctrine of kenosis. Quoting Nestorius, he notes that the Word

is humbled in voluntary abasement even unto death on the cross, using as His own *prosopon* the *prosopon* of the one who died and was crucified. And He served in his own *prosopon* the one that belonged to the one who died, was crucified, and was glorified. Christ therefore has two natures, the form of God and the form of a servant, the one who is glorified and the one who glorifies.⁴⁰⁸

For Bulgakov, Nestorius was struggling with a "dialectical" problem, namely, how to understand the bi-unity as a unity not of natures but of their personal centres. Bulgakov believed that the ancient Orthodox fathers simply prohibited the discussion of the question, simply asserting one hypostasis in two natures, and not dealing with the underlying issue.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 41.

⁴⁰⁸ Nestorius, *La livre d'Héraclide de Damas [The Book of Heracleides of Damascus, or The Bazaar of Heracleides]*, translated into French by François Nau (Originally published Paris: 1910; reprint Farnborough UK: Gregg International, 1969), p. 54-55, quoted by Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 46.

⁴⁰⁹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 46. Johannes Hoff has pointed out to me that according to Aaron Riches "the problem was that Nestorius assumed two 'personal' centres – and that his concept of 'prosopon' (mask) does not cover what 'hypostasis' is supposed to say (namely the ontologically unifying core of a substance)." See Riches, Aaron, *Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), pp. 76-79.

Finally, he turns to *The Tome of Leo*, a public letter sent in 451 from Leo, Bishop of Rome and Patriarch of the West, to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople. Eutyches, an Archimandrite of a monastery at Constantinople, had argued that Christ was a fusion of both human and divine, and so had one unique nature (i.e. monophysism). Relying on Philippians 2, Leo used the language of form (*morphe*) instead of nature (*phusis*), and he talks about the form of God being united with the form of a servant – which is simultaneously a humiliation of the divine and an exaltation of the human, and which is true of both the forms and of the person. Bulgakov believes that Leo was simply restating the already agreed orthodox beliefs in slightly different language. His *Tome* did not advance theology, but it did allow for Chalcedon to take place.⁴¹⁰ So Leo, too, did not address the issue of how the two natures were united.

Bulgakov thinks that the answer to the problem of how the hypostatic union is effected is found in kenosis. While the ancient Greek and Latin fathers touched on kenosis, he felt that they paused in their theological development. *The Lamb of God* was his attempt to get things moving again. “The entire Christological problematic of the Chalcedonian dogma necessarily leads to the doctrine of the *kenosis* of Divinity in the Incarnation.”⁴¹¹

Historically, doctrine concerning the immanent Trinity was derived from the economic Trinity; the internal relations of the three persons of the Trinity were only discerned after the early Christians experienced the Divine as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, the first Christians encountered Jesus as human and later, in the light of the resurrection, concluded he was also divine, and this

⁴¹⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, pp. 54-56.

⁴¹¹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 211.

insight was described in various ways in the Synoptics and in the Fourth Gospel. Likewise, the divine was experienced in the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the charisms bestowed upon believers, and in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The high Christology of John was echoed in the first chapter of the (possibly pseudonymous) Letter of Paul to the Colossians,⁴¹² and may be present in what Paul actually thought in Philippians 2. Three-fold liturgical formulations arose naturally in the language of Paul (and Matthew 28), and in the fulness of time the early Christians sought to clarify the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

b) From the Incarnation to the Immanent Trinity

Bulgakov takes the immanent Trinity as defined at Nicaea, and works back to the economic Trinity, taking the kenosis of the Christ from divine to human as something which typifies the internal relationships of the Trinity:

Spiritual sonhood consists precisely in the Son's depleting Himself in the name of the Father. Sonhood is already *eternal kenosis*. The son is not a flame of the Father's fire but the gentle Light of holy glory (as the vespers hymn says). The Son's love is the sacrificial, self-renouncing humility of the Lamb of God, "foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20). And if the Father desires to have Himself outside Himself, in the Son, the Son too does not desire to have Himself for Himself; He offers His personal selfhood in sacrifice to the Father, and being the Word, He becomes mute for Himself, as it were, making Himself the *Father's Word*. Being rich, he makes Himself poor, becoming sacrificially silent in the bosom of the Father.⁴¹³

⁴¹² The scholarly consensus is that both Colossians and Ephesians are not Pauline. However, John Knox (1901-1990) - the American biblical scholar, not the Scottish reformer - in *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (New York NY: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952) made the argument that they were Pauline, just from a later stage in his life. Obviously, if Colossians and Ephesians are Pauline, it supports a reading of Philippians 2 in which kenosis is an emptying of the divine, and not simply human obedience.

⁴¹³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, pp. 98-99.

In this passage Bulgakov moves kenosis from being merely a divine action in history, the Incarnation, and describes it as *the* defining characteristic of the Word. Humility, self-emptying, self-renunciation, and sacrifice all describe his understanding of the eternal begottenness of the Son before all worlds. But it is not just an aspect of the Son. He goes on:

The sacrifice of the Father's love consists in self-renunciation and in self-emptying in the begetting of the Son. The sacrifice of the Son's love consists in self-depletion in the begottenness from the Father, in the acceptance of birth as begottenness . . . The *sacrifice* of love, in its reality, is pre-eternal suffering – not the suffering of limitation . . . but the suffering of the authenticity of sacrifice and its immensity. If God is love, He is also sacrifice, which manifests the victorious power of love and its joy only through suffering.⁴¹⁴

Kenosis then is an eternal aspect of the first person of the triune God as well; divine begetting is loving, sacrificial, and emptying. But he does not stop there, of course:

God is not the dyad of Father and Son, but the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is precisely the *joy* of sacrificial love, the bliss and actualization of this love.⁴¹⁵

The “self-identification in love” of the Father and the Son, the begetting and begottenness, is “the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father upon the Son (or “through” the Son).”⁴¹⁶ The third person of the Trinity, then, is the result of the eternal kenotic dynamic of the first two.

Because of this, the Holy Spirit also engages in kenosis. When Bulgakov talks about the kenosis of the Holy Spirit, it is not in terms of the relation of the immanent Trinity, but with reference to creation. He discusses this in *The Lamb*

⁴¹⁴ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 99.

⁴¹⁵ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 99.

⁴¹⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 100.

of God and expands on it in *The Comforter*.⁴¹⁷ Based on John 1.3 and a Trinitarian reading of Genesis 1.1-2, Bulgakov re-asserts the conventional Christian understanding that the whole of the Trinity was involved in creation - the Father speaking, the Word spoken, and the Spirit moving upon the face of the waters. However, he then characterizes this as “a metaphysical kenosis. Alongside his *absolute* being, God establishes a *relative* being with which He enters into an interrelation, being God and Creator for this being.” He clarifies that “God is not diminished by this in His Divine immanence, but He goes beyond its limits into the world” and, denying Hegel, does not see creation as an “*inner self-positing of Divinity*” but “a certain *work* of God.” And because the Spirit is involved, it is an act of love.⁴¹⁸

Creation as kenosis is Trinitarian. The going out from the Father in which he becomes God for the world is a kenotic sacrifice of paternal love. “The Son, the Lamb of God, is pre-eternally “sacrificed” in the creation of the world, as the expressly cosmic hypostasis, the demiurge in Divinity.” The Holy Spirit “gives *being* to the Father’s ‘let there be’ . . . clothing on beauty the structure and order of creation” and “the Father sees, in the beauty of the accomplishment, that ‘it is good.’” The Holy Spirit’s role in creation is kenotic in that it is “the giver of life”, the Comforter, the Father’s love for the Son in creation, sent and received into a world that can never encompass the fullness of that love.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, translated by Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004).

⁴¹⁸ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 128.

⁴¹⁹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 129.

As self-conscious creatures, humans and angels ought to recognize themselves as being made in the image of God, as “the reflection of the Divine sun in a drop of being.” However, if humanity or the angelic “turns away from this Sun and rejects the kenosis, he remains alone with himself in the consciousness of his Luciferian self-positing.” The Fall, the broken nature of the world, alienation from God, is a rejection of the divine act of kenosis.⁴²⁰ Bulgakov does not explore the idea that creation is kenotic because God lets go of control and allows for failure, probably because he regards kenosis as fundamentally positive; the Fall is not made possible because of kenosis, but is actually its rejection.

c) Kenosis and The Hypostatic Union

For Bulgakov the Son is the kenotic hypostasis, and so it is the proper person of the Trinity for the Incarnation. The power of the Holy Spirit makes the Incarnation possible, but the Third Person is itself not made flesh.⁴²¹ In his reading of Philippians 2 he sees the kenosis not merely as being about earthly obedience, but of heavenly as well – he refuses to read it in a restricted way.⁴²² When considering the meaning of μορφή (*morphe*, “form”) he notes the patristic consensus that it is the same as οὐσία (*ousia*, “being”) and φύσις (*phusis*, “nature”), but that modern exegetes reject such an identification. Following on the understanding of Bishop Theofan of Poltava (1875-1940)⁴²³ he reads *morphe*

⁴²⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 143.

⁴²¹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 177.

⁴²² Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 215.

⁴²³ Boris Jakim transliterates the name as *Feofan*; it is also spelled *Feophan*. See Vladimir Moss, <http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/212/a-life-archbishop-theophan-poltava/>, accessed May 19, 2018.

as the *norm of being* corresponding to nature; this idea generally expresses the difference that exists between God's unchangeable *nature* and the *state* of life that proceeds from this nature as a general possibility and even property of being . . . it is this form or norm of divine life that Christ voluntarily changed into the form of a servant; that is, He changed not the unchangeable nature but the changeable form.⁴²⁴

Bulgakov, by making a subtle distinction between *form* and *nature*, allows for the unchangeable to change. In a similar way, building on the term "the likeness of humanity" (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων), he sees the incarnate Word having two types of likeness which describe the similarity and difference of Jesus with the rest of humanity; the "likeness of humanity" is "the image of the New Adam" but "differs from the fallen Adam by His sinlessness and in this sense bears only a likeness to him."⁴²⁵

Bulgakov lays bare his strategy around kenosis when he declares that, "the union of two *unequal* natures can be accomplished only in such a manner that one of the natures asserts its priority."⁴²⁶ The problem of the limitation of the divine in the Incarnation is resolved by finding the principle of limitation in the immanent Trinity – and this principle is kenosis. Having extended kenosis from earthly humiliation and Incarnation to the pre-existent logos and the relations between the persons of the Trinity, it is then easy for him to say that emptying out is a logical result of that pre-existent relationship. The challenge is to make numerous distinctions, as he does between *form* and *nature* and two types of *likeness*.

Along these lines Bulgakov then makes a distinction "between the life of God *according to* Himself, as He is in His unchangeable essence, and His life *for*

⁴²⁴ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 216.

⁴²⁵ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 217.

⁴²⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 218.

Himself, as He lives out His essence for Himself in the living act.”⁴²⁷ God as free and self-caused can, in the time and space of creation, limit the divine. Bulgakov sees any argument against the ability of the divine to limit God’s own self in creation as an unwarranted attack upon God’s freedom and aseity.⁴²⁸ God’s self-limitation in creation is not a diminishment of the divine in itself.⁴²⁹ The kenosis of the divine in creation flows from divine love and “expresses the general relation of God to the world.”⁴³⁰

Bulgakov then looks from three points of view at the character of kenosis in the Incarnation: a) nature (*qua* created human or uncreated divine), b) the hypostasis of the Incarnate Word, and c) the immanent Trinity. In the first case, the kenosis consists of a separation of the divine *nature* from the divine *life*. In taking on a human nature, the divine nature remains as it is, but is separated from the glory of the divine form of life. “The separation of the nature and the life, which constitutes the kenosis of the Son, is not an empirical and human sacrifice but a metaphysical and divine one.”⁴³¹ A few pages later he states that the Incarnation “is the *metaphysical* Golgotha of the self-crucifixion of the Logos in time. The *historical* Golgotha was only a *consequence* of the metaphysical one.”⁴³²

The second perspective, from that of the hypostasis, is looking at whether the relationship of the pre-incarnate Word with the Father is changed by the Incarnation. Bulgakov reasons that since, by his understanding, the Word is

⁴²⁷ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 221.

⁴²⁸ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 222. *Aseity* is the self-existence of God.

⁴²⁹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 223.

⁴³⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 223.

⁴³¹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 225.

⁴³² Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 232.

already kenotic in relation to the Father, there is no change. From the third perspective of the immanence, the three persons remain in glory and joy; the “immanent” Trinity does not know the kenosis of the incarnate Word, which exists only in the “economic” Trinity.⁴³³

Bulgakov addresses the potential Hegelian reading of the metaphysical Incarnation when he asks, “is such a self-emptying, such a submergence of the light of eternity in the waters of temporality possible? Is this not a self-annihilation, a self-extinction?”⁴³⁴ This gives him not only an opportunity to negate such a reading, but also to discuss his understanding of human subjectivity in relation to the Incarnation. Bulgakov notes that humanity “is called to receive the Word and is worthy of receiving Him, that as the image of God, man is the adequate form for this reception . . . in his psycho-corporeal essence, he contains a spirit of divine origin”⁴³⁵ Here his Sophiology rears its head, in that humanity is the creaturely Sophia that can receive the Divine Sophia; in the case of Jesus the Logos is itself what is received. Jesus Christ realizes the fullness of this essence, but, like other humans, is awash in temporality.

Bulgakov thus rejects the idea that the Word is somehow destroyed in the Incarnation. Rather, the self-consciousness of the God-Human hypostasis develops like a normal human from pre-consciousness towards a focused adult awareness. However, whereas normal humans only become aware of who they are in relation to the divine, Jesus recognizes his dual natures. The form of divine

⁴³³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 227.

⁴³⁴ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 232.

⁴³⁵ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 230.

life is extinguished in the Incarnation, but the nature is not.⁴³⁶ It is one life in two natures.⁴³⁷ For Bulgakov, the high Christology described in the Fourth Gospel is something of which Jesus was aware, to the extent that his humanity could receive and contain it.⁴³⁸

He rejects the “comparison of the two natures in Christ to the soul and body in man” because it undermines the unity of the human and divine natures in one life, as if it is only the divine nature that informs and controls the life of Jesus, when it is the union of the two. “The divine nature in its union with the human nature . . . does not coerce; it inspires.”⁴³⁹ The union of the two natures in one life is dynamic and “an intense and unceasing struggle in which this harmony is accomplished . . . by the spiritual overcoming of the “flesh” through its free subordination to the commands of the hypostatic union.”⁴⁴⁰ As an Orthodox theologian, Bulgakov adheres to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the Third Council of Constantinople (680-681), which affirmed that Jesus had two *wills* and two *energies*, and thus condemns monothelitism (μονοθελητισμός *monothelitismos* doctrine of one will) and monoenergism (μονοενεργητισμός *monoenergitismos* doctrine of one energy).⁴⁴¹ The divine will in the Incarnation is not mainly of God

⁴³⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 233-234.

⁴³⁷ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 235.

⁴³⁸ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 237-238.

⁴³⁹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 239-240.

⁴⁴⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 243.

⁴⁴¹ This was due to the unsuccessful effort of various Roman emperors in the 7th Century to find language to get around the schism between the Chalcedonians and the Oriental Orthodox, which was whether Christ had two or one nature. They deliberately used the vague language of *energy*, and when this was condemned, started to use the language of *will*, on the principle that a person should have one will; this ran up against the Chalcedonian emphasis on two natures, and so it was held that each nature had an energy (whatever that was) and a will. Gregory Palamas of Thessaloniki (1296-1359) later described energy

as Creator and Provider, but of the divine will as kenotic, and disclosed in Jesus.⁴⁴² The human will willingly subordinates itself to the divine will in the state of kenosis: “yet, not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22.24). With respect to humanity in general, Bulgakov, following the Fathers, refers to the action of the divine nature on the human essence as *deification*.

Divinity is revealed in the human essence only in proportion to its capacity to receive this revelation; in this sense, Divinity adapts itself, so to speak, to the limitations and to the development of the human essence . . . the divine nature must in a certain sense remove the absoluteness from itself; it must become relative in its turn and correlative with human nature . . . the divine consciousness in Christ is commensurate with the human consciousness and does not exceed it.⁴⁴³

Theosis or deification is thus modeled by the divine-human Jesus in his humility and self-offering, which humans in general receive by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴⁴ The divinity in the hypostatic union of Jesus as such does not suffer, but in the united life, in the *perichoresis* (interpenetration) of divine and human, the divine co-suffers, and this is part of the ontological kenosis.⁴⁴⁵

d) “One Who In Every Respect Has Been Tempted As We Are, Yet Without Sin.”

Bulgakov addresses the subjective experience of Jesus as a self who may be conscious of his divinity. He asserts that, for a time, as he grew from being a child to an adult, his divinity was concealed; when awakened, his human nature had a direct divine consciousness. “Kenosis did not and could not extend to this

as the activity of God in creation; this distinction of energy from the inner being of God influenced Bulgakov’s Sophiology.

⁴⁴² Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 244.

⁴⁴³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 249-251.

⁴⁴⁴ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 280.

⁴⁴⁵ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 259.

divine consciousness.”⁴⁴⁶ In other words, the divine consciousness was not lost or destroyed, but merely concealed. This consciousness is manifested as divine sonhood, which “appears as personal self-renunciation in the surrender of Himself and of His own to the father; it is, as it were, a voluntary depersonalization in the name of filial obedience.”⁴⁴⁷ Jesus’s divine self-knowledge did not lead to the eruption of omniscience; rather, “the transcendental depths of His divine consciousness . . . were covered with a film of becoming with its fluctuating illumination.”⁴⁴⁸ Jesus conforms himself to the will of God, and Bulgakov sees this in Biblical passages such as, “. . . not what I want but what you want” (Matthew 26.39) and “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23.46). Jesus does not pray to the triune God, but to the Father, “who for Him was, above all and before all, God.”⁴⁴⁹ Bulgakov correctly notes that the gospels are not interested in the development of divine consciousness in Jesus, and believes that “such a task would be meaningless, for it would exceed the bounds of that which is accessible to man.”⁴⁵⁰

In humility, Jesus does not claim divinity, but is described and ascribed as divine. Bulgakov notes the unresolved tension between Jesus’s abject humility and attitude towards the Father as God, and the way in which Jesus is described as acting in divine ways and recognized as God by others. For Arians this was resolved by subordinationism, by asserting that Jesus is derivatively divine, a divine creature of the true divinity. Bulgakov, ever the Orthodox Nicean, resolves

⁴⁴⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 263.

⁴⁴⁷ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 265.

⁴⁴⁸ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 303.

⁴⁴⁹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 280.

⁴⁵⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 265.

this tension through kenosis; the divine hypostasis, uncreated, equal to the Father, “is silenced in Him” and is subordinated in the Incarnation to the Father.⁴⁵¹

Bulgakov dances along the knife edge of these paradoxes when he considers the temptation of Jesus. He is bound by scripture to assert that Christ was tempted in every way as is the rest of humanity, but did not give in. Yet the danger is that it may come across as a docetic “act” – because he is the God-Human, because he is divine, Jesus is invincible before temptation. It is a bit like being tempted by a large meal when one is already full. Again, Bulgakov resolves this by reference to kenosis, in that

The temptation was included in Christ’s humiliation on his earthly kenotic path. Fated to fail but perfectly real, the temptation consisted in *conquering the difficulties* that arose on the path of obedience and humiliation . . . And the experience of temptation, according to the testimony of the Apostle [i.e. Paul as the supposed author of Hebrews 5.9] was a *teleiosis*, a “making perfect,” for the Son of Man Himself.⁴⁵²

The overcoming of temptation is a dynamic process for the incarnate Word, one that involves many emotions and much suffering, as it is a route of humility that leads to death. Perfection, likewise, is both an ontological presupposition and an incarnate dynamic shown forth in kenosis.

In a way parallel to how he explains the incarnate subordination of the Son to the Father, so he uses kenosis to explain the descent of the Spirit on Jesus. Bulgakov writes,

the Holy Spirit is expressly given to Him by the Father in order to minister to Him and does not repose on Him naturally . . . the kenosis really signifies for the Son that in some sense He leaves the life of the Holy Trinity, although His naturally essential presence in the Trinity is

⁴⁵¹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 283-4.

⁴⁵² Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 301.

preserved.⁴⁵³

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Son, then, is a result of the kenosis. The Father is the determining principle for the ministry of the Son, whereas the Spirit, sent by the Father, is the accomplishing principle. The kenosis of the Word into the Incarnation is compensated by the Father and the Spirit until the kenosis is completed in the glorification of the Son in the Ascension.⁴⁵⁴

The experience of death by the one who is eternal is an experience unimaginable to normal humanity. Bulgakov sees the two natures of Christ having different kinds of death. "His human hypostasis passes together with His humanity through the gates of death into the pre-ontic and non-ontic depths of creatureliness"⁴⁵⁵ but death seems to affect the divine nature in degree and quality:

The kenosis of Divinity – its diminution, passing here into extinction, as it were – is so deep that the abyss of death opens up for the God-Man, with the darkness of nonbeing and all the force of forsakenness by God. The yawning abyss of creaturely *nothing* in death opens up for the Creator Himself. The cry on the cross, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. 27:46), is the extreme limit of the self-emptying of Divinity in the suffering on the cross.⁴⁵⁶

The cross is the moment when the Holy Spirit, who is joy and comfort, and who is the hypostatic love between the Father and the Son, absents itself from the Son. In this sense the Spirit participates in the kenosis of the Son. Likewise, the Father participates by forsaking the Son.⁴⁵⁷ The kenosis of the cross, then, is a Trinitarian act.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 307.

⁴⁵⁴ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 309.

⁴⁵⁵ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 314.

⁴⁵⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 312-313.

⁴⁵⁷ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 313-314.

⁴⁵⁸ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 401.

In a theme that would be developed by Balthasar,⁴⁵⁹ the descent into Hell is also part of Christ's kenotic action, and the preaching of Jesus to the souls in the lower realm (so important in Orthodox iconography of the resurrection) is an image of further service, even beyond death.⁴⁶⁰ The Resurrection and Ascension are moments of kenosis, in that Jesus does not raise himself but is acted upon; the restoration to glory is an action of God the Father.⁴⁶¹ As a result, the Last Discourse in the Gospel according to John, which is largely about the glorification of Jesus in his death and resurrection, must be read in a kenotic light. As well, Bulgakov regards Christ "in heaven" between the Ascension and Pentecost as part of the mystery of kenosis, in that Jesus is continuing to serve humanity by preparing to send the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶²

With respect to human beings, Bulgakov sees the earthly ministry of Jesus as didactic and inspirational and the glorified state as ontologically transformative. As kenosis is all one piece with the whole of the Incarnation – the conception, birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension – it is the central principle of salvation. Bulgakov sees the action of God in the world, until the *parousia* and the full restoration of the kingdom, as the era in which God acts kenotically.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*.

⁴⁶⁰ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 316.

⁴⁶¹ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 318.

⁴⁶² Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 401.

⁴⁶³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 440.

e) The Kenosis of the Spirit

In *The Comforter* Bulgakov develops his understanding of the kenosis of the Holy Spirit. In Bulgakov's view "the demonic possession of the world was abolished" by Christ's death, but "nature remains in an unfinished form and needs to be "transfigured"; the "long suffering patience of God" with an unreceptive creation is "precisely the kenosis of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁶⁴

The Holy Spirit is the life force of nature through which creation is being reborn. It is a becoming that is not yet achieved, a diminution of the fullness of the divine that conforms to the limitation of creation. There is a *perichoresis* of the Holy Spirit as the uncreated interacts with the creatures, not only in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist but in any of the sacramental acts.⁴⁶⁵ Bulgakov sees this kenosis of the Spirit, this limitation for conformability, as extending to "the sinful, illegitimate, and even theomachic self-determination of this creation"; even Satan and his angels are said to be in contact with this life force of the Spirit, though they would deny it.⁴⁶⁶ The Holy Spirit is part of creation and gives it life, and it is part of re-creation through a descent which is kenotic in its patience and humility: a "voluntary self-limitation in the face of creaturely inertia and freedom."⁴⁶⁷ If the kenosis of the Son is seen as an abandoning of heaven and a self-emptying of divinity, the kenosis of the Spirit is "the voluntary subordination of the Immeasurable to measure."⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁴ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, pp. 206-207.

⁴⁶⁵ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, pp. 219-222.

⁴⁶⁶ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 227. *Theomachy* in Greek originally referred a fight among gods, but here refers to a battle or revolt against God.

⁴⁶⁷ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, pp. 281-282.

⁴⁶⁸ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 351.

The cry of desolation uttered by Jesus on the cross in Mark 15.34 and Matthew 27.46 is a moment in which Jesus, the divine human, experiences the Holy Spirit that has descended upon him as kenotically reduced to potential only; it is, therefore, a kenosis of the Son *and* the Spirit: “in this common Passion of the Son and of the Spirit, hypostatic Love, loving and for the sake of love, abstains from love, refrains from manifesting its power and effectiveness.”⁴⁶⁹ The resurrection is accomplished by the Father through the Holy Spirit, the life force that cannot be overcome by death; as Christ’s personal kenosis is completed in death and reversed in the glory of the resurrection, so the kenosis of the Spirit is reversed in the overflowing at Pentecost and in the Upper Room when Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you . . . Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20.21-22).⁴⁷⁰

While Christ is ascended and glorified, his kingdom is not yet fully accomplished in the world, but the Spirit is active in the world. “*Christ is in the process of being enthroned in the world by the Holy Spirit, and the kenosis of the Spirit is therefore also the earthly kenosis of the glorified Christ.*”⁴⁷¹ Pentecost is not a single event, but a continuous one in which the Holy Spirit continues to blow over creation, patiently waiting to enter the hearts of human beings. The descent of the Spirit is kenotic in that it does not transfigure all of creation in one fell swoop, but a preparation of the world for a glorified Christ that it is not yet ready to receive.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 253.

⁴⁷⁰ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, pp. 254-257.

⁴⁷¹ Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 284.

⁴⁷² Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 349.

D) Summary of Bulgakov on Kenosis

David Law's categorization of kenotic theologies and listing of issues in kenotic theology provides a useful way to summarise and assess Bulgakov on kenosis.

The Six Issues	Bulgakov's Answers
1. <i>Object of kenosis</i> : What features of the divine nature does the Logos renounce on becoming a human being?	The Logos renounces the <i>form</i> of divine life, but not the <i>nature</i> .
2. <i>Duration</i> : Is kenosis temporary during the thirty-some years of the Incarnation only, or is it something that continues after the resurrection?	As kenosis is an inherent quality of the Triune God, kenosis in the Incarnation is a temporal manifestation of an eternal reality. As the "God-Man," the kenosis is completed in the resurrection and ascension, but continues in the Holy Spirit.
3. <i>Human Nature</i> : Is there an affinity between the divine and human which allows the human to receive the divine?	As the image of God, the human is the adequate form for this reception of the divine, whether in Incarnation for Jesus or through <i>theosis</i> for others.
4. <i>Trinity</i> : What is the connection between kenosis and the immanent Trinity? Does it reveal something important about the relationships of the three persons of the Trinity? Does the emptying of the divine into human change the inter-Trinitarian relations?	The kenosis of the Incarnation reveals the inherent nature of the three persons of the Trinity as self-sacrificing, i.e. loving. The relation of God to the world is also revealed as kenotic. The immanent Trinity is not changed by kenosis, because it is already kenotic. While the economic Trinity in the Incarnation experiences the form of death, the divine nature is not changed.
5. <i>The Logos and the Cosmos</i> : While the Word is flesh, what happens to the action of the Logos on the world? Is Jesus just not conscious of the cosmic activity? Is the Logos on auto-pilot? Does another person take over?	The eternal nature of Logos continues to act on the world (for Bulgakov, through Sophia) while the form of divine life in the Incarnation is emptied. Jesus as both human and divine develops a normal human consciousness, but is fully aware of his divine sonship from the baptism by John.
6. <i>The Three States</i> :	
a) How exactly does the Word move from pre-existence to existence as	While fundamentally a mystery and beyond human comprehension, the

human, from the state of pre-existence to the state of humiliation?	Incarnation is a self-limitation of the Divine. Kenosis, as an inherent aspect of the immanent Trinity, is an appropriate way for God to relate to the world. The hypostatic union of human and God is possible because the creation was made through the Word, and humanity is in the image of God. The Incarnation is the likeness of the New Adam, and is both like and unlike the Old Adam.
b) How does Christ re-appropriate the divine attributes in moving from the state of humiliation to the state of exaltation?	Christ is raised by the Father through the Holy Spirit. The divine life is resumed, but as a hypostatic union.
c) What happens to the human nature of Christ in the state of exaltation?	The human nature is divinized, undergoing theosis. It is transfigured and glorified.
i) If the human nature can be combined with the divine in exaltation, then why is a kenosis in the state of humiliation necessary?	The kenosis of the Word in Christ allows for the kenosis of the Holy Spirit, which leads to the transformation of humanity.
ii) Does the assumption of the human nature into divinity not change God?	God's relationship to creation is changed, but God as such does not change.
d) How does the Word stay the same in all three states? Is the state of exaltation the same as the state of pre-existence? What does the state of humiliation add to the pre-existent state?	The Word's relationship to creation does change, but the Word as part of the eternal Trinity does not. Thus, the three states are different. The state of humiliation is a continuation of the kenotic pre-existent state; one needs to distinguish between the pre-existent Word as part of the eternal immanent Trinity and the pre-existent Word in time in relation to the cosmos.

Table 5: What Bulgakov Would Have Replied if Asked David Law's Six Questions.

Bulgakov sees kenosis as the answer to a large number of Christological and Trinitarian problems. What is noticeable is the lack of emphasis upon soteriology or ethics in these later writings. His approach to the practical realities of Christian life is rooted in the incorporation of a human in the life and liturgy of the church, so that in a process of *theosis* the Holy Spirit might work upon individuals in the context of the collective. He views issues in economics

from the perspective of his Sophiology, thus erecting a theological hermeneutic which he does not use in detail; perhaps after immersing himself in the details of economic minutiae in his earlier life he came to the conclusion that the limitations of social sciences could only be overcome by an appeal to the divine working in the world, and the formation of human souls by the Comforter.

In making kenosis an inherently divine characteristic Bulgakov creates a problem. He seems to read kenosis univocally when the kenosis in the Incarnation and kenosis in Trinitarian procession must be quite different. In the Incarnation it is a humbling, an obedience, and an emptying out to death, even death on the cross. In the begetting of the Son from the Father it is . . . what? As we have seen, Bulgakov writes,

The sacrifice of the Father's love consists in self-renunciation and in self-emptying in the begetting of the Son. The sacrifice of the Son's love consists in self-depletion in the begottenness from the Father, in the acceptance of birth as begottenness . . . The *sacrifice* of love, in its reality, is pre-eternal suffering – not the suffering of limitation . . . but the suffering of the authenticity of sacrifice and its immensity. If God is love, He is also sacrifice, which manifests the victorious power of love and its joy only through suffering.⁴⁷³

But does it make sense to talk about “suffering” and “sacrifice” in the context of the immanent Trinity? Does the Father renounce self and empty his own self in the begetting? Is this a conclusion too far? Yes, there is love in the begetting, but not all love is sacrificial, nor is suffering a necessary element of love. Bulgakov comes close to reimagining Hegel's annihilatory description of the Trinity in more sacred language. Paul L. Gavrilyuk's comments:

As an Orthodox theologian Bulgakov often fails to exercise what may be called apophatic reserve, characteristic of patristic thought, with regard to what could be known or said about the inner life of the Trinity. He overpsychologizes his metaphysics and at times appears to know more

⁴⁷³ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 99.

about the relations between the persons of the Trinity than these persons know about themselves. For this reason his introduction of suffering and kenosis into the inner life of God is susceptible to the charge of anthropopathism.⁴⁷⁴

If a theologian wants to adopt Bulgakov's use of kenosis as a description of the immanent Trinity she or he will have to be careful about phrasing eternal kenosis in ways that do not depend on kenosis in fallen creation. Yes, God is love, but that love may only become necessarily sacrificial and prone to suffering in the context of sin, and of a broken and fallen world. When speaking about kenosis in the immanent Trinity other language is probably required, language that eschews words such as "sacrifice" and construes it in terms such as "gift" and "love".

E) Bulgakov, Alaskan Orthodoxy, and Levinas's Critique of Totality

Why might the kenotic theology of an exiled Russian theologian be of interest to a post-colonial settler Christian? And how does this not lead to the inscription of another totalizing thought?

The primary insight that Bulgakov asserts that kenosis is a primary characteristic of the divine, both as one and as Trinity, and as immanent and in relation to the world. The emptying out of Jesus Christ is not something particular to him as a human being, but as the person who is fully human and fully divine. It is not some temporary state of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, but a breaking into history of the perpetual working out of the Word, and

⁴⁷⁴ Paul L. Gavrilyuk, "The Kenotic Theology of Sergius Bulgakov", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 58, pp. 251-269; p. 268.

seen not only in the Cross but also in the Incarnation and in his life. As a characteristic of God, it is shared by the Father and the Spirit, as well as the Son. If human beings are made in the image of God, then humanity is inherently kenotic as well.

This is perhaps nowhere so well stated than in the Synoptics. As noted above, Jesus in this passage and its parallels describes how the disciples are to pour themselves out for others:

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. *Mark 10.42-45 & parallels*

This is true not only for postcolonial Christians, but for everyone. The problem as one looks over the seven theological themes described in Part Two, is that there has been too much lording it over others in forms of tyranny, and not enough servanthood and humility. While previous generations involved in the Indian Residential Schools undoubtedly saw themselves as good Christians doing God's will, they did not critique or transform the oppressive structures in which they operated. Thus, while perhaps personally humble and pious, they crushed the children apprehended from their mothers and fathers and sought to remake them in their own image.

A kenotic Christianity, in which the disciples of Christ have the mind of Christ, lets go of power. Following Las Casas, violence must be eschewed and when it comes to proclaiming the gospel, the power of persuasion instead be used.

Something like this happened, in Alaska, resulting in the emergence of an Indigenous form of Orthodox Christianity in North America. As described by Sergei Kan in *Memory Eternal*,⁴⁷⁵ in the late 18th century the Russian-American Company (“RAC”) began trading with the various Indigenous peoples in the Aleutian Islands and south coast of Alaska. Among the traders were their chaplains, Russian Orthodox priests, many of whom came from Siberia and were used to working with the Indigenous peoples there. Eventually they came to the Tlingit, who live in what we now call the “panhandle” of Alaska. The RAC established a fort at Sitka. Many of the Tlingit came to accept baptism in the Russian Orthodox Church and sporadically attended the church. After the sale of Russian America to the United States in 1867 the Tlingit became *more* Orthodox. While some accepted other supposedly more “progressive forms” of Christianity, such as Presbyterianism and the Salvation Army, the majority preferred the Orthodox way. Kan attributes this to several factors, but one stood out: the Russian Orthodox Church (and later, the Orthodox Church in America) was not part of the exploitive American assimilationist culture. Whereas the RAC was mainly interested in trading for furs, the Americans sought to settle the land and restrict the rights of the Tlingit. The Orthodox pastors sought to continue the trajectory that had been determined in the past, and so being Orthodox was seen as a means of resistance to the Americans. As well, the Orthodox, coming from a complex hierarchical society, respected the complex culture of the Tlingit and its customs. It did not condemn the old ways of potlatching and rituals around death, but ignored them or, later in the 20th Century, became part of them. The

⁴⁷⁵ Sergei Kan, *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity through Two Centuries*, (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1999).

Tlingit were drawn to the rich rituals of the Orthodox liturgy, and the services of the Salvation Army and Presbyterians suffered in comparison. In particular, the ways in which the Orthodox marked death, especially the service forty days after death, became a central part of Tlingit culture, evolving into another type of Tlingit feast.

Kan nowhere mentions kenotic theology in his history of Tlingit Orthodoxy, and Bulgakov never seems to discuss the Alaska mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, the adoption of Orthodox Christianity, accomplished mainly after the Russian authorities had left and in the face of American assimilationist pressures, presents an example of how a mission was carried out and was successful, and did not have to involve violence or the apprehension of children. Orthodoxy was very much the poorer of the varieties of Christianity available, especially after 1917, when Russian financial support ended and obtaining clergy became difficult. The Tlingit adopted Orthodoxy, partly as a buffer against assimilation, but also from genuine piety and enthusiasm; today it is still seen as a means of withstanding secular American society and all its ills.

Of course, the history of the RAC in Alaska was not as peaceful as is now sometimes remembered, nor were all the Orthodox clergy over the past two centuries paragons of tolerance and sympathy. However, the fact that the Orthodox Church grew stronger *after* the Russian authorities had left suggests that there is power in the weakness of a church that does not depend on the State.⁴⁷⁶ From a Levinasian perspective, this is a true peace that is not a cessation

⁴⁷⁶ A parallel case might be that of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec after the Conquest of 1760. The inhabitants of New France were not notably pious, but

from violence, but one that is productive and grows. The growth was grounded in service and respect for the other, and allowing for an enculturation of the good news that was preached to them. Arguably, it was kenotic evangelism. What Bulgakov was working out in theory in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s the Tlingit and their Russian Orthodox clergy were accomplishing in practice.

after the departure of the French government and trading elite, the French-Canadian *habitants* turned to Catholicism for leadership in the resistance to the new Protestant British rulers. Sunday attendance rates rose up to 80% up until the 1960s, when language rather than religion became the primary marker of Quebecois identity. By the mid-19th Century the Catholic Church had entered into an solid alliance with the government, and by the 1960s it was no longer being seen as a buffer or a means of resistance, but as a means of oppression allied with the English-speaking business class.

Chapter Nine: The Application of Kenotic Theology to Structures of Oppression
by Sarah Coakley and Others

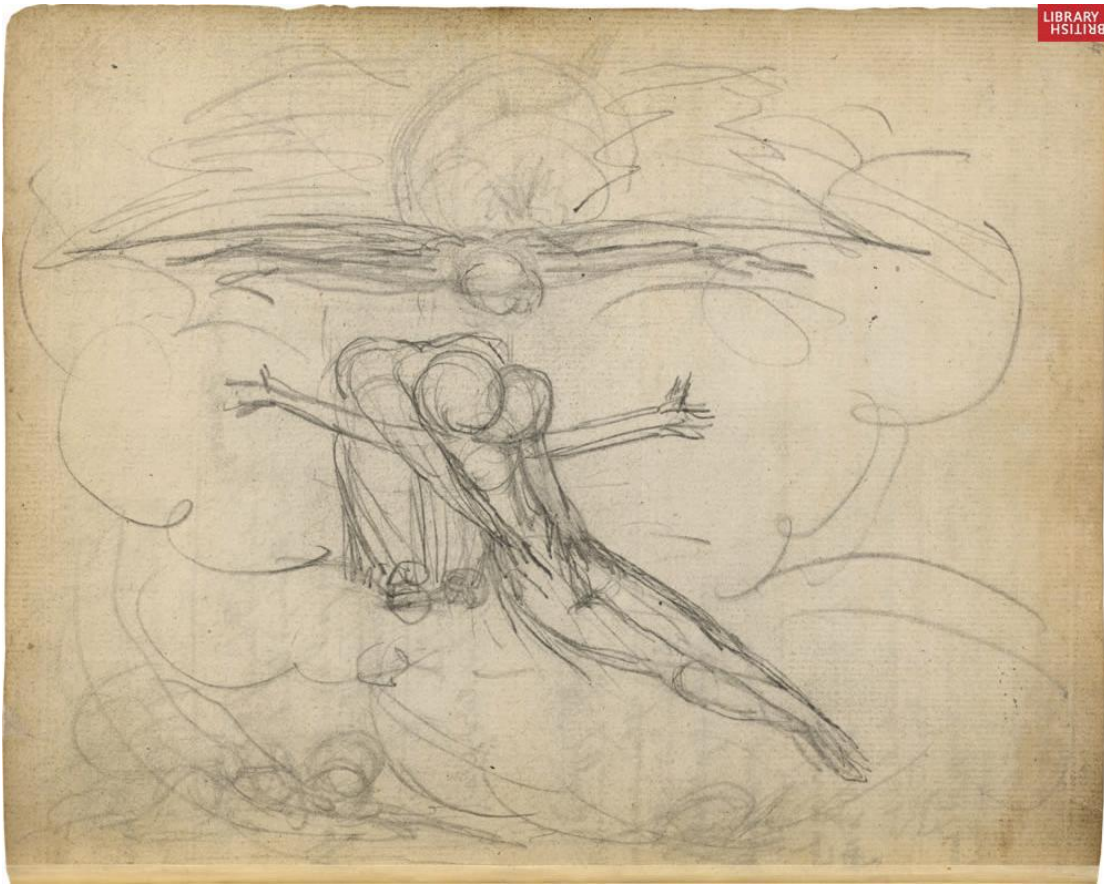


Image 6: William Blake, "The Holy Trinity" c. 1794 from *The Notebook of William Blake - Folio N104*, © The British Library Board. Sarah Coakley used this illustration for the cover of *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'*

A) Introduction

Sarah Coakley has written three essays on kenosis. In them she has raised significant issues in the current discussion of kenosis, and highlighted the connection of kenotic theology with contemplative prayer. In this chapter I discuss the persisting value of her analysis, and in conversation with more recent

authors, expand that to the use of kenotic theology in transforming structures of oppression. I also engage with several critiques of kenotic theology.

Coakley's three essays are: "Kenōsis and Subversion: On the Repression of "Vulnerability" (1996);⁴⁷⁷ "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations" (2001);⁴⁷⁸ and "Does Kenosis Rest on a Mistake? Three Kenotic Models in Patristic Exegesis" (2006).⁴⁷⁹ Each essay approaches kenosis differently and discusses significant issues. Her 2013 book *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* and the 2015 collection of essays in *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God*⁴⁸⁰, while not directed to kenotic theology as such, explore more deeply the themes and issues she raised in these essays.

B) Three Achievements in Kenotic Theology

Coakley accomplishes three significant things in her three essays. First, in "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations" she develops a taxonomy of kenotic issues; in so doing she is following in the tradition of earlier

⁴⁷⁷ Sarah Coakley, "Kenōsis and Subversion: On the Repression of "Vulnerability" in Christian Feminist Writing" in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), pp. 3-39.

⁴⁷⁸ Sarah Coakley, "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations" in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* ed. by John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 2001), pp. 192-210.

⁴⁷⁹ Sarah Coakley, "Does Kenosis Rest on a Mistake? Three Kenotic Models in Patristic Exegesis" in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God* edited by C. Stephen Evan (Vancouver BC: Regent College Publishing, 2006), pp. 246-264.

⁴⁸⁰ Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God* (London UK: Bloomsbury, 2015).

English theologians, such as Charles Gore. These distinctions have proven to be useful, and David Law made use of in *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology*; in the previous chapter we have seen how they might be used. Given the varieties of kenotic theology and the possibility of confusion, these distinctions should not be assumed to be obvious; Philip McCosker described “kenosis” as a “weasel word” “whose popularity is inversely proportional to the clarity of its definition” -- but he approves of Coakley’s careful parsing of types of kenotic theology.⁴⁸¹ Second, Coakley identifies gendered assumptions made by both kenotic theologians and their opponents. Given that kenotic language uses metaphors based on the human person, this is important. Third, she points a way out of these essentializing assumptions through wordless prayer and the apophatic theology that parallels it.

As the first achievement has been incorporated into David Law’s queries above, there is no need to say any more about it. So, let us consider how she achieves the second and third.

a) Gender Assumption in Kenotic Theology

Kenosis is a contested concept in Feminist Christian Theology. According to some authors, “sacrifice”, “humility”, and “obedience” have historically been used not to empower women, but to reinforce unjust structures, whether in marriage or wider society. Ruth Greenhout notes that Valerie Saiving made this point in an article on women and sacrifice in 1960. Saiving believed that “men

⁴⁸¹ Philip McCosker, “On Emptying Kenosis”, a review of *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God* edited by C. Stephen Evan, *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 14:3 (2007), pp. 380-388.

and women are prone to different types of sin – men to pride and women to lack of self – and that the preaching of the gospel must take those differences into account.”⁴⁸²

Rosemary Radford Ruether suggested that kenosis offers a challenge to patriarchy. She sees Jesus undermining the significance of his maleness in patriarchy through kenosis, “the announcement of the new humanity through a lifestyle that discards hierarchical caste privilege and speaks on behalf of the lowly.”⁴⁸³ Daphne Hampson disagrees; she critiques Ruether by stating that while it may be helpful for men to be kenotic and to have a kenotic understanding of God, “for women, the theme of self-emptying and self-abnegation is far from helpful as a paradigm.”⁴⁸⁴ Hampson is aware how women in the church have often been forced to be second-class members, encouraged to persist in violent marriages, and told to forgive their oppressors before the offenders have shown any recognition of their sin or of a need to repent. “Kenōsis and Subversion” is Coakley’s response to Hampson. Coakley reviews the standard approaches to kenotic theology (or, at least, what passed in 1996 as such). She finds that, with one exception, Hampson does not address any genuine kenotic theology, but just the idea in general as presented by some relatively recent kenoticists.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² Ruth Groenhout, “Kenosis and Feminist Theory” in, *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God* edited by C. Stephen Evans (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 291-312; pp. 292-293. Saiving’s original article is “The Human Situation: a Feminine View”, *Journal of Religion* 40 (April 1960), pp. 100-112.

⁴⁸³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1993), p. 137.

⁴⁸⁴ Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 155, quoted in Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, p. 3.

⁴⁸⁵ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, pp. 32.

“Kenōsis and Subversion” is not without problems. In presenting kenotic theologies that do not correlate with what Hampson was targeting, Coakley uses theological premises and conclusions that, while current when writing, now seem doubtful. For example, she draws on the “gnostic redeemer theory” postulated by the German “History of Religions” school, which believed that Paul had taken over a pre-Christian gnostic tradition of a cosmic *Urmensch* that has come with a secret teaching. She opposes this with what she calls the “ethical” approach as exemplified by C. F. D. Moule and J. A. T. Robinson, who emphasized that Philippians 2.5-11 was less about pre-existence (although it cannot be ruled out, in their opinion) than about his human humility and “non-grasping” nature, which are then understood as revelations of divine characteristics.⁴⁸⁶

Neither of these approaches has aged well. Already by 1961 the methodology behind the “gnostic redeemer theory” had been seriously challenged by Carsten Colpe.⁴⁸⁷ There is little evidence that the idea existed prior to Mani and the emergence of Manicheism in the Fourth Century. Further, as noted before, Daniel Boyarin has identified a Jewish Binitarianism that removes any necessity for a gnostic origin of incarnational theology.⁴⁸⁸ The assumption that a high Christology must be a late development is not grounded in actual evidence, and may owe more to a Hegelian idea of the development of theology than what really happened.

⁴⁸⁶ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, pp. 7-8, 10.

⁴⁸⁷ Carsten Colpe, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Göttingen DE: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), p. 191, referred to by John G. Gibbs, *Creation and Redemption: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Leiden NL: E. J. Brill, 1971). p. 53, footnote 3.

⁴⁸⁸ Daniel Boyarin, “The Gospel of the Memra”.

Also, Coakley believes that, “The [Chalcedonian] Definition represented a compromise between the rival schools of Alexandria and Antioch”.⁴⁸⁹ While this may have been tenable in 1996, Aaron Riches’s *Ecce Homo* (2016) demonstrates that the School of Alexandria (i.e. Cyril of Alexandria) was affirmed at Chalcedon;⁴⁹⁰ there was no Hegelian synthesis of opposites in a compromise.

That said, her point about gendered assumptions hiding in kenotic theology is still valid. Both Hampson, Saiving, and the male theologians that they criticize, essentialize human characteristics on gender lines; women have one set of associated characteristics, and men another. Among these characteristics, “vulnerability” is associated with femininity, and “power” with masculinity.⁴⁹¹ Coakley wonders why these theologians are all so old-fashioned when the association between gender and characteristics is not something that can be assumed.

Twenty-two years on this kind of gendered language is even more problematic. The once radical idea that “gender is socially constructed” has become a common assumption (if still contested in some quarters), and accords with what science recognizes, not as a polarity but a complex multi-variable thing.⁴⁹² Rather than reinscribing these essentializing characteristics, Coakley questions the assumptions behind them, and argues that the apophatic tradition,

⁴⁸⁹ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, p. 14, footnote 21.

⁴⁹⁰ Riches, *Ecce Homo*, pp. 74-87.

⁴⁹¹ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, p. 32.

⁴⁹² Science does not support the simple binary of male and female, even if a majority of the population might define themselves in that polarity. The literature is vast, but a good place to start is the September 2017 special issue of *Scientific American* (Vol 317, No. 3) on sex and gender, especially the summary in Amanda Montañez’s “Beyond X and Y”, p. 50-51.

as found in wordless prayer, calls them into question, too. Thus, Coakley's "subversion" is not just trendy, but rooted in tradition and scripture.

Assumptions about gender are highlighted in her second essay, "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations". Coakley notes that the contributors to Polkinghorne's book *The Work of Love* "take it as an axiomatic good that humans should enjoy a type of freedom that places limitations on God's power and foreknowledge".⁴⁹³ The image is that of a Big God "backing out of the scene, or restraining his influence" so that the little humans may freely act and think. Coakley refers to French feminists who see this "picture of adult independence" as a "male fantasy", and she calls into question such an axiom. In response to this very modern assumption, she refers back to Cranmer and older theologies which believed that God's service was "perfect freedom." One cannot simply assume that there is a conflict between the power of God and human freedom; just as the "being" is not univocal with respect to God and creation, so neither is "power" and "freedom". What appears to be a contradiction or conflict is a paradoxical truth.

In the same essay, she notes that the "other" is, for French feminists (notably Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray), often viewed as female, something different from the normativity of the male. Given that the other is a major theme for Graham Ward and Hans Urs von Balthasar, this raises for Coakley the fact that they are unintentionally working gender assumptions into their theologies

⁴⁹³ Coakley, *Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations*, pp. 205-206.

and philosophies.⁴⁹⁴ One does not have to be a Freudian or a follower of Lacan to see that this may indeed be the case.

In her third essay, “Does Kenosis Rest on a Mistake? Three Kenotic Models in Patristic Exegesis”, she raises her concerns with the kenotic theology of C. Stephen Evans and Stephen T. Davis. In their essays in *Exploring Kenotic Christology* she evinces a failure to deal with the *communicatio idiomatum*. Each of them seems to be fuzzy on the difference between God as such and God as the Logos which becomes flesh; their Christological emphasis is not sufficiently Trinitarian - is it God *qua* God emptied out in the Incarnation, or is it just the second person? The Incarnation is thus seen as a kind of metamorphosis. The *communicatio* requires that they be clearer on how the divine and human coexist and relate in the person of Christ. The “mistake” in her title is that they fudge the distinction between human and divine, and see the divine being radically changed by the human. Coakley feels that Cyril of Alexandria (perhaps) and Gregory of Nyssa (definitely) offer alternatives to this “mistake.” Bringing her feminist perspective to bear, she finds that Evans and Davis (and others) inscribe an implicit masculine understanding of power and freedom in their models of kenosis – in which power is seen as “freedom from constraint, relationship, dependence”

Apart from identifying and analyzing these gender assumptions, what then is one to do? This is Coakley’s third and perhaps most important achievement: suggesting that contemplative prayer is a way out of gender binaries and assumptions.

⁴⁹⁴ Coakley, *Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations*, pp. 208-209.

b) Wordless Prayer and Power-In-Vulnerability

In “Kenōsis and Subversion” Coakley identifies contemplative prayer as a means of empowerment that does not reinscribe “masculine” or “feminine” characteristics, but calls into question such binaries and creates a space in which the Divine can work. She suggests that the best way Christian feminism can “avoid emulating the very forms of ‘worldly’ power we criticize in ‘masculinism’” is through the *askēsis* of contemplative prayer, which is a “spiritual extension of Christic kenosis”.⁴⁹⁵

She has a generous understanding of what passes for contemplation – including not only the repetition of a word or phrase, complete silence, and the Quaker practice of attention, but also charismatic speaking in tongues (!).⁴⁹⁶ In a chapter of *God, Sexuality, and the Self* she considers depictions of the Trinity throughout history, and notes that contemplation of the artworks can both purge idolatry (often unconscious) and “redirect our hearts, minds, and imaginations towards a new participation in the Trinitarian God.” She notes that while often overly masculinist, certain types of imagery allow for the incorporation of male and females in the life of God, and symbolic movements, mainly circular “can overcome the rigidity of any hierarchical ‘linear’ model of the Trinity.”⁴⁹⁷

Whatever the method,

⁴⁹⁵ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, p. 34.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 35. Coakley is influenced by John Chapman and his *Spiritual Letters* (1935), which draws on St. John of the Cross; see the essay following “Kenōsis and Subversion” which is “Traditions of Spiritual Guidance: Dom John Chapman OSB (1865-1933) on the Meaning of ‘Contemplation’” in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), pp. 40-54.

⁴⁹⁷ Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, pp. 260-261. The viewing of holy images as a means of contemplation was already old when John of Damascus (675-749) pointed out that icons are “familiar, every-day media” that allow us to

... this practice is profoundly transformative, 'empowering' in a mysterious 'Christic' sense; for it is a feature of the special 'self-effacement' of this gentle space-making – this yielding to divine power which is no worldly power – that it marks one's willed engagement in the pattern of the cross and resurrection, one's deeper rooting and grafting into 'the body of Christ'.⁴⁹⁸

This results in what she calls "power-in-vulnerability". It is a reframing of vulnerability as the precondition to transformation, to reaching beyond the binaries and the zero-sum games of the powerful and the powerless. "Power-in-vulnerability" is not an oxymoron, but a combination of two complementary aspects. This "'self-emptying' is not a negation of self but the place of the self's transformation and expansion into God."⁴⁹⁹ As a spiritual extension of Christ's kenosis it is not an invitation or a justification for abuse, but rather the transformation and empowerment of the person.

Contemplative prayer is apophatic theology in practice, and Coakley thus links apophatic theology with feminist concerns and kenotic theology. While some focus theology of the Christian faith on propositions and theological discourse, and others see it as concerned with issues of injustice, poverty, and violence, Coakley reminds us that is also concerned with individual spiritual transformation; Coakley's approach allows for both dogma, action, and contemplation.

contemplate higher things (see St. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images* (Third Apology 21), translated by David Anderson (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), p. 76).

⁴⁹⁸ Coakley, "Kenōsis and Subversion", p. 35.

⁴⁹⁹ Coakley, "Kenōsis and Subversion", p. 36.

C) Recent Critiques of Coakley's Kenoticism

Recently there have been two critiques of Coakley's approach to kenosis, one by Linn Marie Tonstad in 2016 and a second by Karen Kilby of Durham in 2018.

a) Linn Tonstad's Critique of Coakley.

Tonstad presents herself as the first real critic of Coakley's approach to kenosis (an assertion endorsed by Kilby). She employs two methodologies in her book *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude*.⁵⁰⁰ In the first part she employs what she calls "standard dogmatic analysis", but in the second part she approaches Trinitarian theology through Queer Theology. Coakley, along with Balthasar and Graham Ward, are critiqued in the first part, mainly to show how contemporary theology makes untenable, problematic gendered assumptions. The second part is an attempt to show how Queer theology cuts through these issues. Tonstad believes that

Our examination of contemporary trinitarian theology has demonstrated the intimate links between the procession of the Son and Spirit from the Father with hierarchy, subordination, gender and sexuality, and corrective projectionism.⁵⁰¹

In other words, the language of procession – begetting, proceeding – can only result in a subordination of the second and third persons to the first, thus undermining the equality of the three persons. Therefore, it must be rejected.

⁵⁰⁰ Linn Marie Tonstad, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (New York NY and London UK: Routledge, 2016).

⁵⁰¹ Tonstad, p. 220.

Tonstad indicts Coakley with several charges that would be devastating if demonstrably true. She writes

Coakley does not distinguish adequately between sin and finitude, and her understanding of suffering and cruciformity betray dangerous assumptions about the nature of human personhood and the God relationship . . . My conclusion . . . is that the intimate relationship between the trinity, sexual difference, and the God-creation relationship, sought in diverse ways by Balthasar, Ward, and Coakley, exacerbates the theological translation mechanism by which difference entails competition (requiring kenosis as a corrective) and death.⁵⁰²

She adds that, “she, too, interprets dependence on God as vulnerability”⁵⁰³ and

Correlatively, Coakley elides the differences among the suffering of prayer (the loss of noetic and idolatrous certainties, which combines with expansion of the self’s capacities), suffering in its more ordinary sense (tragedy, horrendous evil, and injustice), and self-sacrificial suffering that entails loss rather than gifted and expansive transformation.

All of which, if true, means that Coakley’s kenotic “power-in-vulnerability” does not work.

Coakley has rejected these accusations, stating in a 2017 *Syndicate*

Theology seminar on Tonstad’s book that

it is strange indeed that Tonstad accuses me of various positions she has already detected in Balthasar and Ward (and others), but which I myself explicitly reject and critique in my own *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay “On the Trinity.”* [GSS] . . . Amongst these misreadings are my supposed projection of human gender identities into the persons of the Trinity; my purported failure to distinguish human and divine ontologies; and the charge of an unthinking elision of destructive suffering, supine passivity and prayer. None of these claims hit the mark; and indeed I explicitly argue against them at many points in my work. The core theme of GSS, in fact, is that the trinitarian God is beyond gender in any human sense, and precisely “interrupts” and transforms any attempts to fix a gender “binary” or to mandate “heteronormativity.” Likewise, in my earlier *Powers and Submissions*, I explicitly disjoined abusive human suffering and the empowering act of prayer, and argued that the latter gives the resources to resist the former. The further charge that I have

⁵⁰² Tonstad, p. 18.

⁵⁰³ Tonstad, p. 99.

confused “finitude” and “sin” is simply puzzling and unsubstantiated, and appears to be another projection.⁵⁰⁴

As well as believing that Tonstad has misread her work, Coakley finds that

there is a random jumble of accusations against me which build up towards the end of ch. 3 (of racism, of mandated violence, of distorted fieldwork, of incoherent evolutionary theory, of “missing” the “fundamental nature of Christ,” of “obsession,” of “self-policing,” etc.), which come so thick and fast and are so poorly evidenced by the sources cited (many of which are not even yet published) that one can only conclude that something emotive is at stake . . .⁵⁰⁵

Tonstad correctly identifies contemplative prayer as central for Coakley for destabilizing gender binaries and heteronormativity as related to the Trinity.

However, Coakley finds that

for Tonstad, contemplation is an act that seemingly can only be read as heterosexist false consciousness; indeed, there is a failure of comprehension in Tonstad for the whole life of prayer which may be immediately evident to the reader: any such act of willed “vulnerability” to God repels her.⁵⁰⁶

So, these are the indictments and the preliminary responses. I do not propose to take up all the debatable points between Coakley and Tonstad – such an effort would require a small monograph – but instead I will briefly discuss how Tonstad critiques Coakley and consider where her comments hit the mark and where they do not. Tonstad’s primary defense is that her reading of Coakley is “exhaustively detailed”⁵⁰⁷ and she does indeed reference many of Coakley’s essays and books, as well as unpublished lectures.

⁵⁰⁴ Sarah Coakley, “Response: Voices in *God and Difference*”, June 25, 2017, *Symposium on God and Difference by Linn Tonstad*, <https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/>, accessed January 4, 2019.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid

⁵⁰⁷ Linn Tonsatd, “Response to Sarah Coakley”, June 6, 2017, *Symposium on God and Difference by Linn Tonstad*,

However, most of the disagreement between Tonstad and Coakley are rooted in differences about methodology and how one speaks of God. As they do not adopt the same assumptions or methods, they are bound to disagree on any results. So perhaps it would help to start with some of these.

First, some commonalities. Both Coakley and Tonstad would agree that in Trinitarian language “speaking trinity is intrinsically a process of unsaying as well as saying.”⁵⁰⁸ Further, Chris Greenough notes that just as Queer Theology uses the method of ‘scavenging’, collecting and producing information on people who have traditionally been excluded from more traditional studies, so Sarah Coakley goes on ‘foraging raids’ into the history and contemporary practice of Trinitarianism. Coakley and Tonstad, in different ways, both use traditional academic methodology in conjunction with these non-traditional methods.⁵⁰⁹ Finally, both Tonstad and Coakley share the commitments listed by Tonstad that are

often considered traditional: real distinction between trinitarian persons, the one divinity and full “equality” of each of the persons, classical assumptions about divine transcendence, the truth of the resurrection, theology’s dependence on divine self-revelation, and anticipation of the return of Christ.⁵¹⁰

Now for some differences.

First, Coakley and Tonstad position themselves differently within the world of theology. Coakley is a priest rooted in the Church of England, and informs her theology by drawing upon her experience and practices as a

<https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/god-and-difference/>, accessed December 27, 2020.

⁵⁰⁸ Tonstad, *ibid*; Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, p. 23.

⁵⁰⁹ Chris Greenough, “Theological Talk in a Salsa Bar on Wigan Pier”, *Feminist Theology Vol. 28(2) 2020*, pp. 147–160; p. 150.

⁵¹⁰ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 2.

Christian, academic theologian, and ordained minister. Her approaches to the practices of prayer, sacrament, and social action are informed by the liberal Anglo-Catholic tradition. She reads widely outside of theology, and has collaborated with physicians around the issue of pain. She considers sympathetically practices and traditions different from her own (evangelicals and charismatics, especially in chapter 4 of *God, Sexuality, and the Self*), instead of rejecting them *a priori*. Rather than treating the social sciences as antagonistic towards faith and religion, she sees them as necessary dialogue partners (thus calling into question the approach of the theologians associated with Radical Orthodoxy). She sees herself as a feminist theologian, but is critical of the writings of individual feminist theologians. She moves back and forth across many fields, unwilling to dismiss or valorise, but always adopting a critical appreciation.

Tonstad, on the other hand, notes that the Seventh Day Adventist Church is the church she no longer attends, and it is not clear if she participates in any organized religious tradition. Tonstad is an outsider, first by having spent her early life in a small Protestant denomination in Norway with beliefs and practices considered unusual by main-stream churches, and second, by having moved on to identify as a feminist and Queer theologian.⁵¹¹ The result is that where Coakley seeks to negotiate a path between the strands of tradition and their modern critiques, Tonstad critiques and constructs from the position of a Queer and feminist theologian, rejecting certain past strategies as self-evidently

⁵¹¹ Linn Marie Tonstad, "Remember the Sabbath Day: The Cost of Difference" at <https://feminismandreligion.com/2014/01/10/remember-the-sabbath-day-the-cost-of-difference-by-linn-marie-tonstad/>, accessed December 28, 2020.

beyond redemption. Coakley develops her own method she calls *theologie totale* with a critical stance to “postmodern gender theory,” whereas Tonstad sees Queer theology as the way to go.⁵¹²

This shows up particularly in their approach to language. Tonstad adopts a strategy, rooted in the work of Mary Daly, of *over-literalization*, which

picks up the interplay between cataphasis and apophasis to produce complex forms of assertion and destabilization. Such over-literalizing theological language and imagery, in its very impropriety, serves as a cataphatic theological apophasis.⁵¹³

As well as Daly, she is deeply influenced by the late Marcella Althaus-Reid. Thus, Tonstad rejects the possibility of ever using masculine language -- traditional language with a whiff of patriarchy and heteronormativity is dangerous and damaging. Whereas Coakley holds out the possibility of saying “Father” rightly – after destabilising the whole concept in prayer – Tonstad declines the possibility of doing so. While not quite the lesbian separatism advocated by Mary Daly, Tonstad’s Queer theology revels in its outrageous language and outsider status. Thus, the Trinity becomes “an immoderate, polyamorous God, whose self is composed in relation to multiple embraces and sexual indefinities beyond oneness, and beyond dual models of loving relationships.”⁵¹⁴ Finally, it rejects any theology of the cross, and instead prefers “resurrection as transformative nonrepetition.”⁵¹⁵

Coakley comes from the era of theology that has been deeply influenced by the later analytical philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and she uses him

⁵¹² Coakley, p. 65; Tonstad, *God and Difference*, pp.1-2.

⁵¹³ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 6.

⁵¹⁴ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 139.

⁵¹⁵ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 138.

explicitly in an essay to build her understanding of ‘spiritual senses’ on a ‘grammar of the resurrection.’⁵¹⁶ In that article discerns that Wittgenstein acknowledged a variety of responses to the divine, and that ultimately what was important was not what theological languages refer to, but the varieties of language that change the believer. The ‘game’ of religious language is a form of life, not an abstraction from it, and certainly not a reduction to any essence. As a result, while Coakley is not unconcerned with perceived referents to theological words, she is sufficiently satisfied with apophatic subversion that she is not convinced of the absolute necessity of dispensing with them. Holding in tension the cataphatic and apophatic, one arrives at an irreducible content that is perceived with the spiritual senses, and the act of perception changes one’s self.

One can see how she does this in a sentence in *Kenōsis and Subversion*:

This practice is profoundly transformative, ‘empowering’ in a mysterious “Christic sense; for it is a feature of the *special* self-effacement of this gentle space-making – this yielding to a divine power which is no worldly power – that it marks one’s willed engagement in the pattern of cross and resurrection, one’s deeper rooting and grafting into ‘the body of Christ’.⁵¹⁷

In that passage she holds together the tension between “empowerment” on one side and “self-effacing” and “yielding” on the other, as well as calling into question the sense that there is any univocal sense to “power” when considered as divine and worldly. It is a “yielding” and so appears passive, yet it is a willed engagement. The pattern entered into is that of the cross and resurrection – which I suspect can also be read as a shorthand for whole of Christ’s earthly

⁵¹⁶ Sarah Coakley, “The Resurrection and the ‘Spiritual Senses’: On Wittgenstein, Epistemology and the Risen Christ” in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), pp. 130-152.

⁵¹⁷ Coakley, “Kenōsis and Subversion”, p. 35

existence, including his incarnation, life, and teaching, but is also related to the mystical body of Christ, which may be the church as well as something beyond that. She uses two metaphors of attachment – grafting and rooting – which would be contradictory if taken literally, but seem to imply different aspects of kenotic empowerment.

Tonstad does not care for this kind of dialectical subversion, or rejects it, and so reads Coakley as implicitly endorsing references and discounts any subversion of them. Her summary statement in chapter 4 of *God and Difference* makes her point:

trinitarian theology faces a serious problem in its tendency to translate the Father–Son relation into gendered versions of death, wounding, space-making, self-emptying, and eternal sacrifice. The Father–Son relation, understood as willing obedience, is turned into feminine acquiescence that genders the God–world relation or erects the cross in the womb-wound of trinitarian relationality. Each of these ways of thinking the trinity reads sexual difference and death into the trinity itself or into the God–world relation in ways that threaten the goodness of either.⁵¹⁸

Despite the plethora of footnoted references, it seems that Tonstad misses what Coakley is doing.

Does Coakley project human gender identities into the persons of the Trinity? Tonstad finds that Coakley feminizes the humanity of Christ, so that the divine is therefore masculine.⁵¹⁹ However, Tonstad again misses what Coakley is doing. Recognizing that society has constructed binaries and essentialism around male and female, Coakley raises these binaries, metaphors and images, but only to undo them. While the tradition or naïve Christianity may project human gender identities into the person of the Trinity, Coakley points out that such

⁵¹⁸ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 147.

⁵¹⁹ Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 105.

projections are inherently unstable, and ultimately fail. What remains, for Coakley, is the erotic nature of the relationship, which is fundamentally about desire, and not necessarily gendered. Coakley is playing more with the binaries and metaphors than Tonstad's Queer over-literalism allows.

Coakley explicitly abjures the simple individualistic understanding of the persons of the Trinity that some have advocated, that see the Trinity as a community – the approach of a “social Trinity”. Mapping our modern idea of personality on the persons of the Trinity is anachronistic, and thus should rule out a simple mapping of masculine (and/or feminine) on the divine. Coakley notes that this is done anyway, by both patriarchal theologians and well-meaning feminists, but she calls it into question.⁵²⁰

Tonstad does not have a theology of the cross, and feels that if a theologian does have one it, is thereby projected into the immanent Trinity. She reads the cross as subjection and violence, and so cannot see how it could possibly be a revelation of the transcendent God. While her emphasis on the resurrection is a necessary corrective to the Western church's tendency to over-emphasise the cross, she fails to incorporate Pauline or Synoptic understandings of atonement, but appears to pick and choose what is helpful to her approach. The possibility of using both the cross and resurrection is not taken up.

Perhaps it is part of this unmooring from scripture and tradition that results in her lack of a theology of prayer. Faith for her seems to be fundamentally propositional and theoretical, and not a set of lived practices. This

⁵²⁰ Sarah Coakley, “Persons in the ‘Social’ Doctrine of the Trinity: Current Analytic Discussion and ‘Cappadocian’ Theology”, in *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), pp. 109-129.

very “Protestant” approach seems quite alien to anyone coming from a more Catholic or Orthodox sensibility. This is the biggest problem with her critique of Coakley on contemplative prayer as a self-effacing practice. She reads it as an esoteric quasi-feminist intellectual attempt at destabilizing gender in a hopelessly patriarchal and death-oriented theology; she seems unaware that Coakley is really just tweaking a form of prayer faithfully practiced daily by millions of Christians. The whole point of bringing up the point of her teaching it in a prison in greater Boston was not to analyze the American way of incarceration,⁵²¹ but to point out that this is an eminently teachable practice across gender, class, and cultural divides. Tonstad misses this - she cannot see how Coakley doing “theology on one’s knees” can be much other than the physical manifestation of divine fellatio.⁵²²

As noted earlier, for Coakley contemplative prayer is a means by which human desire for the other is purged of sinful aspects. These may be sexual, but it may also be forms of idolatry. She adopts hyperbolic language to make her point, using the language of one of John Donne’s poem to do so:

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;

⁵²¹ Coakley has described her experiences in a non-academic article in “Jail Break: Meditation as a Subversive Activity,” *Christian Century* (June 2004), pp. 18–21. Her promised third volume of systematic theology will address secular institutions such as hospitals and prisons in the context of sin and atonement; see Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, p. xv.

⁵²² Tonstad, *God and Difference*, p. 99, 141.

Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

As this is a model for what Coakly thinks happens in contemplative prayer, Tonstad concludes that such a spiritual practice is a form of violence which inscribes the divine as masculine and the one who prays as feminine. Coakley is well aware of such a reading, and seeks neither to unwrite the notes of violence or to recommend them, but argues that

Donne seems to thematize precisely the sense of the impossibility of aligning sexual desire and desire for God which constitutes the persistent male-constructed aporia to which feminist theology aims to attend.⁵²³

By using and undermining such masculinist language Coakley seeks to align these desires; sexual desires can only be manifested properly in the context of the proper desire for the divine.

Coakley construes contemplative prayer as being kenotic, for the one who prays lets go of autonomy and subjects one's self to the divine, thereby gently making space and entering into the pattern of the cross and resurrection. For Coakley this is a "suffering" freely chosen as a spiritual practice, an *ασκήσεις* in which desires are purified. Tonstad reduces the pattern of cross and resurrection in contemplative prayer into the cruciform only, and so misses the therapeutic and dialectical dimensions of wordless contemplation. Tonstad constantly identifies this purgation with a kind of suffering, without seeing that it is at the same time a source of healing.

This, then, is the struggle, purgation, and suffering of wordless prayer. It is fundamentally spiritual, but Tonstad again literalizes it, dismisses the

⁵²³ Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, pp. 297-299.

paradoxical tension of such language, and genders it in a way that says more about her as a reader than Coakley as a writer. It is one thing to have a hermeneutic of suspicion, but Tonstad's approach seems a touch eisegetical.

b) Karen Kilby and the Seduction of Kenoticism

A more recent critique of kenoticism is that of Karen Kilby of Durham. She delivered a paper on "The Seductions of Kenosis" on January 10, 2018 as part of the Durham Centre for Catholic Studies conference on *Suffering, Diminishment and the Christian Life*.⁵²⁴ The conference asked, "Is love intrinsically linked to suffering? Are suffering, diminishment and loss on some fundamental level good?" Kilby starts off with what she describes as "the common-sense affirmation" that suffering and loss are not good, and that suffering and loss are not essentially bound up with love. She then brings in what she sees as the current "overuse" of kenotic theology, identifying Bulgakov, Balthasar, and Coakley as prime examples, as well as the essayists of *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*. With respect to the last group of theologians in particular, she objects to the comparison of the need for a magisterium to let go of over-protective power with the generous descent of the Word made flesh. She would prefer to call for repentance by the powerful in response to Christ's descent; repentance is not the same as imitating kenosis.

Kilby, echoing Tonstad, objects to the Christian valourisation of "vulnerability" as it means "the capacity to be wounded", to "fragility" as "it

⁵²⁴ Karen Kilby, "The Seductions of Kenosis", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUSujhwdMVQ> accessed January 3, 2019. Published in *Suffering and the Christian Life*, edited by Karen Kilby and Rachel Davies (London UK: T&T Clark, 2020), pp. 163-174.

means the capacity to be broken”, and believes that “kenosis means a deliberate self-emptying, a becoming less.” If we call these things good, then she sees that as a problem. There is “no formula, no algorithm, by which one can take suffering and add in a dose of prayer, or piety, or attentiveness, or love, and know that something transformatively meaningful or valuable will appear, this side of the eschaton.”⁵²⁵

And yet, despite these common-sense affirmations, she finds that theologians have been seduced by kenosis. First, she observes that Western society is dominated by a denial of the reality of suffering and death, and when it does take place, it is pushed to the margins and ignored. Theologians wish to offer a corrective to this, but appear to go too far. They go beyond accepting limitation and the inevitability of suffering, and instead embrace it. Second, she finds that in the face of watching others suffer there is a natural desire to make sense of it all, and it does not feel right for theologians, in an acute way, “to remain dumb, silent”.⁵²⁶ Growth and grace can be experienced in the process of diminishment and loss, but they are not to be identified with the diminishment or loss itself. Thirdly, theologians are seduced by kenosis, vulnerability, and fragility because it all sounds so familiar. Kilby advises that theologians develop an *ἄσκησις*, to be careful to not find meaning where there is no meaning - especially in suffering - and to remember to keep a place for hope, for love over suffering. She believes that “good” Catholic theology has always had a paradoxical tension between nature and grace. Nature has its own integrity, in which one acknowledges limitations, frailty, suffering and death as part of its

⁵²⁵ Ibid, starting at 18:18.

⁵²⁶ Ibid, starting at 34:08

cycles. That said, nature desires to transcend itself, looks for the supernatural, for meaning. She believes that the theologians she critiques seek to resolve the paradox by developing theodicies and being seduced by kenosis.

While Kilby is correct in recognizing the importance of not valourising all suffering – much, if not most of it, is “useless” – the sufferings of Jesus are held to be redeeming. Just as there is a common sense understanding that suffering is wrong and meaningless, there is also a common sense appreciation that a person’s suffering can be meaningful, whether it is in the sense of one person choosing to sacrifice themselves for another, or in the sense of a person growing through the pains suffered in an athletic discipline; it may not be nice or enjoyable, but it can still be meaningful. In particular, despite being an American, she overlooks the traditions of Black Theology – especially those of Martin Luther King - that have engaged deeply with suffering and will construe some suffering as redemptive.⁵²⁷

So, she runs into problems considering kenosis, vulnerability, and fragility. She writes:

The problem in connection with these theological fashions is not hard to state. Vulnerability means the capacity to be wounded. Fragility means the capacity to be broken. Kenosis means a deliberate self-emptying, a becoming less. It would seem on the face of it, that to be wounded, or to be broken, or to be less, are not good things. To the degree that we speak about kenosis, vulnerability and fragility in a positive light, then, as things which are good in themselves, we appear to be saying something fairly troubling - something at odds with the opening platitudes of this chapter.

However, she does not reckon with the biblical and Christological roots of these ideas. Her understanding of kenosis as “deliberate self-emptying, a

⁵²⁷ See especially Mika Edmondson, *The Power of Unearned Suffering: The Roots and Implications of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Theodicy* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2017).

becoming less” is one-dimensional, and seems to have little relation to Philippians 2.5-11. Her fundamental problem is that she does not really grapple with any actual kenotic theologian, but remains moored to the perspective of what she calls “common sense”. It would be one thing to say that Bulgakov and other kenoticists go too far in finding kenosis in the immanent theology, and demonstrating why this is false, but she does not do this. She just does not engage with them, or enter into the reasons why some suffering might be meaningful, even redemptive.

Kilby does not spell out what is “less” about Christ in his self-emptying. Thus, she does not answer, “What features of the divine nature does the Logos renounce on becoming a human being?” If this is a lessening, what is it? It seems that she is reacting without analyzing.

Coakley does not make much of the idea of “fragility”, other than to note that human beings can be fragile psychologically, and in contemplative prayer take a risk of unconscious content bubbling up into consciousness. But fragility is neither good or bad – it simply is. An exquisite origami is no less valuable for being fragile – indeed, part of the wonder is that it is fragile. A sand mandala is a fragile thing, and it is deliberately destroyed when finished – but that is the whole point. While vulnerability may lead to being wounded, it can also lead to great intimacy. One hopes to be vulnerable with one’s lover, rather than on the defensive, because without it no real trust can be built. Kilby’s approach to these topics are seemingly one-dimensional.

However, Kilby’s reflections do suggest that what one would hope for from Coakley in the future is a careful, clear analysis of what these terms might

mean, and how they are goods in and of themselves, but how they might become problematic.

Kilby is correct in distinguishing between repentance and kenosis. However, she might have gone further with the question. It is one thing to say that an institution needs to repent, and another for an individual to do so. For example, going back to the IRS in Canada, it is clear that Canada as a nation and its various institutions should repent from its original sin of taking land and engaging in genocide with its Indigenous peoples. It is another thing to say that an individual Canadian needs to repent for this, especially if they were, say, a recent immigrant who has only just become a citizen. It is not that they do not need to take responsibility for action to right the injustices of the past, but, as they were not personally responsible for causing them, the way that responsibility works out will look different – it will be a letting go of the benefits and privileges that accrue to the non-indigenous person because of those past injustices. This is more of a kenosis than a repentance.

D) Other Recent Approaches and Applications of Kenoticism

What does kenotic theology look like in practice? We have already seen that Coakley advises wordless prayer as a spiritual practice, but what does it look like outside of solitude? Here are four different examples.

a) Kenosis and Healing from Trauma

The American Orthodox theologian Aristotle Papanikolaou, reflecting on the debate between Hampson and Coakley, asks, “How is the notion of *kenosis* helpful to the struggle for social justice and the fight against systematically

entrenched oppression and inequality? How can one possibly speak of *kenosis* in situations of abuse?"⁵²⁸ Papanikolaou notes that:

Though perhaps for different reasons, Balthasar and feminist theologians in general reject Enlightenment notions of self in terms of individuality, autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency. They argue for relational understandings of the self, a self that is constituted in and through community and communion. Such notions of the self reject oppositions of the "one" to the "other", but affirm rather a notion of the "one", of identity that includes the "other".⁵²⁹

After reviewing the kenotic theology of Balthasar he suggests "that the healing toward personhood involves a kenosis."⁵³⁰ Drawing on the work of Judith Herman⁵³¹ he notes that, "[t]he results of abuse, in part, are isolation, withdrawal, disassociation and fear of relations" but that healing requires breaking out of solitude into relation and rebuilding of trust. In the context of sexualized violence,

Herman more forcefully asserts, "It cannot be reiterated too often: no one can face trauma alone." This reaching out to others is not toward another pathological dependency, but for "support in finding her own voice, her own language". One only recovers one's self, one's autonomy, or put another way, one only re-receives one's personhood through particular types of relationships.⁵³²

He then goes on to suggest:

If healing results through a set of relations in which there is, to use spatial metaphors, space for care, self-love, trust and vulnerability, then such relations are necessarily kenotic. But in a situation where the self itself is

⁵²⁸ Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Person, Kenosis, and Abuse: Hans Urs von Balthasar and Feminist Theologies in Conversation", *Modern Theology* 19/1 (January 2003), pp. 41-65; p. 46.

⁵²⁹ Papanikolaou, p. 57.

⁵³⁰ Papanikolaou, p. 55.

⁵³¹ Judith Hermon, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York NY: Basic Books, 1992).

⁵³² Papanikolaou pp. 54-55, quoting Hermon, p. 153 in the first case, and in the second Jennifer Manlowe, "Seduced by Faith: Sexual Traumas and Their Embodied Effects" in *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook* edited by Carol J. Adams and Marie Fortune (New York NY: Continuum, 1998), pp. 328-338; p. 336.

dissipated, what is emptied? What could possibly be given? What an abused victim is emptying is fear, fear of the other created by the abuse. In emptying this fear, the abused victim is, to borrow from Coakley, making space for the presence of the other in order to be empowered. The active recognition and seeking of help is itself a kenotic act. According to Herman, "traumatized people are often reluctant to ask for help of any kind, let alone psycho-therapy". By entering such a relationship, the victim "voluntarily submits herself to an unequal relationship in which the therapist has superior status and power". The entering into a therapeutic relationship is itself a kenotic act on the part of the victim of trauma insofar as it involves a self-emptying of fear for the sake of the other (the therapist initially, but more stable, intimate relationships in the long term), as well as risk, vulnerability and trust. The path toward a reconstructed self involves the risk of surrendering oneself over to another.

If healing from trauma is part of Christian ministry, then understanding the kenotic aspects of it would be important. Kenosis, then, becomes a part of a therapeutic response leading to healing, rather than a means of persuading an individual to persist in the meaningless suffering of oppression.

b) *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*

As mentioned at the beginning of Part Three in Chapter Seven, the authors of the essays in the book *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church*. seek to address the crisis of clerical sexual abuse in the Catholic Church by proposing a kenotic restructuring and a reframing of authority in the institution. In the Introduction Anthony J. Carroll suggests that the magisterium of the church leads not only by teaching, but by kenotic example, and draws attention to the humility of Pope Francis as an example of that.⁵³³ In his essay in the body of the book he starts by referring to Francis Oakley's contention that

the contemporary exercise of magisterial authority in the church has been shaped by a rejection of historicity and a general tendency to take refuge

⁵³³ Anthony J. Carroll, "Introduction: The Exercise of Magisterial Authority in the Roman Catholic Church" in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority*, pp. 1-14; p. 7.

in an uncommitted and abstract theology. He also notes that these two factors have fostered an official church teaching style which tends towards an authoritarian annunciation of timeless certainties that demand obedience from the faithful.⁵³⁴

Thus, Carroll entitles his essay “Post-Metaphysical Authority”, not because metaphysics has been made redundant, but because it must be seen in its historical contexts and recognize its implied and explicit commitments. Carroll believes that

The metaphysical model of the structure and function of authority in the church corresponded in the Middle Ages to a feudal and monarchical understanding of power and authority, which was mediated through the dual roles of the sacerdotium and the regnum, the priestly and the kingly offices of the church. ⁵³⁵

The basic issue is that

our understanding of God and the human condition have evolved over time. The inability of the classical metaphysical tradition to think change outside of imperfection means that the evolution of Catholic moral theory is inhibited by the notion that moral positions are metaphysically fixed.⁵³⁶

This leads to a disjunction between society (including a large part of the lay Catholic world) which has moved on from the seemingly unchanging world of the Middle Ages to a much more complex situation in which certain values and virtues, such as human rights and the sanctity of human life, have risen and others, such as deference to one’s “betters”, have dropped out.

Carroll believes the Church must abandon “a strategy of declaring unquestionable metaphysical truths,” and take on “kenotically entering into the rational enquiry of the truth which emerges gradually through open and

⁵³⁴ Anthony J. Carroll, “Post-Metaphysical Authority”, *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority*, pp. 73-90; p. 73.

⁵³⁵ Anthony J. Carroll, “Post-Metaphysical Authority”, p. 75.

⁵³⁶ Anthony J. Carroll, “Post-Metaphysical Authority”, p. 84.

responsible dialogue.”⁵³⁷ The exercise of kenosis by the magisterium is thus an opening up to the church outside the hierarchy. It is a heuristic-hermeneutical tool that is not bound up in entrenched positions (especially with respect to issues of sexual morals) but in principles that revert back to Christology.

Roger Mitchell in his historical research suggests the original radical message of the gospel was undone in the Constantinian era.⁵³⁸ In his essay in this collection he asks what love without sovereignty would look like.⁵³⁹ He identifies three characteristics, derived from the life and teachings of Jesus as described in the gospels. First, it is an authority that undoes Empire, for, subverting Carl Schmitt’s observation that “sovereignty is defined by the distinction between friend and enemy”, he argues that the command to love one’s enemies and to pray for them

quite literally undoes the very foundations of empire by making my enemy my friend, even at the cost of my death . . . The domination of the other, with their territory and resources, for the benefit of a particular tribe, city, people group, religion, culture or civilization is rendered inoperative by the government of love.⁵⁴⁰

Second, it is an authority that “disarms the powers”. Mitchell looks at the three temptations presented to Jesus by Satan and finds that they “expose deep structures of evil that undergird the foundations of sovereign power”, namely i)

⁵³⁷ Anthony J. Carroll, “Post-Metaphysical Authority”, p. 78. There are echoes here of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Plato’s Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the Philebus*, translated by Robert M. Wallace (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵³⁸ Roger Haydon Mitchell, *Church, Gospel, and Empire: How the Politics of Sovereignty Impregnated the West* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

⁵³⁹ Roger Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty: A Reassessment of Divine Power” in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority*, pp. 41-54.

⁵⁴⁰ Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, p. 48, quoting Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political* (New York: Telos Press, 2007), p. 85.

“the economics that preserve one’s personal and tribal survival at the expense of other human beings;” ii) “the politics that dominate one’s fellow humans and their socio-cultural lives;” and iii) “the competitive drive to risk all to gain the high ground of religion, fame and popularity.”⁵⁴¹ The conflict is resolved when Jesus confronts the tempter

not with the violence, law and appeasement that are the tools of sovereign power, but with the word of love from the mouth of God that the baptism incident narrates, with its resultant worship, service and humility.⁵⁴²

Mitchell’s third characteristic of “love without sovereignty” is an authority that empowers the powerless. He says that kenotic love, according to scripture, works to empower six populations: 1) women, ii) children, iii) the poor, iv) it cares for creation, v) it frees the prisoners, and vi) cares for the sick.⁵⁴³ Those who oppose this empowerment are the enemies, and this is “a measure for the chasm of difference that needs to be crossed and the extent of love that is required for peace to be realised. Jesus’s encounter with the powers choreographs the way.”⁵⁴⁴

Finally, Mitchell regards the Incarnation as an authority that “not only reveals the divine nature, it recovers the image of God in human nature. Kenotic love is the essence of the authority of God and is given back to the world in the Incarnation as the basis for a new humanity.”⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴¹ Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, p. 49.

⁵⁴² Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁴³ Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, p. 50.

⁵⁴⁴ Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, p. 51.

⁵⁴⁵ Mitchell, “Authority without Sovereignty”, p. 51.

In the same collection of essays James Sweeny describes kenosis as a means of overcoming the sharp divide between liberals and conservatives in the Catholic Church. It

would chart a radically different path . . . It is open to giftedness and to receive, whether from tradition or from what is newly emerging in history. Kenosis is the readiness to discover truth rather than pretend to possess it. As a characteristic of ecclesial authority kenosis builds bridges to those it addresses rather than taking its stand on some lofty distant ground.⁵⁴⁶

Different authors in the collection also note the compatibility of kenosis with the writings of St. Francis, Pope Francis, and St. Bonaventure. Paul Rout notes that within Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology, the term 'Father' is not meant to be understood in a patriarchal way, implying concepts of domination and subordination. The Father is not the one who rules over but rather the one who, as fertile source of the good, gives totally of that good. The fatherhood of God is to be understood as total self-giving love. What is witnessed in the generation of the Son is the self- emptying of the Father.⁵⁴⁷

Kenotic humility in the Franciscan tradition not only reflects the Trinity and the Incarnate Word, but is the principle for ordering a society which is "opposed to the use of domineering power which so often characterised the nature of relationships in the society of his [St. Francis's] day."⁵⁴⁸ Kenosis is about relationships based on "brotherliness", a mutual submission that captures

⁵⁴⁶ James Sweeny, "Authority in the Church: Authentic and Effective?" in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority*, pp. 105-117; pp. 116-117.

⁵⁴⁷ Paul Rout, "Be Subject to Every Human Creature: St Francis of Assisi and the Experience of Authority" in *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority*, pp. 105-117; 131-145; p. 138.

⁵⁴⁸ Rout, p. 136.

an ecstatic way of knowing that goes beyond reason, a “movement of Persons beyond self towards the other.”⁵⁴⁹

Much of the Church itself needs to repent of its past sins – and there are undoubtedly a number of individuals that also need to repent of their particular errors, particularly those involving abuse of others and/or coverups. These authors look past individuals to look at the system, and find it tending towards what Levinas would call a totality. To reform the church more is needed than just individual or even corporate repentance, but a transformation that involves a Christ-like kenosis.

c) Simone Weil, Sallie McFague, and the Consumption of Resources

In her short life Simone Weil (1909-1943) was known as a French anarchist activist, a philosopher, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War, a teacher, and a classicist whose 1939 essay “L'Iliade ou le poème de la force” (“The Iliad, or the Poem of Force”) continues to influence Homeric studies. Raised a secular Jew, she was agnostic until the mid-1930s, when a series of mystical experiences drew her towards Roman Catholicism. Her subsequent writings, unpublished until after the Second World War, turned to theology. In 1942 she escaped the Nazi persecution of Jews in France by emigrating to the United States, and then promptly went to London to work with Charles de Gaulle and the Free French. In England she was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and this, combined with what may have been a form of “holy anorexia”⁵⁵⁰ led to an early death, shortly after

⁵⁴⁹ Rout, p. 141.

⁵⁵⁰ Weil knew that the French people suffering under Nazi occupation in France were limited in how much they could eat; she felt that it was important to be in solidarity with them, and so she restricted her calories. Others have retroactively

receiving baptism,⁵⁵¹ in a sanatorium near London. After her theological reflections were published, she became well known for her unusual approach to theology.

Weil's theology was influenced by Kierkegaard,⁵⁵² and she may have derived an interest in kenotic theology from her reading of him. What seems clear is that her understanding of kenosis is due to her meditation on her own pre-existing tendencies towards justice and a lack of attachment to material things. As a classicist she views the kenosis of the Word in the context of Imperial Rome, just as Roger Mitchell in the previous section does. Lissa McCullough writes:

She held that the Roman Catholic conception of God, centered on God's absolutely sovereign omnipotence, was a corruption foreign to authentic Christianity, introduced into it by the influence of Imperial Rome's adulation of power. When the Christian religion was officially adopted by the Roman Empire, "God was turned into the counterpart of the Emperor" (NR 271). Ever since the Roman spirit of imperialism and domination has retained its hold over the Church.⁵⁵³

diagnosed her as anorexic. Charitably, Weil may be seen to be following in a tradition of Catholic holy women such as Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), and Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897); see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 1988).

⁵⁵¹ Weil repeatedly declined to be baptized as she felt she could not accept all of the Catholic church's teachings. However, there are reliable reports that she was baptized in her last days by her friend Simone Dietz. See Maria Clara Bingemer, *Simone Weil: Mystic of Passion and Compassion*, translated by Karen M. Kraft (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2015), p. 84 and Eric O. Springsted, "Simone Weil and Baptism" in *Spirit, Nature and Community: Issues in the Thought of Simone Weil* edited by Diogenes Allen & Eric O. Springsted (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 1-18.

⁵⁵² David Pollard, *The Continuing Legacy of Simone Weil* (Lanham MD: Hamilton Books, 2015), p. 36.

⁵⁵³ Lissa McCullough, *The Religious Philosophy of Simone Weil: An Introduction* (London UK: I. B. Taurus & Co., Ltd., 2014), pp. 102-103.

For her the mystical path to God was a process of ridding oneself of this false deity. Arguably, then, her theology was proto-post-colonial.

Weil viewed creation as a kind of abdication by God from being omnipresent and everything – God withdraws and allows creation existence.⁵⁵⁴ God's act of creation is thus self-limiting and kenotic, which is also “seen in terms of sacrifice, of suffering, and the Incarnation and Passion of Christ . . . [which] are merely two aspects of the same process.”⁵⁵⁵ In this respect she parallels Bulgakov, but she goes further. She regards human renunciation as an imitation of God's self-limitation in creation. Renunciation is thus the point in which God's love for God's own self can manifest itself in us: “In so far as I become nothing, God loves himself through me.”⁵⁵⁶ If creation is the uncreated making creation, then “De-creation is to make something created into the uncreated.”⁵⁵⁷

There is, of course, a danger here. Ruth Groenhout argues that Weil takes self-sacrifice too far in the direction of annihilation. “[P]roper self-sacrifice *must* emphasise the worth of the self that is emptied out.”⁵⁵⁸ Weil lived kenosis. The fact that she did die at such a young age and that her illness was exacerbated by her limited calories might give us pause.

Kenosis for Weil, like Bulgakov, is the central explanation of the nature of God in relation to the world. Whereas Bulgakov sees human kenosis taking place

⁵⁵⁴ Simone Weil, *First and Last Notebooks* translated by Richard Rees (London UK: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 120, 297.

⁵⁵⁵ J. P. Little “Simone Weil's Concept of Decreation” in *Simone Weil's Philosophy of Culture: Readings Toward a Divine Humanity* edited Richard H. Bell (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 25-51; p. 28.

⁵⁵⁶ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* translated by Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London UK: Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 33-34.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32.

⁵⁵⁸ Groenhout, p. 302.

in the context of the church, calling into question the world, Weil saw it as more individualistic, a radical process of self-renunciation.

Sallie McFague (1933-2020) has reflected at length on Weil's kenotic thought in *Blessed are the Consumers*.⁵⁵⁹ In this book she considers the writings and lives of three "saints", namely: John Woolman (1720-1772), a Pennsylvania Quaker; Dorothy Day (1897-1980), a lay Catholic social worker; and Simone Weil. In each case renunciation plays a major part. For Weil's the renunciation of food is a corporeal action: "to love the neighbor as God loves means giving one's own body for the material well-being of others, anonymously, and without regard to the neighbor's worth."⁵⁶⁰

What is important for McFague is that each of these people not only espoused kenotic ideals, but they lived them, too, and did so in engagement with the world. Woolman advocated for abolition, Day for worker's rights and the needs of the poor; and Weil also for workers, Spanish Republicans, and victims of the Nazi occupation of France. Each of them was an outsider. Weil prized her position of being outside the Church and thereby saw herself as uncontaminated by its worldly compromises.

For McFague the critical action in Weil's mystical theology is the paying of attention to the other, an approach that has obvious resonances with Levinas. Attention is paid to beauty, which has its source in God, and to suffering, which puts a person in touch with "the implacable order of the world" which is "necessary to burst the bubble of egoism":⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Sallie McFague, *Blessed are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2013), esp. pp. 50-61..

⁵⁶⁰ McFague, p. 61.

⁵⁶¹ McFague, pp. 57-58.

This double movement of Christ and his disciples – downward in solidarity with all possible dimensions of human despair and degradation and upward to include all possible affliction within God’s compassion – is the heart of Weil’s understanding of both divine and human action.⁵⁶²

For Weil kenotic love, not power, is at the core of God and creation, and both Creation and Incarnation are contained within the Passion.⁵⁶³

McFague is convinced that the critical issue for humanity in the 21st Century is climate change and the necessity to reduce the consumption of energy that produces it. Reflecting on Woolman, Weil, and Day, McFague concludes not that all followers of Christ must do exactly as they did, but that we should enter

the wild space of voluntary poverty . . . [in which] a critical step should be a significant reduction of energy at the personal level toward the practice of simplicity in our daily lives . . . [and] to use all our considerable assets, at personal, professional, and public levels, to seriously reduce energy use and bring about a new way of being in the world.⁵⁶⁴

What is striking about all the authors in this section is that they seek to move the conversation from abstract reflections on the Incarnation and the interior life of the Trinity to practical discussion of what it is to “have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus.” Kenotic theology is seen to do work in healing from trauma, in reforming the church, and assisting ordinary people in addressing the crisis of global warming and degradation of biodiversity. If Bulgakov *et al* are right, kenotic theology is not just an interesting corner of Christology, but it is a revelation of a central truth about who God is, what creation is, and what we as human beings are called to be and do.

⁵⁶² McFague, p. 58.

⁵⁶³ McFague, p. 59.

⁵⁶⁴ McFague, p. 76-77.

E) Assessment of Coakley and Other Recent Authors on Kenoticism

The extension of the kenotic from the Incarnation through the economic Trinity to the interior life of the Triune God is a bold move. Tonstad and Kilby advise against it. Biblical scholars might question how well grounded it is in scripture. Strict proponents of apophaticism may see it as a step too far.

And yet – there is something in the idea that the divine is inherently self-emptying – understanding this as love, and not as annihilation or degradation. If we do that, though, we must recognize the enormity of such a claim, it being on the same level as defining the divine as three persons with one being.

Coakley and the other authors considered in this chapter move the discussion along at several levels. Coakley correctly warns us of reading gender essentialism into kenoticism, and advises the exercise of apophatic restraint through the practice of contemplative prayer, which brings out the destabilized and paradoxical nature of theological language. Like Bulgakov, this is “theology on one’s knees”.⁵⁶⁵ She also, in her careful, analytical classification, warns us that not all kenoticisms are the same, and one must be clear about which one is being promoted or discussed or critiqued. This dissertation has used authors who are (arguably) well within the dogmatic traditions of the church, across Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Anglicanism. Kenoticism should not entail a commitment to process theology, or a mashup of modalism and Hegelianism.

Does kenotic theology do any work when it gets off its knees? The authors reviewed in this chapter suggest that it can and does.

⁵⁶⁵ “Theology on our knees” is a phrase coined by Hans Urs von Balthasar, and was endorsed by, among others, Benedict XVI.

- Implicit in Coakley’s approach to kenosis through contemplative prayer is a critique of patriarchy and oppressive structures, calling forth a subversive approach that questions gender essentialism.
- Aristotle Papanikolaou extends kenotic theology to be a necessary part of healing from trauma.
- Anthony J. Carroll asks for the magisterium of the Catholic church to be kenotic, primarily by abandoning the timelessness of a metaphysical perspective that does not allow for any change in teaching, by humbly entering into a heuristic that is dialogical.
- Roger Mitchell regards kenotic theology as part of the challenge to “Empire” in that it manifests a “love without sovereignty” that empowers the powerless.
- James Sweeny sees in it a generosity that has the potential to overcome entrenched positions.
- Paul Rout sees the self-emptying of God the Father as a principle of social organization, visible from the start in the polity of the Franciscans. This is also a principle for the ordering of the Church and society in general.
- Building on Simone Weil’s kenoticism, Sallie McFague regards kenotic theology as an entry into “the wild space of poverty” which allows the followers of Jesus to let go of their consumption of energy, and lessening the destructive footprint of humanity upon the Earth.

The perspectives of these authors see the value in kenotic theology not simply in the way it might solve some problems in Trinitarian and Incarnational theology, but for the way in which kenosis models how the Church and Christians can respond to the work of Christ.

As the contributors to *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church* argue, the Catholic Church is in a crisis, and Coakley points out that the Anglican Communion has its own issues with sex. The old theologies do not seem to be working very well; both the Canadian experience with the Indian Residential Schools and the current world-wide experience of Roman Catholics and sex-abuse scandals suggest as much. Tinkering with the old certainties may not be enough – it is probably necessary to go deeper, but with humility.

In the previous chapter we saw some possible commonality between Bulgakov's Orthodox approach to kenosis and what transpired in Alaska, and I described it as kenotic evangelism. In a similar way Coakley's work can be seen as destabilising patriarchy in theology and allowing for the practical work of liberation to move forward – kenotic social justice, and kenotic pastoral care, we might say. It is not as radical as some might have it, as it is rooted in the orthodox mainstream of Christianity, but it has the potential to become more important as time goes on.

The kenotic theology described and lived by the people discussed in this chapter looks more like the right side of the table on page 80 than the left side. It is not about the self, but is oriented towards the divine and one's neighbour. The kenotic attitude finds itself not adjusting to the norms of history, but looks towards its fulfillment in the reign of Christ, an eschatological perspective. This means it will always be restless with the status quo or the propaganda of nations and institutions. It will always be horrified by injustice and seek to be on the side of those who suffer and experience persecution. It is willing to let go of power, wealth, privilege, and even one's own well-being. It does not impose itself, but persuades through open and transparent "power in vulnerability". Without

letting go of its critical abilities and own experiences, it is open to a dialogue with others, and to be transformed.

If Bulgakov, Coakley, Weil, and the others are right, kenosis is about love in action. The kenotic attitude was perhaps best described by Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 13.4-7

Conclusion

Chapter Ten: 'Have This Mind About You'



Image 7: *Easter 1985* by Roy Henry Vickers. Used with permission.

In this chapter I summarise what has been discussed in this dissertation, and I note a few possible areas of further exploration.

In the Introduction I identified the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada as a theological problem for Canadian Christians and others.

These schools were created and funded by the federal government of Canada, partly because of their obligation and responsibility for the Indigenous peoples of Canada, but as has been made clear by historians, mainly (in Duncan Campbell Scott's words) "to eliminate the Indian problem forever." The Introduction listed the results, and later, in Part Two, I make the argument that it was a type of genocide.

All of the major churches in Canada were enthusiastically involved in the operation of the schools from the 1880s until 1970s, when the government took over direct control. The government subcontracted the operation to the churches partly because they were already operating a number of day schools and residential schools, and partly because it was undoubtedly cheaper to pay the non-profit sector to do it. However, by engaging the churches the government also wrapped up the assimilationist effort in the moral authority of the churches. It was applauded as a good thing to do.

One might argue that the churches' involvement can be excused, as they were simply subject to the sociological and political pressures in settler societies; it was not a religious problem or a theological problem, but an historical one with society. However, that begs the question. One needs to look at the evidence to determine what rationales were being given at the time.

Part One suggest that the mature philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas is a useful interrogator for Unsettling Theology. Levinas is concerned with how philosophy becomes the midwife to the violence of the state. As a recovering Heideggerian he knew how fundamental ontology could become subservient to a

totalitarian and racist ideology, and so he sought to push beyond that to establish ethics as first philosophy.

In *Otherwise than Being* he describes the conscious self as oriented outside of itself, using the term *substitution, proximity, and sensibility*. The pre-verbal, anarchic character of this orientation is paradoxically described in hyperbolic language, in what Derrida called *sériture*, a pointing towards something but then erasure of it. Levinas uses the terms *the saying* and *the said* to distinguish between the metaethical construction of the self and the compromised quality of philosophy which must use language. This resonates with some of how the later Wittgenstein discusses language. It is also parallel to apophatic theology, which also attempts to describe that which is beyond words. While kenotic theology is not apophatic theology or Levinasian metaethics, it is conformable to both in the sense that encourages believers to let go of trying to have the perspective of God - all-seeing, objective, inherently true and certain - and enter into a much more limited and other-oriented attitude.

The critique of philosophy in his earlier book *Totality and Infinity* – the analysis of thought from Thales to Heidegger, in which the self assimilates the other – still stands. While the metaethics needs to be described in *sériture*, the critique of thematized philosophy can be done with ordinary language. We can still use his critique of Totality. Towards the end of Part One I generalized it, and it becomes a tool that is used in Parts Two and Three.

Totality is the perspective that ignores the *other* other, the unassimilatable. The other, if not assimilated, is eradicated, by violence if necessary. For Totality, the self is the norm and standard against which all others are judged. In practice this has meant that the European Christian male is the

supreme example of the self, and the expansion and domination of Christian European society into other realms becomes the “normal” and “logical” result, along with the concomitant eradication of the other, whether the Jew or Roma in Europe or the Indigenous in the Americas or Australia. Western society does indeed have its “killer apps.”

In Part Two I turned to the theologies that permitted genocide. I dealt first with the question of whether the IRS system was in fact genocide, and I argued that it was, mainly by appealing to the language of the Genocide Convention. I then identified seven types of theological justifications for colonisation and assimilation. Here is a summary.

The Doctrine of Discovery is already well known and is specifically named in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to Action. This is undoubtedly because it has been the legal justification for claiming and taking the land, enslaving or removing the original population, and assimilating those who did not die off from disease, war, and other violence. Its theological roots are in the papal bulls and royal charters, and it presumes the superiority of the European Christian religion and civilization.

That said, however important the Doctrine of Discovery is, it is not the whole story. There are at least six other justifications for colonialism that use theological ideas: *Providence*; *Eschatology*; *the Mandate to Develop*; *the Struggle with Evil*; *Fulfillment Theology*; and *the Difficulty of Communicating the Gospel in Indigenous Languages*. The Doctrine of Discovery is grounded in the superiority of Christian European cultures and sovereigns, and it is inherently violent, racist, and exploitive. However, not all of the succeeding theological ideas are: there is

nothing inherently problematic about the concept of providence, or the unfolding of eschatology. It is the way in which they were used by Christian to justify violence and assimilation that is a problem.

Thus, the depopulation of the Indigenous populations Americas by pandemics, involving tens of millions of deaths, was seen as providential. What was merely convenient for the settlers of the Plymouth Colony, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and New France – that the previous inhabitants had died off or disappeared – was now seen as God’s hand. This elided into justifying the more active murder and exploitation that went along with Imperialism – that the Europeans conquered the world in order to bring civilization and Christianity to the rest of the world. God’s guiding hand was eventually identified with the invisible hand of classical economics, so that the brutal realities of crop failures, epidemics, and mass poverty were all viewed as forms of divine chastisement.

Likewise, eschatology, at least the type that was dominant at the World Missionary Conference of 1910, identified the steady advancement and improvement under the providence of God with the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The progress of civilization was paralleled by the progress of evangelization, which would somehow hasten the return of Christ. Evangelism, then, was not so much about meeting the needs of others or bringing them the good news, but was to hasten the coming of the Messiah.

The Mandate to Develop functioned as an indictment of Indigenous peoples, as they had failed to develop and exploit the natural resources and fertile land of the land they lived on. Settlers drew on an interpretation of Adam and Eve being commanded to tame and subdue the land, and to make it productive, as something that the original inhabitants needed to do if they were

to be considered civilized and Christian. If the Indigenous peoples obstructed development, then the settlers had the right to push them aside and restrict them to small reserves.

The Struggle with Evil also justified the dispossession of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. They were “heathen’s and “pagans”, at best “noble savages” but more likely “depraved” and “warlike.” Instead of allowing the Indigenous persons to speak for themselves, settlers used Romans 1 to understand who they were, concluding that were “full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, and malignity.” The spirituality of the Indigenous was viewed as primitive forms of idolatry, a worshipping of demons and Satanic beings. As Robert Speer said in 1909, other religions and traditions were “not an inspiration to, they are an incubus on the religious nature of mankind. Christianity has [not] anything to learn from any other faith.” Thus, to allow the Indigenous to continue as they were was to tolerate evil and its worship in one’s midst. This was not acceptable, and so the Indigenous needed to be remade in the image of European, Christian culture and faith.

A kinder, gentler type of genocidal theology is found in Fulfillment Theology, which sets out a hierarchy of religions with Animism at the bottom and Christianity at the top. Christianity is the fulfillment of the religious motivations and desires that are manifested in the other religions. This paralleled the hierarchies of race that the 19th century began to approach in a supposedly “scientific” way. Thus, European settlers were doing a favour to those they sought to assimilate, because they were merely helping them to fulfill what their own “primitive” religions pointed towards. Those who resisted needed to be isolated and guarded against.

The final type of theological justification for assimilation was the argument that the good news of Jesus Christ could not be communicated effectively in Indigenous languages, so the target population of evangelists needed to learn a European language. Rather than acknowledging their own inability to learn the local languages fluently, evangelists blamed the languages themselves. Indigenous peoples were “devoid of religion”, lacking the basic categories of “joy”, “grief”, “courage”, and “cowardice”, as well as terms used in the parables, such as pearls, kings, prisons, salt, leaven, wine, shepherds, and so forth. The missionaries were unable to see the differences between oral and written cultures, and the possibilities of dynamic equivalences. This also fed into an assimilationist agenda that strongly supported the practices of the IRS.

At various points in Part Two I apply the generalized critique of Totality from Part One. As is expected, the theological justifications are all self-centered egoisms, more concerned with the assimilation and eradication of the other than their best interests. The violence of the state erupted repeatedly, whether, in the late 15th century, in the enslavement of Taino in Hispaniola, in the 16th century with the kidnapping of persons from the Laurentian Iroquois by the French, or the apprehending of five-year old Cree for the IRS in the 20th. For the Europeans, historical progress involved the death and destruction of perhaps up to 90% of the population of the Americas, and this is seen as the work of Almighty God. Peace is established only after Indigenous peoples are driven off the land into small reservations.

Not surprisingly, many Indigenous leaders and activists have rejected Christianity, concluding that after the past five centuries it is merely a tool of

imperialism and colonization. However, many still adhere to it, and a remarkable characteristic of both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada is the presence of Indigenous peoples in congregations and leadership. Settlers, too, might be tempted to abandon Christianity, given its legacy. However, there are forms of theological discourse that are not automatically caught up in colonialism and imperialism.

Part Three suggests that, especially for settler peoples, kenotic theology is just such a type of God-talk that avoids the pitfalls of the theologies described in Part Two. Arguably it is more conformable to the metaethics of Levinas, and it withstands the critique of Totality.

We can read several basic elements of kenotic theology out of Philippians

2.5-11. Christ

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

⁹ Therefore God also
highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue
should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

First, it is doxological, and it uses the language of praise; Paul praises God in Christ for these acts. Second, it is Christological, for it describes over its seven

verses how Jesus, the first of all, voluntarily becomes the last, and then as the last, becomes first: Third, it is exhortatory, as Paul tells the Philippians that they should have this same mind. The text functions on these three levels all at once.

From a historical critical perspective this passage functions as an intertext to help us understand the Prologue of John and similar Christological passages. It also allows us to understand passages such as Mark 10.42-45, in which Jesus tells his disciples that they must not be like the Gentile rulers who seek power, but must become servants and slaves.

Sheila Briggs observes that Jesus voluntarily takes on this form of slavery. Slavery is not normally voluntary, and so this creates something of a paradox. Philippians 2.5-11 is revealed to be hyperbolic language which expresses that idea the pre-incarnate Christ let go of equality with God to be a Galilean Jew – not a part of the privileged Roman citizenry, but a member of a people subject to the Empire. The violent death Jesus experiences is reserved for non-citizens and slaves. He does not respond with violence, but with prayer and a plea to God for forgiveness on his persecutors. This is not the way of the world, as Jesus told his disciples in Mark 10.42-45 – but it is the way of Jesus and his disciples in the kingdom of God. It is disruptive, counter-intuitive, and demanding – and it should be unsettling for any reader.

For the purposes of this dissertation a key point is that Paul tells the Philippians to have the same mind as that of Christ. As scripture, this commendation is read in the church as applying to all Christians. Thus, Christians are also called, not to take advantage of their relationship with God in some self-serving manner, but to empty themselves, to be a slave of the Divine, and to be humble and obedient to the divine will. It is by doing this that Christians die with

Christ so that they might rise with him. It is not enough to have righteousness imputed, or received as a promise in baptism; rather, the Christian is encouraged to become Christlike, through the process of what the Orthodox call theosis. Sainthood is not some esoteric or inhuman goal of the human person, but it is the ordinary goal of anybody who truly hears the call of Jesus.

In Chapter Eight I observed that Sergius Bulgakov accomplished two major things. First, he took the kenotic theology of its German and Protestant exponents and rooted it in the theology and traditions of Orthodoxy. Thus, it ceased to be the concern of a small segment of Protestant academic theology and was made more “catholic”, commanding the attention of all forms of Christianity. At the same time, he purged it of any whiff of Hegelianism. Second, building on the earlier writers, but writing at much greater length and depth, he expanded the idea of the kenotic so that it encompassed the Holy Trinity, and used it to explain the interior relationships of the three persons in one, as well as God’s role in creation.

There appear to be two issues with Bulgakov’s approach. The first is that, as Paul Gavrilyuk says, he fails “to exercise what may be called apophatic reserve . . . with regards to what could be known or said about the inner life of the Trinity.” The second is that it is not at all clear what it means for Bulgakov that in the immanent Trinity “the sacrifice of the Father’s love consists in self-renunciation and self-emptying in the begetting of the Son” and that this is “pre-eternal suffering.” This language is taken from kenotic theology in the context of the Trinity in the world, but how can the persons of the Trinity be said to “suffer”?

The answer to these two criticisms is to go deeper into the philosophy of theological language. From the perspective of the later Wittgenstein, Bulgakov might be thought of as showing some pretty fancy footwork in the language-game of theology, verging on going outside the rules and the context of the theology pitch. However, all theological language has an apophatic dimension, such that even credal terms such as *Father, Son, Spirit, Word, begotten, light*, and *ὁμοούσιον* may be affirmed, but then qualified or effaced. Otherwise, one winds up with a God who is merely another thing among creation, a supreme being like a Zeus or a Wodin, but not the transcendent deity.

The issue, then, is not that Bulgakov needed to be more apophatic, but rather *how* he is apophatic. Without question he has a strong sense of the accessibility of kataphatic thought, rooted in the condescension of God in the creation of the human in the divine image and in the Incarnation.⁵⁶⁶ The criterion is fundamentally of utility – does this help us to understand the One who is beyond understanding? It would seem a logical, sensible move to say that a characteristic of God in the world - that of being emptied out in the person of the Word made flesh - is also a characteristic of the divine in itself.

However, his language of “suffering” in the immanent Trinity may not be helpful because it conflicts with notions of eternity and impassibility. Perhaps it would be more helpful to describe the relationship as one of orientation, in that each person of the Trinity is “for the other” in a similar way to which Levinas describes the self in *Otherwise than Being*, at the same time recognising that a

⁵⁶⁶ Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, p. 112.

person in the Trinity is not the same as a human person, although affirming a “family resemblance”.

Karen Kilby similarly indicts Sarah Coakley and other kenoticists of the 21st Century, arguing that they are seduced by kenosis to find meaning in suffering, and that they need to develop an *ἄσκησις* to avoid such seduction. However, I argued in chapter 9 that Kilby is reductionist – she makes all suffering merely “useless suffering”, and does not admit that some of it can be redemptive, or just a form of *ἄσκησις*. Thus, she fails to see the positive aspects of kenosis, such as the Incarnation.

Coakley’s contribution to kenotic theology, apart from her taxonomy of issues, involve the identification of gender issues in kenotic writing, and the role of contemplation. Masculinist language and concepts often enter into theology, and she is very good at identifying it in supposedly progressive kenoticists who are partial to process theology.

Contemplation, and in particular, wordless prayer, purges idolatry (including masculinist images and language) and redirects the person praying to “a new participation in the Trinitarian God.” This “power-in-vulnerability” is obviously apophatic, but it is also kenotic in that it is not merely a negation, but results in something new, as the Incarnation is a positive result of kenotic action. This prepares the person praying to the more active side of the Christian life, whether in teaching theology, preaching the Word, or working to place gospel values in the marketplace.

Kenoticism can be part of this active life in a variety of ways. Aristotle Papanikolaou argues that following trauma “the healing toward personhood involves a kenosis.” Anthony J. Carroll believes that a kenotic attitude towards

metaphysics will lead to the church eschewing “a strategy of declaring unquestionable metaphysical truths” and engaging more with the historically determined nature of the church’s teachings and “kenotically entering into the rational enquiry of truth which emerges gradually through open and responsible dialogue.” Roger Mitchell looks towards a “love without sovereignty” that empowers the powerless. Paul Rout affirms that the Franciscan understanding of the fatherhood of God is to be understood as total self-giving, not patriarchal authority.

Simone Weil echoes Bulgakov in seeing creation as a kenotic act, and regards it as a self-limitation of God, into which human beings are also called to enter in self-renunciation. Sallie McFague picks up on Weil’s theme of kenotic renunciation and relates it to the crisis of climate change.

At the end of Chapter Nine I subjected kenotic theology to the Levinasian critique, and it proved to be more congruent with Levinas’s metaethics than the theologies reviewed in Part Two. This is not surprising, as the kenosis of Christ is oriented towards the other – whether to God the Father or to another person – just as the self in the Saying is anarchically oriented towards what is outside itself.

Of course, kenotic theology, like anything, can be misused, and might become part of totalizing thinking. As feminists have pointed out, the exhortation towards sacrificial love has been used to justify the abuse of women – that they should stay in abusive marriages, that they should give their lives to their husbands and children, and that they should endure a lesser status in society. However, kenotic theology is radically subjective. Just as Jesus voluntarily

chooses to take the form of a slave and be obedient to God, so the individual Christian must do the same. This does not necessarily mean that one accepts the oppressor's definition of what God is calling the oppressed to do. God's call may be interpreted so that one must flee slavery, or to enter into non-violent civil disobedience, which also requires sacrifice, but gives meaning to what would otherwise be meaningless suffering.

This brings us back to the original issue: what is to be done with the legacy of the IRS?

One approach might be to say that, on balance, the legacy is positive, that settlers have nothing to apologise for, and so there is no need to work for healing and reconciliation. This is apparently the approach of Nigel Biggar and the McDonald Centre's research on the upside of colonialism and imperialism. One can minimise the suffering, cultural degradation, and vast numbers of the dead, and suggest that, in the long run, humanity benefited by the expansion of what Niall Ferguson calls (unironically) the "killer apps" of western civilization. Decolonization and postcolonial critiques only create problems, as seen in, for example, the financial basket cases of Zimbabwe, which used to feed much of Southern Africa. But these kinds of examples only prove the point about the damage of colonialism, as it ignores the long-term effect of the theft of land by British settlers and the trauma caused by the violence involved.

Another approach might be a more liberal one – to bewail the suffering that has taken place, but to state that the only way forward is to make it easier for Indigenous peoples to function in the dominant settler society – which is

really just another form of asserting colonialism.

So, how might kenotic theology help with deal with the legacy?

By now it should be clear that kenotic activity is creative; in letting go a person is changed. Listening to another person is kenotic – a true dialogue is a letting go of controlling the agenda or the outcome. In the Introduction and in Part Two of this dissertation we heard and received the critiques of Indigenous peoples themselves, and that of their scholarly allies. In the language of Tuhiwai Smith, this creates the condition of “a critical consciousness, an awakening from the slumber of hegemony and the realization that action has to occur.” This requires a letting go of the self-serving historical narratives of the dominant settler. In the case of Canada, it means rewriting the history: instead of the march of progress in the settlement and development of a “savage” land, any new history will describe the violence involved in the appropriation of territory, followed by the breaking of treaties, and the deliberate marginalization of the original peoples. For Christians in Canada, it means letting go of justifying the Residential Schools by referring to the good intentions of those who worked there, and instead acknowledging the opportunism and complicity of the churches. It means a commitment to working for change, not just for the Indigenous, but for everyone.

As Karen Kilby points out, repentance and kenosis are not identical. The institutions of Canadian society need to repent, but it would be a much more complex thing to call on individuals to do so. After all, most Canadians today, whether born in the country or recent immigrants, were not involved in the taking of land in the 17th, 18th, and 19th century, nor are they personally responsible for setting up the Residential Schools. That said, inasmuch as they do

benefit from these past actions, they have a responsibility to act. Typically, they are in positions of relative power as citizens and participants in the economy. Having become aware of the need for justice, they may need to change their assumptions and unconscious biases. A Twenty-First Century Canadian can choose to use what privilege they have in order to work with Indigenous peoples and overcome the injustices of the past and present. This means being both active in Canadian society and at the same time being critical of it, and seeking to change it. Indigenous justice involves issues around land and the autonomy of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, so this means letting go of control of land and the political institutions of the Indigenous; much of what is called “Crown Land” needs to be returned to their original owners in some significant way. Likewise, the need for the Canadian political system to have oversight over Indigenous governments must come to an end. This letting go is kenotic, and for Canadian Christians it is an instantiation of “having the mind of Christ.”

Indigenous Christians throughout the world have been reimagining the world and their place in it, using their particular people’s unique ways of understanding, and recovering ancient traditions. For Vine Deloria this meant recovering the meaning of place over and against the emphasis on being incorporated into western history as defined by Europeans and settler peoples. George Tinker builds on this, asserting the importance of the relationships with the ancestors, the practice of the vision quest, and the recovery of the pre-contact knowledge of the Creator. Coming from a Lutheran tradition, this means letting go of the supposedly universal structures contained within denominational documents and histories. Likewise, Twiss seeks to incorporate Indigenous practices such as the sweat lodge and pow-wow into Christian life,

meaning that he must let of the conservative evangelical tradition from which he comes that condemned such things. Randy Woodley disrupts academic, western Biblical concepts such as *Shalom* by incorporating a Keetoowah Cherokee understanding of “harmony”. In Alaska the Tlingit have adopted Orthodox Christianity and use it to hold off American settler values, whether sacred or secular. In all of these approaches the gospel is poured out from its captivity in settler modes of thought – it is rescued from the cowboys, as Richard Twiss puts it in the title of his book - to be renewed in Indigenous practices and ways of knowing; the Word of the good news becomes flesh among them, and not merely as a re-creation of settler spirituality. In this sense one might commend kenotic theology to Indigenous theologians and Christians – not because they need it, but because they are already living it. This is not repentance, but rather, like the Word poured out into human form in the Incarnation, it is the beginning of a new creation, and a transformation of what it is to be human in a particular way.

It looks different for settler Christians, or for those who come from the countries that sent them forth, such as Britain and France. It will involve both repentance and kenosis – repentance at the societal level, possibly at the personal level where racist assumptions need to be purged, but it will also require a charitable response of letting go. Mark Brett in Australia suggests that listening to Indigenous voices and working for justice will be kenotic, but also involves confession and resistance. Gerald West in South Africa points out that it requires massive social transformation, especially with respect to the economy. Marion Grau suggests using polydoxy as a form of resistance. Kampen, Travis, and I all call for changes to our theologies.

More research needs to be done in the archives of the settler states and in the former colonial powers to ascertain whether the seven theologies I have described were, in fact, as prevalent as I suspect they were. As well, I am sure that this was not an exhaustive inventory of genocidal theologies, and others that I have missed will undoubtedly be identified.

The debate on kenotic theology needs to continue. In particular, it is probably the case that more work needs to be done on the connection between contemplative prayer and action, and how they can both be kenotic. As well, it is not clear to me that the English-speaking world has fully digested Bulgakov's kenotic theology, and further discussion needs to take place about whether his move to derive the kenotic in the Immanent Trinity from the Incarnate Word is, in fact, justified. I suspect it is, and if so, it is arguably a tremendous theological achievement. More work also needs to be done on the creativity inherent in the kenotic – how sacrifice and self-emptying is not nihilistic, but fecund and positive.

In this dissertation I have sought to describe *Unsettling Theology* as an emerging genre of postcolonial theology. It is necessarily complex and cross-disciplinary, as it weaves in the critiques of past history and theology, the restlessness of Levinasian metaethics, and the transformative hope of the Incarnation seen as the pouring out of the Word. Beyond the academic purposes for which it was composed, I hope that it may also be a contribution to healing and reconciliation in Canada and beyond.

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As required, the text and bibliography has been formatted according to *MHRA Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors and Editors, Third Edition* (London UK: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013).

Some cities have the same name (eg. Cambridge MA and Cambridge UK; London ON and London UK; Victoria BC and Victoria TX). Cities of publication are always distinguished a) in Canadian provinces and US states, by the standard two letter postal state or provincial abbreviation (ON for Ontario, BC for British Columbia, CA for California, *etc.*) or b) by the two-letter abbreviation for a country (such as UK for United Kingdom, CH for Switzerland, *etc.*). Note that CA is always California.

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I took eighteen months of unpaid leave from the Diocese of British Columbia in 2012-2014 in order to read and “passively cogitate” (as Tamsin Jones put it). It was only supposed to be a year, but the bishop retired and I ended up being a candidate in the election, so what was supposed to be twelve months became eighteen. It was probably a good thing I did not win the election, as I would have had to drop the dissertation. During that time, I lived off of part of a legacy from my parents - William B. Scott, Jr. (†1992) and Ardelle Scott (†2010). My father worked in the pulp and paper industry in Quebec, New Brunswick, Cheshire, and London. There is a certain justice that this dissertation was partially supported from the income my father earned from the trees taken from the traditional lands of Innu and Naskapis. Thank you, Mom and Dad.

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Προς Μεγίστην Δόξαν Θεού

Appendix One: Notes on Terminology

I used to be an Indian. Then I became a native. After that I was aboriginal. Now I'm indigenous. I wonder what I'll be next? *Dallas Smith, Former President of Nanwakolas Council*⁵⁶⁷, at a gathering of the Association of Anglican Deacons in Victoria BC, 28 July, 2017.

This dissertation adopts two standards for language around indigenous peoples. The first is the *Style Guide for Reporting on Indigenous People* produced in December 2017 by the Indigenous Reporters Program of Journalists for Human Rights.⁵⁶⁸ The second is Chelsea Vowel's analysis and recommendations in her blog and book, *Indigenous Writes*.⁵⁶⁹

Among other things, the *Style Guide* recommends:

- *Indigenous* is to be preferred over the term *Aboriginal*.
- Do not use *Canada's Indigenous people* to describe the Indigenous people that are in the country. It is paternalistic and implies Canada owns Indigenous people. An alternative would be *Indigenous people in Canada*.
- Other terms colloquially used but not recommended: *Native, Indian*. The term *Indian* is considered offensive and should be used only in historical or legal contexts (e.g., *Indian status, Indian Act*). Avoid the terms . . . unless they are preferred by the subjects themselves or are part of a proper name.
- Avoid the use of *tribe* to describe a First Nation group (ie. *Dene, Blackfoot*.) unless the subject nation prefers (*Blood Tribe*). Use *people* or *nation* instead.
- *Métis* should only be used in circumstances where individuals and communities use the term *Métis* themselves. Do not use *Métis* to refer to mixed-descent individuals, as there are many First Nations people who have some non-First Nations ancestry, but are members of First Nations communities.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ The Nanwakolas Council represents the Kwakwaka'wakw speaking peoples of the Mamalilikulla Nation, Tlowitsis Nation, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlatla First Nation, Wei Wai Kum First Nation, Kwiakah First Nation, and the K'ómoks First Nation <http://www.nanwakolas.com/>.

⁵⁶⁸ <http://icht.ca/style-guide-for-reporting-on-indigenous-people/>, accessed January 10, 2018.

⁵⁶⁹ Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues in Canada* (Winnipeg MB: HighWater Press, 2016), pp. and online at "A rose by any other name is a mihkokwaniy" at <http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/01/a-rose-by-any-other-name-is-a-mihkokwaniy/>, accessed January 10, 2018.

⁵⁷⁰ Likewise, many people who identify primarily as being of European descent – British or French, mainly – may have First Nation ancestry, but are not culturally

- *Inuit* means “people” in the Inuktitut language while *Inuk* means person. Do not use *Eskimo*. It is a Cree word and means “eater of raw meat” and is considered offensive.

Chelsea Vowell helpfully points out that, “Names are linked to identity, and notions of identity are fluid. They change, they evolve. What was a good term twenty years ago might be inappropriate now.” She also notes that, “The names are going to continue to change . . . get used to it!” Further, “there are often multiple names in use. One person can call herself Assiniboine, Stoney, Nakota Sioux, Stone Sioux, Nakoda, and Îyârhe Nakoda . . . all names for the same group of people.” The best practice is to use the term that the person or First Nation themselves use.

Vowell names terms are considered unacceptable, namely:

- *savage*
- *Red Indian*
- *redskin*
- *primitive*
- *half-breed*
- *squaw/brave/buck*

She notes out that the term *Indian* is contentious, largely because it is often used pejoratively by others; that said,

it’s also a term we use a lot internally to talk about ourselves. Please note that this does not mean it’s always okay for you to use the term. I tend to suggest that avoiding this term is probably for the best, unless you are specifically referencing the Indian Act. There is a level of sarcasm often associated with its internal use that you probably don’t notice, and probably can’t replicate...so if you are interested in avoiding giving offense, this is a name that you might want to drop from your vocabulary.

or legally part of any First Nation or the historic Métis; they should not be called Métis either.

Indigenous authors from the United States of America will often use terms like *American Indian* and *Native American*, but these terms are problematic and not generally used in Canada.

This dissertation will avoid the use of “Indian” and other problematic terms except when it occurs as part of a historically established entity, such as the *Indian Residential Schools* or the *Indian Act*. When other scholars use it or similar terms and I quote them, I do so without approving of their terminology.

It is not only terminology used with respect to indigenous peoples that can be challenging. What do we call non-indigenous peoples?

It is tempting to treat “indigenous” and “settler” as binary opposites describing the situation in settled former colonies, such as Canada. It is more complex than that. To begin with, in Canada the settlers are divided between Anglophones and Francophones. The French speaking population of Canada up until the 1960s was dominated by Anglophones who identified as *English* or *British*; consequently, the Francophones feel that they were colonized by them. As well, there are varieties of Francophones in Canada - Quebecois, Acadians, Franco-Ontarians, Manitoban - each with their own histories and identities. Immigration in the late 19th and the first seven decades of the 20th century included Germans, Ukrainians, Dutch, Hungarians, Czechoslovaks, Italians, Japanese, Chinese, and Portuguese. Since the 1970s Canadian immigration has been “race-blind” and increasing numbers of immigrants from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia have arrived. Thus, some writers will distinguish “settlers” from “immigrants”, namely those who were born in Canada (or can pass as such) and those who emigrated here. Many dislike the term “settler” since their forebears emigrated to Canada centuries before. They feel

they have every right to feel that they are on their “home and native land”, as the English verses of the Canadian national anthem puts it.⁵⁷¹ I have not come across a better term than “settler”, so I use it. Although socially constructed, it usefully describes a population whose origins are elsewhere, and enjoy the privileges of a dominant colonizing community.

“People of colour” includes not only Indigenous and Asian populations, but those with African ancestry. African-Canadians include first generation immigrants from the many nations of Africa, but the majority are descended from those enslaved and forced to work in Haiti, South America, the Caribbean, and what became the United States and Canada. The ancestors of these latter peoples were neither immigrants nor settlers, let alone indigenous. They experience, like all “people of colour” in Canada, a degree of discrimination that is often papered over by the dominant European-descended populations. African-Canadian discussions with Indigenous peoples are only starting now, and they look different from settler-Indigenous conversations.

“White” is a term often used in both Indigenous and settler contexts (as well as in the UK), but it tends to reinforce social constructions as it is associated with skin colour, and ignores the complex historical reality. Ethnicity is a better descriptor, as it refers to actual ancestry and cultural roots. While occasionally useful as a shorthand descriptor in casual conversation, I will avoid using “white” in my writing. In this dissertation I will generally use the term “settler” for past and present colonists and their descendants, becoming more specific as necessary.

⁵⁷¹ First Nations activists, of course, suggest the more accurate words would be “our homes on native lands”.

As is normal in contemporary writing, I will not use “man” and “mankind” as a referent to “human” and “humanity,” except in quotations by older authors, but I will not give in to the temptation to use *sic* after such texts. Finally, as a Canadian my spelling is a combination of British and American, and I apologise in advance for any such spellings that offend. I have gloried in the variety of orthographies used among the First Nations and Inuit, and a pronunciation guide is appended as Appendix Two.

Appendix Two: Pronunciation Guide

People who speak English as their first language can find it hard to wrap their tongues around unfamiliar languages. Therefore, I have provided a guide for pronunciation of the indigenous terms in this dissertation. There are hundreds of indigenous languages in the Americas, and five centuries' worth of attempts reduce them to writing. The Latin alphabet is typically used to transliterate these languages and dialects, but unusual symbols are frequently used to represent non-English sounds. Some of the major languages – Cree and Inuktitut being the prime examples – use syllabaries, originally developed by missionaries in the 19th century to provide Bibles and prayer books.

Orthographies can compete against each other. In Yalis (Alert Bay, BC), at the north end of Vancouver Island, Kwak'wala speaking people have to deal with at least three: the simplified transliteration long used in the local Anglican church (c. 1880); the complex scholarly orthography of Franz Boas and George Hunt (c. 1900); and the more recent orthography of the U'mista Cultural Society.

Where possible in this guide I have provided International Phonetic Code (“IPA”) transliterations, as well as a simpler (although much less accurate) transliteration in the Latin alphabet. If I really do not know how to pronounce a word, I have omitted it in this guide rather than guess.

Commonly Spelled	IPA	“Sort of sounds like . . .”
Anishinabe		ah-nish-i-naw-be
Ayaawx		ay-yaw-ch
Cowichan or Quw'utsun	'kau.witʃən	kow-wit-sun
Da'naxda'xw Awaetlatla		da-noch-da-och ah- wah-eit-la
Dzawada'enuxw		de-zaw-wa-dan-euch
Esquimalt	r'skwaimɔ:lt	ess-kwhy-malt

Ga'axsta'las		ga-ach-sta-lass
Gixsam		gits-sam
Haudenosaunee	'houdənou'ʃouni	how-den-ow-sow-nee
Heiltsuk	heiltsək	hie-ul-suck
Halq'eméylem	həl̩kə'meɪləm	hool-kah-mee-lum
Inuk	ɪ'nʊk	i-nook
Inuktitut	ɪ'nʊktɪtʊt	i-nook-ti-tout
Inuit (Δ _o Δ ^c)	'ɪnjʊt	i-noo-it
Innu (not to be confused with Inuit)		in-noo
Iroquois	ɪrəkwoɪ	ear-owe-kwah
Kahnawá:ke (Caughnawaga)	gahna'wa:ge	kog-nah-wa-gah
Kanehsatà:ke		kawn-e-sa-taw-kay
Kanien'kehá:ka		kan-yen-ke-ha-ka
K'ómoks or Comox		co-mocks
Kwagu't		k'wag-ee-ulth
Kwakwaka'wakw	'k ^w ak ^w ək'əʔwak ^w	kwak-walk-ee-walk
Kwak'wala (the language of the Kwakwaka'wakw)	kwa:kwa:lə	kwa-kwalla
Kwiakah		kwee-a-kah
Lakota		lah-koe-tah
Lekwungen or Lək ^w əŋíŋəŋ		lek-wung'n
Malahat		mal-la-hat
Mamalilikulla		ma-ma-lilly-koolah
Métis		may-tee
Mohawk	mouhɔ:k	moe-hock
'Namgis		nam-giss
'na'mina		nah-mee-nah
Nanwakolas		nan-wah-koe-las
Naskapis		nas-ka-pee
Ojibwa		oh-jib-way
Osage Nation	'ouserɪʒ	oh-sayj
Pauingassi		poe-en-ga-see
Salish		say-lish
Secwepemc	ʃə'hwepəm	sh'whep-am
Shuswap (derived from Secwepemc)		shoo-swap
Songhees		song- hees
Stó:lō	'stɔ:lou	staw-low
Taiaiake		tie-a-kay
tipi, teepee		tee-pee
Tlowitsis	ʔawit'sis	t'lowe-it-sis
Tsimshian (Ts'msyen)	'sɪmʃɪən	simp'shee-an
U'mista		oo-mis-tah
wazhazhe		wa-zha-zhe
Wei Wai Kum		way-why-kum
W̱SÁNEĆ		w'saa-nich

Appendix Three: A Timeline of Selected Events

The purpose of this timeline is to orient readers to a) the interactions of settlers and indigenous peoples in what is now North America, and b) Canadian constitutional history.

BP = *Before Present*. BCE = *Before Common Era* = BC = *Before Christ*
CE = *Common Era* = AD = *anno Domini*, "In the year of the Lord"

This timeline incorporates material (marked with a *) at "A timeline of residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission", CBC News (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-timeline-of-residential-schools-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-1.724434>, accessed November 21, 2018.

- 780,000 BP First human beings settle in what is now Great Britain.
- 130,000 BP Human beings in what is now southern California (contested).
- 45,000 BP Early modern humans arrive in Europe.
- 43,000 BP Minimum number of years, according to some linguists, that is required to have achieved the linguistic diversity in the Americas at Contact.
- 25,000 BP Minimum number of years for the presence of indigenous peoples in the Americas based on mitochondrial evidence.
- 19,000 BP – 14,000 BP The ancestors of modern Europeans settle the non-glaciated parts of Europe.
- 11,000 BP Older consensus of the era for entry into the Americas via the Beringia Land Bridge.
- 10,000 BP End of the last Ice Age in Great Britain.
- 8,500 BP Farming begins in Asia and Africa.
- 200 CE – 1300 CE Arrival of the ancestors of the Inuit in what is now northern Canada, Alaska, and Greenland.
- 250 CE – 900 CE "Classic" period of Mayan civilization, including a fully developed writing system.
- 500 CE – 1000 CE Wari "Empire" in what is now Peru.
- 550 CE – 1000 CE Tiwanaku State in what is now Bolivia, Chile, and Peru.
- 600-1400 CE Establishment of Cahokia in what is now the state of Illinois.

- 1000 CE Norse settlement of Vinland.
- 1100 CE – 1572 The Sapa Inca expand the Kingdom of Cusco into the Inca Empire.
- 1428 CE Foundation of the Aztec Empire in the Valley of Mexico.
- 1451 CE (or 1142 CE ???) Foundation of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) by the Peacemaker from the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Onó-tà?ke (Onondaga), Onyota'a:ka (Oneida), Guyohkohnyo (Cayuga), and Onödowá'ga: (Seneca). The Skarù:rę?, (Tuscorora) join in 1722.
- 1492 CE Contact by Columbus with Taino in Bahamas. Subsequent voyages in 1493, 1498, and 1502. La Navidad is founded on Hispanolia, destroyed by the Taino. Enslavement of the Taino by the Spanish. Diseases introduced by Europeans begin to kill off 50-90% of the populations.
- 1493 CE Pope Alexander VI issues *Intera caetera*, demarcating areas of conquest and colonization between Portugal and Spain.
- 1496 CE First voyage of John Cabot on behalf of King Henry VII of England. Subsequent voyages in 1497 and 1498-1500.
- 1501 CE The first African slaves brought from Africa to Spanish settlements.
- 1511 CE Fr. Antonio Montesinos denounces the use of violence in the settlement of Hispanolia.
- 1519-21 CE Conquest of Mexico.
- 1520 CE Francisco de Vitoria condemns violence in the settlement of New Spain.
- 1532 CE Conquest of Inca Empire of Peru.
- 1534 CE First Voyage of Jacques Cartier to Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.
- 1535-36 Second voyage of Cartier past Stadacona (Quebec City) down to Hochelaga (Montreal).
- 1537 Fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas calls into question the justice of Spanish settlement in New Spain. He is made a bishop in 1544.

- 1541 Third voyage of Cartier. An attempt at a permanent settlement is made, but abandoned after two years because of disease and attacks by the Laurentian Iroquois of Stadacona.
- 1542 The Spanish Crown issues “The New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians. They are repealed in 1545.
- 1550-51 Valladolid Debate between Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda.
- 1604 CE Port-Royal, Acadia (in what is now Nova Scotia) is founded by French settlers, including Samuel de Champlain, in what is now Nova Scotia
- 1607 CE Settlement of Jamestown by the Virginia Company of London.
- 1609 The Habitation, New France is established at Quebec by Champlain. The peoples of Stadacona and Hochelaga are not to be found, and neighbouring First Nations move in.
- 1620 First settlement by English Puritans in Plymouth Plantation.
- 1620-1680 * Boarding schools are established for Indian youth by the Récollets, a French order in New France, and later the Jesuits and the female order the Ursulines. These schools last until the 1680s.
- 1630 Settlement of Massachusetts Bay Colony (Boston) by Puritans.
- 1670 *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson’s Bay* is incorporated and given the monopoly on trade and commerce of all lands draining into Hudson’s Bay (i.e. most of what is now Northern Quebec, Inuvut, the North-West Territories, Northern Ontario, and the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta). It is focused on trading for beaver pelts. The Hudson’s Bay Company would expand in the 18th century into lands draining into the Arctic, and in the 19th century into Oregon Territory and what is now British Columbia. In 1869 it surrenders its territory to the Crown, which transfers it to the new Dominion of Canada, The Hudson’s Bay Company still exists as a chain of department stores.
- 1759 General James Wolfe of Great Britain defeats the French General the Marquis de Montcalm in a decisive battle on the Plains of Abraham, just west of Quebec City. New France is retained by Great Britain in the Treaty of Paris (1763).
- 1763 Royal Proclamation of 1763 in which the British Crown recognizes the indigenous peoples in British North America as autonomous

- nations, requiring negotiation with the Crown for any surrender of land, and reserving all lands west of the Appalachians to them.
- 1763 Blankets infected with smallpox deliberately are distributed to local indigenous peoples by British soldiers at Fort Pitt.
- 1764 The Parliament of Great Britain passes the *Quebec Act* which expands the jurisdiction of the Province of Quebec into the Ohio valley, calling into question settlements and purchases made by colonists from the 12 Colonies. As it established French civil law (as opposed to English Common Law), permitted the free exercise of Catholicism and mandated the collection of tithes by the Catholic church, it was considered in 1776 one of the “intolerable” acts and a justification for revolution against the Crown.
- 1775-1783 American Revolution
- 1780s Smallpox epidemic among the Salish peoples along what later was known as the Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- 1784/1791 Following the influx of Loyalists from the 13 Colonies into the Nova Scotia, the colony of New Brunswick is separated out from Nova Scotia proper.
- 1791 Following the influx of Loyalists into the Province of Quebec *The Constitution Act* (1791) is passed establishing Upper Canada and Lower Canada.
- 1820s * In Upper Canada and Lower Canada early church schools for First Nations are run by Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists.
- 1823 Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme Court writes the majority decision in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, affirming aspects of aboriginal title but only in the context of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- 1840 Upper and Lower Canada are joined into the Province of Canada with one legislature, but separated into Canada West and Canada East.
- 1843 Fort Victoria is established as a Hudson's Bay Factory. A smallpox epidemic follows.
- 1847 * In Canada West the Methodist minister Egerton Ryerson produces a study of native education at the request of the assistant superintendent general of Indian affairs. His findings become the model for future Indian residential schools. Ryerson recommends that domestic education and religious instruction is the best model for the Indian population. The recommended focus is on

agricultural training and government funding will be awarded through inspections and reports.

- 1849 Two Crown Colonies are established on the west coast. One is the Colony of Vancouver Island, and the other is on the mainland and named British Columbia. Fort Rupert is established at the northern end of Vancouver Island; more epidemics follow.
- 1857 *The Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Relating to Indians (commonly known as the Gradual Civilization Act)* is passed by the Parliament of the Province of Canada. The purpose of this act is to transform male members of First Nations into ordinary British subjects.
- 1858 The Fraser River Gold Rush takes place in the Colony of British Columbia. Tens of thousands of prospectors come, largely from California.
- 1859 George Hills is consecrated the first Bishop of British Columbia at Lambeth Palace; after a year of fundraising in the UK he arrives in Victoria.
- 1860 * Indian Affairs is transferred from the Imperial Government to the Province of Canada. This is after the Imperial Government shifts its policy from fostering the autonomy of native populations through industry to assimilating them through education.
- 1862 Cariboo Gold Rush in British Columbia; another smallpox epidemic.
- 1867 Under the *British North American Act* (now known as *Constitution Act 1867*) the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick form the Dominion of Canada. Canada West becomes the province of Ontario and Canada East becomes the province of Quebec. The new government operates as a federation, the federal and provincial governments having different responsibilities. The Dominion Government assumes responsibility for First Nations.
- 1869-1870 The lands of the Hudson's Bay Company are transferred to the Dominion of Canada. This creates a crisis for Métis in Rupert's Land along the Red River (near modern Winnipeg). Louis Riel leads a revolt, establishing a provisional government, and negotiates with the Canadian government. This results in the Manitoba Act, which establishes the province of Manitoba. Riel orders the trial of a protestant Orangeman for treason, and he is executed. Riel is accused of murder and forced into exile in the US. He is elected an MP in 1873, but never takes his seat.

- 1866 The Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia are merged, and the new colony is named British Columbia.
- 1871 The Colony of British Columbia enters into the Dominion of Canada, with the condition that a railway be built from Ontario to the Pacific. This inaugurates the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (“CPR”), which is completed in 1885.
- 1876 The Indian Act is passed by the federal government of Canada. It imposes elected band councils upon recognized First Nations.
- 1898 As a result of the Yukon Gold Rush, Yukon Territory is separated from the Northwest-Territories. The majority of the indigenous peoples there are First Nations.
- 1873 The Colony of Prince Edward Island joins the Dominion of Canada.
- 1880 British Crown assigns the Arctic islands to the Dominion of Canada.
- 1885 *The Indian Act* is amended to ban *potlatches*, the ceremonial feasts of west coast First Nations.
- 1885 *The North-West Rebellion* breaks out in Saskatchewan under the leadership of Louis Riel. It is a revolt by Métis, Cree, and Assiniboine against the federal government of Canada, in order to assert land rights. As most of the Canadian Pacific Railway connecting the Prairies to Ontario had been built, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald is able to suppress it quickly, unlike the situation in Manitoba in 1869-70. 91 people are killed in a series of conflicts. Nine First Nations and Métis leaders are hanged after trials for murder and treason, including Riel. Because of the perceived Protestant-Catholic dimension of the conflict (most of the indigenous were Catholic, most of the settlers and soldiers were Protestant), opinion in the majority Catholic province of Quebec turns against Macdonald’s Conservative party; they do not again win a majority of seats there until 1958.
- 1895 *The Indian Act* is amended to ban the Sun Dance, a ceremonial of First Nations on the Prairies.
- 1905 The Government of Canada creates the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan out of the North-West Territories.
- 1920 At the request of the denominations operating the Residential Schools, *The Indian Act* is amended to make attendance at the schools mandatory.

- 1927 The Indian Act is amended to ban the use of funds for bands or “Indians” to raise funds for lawsuits.
- 1931 *The Statute of Westminster* is passed by the UK Parliament in London after negotiations with the Dominions. The Statute makes the Dominions independent, albeit sharing the Crown. As Canada does not have an amending formula in its founding acts, it still has to ask the UK Parliament to occasionally pass constitutional legislation.
- 1951 The bans on potlatches and the Sun Dance are revoked. First Nations allowed to have legal representation.
- 1969 *The White Paper* (formally known as the “Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969”) is released by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chretien (later Prime Minister). It proposes to abolish all previous legal documents pertaining to Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the Indian Act and the various treaties, and assimilate all “Indian” peoples under the Canadian state. The backlash to the 1969 White Paper is monumental, leading not only to its withdrawal in 1970, but to a wave of activism, academic work and court decisions over the next five decades.⁵⁷²
- 1969 The various denominations and religious orders withdraw from operating the Indian Residential Schools. The schools are operated directly by the federal government, but often through band councils.
- 1973 The Supreme Court of Canada issues a 3-3 split judgment in *Calder v. British Columbia (AG)*. In 1969 Frank Calder and the Nisga’a Nation Tribal Council brought a suit against the Attorney General of British Columbia to have a declaration that certain aboriginal title and rights had never been extinguished. The Supreme Court affirms that title to land certainly existed in 1763 by virtue of *The Royal Proclamation*, but how that translated into land claims in 1973 was unclear. This case forms the foundation for *Delgamuukw v British Columbia* in 1997,
- 1974 * The aboriginal education system sees an increase in the number of native employees in the school system. Over 34 per cent of staff members have Indian status. This is after the government gives control of the Indian education program to band councils and Indian education committees.

⁵⁷² Naithan Lagace and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, “The White Paper, 1969”, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969> accessed December 9, 2018.

- 1975 * A provincial Task Force on the Educational Needs of Native Peoples hears recommendations from native representatives to increase language and cultural programs and improve funding for native control of education. Also, a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development publication reports that 174 federal and 34 provincial schools offer language programs in 23 native languages.
- 1975 The last Canadian passports are issued which declare "The bearer of this passport is a British subject."
- 1979 * 15 residential schools are still operating in Canada. The Department of Indian Affairs evaluates the schools and creates a series of initiatives. Among them is a plan to make the school administration more culturally aware of the needs of aboriginal students.
- 1982 Following negotiations in 1981, the federal government of Pierre Trudeau with the consent of nine of the ten provinces agree to "repatriate" the Constitution. The UK Parliament, at Canada's request, passes legislation that incorporates an amending formula, a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and various other clauses. Section 35 of the act "recognizes and affirms" the "existing" aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada.; the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is recognized as part of Canada's Constitution.
- 1986 * The United Church of Canada formally apologizes to Canada's First Nations people.
- 1989 * Adults who as children were housed at Mount Cashel Orphanage in Newfoundland make allegations of sexual abuse by Christian Brothers at the school. This lawsuit by non-indigenous survivors of residential abuse paves the way for litigation for Indian Residential School victims.
- 1990 * Phil Fontaine, leader of the Association of Manitoba Chiefs, meets with representatives of the Catholic Church. He demands that the church acknowledge the physical and sexual abuse suffered by students at residential schools.
- 1991 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples ("RCAP") begins its work.
- 1991 * The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate offers an apology to First Nations of Canada.
- 1993 The Anglican Church of Canada offers an apology to the First Nations of Canada.

- 1994 * The Presbyterian Church offers a confession to First Nations of Canada.
- 1996 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, (“RCAP”), issues its final report. One entire chapter is dedicated to residential schools. The 4,000-page document makes 440 recommendations calling for changes in the relationship between aboriginals, non-aboriginals and governments in Canada.
- 1996 The Gordon Residential School, the last federally run facility, closes in Saskatchewan.
- 1997 The Supreme Court of Canada issues its decision in *Delgamuukw v British Columbia*. “The court finds that the provincial government had no right to extinguish the Indigenous peoples’ rights to their ancestral territories . . . [T]he court deems that oral history is an important type of evidence that courts must treat as equal to other types of evidence. The court also clarifies the content and definition of Aboriginal title, as previously explored in the Calder case (1973). It defines Aboriginal title as Indigenous peoples’ exclusive right to the land, and affirms that Aboriginal title is recognized as an “existing aboriginal right” in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.”⁵⁷³
- 1998 The government unveils *Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan*, a long-term, broad-based policy approach in response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It includes the Statement of Reconciliation: Learning from the Past, in which the Government of Canada recognizes and apologizes to those who experienced physical and sexual abuse at Indian residential schools and acknowledges its role in the development and administration of residential schools. St. Michael’s Indian Residential Schools, the last band-run school, closes.
- 1999 Nunavut, a territory which has a majority Inuit population, is carved out from the Northwest Territories.
- 2001 * Canadian government begins negotiations with the Anglican, Catholic, United and Presbyterian churches to design a compensation plan. By October, the government agrees to pay 70 per cent of settlement to former students with validated claims. By December, the Anglican Diocese of Cariboo in British Columbia declares bankruptcy, saying it can no longer pay claims related to residential school lawsuits.

⁵⁷³ Gérald A. Beaudoin & Michelle Filice, “Delgamuukw Case”, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/delgamuukw-case>, accessed December 9, 2018.

- 2005 * Ottawa announces a \$2-billion compensation package for aboriginal people who were forced to attend residential schools. Details of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement include an initial payout for each person who attended a residential school of \$10,000, plus \$3,000 per year. Approximately 86,000 people are eligible for compensation.
- 2008 * Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologizes to former students of native residential schools, marking the first formal apology by a prime minister for the federally financed program. "The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history," he says in a speech in the House of Commons.
- 2009 * Pope Benedict XVI expresses "sorrow" to a delegation from Canada's Assembly of First Nations for the abuse and "deplorable" treatment that aboriginal students suffered at Catholic church-run residential schools. Assembly of First Nations Leader Phil Fontaine says it doesn't amount to an official apology but hopes it will "close the book" on the issue of apologies.
- 2009 * Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl announces the appointment of Judge Murray Sinclair, an aboriginal justice from Manitoba, as chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for residential schools. Marie Wilson, a senior executive with the N.W.T. Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, and Wilton Littlechild, Alberta regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations, are also appointed commissioners.
- 2010 * Thousands of aboriginal residential school survivors meet in Winnipeg for the first national event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- 2015 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issues its *Final Report*.

Appendix Four: The Apology of the Anglican Church of Canada

Apology to Native People

A message from the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, to the National Native Convocation, Minaki, Ontario, Friday, August 6, 1993.

<https://www.anglican.ca/tr/apology/>

My Brothers and Sisters:

Together here with you I have listened as you have told your stories of the residential schools.

I have heard the voices that have spoken of pain and hurt experienced in the schools, and of the scars which endure to this day.

I have felt shame and humiliation as I have heard of suffering inflicted by my people, and as I think of the part our church played in that suffering. I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told and I hold in the highest honour those who have told them.

I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed. I also know that I am in need of healing, and my own people are in need of healing, and our church is in need of healing. Without that healing, we will continue the same attitudes that have done such damage in the past.

I also know that healing takes a long time, both for people and for communities.

I also know that it is God who heals, and that God can begin to heal when we open ourselves, our wounds, our failures and our shame to God. I want to take one step along that path here and now.

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity. I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally. On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

I do this at the desire of those in the Church like the National Executive Council, who know some of your stories and have asked me to apologize. I do this in the name of many who do not know these stories. And I do this even though there are those in the church who cannot accept the fact that these things were done in our name.

As soon as I am home, I shall tell all the bishops what I have said, and ask them to cooperate with me and with the National Executive Council in helping this healing at the local level. Some bishops have already begun this work.

I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing.

The work of the Residential Schools Working Group, the video, the commitment and the effort of the Special Assistants to the Primate for this work, the grants available for healing conferences, are some signs of that pledge, and we shall work for others.

This is Friday, the day of Jesus' suffering and death. It is the anniversary of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, one of the most terrible injuries ever inflicted by one people on another. But even atomic bombs and Good Friday are not the last word. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that life and wholeness are the everlasting and unquenchable purpose of God.

Thank you for listening to me.

+ Michael

Archbishop and Primate

Appendix Five: Statement of Apology by Stephen Harper,
the Prime Minister of Canada

From: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>
accessed November 21, 2018.

On Wednesday June 11, 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, made a Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, on behalf of the Government of Canada.

11 June 2008
Ottawa, Ontario

The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.

For more than a century, Indian Residential Schools separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities. In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United Churches. The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian Residential Schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

Nous le regrettons.

We are sorry.

Nimitataynan.

Niminchinowesamin.

Mamiattugut.

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian Residential Schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement began on September 19, 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities, and Aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that

gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the Settlement Agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential Schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

On behalf of the Government of Canada
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper,
Prime Minister of Canada

Appendix Six: TRC Calls to Action Pertaining to Churches

This summary is courtesy Melanie Delva, Reconciliation Animator, The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Call Number	Directed to	Content
29	All Parties	Work collaboratively with plaintiffs not included in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to have disputed legal issues determined expeditiously on an agreed set of facts.
46	All Parties	Develop and sign Covenant of Reconciliation
48	Church Parties	To formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UNDRIP”) as a framework for reconciliation
48.1		Compliance with UNDRIP
48.2		Respecting self-determination in spiritual matters
48.3		Ongoing public dialogue and actions supporting UNDRIP
48.4		Statement by March, 2016 on how they will implement UNDRIP
49	All religious denominations and faith groups	Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.
59	Church Parties	Ongoing education strategies for congregations regarding colonization, IRS history and the necessity of apologies
60	Church Parties with seminaries and training centres	Develop and teach curriculum on respect for Indigenous spiritualities, history and legacy of IRS, legacy of religious conflict and mitigation of spiritual violence
61	Church Parties	Establish permanent funding for reconciliation projects, culture and language revitalization, relationship-building, and dialogues for self-determination
73	Federal Government with Church Parties	Establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.
74	Federal Government with Church Parties	To inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child’s burial location, and to respond to families’ wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and

		markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.
81	Federal Government with All Parties	To commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa.
82	Federal Government with All Parties	To commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city