

Philippians 2:5-11

Christian Identity of Moral Wisdom, Paradoxical Servitude, and Resonating Kenosis

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Abstract

The study evaluated Philippians 2:5-11 through a socio-rhetorical perspective within a dominant focus on its ideological elements, semantic hymnal structure, and philosophical connections to the servant leadership paradigm and systems thinking and chaos theories. Paul called upon members of a severely stratified society to rid themselves of their privileged social status and in a kenotic way accept humble and obedient leadership practices modeled by Jesus. Through Philippians 2:5-11, Paul set the fundamental components of the Christian identity guiding and unifying the early communities in their efforts to welcome all, treat each other justly, and to focus on expanding the message of salvation guaranteed with Jesus' humiliating and sacrificial death on the cross. Analogous to this historical parallel, the contemporary societies would continue to rely on gaining moral wisdom of humbleness, obedience, and servitude Jesus, the Lord above all, has shared. Through Him, the message of authentic kenotic leadership would strengthen perpetuating tolerance, communal support, and meaningful moral love (agapao) for each other.

Key words: Philippians 2:5-11, Christian identity, servant leadership, systems thinking, chaos theories

Philippians 2:5-11 Christian Identity

The increasingly frail frame of the contemporary social, political, and economic boundaries defining global communities is now projecting volatility and forcing a rapid and dynamic repositioning of the essential values of local cultures. These ongoing shifts of discrete multidimensional elements of current national platforms signify an amplified human perplexity and driving upheaval fueled by the overpowering moral turbulence, chaos, and spiritually draining misdirection. The quintessential questions: who are we? what defines us? and what bonds us? have resurfaced in a role of potential connective agents while we find ourselves once again on the edge battling permanently destructive forces of evil, brutality, intolerance, and merciless violence. Ostensibly, an unconvertible derivative of the current global lack of direction is reflected in the climactic and inconsolable conditions manifested in desperation, longing for stability and meaning. Throughout the times of uncertainty and hesitation Biblical wisdom has offered much needed guidance and support. Therefore, this project uses the ideological analysis of Philippians 2:5-11 as a directing force supporting the rebirthing of the early Christian identity within the confines of the contemporary mindset. Robbins (1996) noted that the ideological analysis actively empowered the message of the Biblical text through readers' connections with the social and cultural themes in the text and thus, enabling the reader to create and to interpret the historical meanings of the contexts in conjunction with the reader's contemporary notions of feelings, beliefs, and perceptions.

Hymnal Structure

In the effort to relay this ideological focus of the exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:5-11, a preliminary discussion of the literary form of the passage and its evident significance in the

effective and meaningful delivery of textual contexts serves as a gateway into the ideological complexities of the text. Martin (1997) extensively and tediously investigated the scholarly work centering on this text and provided a chronologically structured review of the contributions. For example, Martin heavily leaned on Lohmeyer's analysis which linguistically and semantically proved the poetic genre of this letter uniquely situated among the omnipresent prose of the New Testament. In Martin's interpretation, Lohmeyer proposed a six-strophe rhythmical breakdown of the hymn with each section containing three lines. Furthermore, the thematic connection visible through the linguistic unity of each verse may be considered one of the notably distinct features of this Christological hymn. Based on Lohmeyer's study, Martin affirmed that the hymn contained an introductory formula to prepare the reader for an insertion of a quote, for example, 'so and so said'. Additionally, the circular connection between the themes may be ascertained through the beginning baseline statement about God's existence in eternity linked to the concluding statement of the hymn carrying the same message. The purposeful positioning of these verses demonstrates the poetic character of the text in which commonly the last line (in this case the third line) would repeat and carry through the content of the first line. Finally, Martin brought forth Lohmeyer's conclusion that most likely and partly due to hymn's linguistic fluidity and rhythmical nature, the early Christian communities might have been sung this passage (perhaps as a portion of the liturgical process) at a celebratory events commemorating Lord's Supper.

Paul's decision to employ a hymn conveying a clear and focused message further supports the aforementioned argument. Bekker (2006b) examined the available theoretical review of the letter and concluded that the writings of the hymnal structure served a tri-fold purpose in the early Christian communities: (a) hymns joined members through singing and

supported teaching Christian philosophy to the new members, (b) hymns were frequently used as an engaging method of theoretical education and training, and (c) following their educational value, hymns were also used as pedagogical devices catalytically bridging holistic formation of the community into a single entity built upon a broad spectrum of individual and unique contributions.

Historical Background

Geographical Context

The historical setting of the hymn as transcribed in Philippians 2:5-11 is of utmost significance not only in the organizing movement of the early Christian communities but in a transcending manner to the contemporary communities finding themselves in similar circumstances. Paul's decision to leave Asia Minor around 50 C.E. and to initiate the evangelistic pursuit within the borders of Macedonia opened a new era for sharing and expanding the word of the Gospel. After the arrival in Philippi, Paul began the evangelistic process among a group of Gentile women praying outside of the gates of city. According to deSilva (2004), in those times, women joined the early church movement since it invited women to practice their leadership skills and develop their gifts outside of the home setting. Women also provided room and board for the disciples. This care was important as it supplied the missionaries with the operational base for worshipping, gathering, prayer, and participatory teaching. Public opposition and tension escalated after Paul exorcized devil out of the body of a slave women. The slave owners mobilized against Paul's actions and accused him of breaking the Philippians customs, making Paul's teachings and behaviors unacceptable to Roman citizens. Combined with a potential for an uprising among the Gentile community, Paul's presence was viewed as a threat to the established and customary ways of living. As a result of this pending

hazard, Paul was sentenced to public whipping and imprisonment without a trial. While in jail, Paul continued his mission of sharing Jesus' teaching, not only directly among prisoners but more importantly, through the letters attempting to reach out to all communities in hopes of advancing the knowledge contained in the Gospel. Eventually, Paul relying on his Roman citizenship, was released without conviction and although forced to leave the Philippians ahead of anticipated schedule, his suffering skillfully served the main purpose, the purpose of uniting Philippians around the idea of the early Church community that bore a holistic, ideological, and economic vision of Jesus' teachings which opposed the Roman way of living (deSilva, 2004).

The vital concern against the Roman way of living had to do with a habit of exalting emperor worship. During Paul's life time, emperor worshiping initiated by Julius Caesar, was openly and actively practiced as a cult-like behavior either strictly demanded by the emperors or at least not being discouraged. For example, Caligula ordered that his image be placed in temples and synagogues across the Roman Empire to ensure that citizens considered and treated him and latter emperors as gods. This abusive overreaching of the governing powers was acknowledged and fought against by the contemporaries. For example, Seeley (1994) covered writing of Seneca's and Dio's (then contemporary scholars) who through their social manifestos avidly spoke out against the absolute and self-indulging power of the emperors. According to these ancient scholars, king's responsibility ought to be aligned with the well-being of the land and its people. In the effort to attain this goal, emperors needed to redirect the focal priority from pleasure and entertainment towards developing strategies that would justly benefit the state and attainment of these the objectives (Seeley, 1994).

Social Power Struggle

Producing evidence to support this existence of the power struggle, Wortham (1996) fused the structural elements of the hymn with the ideological interpretation and referred to the main undertones of the message contained of Philippians 2:5-11 as an illustration of social drama. Wortham depicted three progressively expanding sections in the hymn which focused on “the main theme, (...) the resolution of conflict, and the plot is developed in terms of a rites de passage with underlying subplots of status reversal and status elevation” (p. 282). The context of the hymn initially embraced the ethos of purity (normal state of affairs, verses 5-6), became later radically contrasted against mounting pollution (crisis in escalation, verses 7-8), and then attained a superior state of purity via building a state of containment and resolution (verses 9-11). Wortham posited that this intense unveiling of social drama within the body of the hymn also represented an attempt to formulate a much firmer and poignant identify of the early Christian community which was about to be transformed into an independent, global movement.

Wortham (1996) affirmed this transformational change based on the symbolism exerted by the profound progression of spiraling linguistic evolvement of the meanings assigned to each verse, for example, (a) Christianity began as one of many subcultures within Judaism (“Christ Jesus who being in very nature God”, Philippians 2:5-6), (b) shattering conversion of the relationship (“but emptied himself having take a slave form, Philippians 2:7”, (c) decisive shaping of the new foundation of the relationship with God (“he humbled himself and became obedient unto death”, Philippians 2:8), and finally, a clear emergence of a new creed guaranteeing a superior, albeit paradoxical in nature, social status (“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name”, Philippians 2:9). Relatedly, the perceptions of the stabilization evoked through the social drama may be distinctly

established from the symbolism of the physical display of the movement unifying the Christian thought, for example, kneeling and praying to show respect in front of the benevolent glory of God. Therefore, Wortham resolutely put forth the analogous parallel of subjugating the entire body to the savior-bearing Christ with a prophetic expansion of Christianity, rising from the myriad of current religions and dominant political and social mores towards its righteous status as a state religion, eventually formally legitimized and accepted by the Roman emperor.

Ideological Transformation

The Emergence of the Righteous Path

Moreover, passionately contradicting the initial grossly misguided ideas about leadership Paul was determined to model to the citizens of the Roma Empire the righteous road that involved all aspects of their lives. Paul was destined to set a plan in motion that with time was going to reconstruct the prevailing socially and economically stratified structure. First and foremost, Paul aimed at rearranging the common ideas concerning the emperors' positions as gods. In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul directly attacked this line of thought and portrayed poignant evidence against it. For example, Paul advocated that there was only one God, Jesus who was in "very nature of God" (Philippians, 2:6) and albeit, a son of God, Jesus did not require a noble or superior social status to arrive as king and to become king to the entire humanity for eternity. On contrary, Jesus emptied himself "but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of servant, being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:7) to model a transparent position of a servant, apparent not only to the eyes of the citizens of the Roman Empire, but also through the servant leadership approach. This ideology was strikingly contrasting to the leadership exhibited by the emperors and their demands to be considered superior beings, demands based on an ill-minded

foundation of emperors' superficially elevated status. This dishonest behavior showed no regard for others and was built on the evil and cruel acts committed at other's expense. Conversely, Jesus embraced the notion of servant leadership via a complete humble and obedient commitment. He completed his mission in the humiliating and sacrificial death on the cross, "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death of a cross!" (Philippians, 2:8; Seeley, 1994).

Empowering Message

Considering the brewing social and economic tensions across the corrupted land of the Roman Empire, Paul's call to change these practices and to adopt Jesus' teachings, especially among the oppressed ones, might have introduced a viable option. As with any significant changes, the message became an essential parameter of the effective preparation for change and its implementation (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 2005). Hardgrove (2008) noted that the power of the message contained within the verses of Philippians 2:5-11 relied on a multi-directional approach,

Paul incorporated the power of the homology (early Christian confessions) of the faith community, and hymn (a homology set to music) that the believers in Philippi would be familiar with, to make a powerful point concerning the proper attitude of a representative of Christ (p. 27).

Relatedly, the message of regarding salvation as the source of all freedom available to those who chose to believe in the Jesus' self-sacrificial mission and those who accepted the virtuous core of His teachings as the path to achieving freedom possesses the power to holistically proliferate the entire being of each member of the Christian community and thus, to

become profoundly evident in the entire spectrum of the moral and ethical behaviors collectively modeled by the early Christians. The paramount need to shape this righteous philosophy by noticeably engaging compound physical, cognitive, and spiritual human dimensions became the pragmatic extension of the authentic leadership paradigm inevitably formed within the hearts and minds of the committed members.

In an analogous manner, the characteristics of this attitude were clearly delineated in several biblical passages presented by Paul. For example, in Philippians 1:15-17 and Philippians 2:3, Paul emphasized the source of this notion and called upon his congregation to manifestly stand among the members of the pageant culture yet distinctly and fundamentally intertwine the righteousness of the Christian teachings within its background.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains (Philippians 1:15-17).

Oakes (2005) moved even further in assessing the grounding power of the message contained in Philippians 2:5-11 and asserted that Paul, instead of solely offering a different ideological concept of leadership responsibility, firmly probed for recalibration of the current social norms and mores in a distinct manner unlike anything that had been put forth previously. The somewhat shocking process of remapping the minds of the citizens, according to Oakes' interpretation, ought to start with a resolute acknowledgement that Jesus resided physically and metaphysically above all previous, current, and future rulers. Verse 9 in Philippians 2 affirms this foundational philosophy: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name". The contents of this verse provoked citizens to think in a

manner that was in direct juxtaposition to the commonly cultivated and accepted customs of elevating the emperors beyond the limitations of the human traits, therefore nourishing the idea of change and reorganization of the perception of the current social structure and its stratified entitlement of unjust privileges. Despite emperors' hubris attempts to self-proclaim their powers to the godly status and despite the demands to cultivate their political powers as rulers of the Roman Empire, Paul urged Philippians to recognize Christ as the ruler whose ultimate power would reach far beyond the area of the empire and whose teachings would withstand the test of time and would extend onto the metaphysical dimensions of human connection. The level of care, love, and humbleness Jesus offered would be unsurpassed and incomparable to any temporal leader.

Christian Paradox

Substantively, this social movement of the early Christian communities, according to Gray (2008), was deeply strengthened through an intriguing connection of its main message to the paradoxical nature of servant leadership. Gray explained that the paradox in Philippians 2:5-11 was primarily founded on Paul's call to challenge the commonly accepted beliefs about leadership, its role, and its practice. According to Gray, Paul's letter moved against the grain of the leadership theories that projected a powerful and single-dimensional image of a leader such as great man theory or trait theory. These theories centered on creating a leadership style penetrated by the portrayals of iron-willed leaders, confident, unwavering in their absolute power, and decisively determined to accomplish their goals, for example, leadership style practices among contemporary Western leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Regan, or Theodore Roosevelt. Clearly, communal perceptions of this leader type depicted people whose

passion for leading and compassion for their followers became synonymous with theatrical-like, charismatically expressive styles of communication which then subjectively indicated the extent of leaders' abilities to directly or indirectly impose leaders' supreme philosophy onto their followers. The paradox of Jesus' leadership paradigm is connected to a polarized premise of the servant leadership principles, building upon the power of values and nurturing virtues originating within leaders' hearts, minds, and souls: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Call to Mimic Jesus' Radical Teachings

Since the fundamental platform of the message is its conceptual content, Bekker (2006b) expounded the ideological analysis of the Biblical components as the principles embodied within a spectrum of proactive leadership behaviors. Paul, at the very beginning of the hymn, proffered the crucial aspect of conscious imitation of values and beliefs proposed by Jesus. Bekker advocated that the idea of mimicking Jesus was wrapped around the need to imitate God and as such, was uniquely and deeply engraved in the early Christianity movement. Underscoring the encouragement of imitating God-worthy leadership, the tone and the enduring nature of the process ought to be considered as well. Building out fool-proof and broad-based leadership that is set to mimic God's method required much devotion, time wise and effort wise, patience, commitment, and yes, sacrificial decision making. The goal was not to follow in the steps of victoriously glorified Roman emperors but to humbly, wisely, and silently impose a values-based way of thinking onto the tolerance and peace seeking communities.

According to Bekker (2006b), the process of conscious imitation of God's leadership identity was founded on five transcending components: (a) undertaking kenosis, (b) exhibiting

servant posture, (c) embracing humanity, (d) acting with humility, and (e) remaining obedient. The mental, spiritual, and physical kenosis (emptying one's, figuratively speaking, vessels) fosters actions that persuade humans towards relinquishment of the privilege-bearing social status and towards taking on a state of poverty, voluntary vulnerability, or selflessness. This kenotic state of mind may also be regarded as a state of communion with kenotic Christ that leads to personal virtuous strength and transformational morphing of authentic connections between the leader and the follower in a manner primarily meaningful and beneficial to the follower not the leader. Kenosis enables leaders moving away from the rigor of the transactional exchange, for example, propagated by the Roman rulers and into a gentle yet firm reevaluation of links between the humanity and God's divinity, the leadership purpose to initiate human connections in the name of God, and the ability to reach each other deeply for a creation of greater good in all aspects of human lives (Bekker, 2006b).

Probing further, Bekker (2006a) elevated the need for acknowledging kenotic concepts in leadership as vehicles possessing dynamic capacities to transpose and transport leaders into the world and the entity of their followers. This empathetic and compassionate parallel of kenosis to incarnation builds "an ethical and philosophical mode of ministry and leadership that is based on voluntary abasement and mutuality with all humankind" (Bekker, 2006a, p.4). The ethical and moral appropriation of kenotic leadership responsibilities empowers leaders to truly assess their own roles in reaffirming the strength of community through redirecting and reapplying leaders' prestigious authority and perceptions of supremacy into dyadic partnerships saturated with equally constructive sense of servant contributions. Bekker deconstructed the phenomenon of kenosis as "a state of mutual acceptance, vulnerability, and receptivity [that] allows the leader to

locate the follower in their mutual humanity and so find their deepest identity in a communal, redefining, and empowering relationship of self-sacrificial love” (p. 5).

Christian Leadership

Humility as Leadership Catalyst

Emphasizing the active role of humility, Hellerman (2010) echoed this underpinning concepts reaching to the extreme state of humiliation (in Paul’s case, public beating and imprisonment) as one of the profound messages the letter intended to share with the citizens of Philippi. At the time of Paul’s arrival in the area, “residents of Roman colony took particular pride in their citizen status [that is the status of the formal Roman citizen]” (Hellerman, 2010, p. 88) and typically, identified themselves with ideology formed among other Roman tribes. Social and economic treatments varied among proclaimed citizens versus those who were considered non-citizens, naturally with a greater advantage base available for the citizen group. Hellerman contended that Paul deliberately decided not to reveal his Roman citizenship. Had Paul openly identified himself as a citizen, the early Christian community, most likely, would have followed the majority rules which organically established a tiered community reflecting Philippians’ current social systems and expectations. Furthermore, siding with the citizen group, Paul would have accepted the immorality of the dominant culture that favored citizens as a result of the current emperor’s policies fueling ethnocentric tastes and shameless preoccupation with superiority of the Roman citizenry. Instead, Paul decided to forgo the benefits leveraging the possession of the Roman citizenship and by engaging in contrarian behaviors, Paul demonstrated “utter inversion of Roman social priorities and common attitudes toward the citizen franchise” (Hellerman, 2010, p. 89). Displaying these blunt countercultural viewpoints pertaining to the

Roman citizen monopoly, Paul intended to create an unobstructed path that guaranteed expansion of the Gospel and its transformational value to members of any social class of the colony who sought to spiritually and philosophically equate themselves with the teachings of the Gospel. Concluding, Paul's willingness to endure humiliation and to revoke preferential treatments due to a higher ranking status reflected Jesus' posture expressed in Philippians 2:6-7, "being in nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking the nature of the servant", which rests on the premise of employing humility as a protection against injustice and moral and ethical aridness.

Christian Identity as a Change Agent

Paul's radical summon to mirror Jesus' teaching, to become servants (slave-like) and to embrace wholesomeness of humanity aimed at forming the solidifying identity of the early Christian communities. In several verses of Philippians 2 (for example, "but made himself nothing", "he humbled himself", "became obedient to death"), Paul explicitly illustrated the choices Jesus made as the only path to human salvation through kenotic practice and self-reflection (Bekker, 2006b). Paul's opposition to prevailing selfish perceptions of reality across the Roman Empire is self-evident. In this letter to Philippians, Paul put forth a belief that Jesus took upon himself a human appearance to make an empowering stance against social injustice and commonly exercised inequality. This premise makes a powerful statement about the significance of humanness that starts with a single, deceptively insignificant human soul and does not dismiss the infinite capacity of one human heart to produce overarching goodness in the name of God. Bekker (2006b) stated that only through acceptance of humanity in ourselves and in others we become closer to God who created us upon His own resemblance. This divine

nature of humanity has been granted to humans to emanate the paramount role each of us can play in fulfilling God's plan not only in our own ways but also in ways that foremost acknowledge the ethical and moral privilege of being able to love and to serve others. However, the privilege of taking on a servant position must be met with a complete commitment to humility. Only in serving others, the connection rooted in unconditional love for each other can blossom and nurture the advancement of human propensity towards self-sustainable betterment of the entire humanity (Bekker, 2006b).

The same notion of servanthood was ingeniously enlaced in the letter to invite in a readers' need for becoming a servant as those who devote their lives to serve others deserve the praise (Gould, 1970). Straight from the beginning, Paul demanded that servant approach be fulfilled by ridding of selfishness, conceited haughtiness and hubris that eventually penetrated communities with disharmony and strife. Gould (1970) stressed the exemplary servant position Jesus modeled, Jesus who became a man to humbly serve the humanity till his humiliating death on the cross. To underscore the exhalation of Jesus as a savior of humanity, Paul wrote Philippians 2 to "employ this paradox of the Cross to salve the wounds caused by differences between brothers" (Gould, 1970, p. 93). Based on the same promise of reforming present social mores which intensified the unjust differences, Oakes (2005) suggested that the political outline of the Roman Empire was destined to be changed by the virtuous principles of love modeled by Jesus. Oakes posited that Paul was keenly aware of what tools were requisite in order to not only stabilize the current position of the early Christian communities but more importantly to ensure that this movement was capable of a self-propelling expansion.

Pragmatic Awareness

Paul also upheld a realistic strategy and knew that monetary support and a successful upkeep of these communities would be crucial to the achievement of their objectives. Oakes (2005) commended Paul for his wise choice in placing the seeds of the early Church along its participatory premise among Philippians. Thanks to these provisions, Church, as envisioned by Paul, would be open to all regardless the gender, the social position, and the influential powers. This cross-cultural approach would enable localized movements (small but strong groups of Jesus' worshipers) promoting the message of salvation through exemplary modeling, discipline, and mutual support. Indisputably, Paul followed the premise that unlike larger church organizations, smaller communities of faith were more manageable, flexible, and responsive to the current internal and external dynamics and strategically speaking, the land of Philippians offered this grand opportunity. Regardless the association with the Roman Empire, Philippians maintained their religious sovereignty which dominated above the traditional cults present in the core of the Roman Empire. Therefore, a newly formed Christian community would face a lesser chance of being ostracized and shut down by the main dogma. Additionally, Paul's plan was to ensure a receipt of ample donations and social support which would represent the approved, right- versus-wrong organizational philosophy. Paul was committed to expanding the gospel and sought the same type of commitment, devotion, and contributions from the members of the early Christian communities. Communal responsibility, integrity, and accountability for the well-being of all members of the congregations were to be partially fostered through donations of all types (monetary, voluntary supplies of room and board, etc.) provided by the rich and powerful members of the society, thus guaranteeing that the low socially ranking minorities and marginalized groups would follow the example set into motion by the socially visible members.

Contemporaneous Theoretical Linkage

Finally, linking the historically-distant manuscript to the world of today (world filled with chaos, injustice, and confusion), Gray (2008) founded substantial elements of his contemporary interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 on the instructional paradox of the text and used the theories of systems thinking and chaos to provide the evidence supportive of this distinction. Gray referenced Aronson's argument regarding the theory of systems thinking as one of the concepts particularly useful in complex situations brought upon by the ineffective collaboration which based on the rarity and paramount impact of the problems may require solutions that are not apparent to the parties involved. Congruent to this ideology, Gray illustrated Paul's depiction of Jesus as one possessing two contradictory natures. As a son of God, Jesus was undeniably of a divine nature and noble status, a position comparable to the social stratification among humans. However, contrarian to the common assertion of autocratic privileges brought upon by the social status, Jesus willfully emptied himself and took upon a human nature to endure suffering and in humility model a servant form of leadership so that human kind can be offered an inexhaustible source of salvation. In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul emphasized this dual character of paradoxical core of Jesus' leadership by presenting ideas unfit into the thinking schema of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean area during the first century. For example, the rules of the Roman Empire exhibited dominant power by their authoritarian leadership approach and all encompassing political power. Unlike then contemporary Roman rulers, Jesus called for leadership embedded into the need of servant thinking as a solution towards correcting the corrupted, excessively greedy, and heartless leadership identities of those governing the nations. Jesus' teachings about leaders' modeling responsibilities, from the systems thinking perspective, represent a foundation of a guide ultimately effective towards

building sustainable and self-governed communities that learn from the past, and through reaching their present destination transpose the path of the future.

The connection between the chaos theory and Philippians 2:5-11 emerges to the forefront of Gray's (2008) interpretation of the leadership ideology centered on meaningful and actionable leadership, especially relevant to a time of overwhelming uncertainty and paralyzing struggles. The theory of chaos, according to Wheatley (1998), creates an image of a system moving within multidimensional space in nonlinear random directions with an unpredictable movement pattern, never appearing in the same spot twice. Moreover, chaotic systems possess two very unexpected composites: shape and strange attractor. "Chaos has always had a shape- a concept contradictory to our common definitions of chaos- but until we could see it through the eyes of computer, we only saw turbulence, energy without predictable form or direction" (Wheatley, 1998, p. 159). The second unforeseen phenomenon at the heart of the chaotic systems is a strange attractor, "a basin of attraction, an area [where] the system is magnetically drawn into, pulling the system into a visible shape" (Wheatley, 1998, p. 159). This sense of instability is also a powerful source of creation and origin to further subsystems which in time reach a state of order and a desired naturally-fit equilibrium.

Thus, the early Christian communities alike contemporary communities certainly found themselves at a core of the systems resembling chaotic state filled with detrimental forces of social injustice, violence, cruelty, and disregard for human life. An organic, less structured, more autonomous and pliable approach to organizational development continues to offer a more adoptive and strengthening alternative applicable to conditions of rapidly changing dynamics (Ascough, 2002). Therefore, Paul's letter encouraged the early Christian communities to grow internally from a small local nucleus gravitating towards their communal equilibriums and firmly

solidifying and promoting their virtuous systems of beliefs to be mirrored on the framework pictured in Philippians 2:5-11. Incontrovertibly, the guiding and bonding principles relevant to the empowering leadership values of the ancient and current times are immortalized in Philippians 2:5-11, a hymn that set “forth the story of salvation. The centre of gravity of this Carmen Christi is the proclamation of Christ’s lordship over all cosmic forces” (Martin, 1997, p. viii)

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