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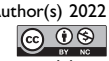

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Does the Gospel Require Self-Sacrifice? Paul and the Reconfiguration of the Self

John M.G. Barclay
Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, UK

Abstract

Some modern Christian notions of 'self-sacrifice' and 'cruciformity' abstract an ethic of self-negation from its larger theological and teleological frame. A distinctively modern and Western trajectory has shaped an 'exclusive altruism' where the interests of the self and of the other stand in a competitive relationship. Although Paul's letter to the Philippians has often been cited as a prime example of such an ethic, closer scrutiny reveals a larger narrative frame, for both Christ and believers, that is oriented towards fullness, not kenosis. Within a community of solidarity and reciprocal asymmetry in Christ, each person's work in looking to the concerns of others is balanced and framed by a communal concern to safeguard the interests of each person in the interests of conjoint benefit. Pauline resources thus enable us to replace the modern polarity with an alternative: the proper opposite to being selfish is not to be 'selfless' but to be 'self-with'.

Keywords

Self-sacrifice, altruism, Paul, cruciformity, Philippians, the self

Introduction

According to a deep Christian instinct, the answer to my question—'Does the Gospel require self-sacrifice?'—is 'Obviously, yes'. The paradigmatic story of Jesus, who laid down his life for others (Jn 15.12-13), and his call to disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him (Mk 8.34), have put their stamp on the Christian moral imagination from the very beginning. Self-sacrifice was exemplified in early Christian martyrdom, and has taken shape in various forms of asceticism and Christian mysticism all the way to contemporary calls to Christian 'altruism', defined as serving the needs of

Corresponding author:
John M.G. Barclay, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS, UK.
Email: john.barclay@durham.ac.uk

others, not the self. The fact that I raise this question may, therefore, seem bizarre. My purpose is not to deny that self-sacrifice (in some senses of that term) may be an appropriate form of Christian love, but to ask about the larger moral and theological frame in which it is placed. Although the cross is central to the Christian narrative, it is not the end of the Jesus-story, neither as its final act nor as its ultimate purpose. Nor is it the end for his followers: 'Whoever loses their life (*psychē*) for my sake and for the sake of the gospel', says Jesus, 'will save it' (Mk 8.35).[1] The loss is not an end in itself, but a paradoxical path to gain.

The question I raise here concerns the conceptual macro-structures that govern our understanding of the self, of the relation between the self and the other, and of the *telos* of the human story—in other words, the large underlying assumptions that can make all the difference to the way we understand and deploy notions of self-sacrifice. After surveying how we have come to associate Christianity with what I call 'exclusive altruism', I will ask whether Paul's letter to the Philippians might provide resources for thinking differently about these issues. I choose this text for a reason. Philippians has become, for many, the prime example of an ethic of self-sacrifice: the 'Christ-hymn' (Phil. 2.6-11) speaks of Christ taking the form of a slave and emptying himself (Phil. 2.7); Paul is glad to be poured out as a libation on the offering of the Philippians' faith (Phil. 2.17); and he instructs the Philippians to set their sights not on their own concerns, but on the concerns of others (Phil. 2.4). In the influential work of Michael Gorman, the Christ-hymn of Philippians 2 is the 'master-story' of Christian ethics, whose hallmark is 'cruciformity', the 'kenotic' mode of self-emptying, self-humbling, and self-giving that counteracts 'selfishness' through a Christian ethic of 'selflessness'.[2] I beg to differ. In this article, I will examine aspects of Philippians that frame 'cruciformity' within a larger narrative that ends not in emptiness but in fullness, where the self and the community reach their *telos* in a Christological narrative about

1. Here and below translations from the New Testament are my own.
2. This theme is nearly ubiquitous in the work of Michael J. Gorman, but is given its fullest expression in *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, 20th anniversary edition with afterword (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001, 2021), and *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 9–39. For recent developments and adaptations of this motif, see Michael Gorman, *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 3–95. In response to criticisms, Gorman has begun to speak of 'resurrectional cruciformity' (*Participating in Christ*, pp. 53–76), but his juxtaposition of crucifixion and resurrection (and his insistence on the priority of the former) does not alter the theological structure of his interpretation of Paul. For a recent critique, see Benjamin G. White, 'Interpreting Pauline Paradox: A Response to Gorman's Cruciformity Concept', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 44.2 (2022), pp. 172–94. In attempting to apply the concept to the 'weak', Nijay Gupta stretches the already capacious meaning of 'cruciformity' to cover such a broad range of virtues (love, obedience, forgiveness, and hope) that the term begins to lose specificity. Nijay Gupta, 'Cruciform Onesimus?', *Expository Times* 133.8 (2022), pp. 328–33.

gain, not loss. By the end, we will have reason to question the modern 'selfish-selfless' polarity, and to offer the outline of an alternative, grounded in a theological ethic.[3]

Exclusive Altruism: A Very Brief History

First, let me outline some steps on the road towards modern notions of altruism that I consider both unnecessary and unhelpful. Some sort of distinction between the self and the other may be basic to all human relations, but the nature of that distinction and the moral shape of a self-other contrast has been understood very differently across different cultures and over time. At its simplest, 'altruism' means simply concern for the other and, in slightly more complex forms, concern to do good indiscriminately to *all* others, *for their own sake*. My object of analysis (and criticism) is not these basic forms of altruism, but a distinctively modern 'perfection' of the concept that we may call 'exclusive altruism', in which benefit for the other is taken to *exclude* any benefit to the self.[4] Here, in 'exclusive altruism', the interests of the self and of the other are assumed to be both polarised and competitive: properly to do good for the other and for their own sake requires action and motivation that is 'wholly disinterested', benefiting the other and *not* the self. Within this zero-sum polarity—where any benefit to the self is taken to reduce the benefit to the other—exclusive altruism requires a comprehensive commitment to self-sacrifice and a suspicion of motives, goals, or results that include the fulfilment or satisfaction of the self.

A strong case can be made that this is a peculiarly modern construction of altruism—a term, not coincidentally, invented in the nineteenth century by Auguste Comte, as the polar opposite to 'egoism'.[5] If we go back to the philosophical traditions of ancient Greek (and Roman) ethics, despite diverse definitions of virtue, the competing schools all shared the common goal of *eudaimonia*—fulfilment, flourishing or happiness in a non-superficial sense. It would be a mistake to consider ancient 'eudaimonism' a quest for 'selfish' or 'self-interested' satisfaction: the fulfilment of the self (in the exercise of virtue) included the welfare of others without zero-sum competition, not least since

3. This article is a companion to my 'Kenosis and the Drama of Salvation in Philippians 2', in Paul T. Nimmo and Keith L. Johnson (eds.), *Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022), pp. 7–23, where my reading of Philippians 2 is spelled out in much greater detail.
4. On the notion of 'perfection', where a concept is drawn out to an extreme, see John M.G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), pp. 66–78 (on six possible perfections of grace). One knows that a perfection is at play when the form of altruism (or 'agapism') being advocated is labelled 'pure', 'genuine', 'robust' or 'full-blown'; see, e.g., Timothy P. Jackson, 'The Christian Love-Ethic and Evolutionary "Cooperation": The Lessons and Limits of Eudaimonism and Game Theory', in Martin A. Nowak and Sarah Coakley (eds.), *Evolution, Games, and God: The Principle of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 307–25.
5. Comte first used the term 'altruisme' in his *Système de politique positive, ou traité de sociologie instituant la religion de l'Humanité* (4 vols., 1851–54). For analysis of the history of the term in Victorian philosophy and religion, see Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

participation in the good was necessarily a shared enterprise. To impose the self-other polarity characteristic of exclusive altruism onto the philosophy of Aristotle, Epicurus or Seneca would be a significant distortion: it represents a moral framework that they simply did not share.[6] Basic to ancient understandings of human relations are the ideals of reciprocity and solidarity; the ideal friendship is one of mutual benefit and conjoint fulfilment, without the sense that 'other-regard' would be diminished or sullied by the happiness of the self. There is criticism, to be sure, or pseudo-benefactions that *only* benefit the self, as of calculations of *utilitas* that aim for what is profitable in what philosophers considered superficial, material terms. There is recognition, accordingly, that the desires of the self require to be pruned or purified in relations characterised by gift or love; and in exceptional circumstances even one's life might have to be sacrificed for the sake of a greater good.[7] That extreme self-sacrifice is, if you like, the *acme* of friendship, the furthest point to which, in a rare emergency, one might need to go in seeking the good of the other and of society as a whole. But it is not the *telos* of friendship, its purpose or goal. That *telos* was constituted by non-competitive participation in 'the good', the end to which human life was properly oriented.[8]

As numerous studies have shown, and as Alasdair MacIntyre has famously articulated in his *After Virtue*, this is the shared world of early Christian ethics, though with some differences: 'the good' is now redefined in Christological terms, human desires are now purified through love for God, the concept of *eudaimonia* is modified through analysis of inner-Trinitarian relations, and the *telos* has an eschatological horizon, beyond death. Because death itself has now been defeated by the good, through the resurrection of Jesus, we find in early Christianity a greater willingness to undergo death in service of others, or of God. However, that is not because the embrace of death is a heroic form of self-sacrifice, as a self-standing ideal of self-obliteration for the sake of others; it is because death itself is now enclosed within a larger frame of hope, fulfilment, and eschatological life.

6. See Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and, in particular, Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 321–99, and Christopher Gill, 'Altruism or Reciprocity in Greek Ethical Philosophy?', in Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite and Richard Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 303–28.
7. For Seneca's philosophy in this regard, see Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, pp. 45–51 and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and its Human Response', *Harvard Theological Review* 101.1 (2008), pp. 15–44.
8. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 266: 'On the traditional Aristotelian view … what education in the virtues teaches me is that my good as a man is one and the same as the good of those others with whom I am bound up in human community. There is no way of my pursuing my good which is necessarily antagonistic to you pursuing yours because *the* good is neither mine peculiarly nor yours peculiarly—goods are not private property. Hence Aristotle's definition of friendship, the fundamental form of human relationship, is in terms of shared goods.'

It could be argued that there are strands of medieval Christian mysticism—exemplified by Meister Eckhart and by the authors of the *Theologia Germanica*—where the contemplation of God is accompanied by the emptying or dispossession of the self. But this is a self-God polarity (where, in fact, the self is reconstructed in God), rather than a self-other polarity; its ethical impact is realised more in withdrawal from 'worldly' affairs than in the exclusive altruism we honour today. I think an important step is taken when Martin Luther—partly drawing on this mystical tradition—began to reshape the sphere of ethical relations. In Luther's polemics against the Catholic tradition, the hope for reward is interpreted as a form of self-seeking: Augustine's critique of the *homo incurvatus in se* is radicalised such that to work for reward is made to look like a quest for the satisfaction of the self. If, as Luther argued, salvation is already given in Christ, no self-seeking is required: Christians can afford to be entirely disinterested because their interests are already externally secured. Thus, the Christian is free to seek the good of the other, and *only* the other, unconcerned for themselves, becoming like Christ in self-giving for others' sake.[9] Although Luther assumed that this self-giving will be reciprocal and will be expressed within the shared life of the state, the household, and the church, his polemics, his penchant for polarities, and his theology of the cross all contributed to the emergence of an exclusive self-other polarity that was to become dominant in the Western tradition.[10]

That polarity first became entrenched in philosophical ethics in early modern England and Scotland. Within an intellectual atmosphere influenced by a pronounced Protestant suspicion of human selfishness, Thomas Hobbes made waves with his representation of human life as, in its natural state, 'nasty, brutish, solitary, and short': for him, all social compacts, and the law and morality that supported them, are a calculated attempt to secure the private good, not a natural outgrowth of pro-social attitudes that are engrained within humanity.[11] In their response to Hobbes, the Cambridge Platonists attempted to ground human goodness in a metaphysical reality, although their abstract and non-eschatological representation of the goodness in which humans participate whittled this down to an innate human goodness, evidenced in the conscience.[12] In moral philosophy of this time (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries) there is a noticeable emphasis on the polarity between 'disinterest' and 'self-interest': the

9. I have argued this case in *Paul and the Gift*, pp. 56–57 and 97–116. Luther's famous treatise, 'The Freedom of a Christian', urges that 'the believer lives only for others and not for himself … considering nothing except the need and advantage of the other' (*Luther's Works* 31.364–65).
10. For Calvin, the 'Sum of the Christian Life' is, quite simply, 'Self-Denial' (*Institutes* 3.7). Self-surrender to God requires the eradication of all 'self-interest' and 'self-love' since these are deeply infected with pride and fleshly desires. Love requires going beyond and even against reason and 'human nature', which are inherently corrupt.
11. See Roger Crisp, *Sacrifice Regained: Morality and Self-Interest in British Moral Philosophy from Hobbes to Bentham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
12. For British moralists' response to Hobbes, in an atmosphere of general negativity regarding human instincts, see Michael G. Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

moral good is attained only to the extent that the interests of the self are removed from moral reckoning.[13] Bernard Mandeville's caustic mockery of supposed disinterest (in his *Fable of the Bees*) only upped the stakes: if, as he claimed, we do good to others only because we desire a good reputation, all our benefactions are tainted with selfishness, and our notions of pure goodness are self-deceiving and self-serving.[14] The stage is set for Kant's concern to purge our motivations, so that (shorn of sentimentalist theories of compassion or sympathy) we do good as individuals for the sake of others and *only* for their sake. It is now everyone's duty 'to promote according to one's means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return': reciprocity, or at least the desire for it, has become suspect, since the structure of reciprocal or shared benefit now smacks of a selfishness that pollutes the purity of the moral act.[15]

For Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill, this self-other polarity has become foundational to morality.[16] Turning the tradition of Protestant polemics against Catholicism into an attack on Christianity as such, they represented any desire for eschatological reward as a stain on Christian morality, a selfish motivation that could be avoided only if one adopted what they called 'the religion of humanity' (what we would call today, 'humanism').[17] If altruism, in their terms, is the opposite of egoism, so *selflessness* has become

13. Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism and the Selfish Hypothesis: Key Debates from Eighteenth-Century British Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).
14. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. Phillip Harth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970; first edition, 1714).
15. Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 572. I am aware that there are many more complexities in Kant than can be elucidated here; see Ryan Patrick Hanley, *Love's Enlightenment: Rethinking Charity in Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 135–70.
16. Andrew Wernick, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
17. See John Stuart Mill, 'On the Utility of Religion', in *Three Essays on Religion: Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923). Mill promotes the religion of humanity as a 'better religion': 'For, in the first place, it is disinterested. It carries the thoughts and feelings out of the self, and fixes them on an unselfish object, loved and pursued as an end for its own sake. The religions which deal in promises and threats regarding a future life, do exactly the contrary: they fasten down the thought to the person's own posthumous interests; they tempt him to regard the performance of his duties to others mainly as a means to his own personal salvation; and are one of the most serious obstacles to the great purpose of moral culture, the strengthening of the unselfish and weakening of the selfish element in our nature … In its effects on common minds, what now goes by the name of religion operates mainly through feelings of self-interest. This is a radical inferiority of the best supernatural religions, compared with the Religion of Humanity' (pp. 110–11). As Friedrich Nietzsche observed, 'not to fall short of the Christian ideal in this [philanthropy], but where possible to outdo it, was a secret spur with all French freethinkers from Voltaire up to Auguste Comte; the latter did in fact, with his moral formula *vivre pour altrui*, outchristian Christianity'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 82.

the opposite of selfishness: the purpose of morality should be the good of the other in an *exclusive* sense.

As it turned out, throwing down the gauntlet to Christianity in this way served to promote a revival and radicalisation of a Protestant ethic in the form of a claim that Christianity was (in fact) wholly and exclusively oriented to the good of the other, and that the Christian ethic, founded on a theology of the cross, was uniquely equipped to motivate what was demanded by exclusive altruism. What Kierkegaard explored in his *Works of Love* and what Protestant theologians promoted as a heroic morality of *kenōsis* found memorable expression in Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, with parallels in Bonhoeffer and elsewhere.[18] Here the self-seeking, desire-oriented, and self-interested claims of *erōs* are put in the sharpest possible contrast with the self-emptying, wholly disinterested ethic of *agapē*: serving the good of the other requires a radical self-negation, commensurate with the self-humbling and self-emptying of Christ all the way to the cross. Gorman's 'cruciformity' stands within this distinctively modern trajectory: although he draws upon Orthodox notions of *theōsis*, even these serve his thesis that 'kenotic servanthood' and self-humbling are the essence of the Christian ethic. One can see the attraction of this tradition, with its radical, heroic ethic, and its strong critique of authoritarian leadership. But one can also see how its one-way ethos could become patronizing and disempowering to the recipients of 'altruism', while its idealization of self-negation could itself become a means of abuse.[19]

18. Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. Edward and Edna Hong (London: Collins, 1962). For British kenotic theologians, see Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1913), p. 265: 'This I believe to the profoundest motive operating in the Kenotic theories—this sense of sacrifice on the part of a pre-existent One'; cf. A.B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ in its Physical, Ethical and Official Aspects* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), p. 15 (Jesus as the 'Great Exemplar of self-renunciation'). The classic statement of modern Lutheran 'altruism' is Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1954), and the same *agape-eros* contrast (their meanings already predetermined) is evidenced in, e.g., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John Doberstein (London: SCM Press, 2015), pp. 18–24. The tradition is continued (though with a less stark antithesis) in Timothy P. Jackson, *Love Disconsoled: Meditations on Christian Charity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

19. For a nuanced theological critique of *kenōsis* with feminist sensitivities, see Sarah Coakley, *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 1–39. Ironically, the self-distancing that occurs in the negation of the self on behalf of the other strengthens the 'buffered' individualism of liberal modernity: giving 'for' another can become a means to evade being 'with' them. As a parallel phenomenon, 'effective altruism', while resisting notions of 'self-sacrifice', consciously disregards pre-existent social ties and maximises individual, rational choice—perfecting altruism as a utilitarian calculus within a neoliberal economic frame; see Peter Singer, *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas about Living Ethically* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

This rapid tour of modern intellectual history is designed to raise two questions. First, are there features in our discourse of altruism that are determined by Western modernity, and are there resources in the biblical tradition that might offer a different path?[20] Second, and relatedly, if we use the term 'altruism', are we buying into an exclusive self-other polarity in which any good for the other must exclude good for the self, and in which the highest ideal is the occlusion, renunciation, or abjection of the self for the sake of the other? Do our habitual contrasts between self-interest and disinterest, or between selfishness and selflessness, reflect some such exclusive altruism, and is there alternative language that could escape this deeply-held but problematic assumption of a zero-sum competition between the good of the other and the good of the self?

An Exploration of Philippians

As noted above, Philippians is often cited as the prime example of a moral theology of self-sacrifice worked out at three levels, regarding Christ, Paul, and believers more generally. Concerning Christ, the 'hymn' of Phil. 2.6-11 presents a downward movement where the one 'in the form of God' did not consider equality (or likeness) with God to consist of seizing (*harpagmos*), but 'emptied himself', taking the form of a slave; and being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient all the way to death, even death on a cross (2.6-8). This self-humbling, self-emptying movement is often interpreted as ethically paradigmatic and connected to the preceding instructions about 'considering others, in humility, more significant than yourselves' (2.3).[21] On Gorman's reading, the Christ-hymn is the 'master-story' of Paul's theology, revealing that 'divinity has kenotic servanthood as its essential attribute'.[22] The final verses of the hymn, which speak of the exaltation of Christ and his installation as Lord of all (2.9-11) are read not as elevation to a new status but as the 'vindication' or 'recognition' of this path of servanthood, such that Jesus' Lordship, and God's power, remain essentially

20. I cannot explore here the important, but related question: are there *non-Western* social and intellectual traditions that might offer better resources for interpreting the biblical materials? See, e.g., Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2009).
21. As is often noted, there seems to be an echo of Paul's term 'humility' (*tapeinophrosunē*, 2.3) in the statement that Christ 'humbled himself' (*etapeinōsen heauton*, 2.8). The elliptical statement of 2.5 has also been read as a straight comparison of mindsets ('think in the way that Christ thought'); see below on the translation of this verse. The ethical interpretation of the 'Christ-hymn' has been a matter of dispute among Pauline scholars since the early twentieth century (in a debate between Lohmeyer and Käsemann), but has become prominent again in recent years; see, e.g., Stephen Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) and L.W. Hurtado, 'Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11', in Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (eds.), *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), pp. 113–26.
22. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, p. 31.

kenotic.[23] With regard to Paul, this reading of Philippians emphasises his renunciation of his preferences for the sake of the Philippians (1.21-26), his counting as loss what he once considered gain (3.2-11), his sharing in the suffering of Christ, being 'conformed to his death' (3.10), and his willingness to be poured out as a libation on the sacrifice of the Philippians' faith (2.17). Such indicators of self-sacrifice are then, apparently, confirmed by Paul's praise of Timothy, who is concerned about the Philippians, unlike the rest who attend only to their own concerns (2.20-21), and similar praise of Epaphroditus, who risked his life for the work of Christ in bringing the Philippians' gift to Paul (2.25-30). At the same time, the Philippians are urged to consider one another more significant than themselves, each one looking not to their own concerns (*ta heautōn*) but to the concerns of others (*ta heterōn*, 2.4; on the text and translation, see below). Here the self-other contrast and the 'not … but' antithesis seem to represent precisely the 'exclusive altruism' we have been speaking about. Moreover, there are echoes of this antithesis in Pauline statements elsewhere about love not seeking its own goods or concerns (*ta heautēs*, 1 Cor. 13.5; cf. 1 Cor. 10.24, 33) and about Christ, as exemplar, not seeking to please himself (Rom. 15.1-3). So is exclusive altruism, and its associated expectation of self-sacrifice, a core Pauline dogma, and does it have its basis in the story of Christ?

A closer look at this letter suggests otherwise. While acknowledging all the features in the text that I have just outlined, I will argue that these are misunderstood if they are not placed within a larger narrative and teleological frame, which ultimately concerns not abjection, but fulfilment. In short, service, humility, and self-limitation are not ends in themselves nor self-standing ideals, but means to another end. They are the often necessary means towards the flourishing of community and of a reconfigured self whose interests are joined with others, whose goal is not emptiness but fullness, not loss but gain. I will pursue my argument with reference to the three categories of people just outlined, Christ, Paul, and other believers.

Sidestepping many contentious features of the Christ-hymn (Phil. 2.6-11), we may focus on what is essential for our purposes.[24] Unquestionably, Paul places heavy emphasis on the downward movement of the Christ-event, whose adoption of human form is associated with emptying, humbling, slavery, obedience, and death—accented as death on a cross (2.6-8). As I have argued elsewhere, I take the 'emptying' here to signal the loss or renunciation of power (Paul uses the *ken*-root often with this nuance), in particular, the renunciation of the capacity to use divine power in humanly powerful forms.[25] That weakness,

23. See, e.g., Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, pp. 30–32. Cf. Gorman, *Participating in Christ*, p. 62: 'for Paul one function of the resurrection is to validate his fundamental claim that the cross is both how and where God acts savingly for the world'. David Horrell, in his careful discussion of the ethical dimensions of this text, speaks in similar terms: 'In the story of Christ's self-lowering, self-giving, even to death, and his subsequent vindication, the Philippians are to see the determinative plot which shapes Paul's and their own moral reasoning'. David Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), p. 214.
24. I have discussed this text in more detail in 'Kenosis and the Drama of Salvation' (see note 3, above).
25. See 'Kenosis and the Drama of Salvation', pp. 16–18.

both physical and social, reaches its *acme* in the crucifixion (cf. 1 Cor. 1.18-25), where Christ identifies himself most fully with humanity in its weakness, mortality, sin, and curse (cf. Rom. 8.3-4; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 3.13).

But that is not the end of the story. The second half of the hymn is just as important as its first, and it represents a new stage in the drama, with a new actor (God) and a new set of actions. Here Christ is exalted and given the name above all other names, with the purpose that every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (2.9-11). I do not think it is adequate to consider this stage of the drama merely the 'vindication' of the servant Jesus, as if the primary focus of the story was an exemplary act of self-humbling to which God accords 'recognition' or approval (see above). Placing this text within the larger frame of the letter, and of Paul's theology elsewhere, indicates that what is depicted in the second part of the Philippian hymn is an eschatological scenario of Christ's universal Lordship, a salvific reordering of all things in submission to him (Phil. 3.20-21; 1 Cor. 15.20-28; Rom. 14.7-12). In other words, the self-emptying of Christ and his self-identification with human weakness and mortality are not ends in themselves: they are the necessary path to the salvific unification of the cosmos (cf. Rom. 10.9-13). Elsewhere in Philippians, Paul points towards that eschatological *telos*, which is characterised not by weakness but by power, not by humiliation but by glory. 'We await', says Paul, 'a Saviour, the Lord, Jesus Christ, who will change the body of our humiliation to make it conform to his body of glory, according to the power by which he is able also to subject all things to himself' (Phil. 3.20-21). If the death of Christ is presently stamped onto the life of believers (3.10), this is not because death is a glorious moral achievement, but because this identification with Christ in his death opens up to solidarity with Christ in his resurrection (3.10-11). Paul's soteriological narrative goes through the cross but beyond it, and it is not sufficient to speak of the risen Lord remaining the Crucified One.[26] The resurrection or exaltation of Jesus is God's act of transformation, a reversal of the trajectory towards death in the human story of Jesus; it guarantees the eschatological *telos* whose characteristic is not loss but salvation (1.28), not humiliation but glory (1.10-11; 3.21).[27]

Over the last century, the discussion of the Christ-hymn in Philippians has veered between readings that emphasise either its soteriological or its ethical import.[28] It is not necessary to play these off against each other, and there is a (limited) sense in which the Philippians might be said to inhabit this story, both in its downward and in its upward trajectories. But it is mistaken, in my view, to take the Christ-story as offering, primarily, an ethical lesson in self-humiliation. That reading not only stumbles on the last part of the

26. Here Gorman speaks in consort with Ernst Käsemann; see Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, pp. 71–72.
27. The Philippian hymn contains an important distinction between Jesus' action (Phil. 2.6-8) and God's (Phil. 2.9-11); but since what Jesus undergoes is done in obedience (to God, 2.8), there is a unity of action running from one half of the hymn to the other, indicated also by the 'therefore' (*dio*) at the start of 2.9. Thus, the exaltation is the goal of the whole narrative, and its eschatological purpose is the necessary frame for the whole drama.
28. For Ernst Käsemann's one-sided but important contribution to this debate, see 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2,5-11', *ZTK* 47 (1950), pp. 313–60 (translated in *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5 (1968), pp. 45–88).

hymn (2.9-11), in which Christ's exaltation is neither humbling nor an ethical example to others; it also fails to place the self-humbling and its ethical correlates within Paul's larger narrative soteriology, whose trajectory is towards resurrection, fullness, and power.[29] It is only our desire to find Christian resources for a modern ethic of self-sacrifice and exclusive altruism that can explain why we might prefer a truncated reading of the Christ-hymn that more or less finishes at the cross. Once the story is read through to its eschatological end (its *telos* in both senses of that term), Paul's instruction to 'think among yourselves, what (you) also (think) in Christ Jesus' (2.5) can be read in a frame in which humility and service of the other are oriented not to masochistic self-abjection but to the construction of a community that will anticipate and participate in Christ's reordering of the cosmos.[30]

What does this mean in relation to Paul, who in this letter speaks frequently of himself as a paradigm for others (3.15-17; 4.9)? First, he surprises us by the way he talks about life and death. Contrary to our assumption that the height of self-sacrifice would be to give up our lives for others, Paul says that, given the choice, he would prefer for his own sake to die, and if he will carry on living that is only because it is in service of others ('more necessary for your sake', 1.24). How so? Because to die is, from his perspective, gain: although the present life is lived in identification with Christ ('to live is Christ', 1.21), 'to die is gain' (1.21), since it would mean a closer bond 'with (the risen) Christ' (1.23).[31] Altruism would regard dying, or risking death, as the supreme self-sacrifice, since it gives up for others what is most precious and advantageous to ourselves (our lives). But in Paul's eschatological frame, life and death look very different. His preference for dying (or willingness to risk death) is a sign that his mortal life is *not* the most precious thing he has: he can sacrifice that because he is *not* thereby sacrificing what is most important about himself.[32] Contrary to our anxieties and suspicions concerning 'interested' behaviour, he

29. See Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 249: 'No account of the Christian moral life can be adequate unless it is allowed to point forward to the resurrection.'
30. The Greek of Phil. 2.5 is famously elliptical as the second clause lacks a verb: it reads literally, 'think this among yourselves which also in Christ Jesus'. I take the meaning to be 'think this among yourselves as you also think in Christ' (cf. Phil. 1.27 and 4.1). For details, see my 'Kenosis and the Drama of Salvation', p. 21 n. 32.
31. While for Paul the present life of the believer is lived 'in Christ', its goal is to be 'with Christ' (Phil. 1.23; 1 Thess. 4.17; 5.10).
32. The modern discussion of Christian 'altruism' rarely notes this larger framing of death itself. For a rare exception, see the following comment by Sarah Coakley: 'There is an equally seductive modern misapprehension to avert, and that is the presumption that dying, or indeed evolutionary extinction, is the worst thing that can happen to anyone (or thing). But that, again, I would contest on theological grounds. The point is not to be misheard, note, as a seeming justification for avoidable suffering, victimization, or abuse, but it is to be heard *christologically*, as an insistence that the deepest agony, loss, and apparent wastefulness in God's creation may, from the perspective of atemporal divinity (and yet also in *the Son's* agony and 'wasted' human death), be spanned by the Spirit's announcement of resurrection hope. Evil, from this perspective, is mere absence of good; death is the prelude to resurrection'. Sarah Coakley, 'Evolution, Co-operation, and Divine Providence', in Nowak and Coakley (eds.), *Evolution, Games, and God*, pp. 375–85, at 379–80; italics original.

is quite unapologetic in speaking of 'gain' (1.12; cf. 3.8) and in parading his own desire (1.23)—though he will later clarify that the believer's proper desires are those energized by God (2.13). Of course, this is not his own gain at the expense of anyone else or at the expense of Christ: he will gain by being 'with Christ'. His gain is not 'selfish' in the modern sense, but neither is his attitude in our sense 'selfless': the goal is defined not by zero-sum competition, but by conjoint benefit.

If there is a reason for Paul to stay alive, it is because he hopes to bring benefit to the Philippians (1.24-26), but here, too, benefit to one party does not compete with or cancel out benefit to the other. It is striking how often Paul uses *syn-* (with) compounds in this letter, where he hails others as his co-workers and co-soldiers (2.22, 25; 4.2-4: *synergos*; *systratiōtēs*; *syzygos*; *syllambanō*; *synathleō*) and ties his own pride and joy to that of the Philippians (and vice versa, theirs to his, with variants of the *synkoinōn*-root at 1.7 and 4.14). Whatever they offer to God, they offer together (he as the libation on their sacrifice, 2.17). Even if this involves suffering he will rejoice, and rejoice *with them*, just as they are to rejoice, and to rejoice *with him* (2.18). If they are to have pride in him (1.26) he also has pride in them; he could not count himself successful or his work fulfilled without them ('lest I run or labour to nil effect', 2.16), because they are beloved to him, his joy and crown (4.1). Whatever elements of self-giving are here at play, the goal is not that he loses and they gain (or that he gains, and they lose) but that the pride, the joy, and the reward are conjoint and shared. While honouring Epaphroditus for risking his life, Paul is heartily relieved, like the Philippians, that he survived: had Epaphroditus died, their acute grief would have represented the fact that their shared benefits had been reduced (2.25-30).

The Philippians are, as Paul puts it, 'co-sharers with me in grace' (*synkoinōnoi mou tēs charitos*, 1.7). Here, as elsewhere, he uses the weighted terminology for partnership or solidarity (*koinōnia*; cf. 2.1; 4.14-15) that indicates joint participation and common gain.[33] In receiving the Philippians' gift, Paul evokes the language of reciprocity—the giving and taking that has gone on between them (4.15). There is no sense here that taking would sully or reduce his generosity as giver: as for everyone in antiquity (and in most cultures today), it is assumed that gift-giving takes place within a structure of reciprocity, extended over time and varied in expression. Paul can cope with having little or having much (4.12-13), but he does not regard fullness (having much) as an embarrassing contradiction, as if he has a comprehensive commitment to self-renunciation. In fact, when he represents the Philippians' gift as (in its deepest sense) a sacrifice to God, he speaks of God as committed to 'fill (*plēroō*) your every need according to his wealth in glory in Christ Jesus' (4.19). Note that what Paul idealises here is not emptiness but fullness, not *kenōsis* but *plērōsis*! To give to one another will, of course, include elements of loss in terms of personal possession, but the goal is the shared benefit of *koinōnia*, and what frames all such sharing in Christ is funded by divine plenitude and oriented towards

33. See John M.G. Barclay, 'KOINWNIA and the Social Dynamics of Paul's Letter to Philemon', in Daniel Marguerat (ed.), *La Lettre à Philemon et L'Ecclésiologie Paulinienne / Philemon and Pauline Ecclesiology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), pp. 151–69.

an ultimate gain, since 'the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus' (1.6).[34]

This is the frame in which to read Paul's comments about communal life in Philippians 2: 'do nothing according to the norms of competitive ambition (*eritheia*) or vainglory (*kenodoxia*), but in humility count one another of greater significance than yourselves. Let each person set their sights not on their own concerns (*ta heautōn*) but, each of you, [also? especially?] on the concerns of others' (2.3-4). There are three things to say about these terse instructions:

(i) The framework for this exhortation is that of a community characterised by solidarity, such that the interests of any one person or group enclose and include the interests of every other. Paul's job will be complete, he says, when the community is of one mind, shares the same love, is harmonious in attitude (*sympsychoi*), and has a single goal or mindset (2.2; cf. 1.27; 4.2). The multiplication of near synonymous phrases underscores that it would be impossible to read what follows as allowing the interests of some parties to be overruled by the partial interests of others. As Marius Victorinus said of this passage in the fourth century, 'we are truly acting for ourselves if we also have a concern for others and strive to be of benefit for them. For since we are all one body, we look out for ourselves when we look out for others.'[35] The spirit here is non-competitive and the benefits non-partitive. The instructions against competitive ambition and vainglory are designed to prevent this unity breaking up into a battle of conflicting interests. The flipside is that no section or individual member of this community can be allowed to suffer for the benefit of others. There is a risk that looking out for others' interests may leave oneself vulnerable in this regard, but it is the responsibility of the community to ensure that this risk is not realised.

(ii) Secondly, within this solidarity, the instruction to consider others more significant, and to look to the interests of others, is explicitly and emphatically reciprocal: in humility consider *one another* (*allēlous*) more important than yourselves: *each of you* (*hekastos … hekastoi*) are to look out for the concerns of others. It is clearly a paradoxical scenario that all parties should consider *each other* more important than themselves—like Paul's instructions elsewhere that in love believers should 'be slaves to one another' (Gal.

34. A parallel pattern of thought is found throughout the Gospels. Those who give up homes, families, and possessions for the sake of the gospel are promised 'a hundredfold' 'now in this time … (with persecutions)' and 'in the age to come eternal life' (Mk 10.29-30). The instruction to give to people beyond the normal limits determined by an assurance of return is undergirded by a promise that the *divine* return is both certain and greater: 'love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great' (Lk. 6.35; cf. 6.38: 'give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap'; 14.13-14: 'when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous').

35. See A. Locher (ed.), *Marii Victorini Afri commentarii in epistulas Pauli ad Galatas, ad Philippenses, ad Ephesios* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1972), p. 83 (1206b): 'tunc enim vere de nobis agimus, si et alios curemus et aliis prodesse properemus. Cum enim omnes unum corpus sumus, aliis si prospiciamus, nobis prospicimus'.

5.13). The inequality that runs in one direction is reversed by an inequality that runs in the opposite direction, so that each party is both honouring and honoured through a reciprocal asymmetry. The expectation of reciprocity, imposed on every single member, entails that there can be no static hierarchy of importance. Humility is enjoined not to create one-sided relations of power, but to replace the competitive desire for recognition with an ethos that makes each person responsible for the dignity of the other. The result will be a community both of humility and of honour, both of serving and of being served, where it is fine to be thought important so long as you are also according importance to others.

(iii) In this light, we may note the textual variant whereby the majority of texts add a *kai* to the final statement of verse 4: 'Let each person set their sights not on their own concerns (*ta heautōn*) but, each of you, *kai* on the concerns of others'. The normal translation of this *kai* would be 'also': 'not on your own concerns but *also* on the concerns of others'.[36] That would indicate that Paul does not subscribe to an exclusive altruism, whereby the interests of others must exclude the interests of oneself: on the contrary, the two are here combined. It has been argued (by Troels Engberg-Pedersen among others) that *kai* should in fact be interpreted otherwise, as 'especially': 'not your own concerns but especially the interests of others'.[37] That is a possible translation, but I think unlikely. In any case, I do not wish to put weight on a textual variant or on a disputable translation, but the context I have sketched already makes the key point apparent. Even if there is present here a straightforward self-other contrast ('not your own concerns, but the concerns of others'), this is framed by an ideal of common interests and reciprocal responsibilities such that the interests of the self, rightly reconceived, are neither abandoned nor disparaged. We might put it like this: here the self is reconfigured and redefined, so that the competitive self, the self-in-contrast-to-others, is left behind, but the self-in-community, the self that is identified with the interests of others, and they with it, is secured and enhanced, as the community shares collaboratively in love, comfort, and mutual encouragement (2.1).

But even that is not enough. The comfort in which the community shares is a comfort 'in Christ' and a partnership in (or of) the Spirit (2.1), and the attitude that they are to cultivate among themselves is one that they have 'in Christ' (2.5). In other words, the Philippian community is sourced in, mediated by, and oriented towards the work of God in Christ. As Bonhoeffer puts it, 'Christus steht zwischen mir und dem Andern'.[38] That the Christian community is derivative from the Christ-event and subordinate to it carries many implications regarding its quality and its aims, but for our purposes we may highlight

36. For discussion of the textual variant, see John M.G. Barclay, 'Benefitting Others and Benefit to Oneself: Seneca and Paul on "Altruism"', in Joey R. Dodson and David E. Briones (eds.), *Paul and Seneca in Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 109–26.
37. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 'Radical Altruism in Philippians 2:4', in John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and J. Michael White (eds.), *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 197–214.
38. 'Christ stands between me and the other'; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Gemeinsames Leben* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980); for the translation of this book, see note 18 above.

just two. First, the new communal solidarity is shaped by an event that accords value to each member not because the majority happen to consider them valuable, but because they are valuable to Christ. The importance of this external criterion of worth is clearest in 1 Corinthians where Paul criticises disregard of 'weaker' members of the community 'for whom Christ died' (1 Cor. 8.11) and where the humiliation of those who are left without food at the Lord's Supper is a flat contradiction of the event they are meant to celebrate, the death of Christ 'for (each one of) you' (1 Cor. 11.17-26). Thus, even a majority cannot determine what is for the communal good without reference to a standard of value already established by the narrative and the values of the good news (which Paul labels in Philippians, 'the things that make a difference', Phil. 1.10). What Paul calls 'the concerns of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 2.21) stand over, and sometimes against, the concerns that the community might determine for itself. Secondly, while the community is charged with looking after the interests of each member, their ultimate fulfilment and satisfaction is underwritten by the one who 'began a good work in you' and will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1.6). Even if a community fails in its responsibility to mutual care, and its members fall out of solidarity, 'their names are written in the book of life' (4.2-3). That does not lessen the desire to create and to practise conjoint benefit here and now, and it does not justify the disregard of anyone's interests on the grounds that they will be compensated hereafter. On the contrary, it means that everyone is answerable to a plan that leaves no-one out of an ultimate purpose of good, and it ensures that no-one can possess this good in a competitive form: because the good that encompasses each individual is also beyond them, everyone can hope to participate in it only in a mode that is shared.

Conclusion

Working from Paul's letter to the Philippians, I have argued that self-sacrifice can stand as a valid Christian ethic only within a larger moral framework and a longer narrative trajectory in which the self is not negated but fulfilled. If we mean by the self the competitive self that seeks its own good at the expense of others, or even the 'atomised' or 'buffered self' that hopes to flourish in independence from others, then, indeed, there are dimensions or aspects of the self that require to be sacrificed for the sake of the self-within-the-common-good. In a Pauline idiom, the self is radically destroyed ('I have been crucified with Christ') but only so that it may be reconstituted in a new form ('It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live …', Gal. 2.19-20; cf. 6.14-15). In the interests of the common good, there may be extreme cases where certain legitimate, but individual goods are sacrificed for communal interests.[39] But that is not the same as an ideal of self-sacrifice or of self-emptying, since the goal is always mutual, conjoint (not competitive) flourishing, and since the *telos* is not loss but fullness, not sacrifice but gain.

There may be some value in drawing a distinction between the 'subjective' and the 'objective' interests of the self. At a subjective level, if actions are governed by concern for the future (collective) gain, the proper giving of the self *into* the web of the common good might be in danger of limitation or even subversion by 'ulterior

39. Note that giving of the self *into* the 'communal good' is not the same as giving of the self *away*. I am indebted to my former student, Dr Logan Williams, for this handy linguistic distinction.

motives'. There is a case for *not* thinking about the end of the story in the act of self-giving, and the risk (and normal time-delay) in acts of reciprocal generosity require that the subjective moment is limited in vision: there may be good reasons for giving while *not* calculating any form of return. But at the objective level, taking into account the larger schema of solidarity and reciprocity and its eschatological *telos*, it is important that the subjective gesture is *not* isolated or idealised as a one-way act of self-sacrifice. It is because it has this larger picture in view that the community can and should ensure that the subjective acts of generosity do not become occasions for abuse or self-neglect. This is not to say, with Bourdieu, that a community systematically deceives itself by inhabiting a double reality, one of power, domination, and 'self-interest' and another of generosity and disinterested giving.[40] But it is to allow a certain space for gestures and discourses of 'self-sacrifice' *so long as* they are surrounded and ultimately oriented towards a vision of a shared good in which the self is not lost but (re)found, not emptied but filled.[41]

As suggested by my brief historical survey, there is a large inbuilt bias to be overcome here in the modern moral imagination of the West, but what I am arguing stands in accord with a feminist challenge to an ethic of self-negation (which has typically caused harm, disproportionately, to women), just as it chimes with a proper Christian questioning of a one-sided ethic of sacrifice or suffering, and an undialectical, kenotic Christology.[42] I hope I have indicated how the modern 'perfection' of exclusive altruism—with its 'selfless'-'selfish' polarity—is both unnecessary and unhelpful as a Christian ethic. If we may all agree that it is wrong to be selfish, a better alternative pole to being selfish would be being '*self-with*', which involves not the negation of the self (as suggested by the adjective 'selfless') but the pooling of the self (without loss of personal identity) in the collective 'We'—the self not given *away*, but given *into* relationship with others. I coin the term 'self-with' partly under the influence of Paul's innovative use of the *syn*-compound in Philippians and elsewhere: if he coined new terms with this prepositional prefix, we too may be allowed some linguistic creativity![43] To be 'self-with' is not to inhabit a position midway between selfishness and selflessness. It is to resist *that* polarity

40. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 188–97; for critique, see Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, pp. 17–22.
41. To use a sports analogy, the footballer who passes the ball (rather than selfishly attempting a risky shot at goal) so that a fellow team-member, who is in space, can assuredly score the goal is, in that moment, sacrificing his/her own, individualised, hope for glory. But the aim is that *the team* should win the game, and as a member of that team he/she will share in a common glory—and is in fact more likely to do so, if everyone disciplines their instinctive desire to take the credit of being the goal-scorer.
42. It is surely no accident that 'Charity' has been represented universally in Western art in a female form, or that Virginia Wolff reacted against the Christian idealisation of the wife as 'The Angel in the House'. For recent critical reflection on a theology of suffering, see Karen Kilby and Rachel Davies (eds.), *Suffering and the Christian Life* (London: T&T Clark, 2019).
43. For a theological perspective that highlights the importance of the preposition 'with', see Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being with God* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015). Notions of shared flourishing (in co-labour with creation) are relevant also to a Christian ecological ethic, but that falls beyond the scope of this article.

altogether and to promote alternative ways of thinking about the self-in-community which might accord better with our uniquely Christian resources, with many non-Western configurations of self and community, and, perhaps, with what we are learning about co-operation from evolutionary sociobiology.[44] The construction of such alternative patterns of thought is no easy task, but I hope to have shown that at this point Paul can be of more help for Christian ethics than we might have imagined.[45]

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ORCID iD

John M.G. Barclay https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8706-5522

44. That large field of enquiry is often bedevilled by the ambiguity of the term 'altruism'. For a broad spectrum of views (enabled by careful definitions), see Nowak and Coakley (eds.), *Evolution, Games, and God*. For theological treatment of this subject, see Neil Messer, *Selfish Genes and Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 2007).
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