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## Necessary, Kenotically-donated, & Self-giving Love

“In a not-so-funny way, we are all prisoners of love”<sup>1</sup>.

The prompt to which I am responding in this essay<sup>2</sup> is related to whether or not God is necessarily loving, or if he is freely loving. In attempting to answer this question, I will dialog with Thomas Jay Oord, who is a giant when it comes to the exposition of Christian love. Further, I shall reiterate a minority view on the meaning and extrapolation of the Greek term *kenosis* – that is, that the term refers to, variously, a “kenotic-donation”<sup>3</sup>, a “self-offering”<sup>4</sup>, a “self-donation”<sup>5</sup>, or a “self-giving”<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, the love to which God calls us is multi-

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<sup>1</sup> R. E. Wagoner, *The Meanings of Love: An Introduction to Philosophy of Love* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 135.

<sup>2</sup> Note that a previous form of this essay, highly modified from its present appearance, is currently under review. Cf. B. McCall, *God and Kenotically-Donated Love: A Synergistic Symbiosis*, “Theology & Science”, under review.

<sup>3</sup> By coining the phrase, “*kenotically-donated*”, I am referring to the methodology by which the Spirit of God’s self-giving, uncontrolling love imbibes creation.

<sup>4</sup> For support of *kenosis* as “self-offering”, please cf. Bradford McCall, *Kenosis of the Spirit into Creation*, “Crucible: Theology & Ministry” 1, no. 1 (May 2008).

<sup>5</sup> For an elaboration of *kenosis* as “self-donation”, I point you to: B. McCall, *Thomistic Personalism in Dialogue with Kenosis*, “Studia Elckie” 19(2017), no. 1, 21-32.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. V. Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3. R. Wagoner also pictures preeminent love to be of the self-giving variety. In fact, he calls it “the epitome of love”... “[for] there is enormous power in selflessness” (Wagoner, *The Meanings of Love*, 137). Further, according to Wagoner, however love is defined, it must be understood as a relation of some kind (14). In fact, “from the Christian point of view love is something held in trust, something given, something I can enjoy only if I do not attempt to possess it” (47). So then, I deduce from Wagoner’s statement that love is something I can enjoy only if it is necessarily self-giving in its orientation,

dimensional and multi-expressive<sup>7</sup>. As such, it takes many forms. God calls his creatures to express “full-Oorded” love, because God’s love is full-orbed.

This *kenotically*-donated, “full-Oorded” love onsets an evolving fertility within the natural world, which is a result of the panentheistic relationship of God and world. This panentheistic relationship was initially wrought by the *kenotic*-donation of God’s very self *into* chaotic matter eons ago, and is now continually sustained and upheld by the repetitive imbibification<sup>8</sup> of the creating Spirit – i.e., the impartation of her very self – into the natural world<sup>9</sup>. Thereafter, marked by the Spirit of contingency within evolution, the natural world progressed in a serpentine manner into the advancement of greater complexity, of which *Homo sapiens sapiens* are the pinnacle (at present, anyway).

Indeed, I will argue in the text that follows for a notion of love that is necessarily *kenotically*-donated, self-giving, creative, and uncontrolling. In so doing, I will use several of Oord’s texts as my launching point, and will aim at substantiating that this necessary, *kenotically*-donated, self-giving, creative, and uncontrolling love is empowering of the other and allows for the interactivity of matter and the godhead, since it is principally pneumatologically derived (i.e. Spirit-based) and established by an imbibification<sup>10</sup> of matter with the Spirit of God. Some of these terms are Tom’s, while some are my terms; the distinction will become apparent in what follows.

### 1. Kenotic love as self-donation & self-giving

I did not originate the terminology of love as self-donation, which is a principle upon which my “full-Oorded”, “*kenotically*-donated love” is based (Karol Wojtyla did)<sup>11</sup>. Neither did I originate the terminology of “uncontrolling love” (Tom Oord did)<sup>12</sup>. But it should be noted that Wojtyla’s self-donating love is a strong correlate to Oord’s characterization of uncontrolling love. Accordingly, I will employ both terms – or at least their application – in what I have come to refer to as “*kenotically*-donated love”. This depiction of my

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which backs up one of the main thrusts of this current essay. This condition, I would submit, both applies to God as well as humans.

<sup>7</sup> T. J. Oord, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010), 32.

<sup>8</sup> The term “imbibification” is similarly a word coined by me to refer to the descent of the Spirit into matter, which causes the Spirit to be embedded within nature, and thereby be embodied within it as well.

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller treatment of this concept, see B. McCall, *Whitehead, Creativity, and the Immanently Creative Spirit*, “*Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion*” 54(2019), forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> I have coined the term “imbibification” to refer to the process by which some entity, something, or someone is imbibed by the Spirit of God.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. B. McCall, *Thomistic Personalism in Dialogue with Kenosis*, “*Studia Elckie*” 19(2017), no. 1, 21-32.

<sup>12</sup> Reference the book by the same name: T. J. Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015).

own is based fundamentally upon the notion that *kenosis* amounts to self-giving with reckless abandonment. Whereas I originated neither of the two aforementioned terms, I did, however, originate the usage of the term *kenosis* as a self-offering<sup>13</sup>. As a result, Tom Oord and I have both been picturing *kenosis* as essentially self-giving (i.e., an “infilling”, a “self-offering”, or even a “self-donation” to the other) since or about the year 2008. Self-donating love and self-giving love are both manifestations of God’s love *to* his creatures, *for* his creatures, and *through* his creatures. In what follows, I shall use the terms self-donating love and self-giving love *to* and *for* creation as highly illustrative, essentially equivalent metaphors with which to picture the creating Spirit’s dynamic presence within the world in our postmodern context through *kenotic* donation.

In noting that the love of the creating Spirit is *kenotically*-donated, I mean to draw attention to the idea that she not only gives us love itself, but also *herself* in the very act of love, and that necessarily so. Further, in characterizing love as self-giving, I intend to once again draw attention to the fact that the creating Spirit gives of herself (liberally) to her creation and the creatures of creation. She, in fact, imparts part of herself to it and them, both, in a “*kenotic*” manner. Hence, I say the creating Spirit’s love is *kenotically*-donated. Picking up Oord’s illustration of uncontrolling love<sup>14</sup>, I gather that he means God gives out of God’s fullness, but does not insist on controlling the response(s) of creation in response to that impartation of love. Hence, the designation of God’s love as “uncontrolling”. As such, God does *not* insist on having control. I would like to transfer Oord’s comments regarding “God’s love” just mentioned to the creating Spirit’s love. In so doing, I note that due to her nature primarily being *kenotically*-donated, self-giving love, the creating Spirit *cannot* control other entities, be they animate or not, although she could lure, woo, bid and beckon entities toward herself. Not simply “will not”, but “cannot!”, and that necessarily so. That is the *radical* assertion everywhere made by Oord, and especially in his newest title, *God Can’t*<sup>15</sup>. And I join him in it.

## 2. A deeper explication of “full-oorded” divine love

In the preceding paragraphs of this essay, I have explicated upon Thomas Jay Oord’s positions regarding love from my own perspective and based upon my (probably) somewhat deficient interpretation, as I admit that I may not fully or accurately represent his views. But I contend that Tom has proposed a doctrine of God’s love in several texts over the last decade that is adequate both

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<sup>13</sup> B. McCall, *Kenosis of the Spirit into Creation*, “Crucible: Theology & Ministry” 1, no. 1 (May 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God*.

<sup>15</sup> T. J. Oord, *God Can’t: How to Believe in God and Love After Tragedy, Abuse, and Other Evils* (Grasmere, ID: SacraSage, 2019), 22.

to science and theology<sup>16</sup>. We will meet two of his texts in what directly follows: that is, *Defining Love*, and *The Nature of Love*, both of which were published in the calendar year 2010. His proposal of an adequate doctrine of the love of God begins with the claim that love is an *essential*, necessarily exhibited divine attribute<sup>17</sup>. It is, then, *necessarily* the case that God always acts intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including past divine actions), to promote overall well-being<sup>18</sup>. Loving other entities, be they animate or not, is not an arbitrary divine decision but a central and necessary aspect of God's eternal, unchanging nature<sup>19</sup>. Simply spoken, God cannot *not* love<sup>20</sup>. It is a necessarily expressed attribute of his person. With the writer of John's gospel, Oord affirms that God is love. Oord is quick to point however, that in suggesting that love is an essential aspect of the divine nature, he is not suggesting that God has no choice whatsoever with regard to love. *That* God will love others is necessarily the case. However, *how* God loves others is a free choice on God's part<sup>21</sup>. So we see here both necessity and freedom with regard to God's love.

"In ongoing love relations", Tom writes, "we can rest assured that God will always act intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including God's own past actions), to promote overall well-being"<sup>22</sup>. In fact, this "relentless, steadfast love is a necessary aspect of what it means to be divine"<sup>23</sup>. The fact *that* God loves others, therefore, is an aspect of God's eternal essence<sup>24</sup>, and is essential to his person. However, the manner in which God chooses to promote overall well-being in particular instances, arises from *how* God sympathetically responds to others in that particular instance itself. There is neither a formula nor circumstances exterior to God that entirely determine what the manifestation of love by God will be. How God loves others, therefore, is a matter of the divine will, and that alone, somewhat *ad hoc* even – that is, there is no exterior compulsion. *How* God loves is a free choice on God's part,

<sup>16</sup> T. J. Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2010); Oord, *Defining Love*; Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God*; and Oord, *God Can't*.

<sup>17</sup> Instead of "essential", some philosophers prefer "superessential" to refer to divine attributes. The latter term implies that a particular attribute applies to God in all possible worlds. Oord means by "essential" essentially the same.

<sup>18</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 15.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Oord, *Defining Love*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Here Oord affirms both the theology of J. Moltmann and some of the philosophical conclusions of W. L. Rowe. Moltmann argues that divine freedom does not include the freedom *not* to love (*The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981], 52-56). Rowe argues that God is not free to do some things – God is not free to make something less than the best of all possible worlds, for example (*Can God Be Free?* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004]).

<sup>21</sup> On this, see T. J. Oord, "Divine Love", in *Philosophy of Religion: Introductory Essays*, ed. T. J. Oord (Kansas City: Mo.: Beacon Hill, 2002).

<sup>22</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 190.

<sup>23</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 190.

<sup>24</sup> For a scholarly analysis of the notion that love is an essential divine attribute, see M. L. Taylor, *God is Love: A Study in the Theology of Karl Rahner* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986).

and in this sense and in this alone, God *freely* chooses to love. But the compulsion itself is inalterable.

Oord contends that the issue of how God loves involves more than questions of divine freedom. It also involves questions of the forms divine love takes. In fact, just as creaturely love sometimes takes the form of *agape*, *eros*, or *philia*, and these forms can even mix, Oord proposes that God also expresses *agape*, *eros*, and *philia*, and sometimes these forms mix<sup>25</sup>. In *agape*, God intentionally responds to ill-being by promoting overall well-being – that is, God repays evil with good. In showing *eros*, God appreciates the value of others and seeks to enhance that value. For example, in loving in an *eros* manner, God calls creation good and desires to increase its beauty in all of its manifold manners, but primarily through the expansion of diversity in macroevolutionary contexts.

Further, God expresses *philia* by working cooperatively with creatures – and also by aiding creatures to work cooperatively with other creatures – to increase the common good. Notably, Oord defines *philia* as acting intentionally, in response to God and others, to promote overall well-being by seeking to establish deeper levels of cooperative friendship. *Philia*, then, is the love of collaboration. Oord points out that *philia*, both the word and the concept, plays a significant role in the New Testament<sup>26</sup>. He notes that we have a strong biblical basis for affirming the notion that God expresses *philia* often in his relations with the “other”. While God’s *agape* refers to repaying evil with good and *eros* refers to creating and enhancing value, *philia* refers to God’s work to promote friendship with those capable of such. *Philia* is *alongside* of love<sup>27</sup>. Like *agape* and *eros*, creaturely expressions of *philia* require God’s prevenient and empowering action. God is both the exemplar of *philia* as well as the source of *philia*. *Philia* is a form of love that works *alongside of* God and others to promote overall well-being. We are, in a very real sense, God’s fellow *agents of creativity* and God’s fellow *workers*. God’s love is “full-Oorded” – i.e., composed of *agape*, *eros*, and *philia* dimensions.

The notion that God’s love is full-Oorded presupposes that God is a thoroughly relational being<sup>28</sup>, and as relational, God both *affects* and is *affected* by those with whom God relates. In a greatly positive development of the last generation or so, almost invariably, contemporary relational theologians have rejected the idea that God is an aloof monarch uninfluenced by others. Instead, relational theologians affirm that God suffers and is passible, which means that God is influenced by the ups and downs, joys and sorrows, sins and loves of

<sup>25</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 51; cf. 190.

<sup>26</sup> For more on the implications of *philia*, see T. J. Oord, *Science of Love: The Wisdom of Well-Being* (Philadelphia: Templeton Press, 2004), ch. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Oord, *The Nature of Love*, 114.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Oord, *Defining Love*, 190.

others. God truly cares, and is, in fact, the most moved mover<sup>29</sup>. Although his creatures truly affect this truly relational God, God's eternal nature of kenotically-donated, self-giving and uncontrolling love remains unchanging. God's eternal nature is fixed. God's nature is love, and that nature never alters. The responses of creaturely entities influence the particular way – *agape*, *eros*, *philia* – that God chooses to love others. The theology that Oord proposes suggests that God's own characteristics and God's own relations with others influence the extent of divine love, as well as the manifestations of divine love. God is always everywhere present to all creatures (theologians refer to this *omnipresence*), and God's loving omnipresence plays a distinctively crucial role for understanding divine action in relation to the natural world. Divine omnipresence pertains directly to love's breadth and width and height and depth. Indeed, because God is present to all creatures and because God loves perfectly in a kenotically-donated, self-giving, and uncontrolling manner, all creatures are necessarily loved; they are in fact, smothered with love. Pelted by it one might say.

### 3. God's love for the "other"

Building off of Oord's position, I claim that the creating Spirit necessarily loves the "other", to invoke Bultmannian language. Indeed, what he suggests agrees with adherents to the idea of *kenosis* who say that the three-word sentence – God is love – is the highest revelation of God. The best of the Christian tradition also confirms the supreme importance of divine love<sup>30</sup>. In fact, God's loving actions are expressions of a loving divine nature. Throughout Oord's *Defining Love*, we encounter the proposition that love requires relations with others<sup>31</sup>. Simply put, love is inherently relational. As Oord is fond of saying, loving actions require intentional sympathetic responses to others with whom the lover possesses relations, and love involves promoting the well-being of those with whom the lover relates<sup>32</sup>. Thus, if love is an essential divine property and love always requires relations, we should conclude that God at all times requires relations with an "other". To say it succinctly, divine relatedness is an aspect of the divine trifold being at rudiment. In the same manner that God did not voluntarily decide the necessarily loving feature of God's own nature, God does not voluntarily decide to be relational. God has to be so. It is a necessary expression of who and what God is. Whereas God does not depend upon relations to creatures to exist – as God exists necessarily – the ways in which creatures respond to God affect the moment-by-moment constitution

<sup>29</sup> Notably, C. Pinnock titles one of his most highly regarded books, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*, which promotes the idea that creatures affect God (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Oord, *Science of Love*, ch. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 206.

of the divine trifold being. It is indeed true that some Christian theologians agree that relational love is a necessary aspect of the divine being. However, many of them argue that God only necessarily loves “others” in the immanent Trinity. Love for creatures, then, is contingent upon God’s wholly voluntary decision<sup>33</sup>. Love for those in the Trinity is necessary; love for those in the universe is arbitrary.

The hypothesis that Oord offers in *Defining Love*<sup>34</sup>, by contrast, claims that God necessarily relates to and loves all creatures, be they worthy or not. God necessarily relates to and loves whatever God creates<sup>35</sup>, and God everlastingly creates, relates, and loves. One may or may not argue that God relates necessarily within the Trinity, but either way it is Oord’s contention that that sort of necessary relation is not sufficient to account for the sum of God’s relationality; God needs an “other” to relate to as well. For Oord, God necessarily relates within the Trinity and God necessarily relates to creatures, at one in the same time. For Oord, these two ideas are not mutually exclusive. A being that both exists necessarily and loves necessarily requires nothing outside itself to exist. Oord is keen to argue that God exists necessarily. Indeed, Oord strongly suggests that a scheme supposing that God necessarily and everlastingly relates to some creaturely world or another is preferable to a scheme that claims God’s relations to the world are accidental or arbitrary<sup>36</sup>. Only a God who necessarily relates to and loves the world should be said to love the world essentially and eternally. In contrast, the God whose relations with the world are arbitrary c/should be said to love the world arbitrarily. This God would not be worthy of worship.

This vision of Oord’s proffers a God who is love at rudiment, and to use my own language, who necessarily “kenotically-donates”, “pours out herself” or “self-offers” as a moment-by-moment cause among causes, and who relates with entities that possess God-given freedom. God’s self-offering is a necessary part of what it means for God to empower creatures. This kenotic-donation, to again use my own wording, is an essential and necessary property of God’s very being, and does not entail voluntary self-limitation whatsoever.

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<sup>33</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 207.

<sup>35</sup> Oord stipulates that the world was not created out of absolutely nothing, and *creatio ex nihilo* should therefore be abandoned. In fact, it should be abandoned because of its shaky theological, scriptural, historical, scientific, and philosophical warrants, or, rather, the lack thereof. For work related to the inadequacy of *creatio ex nihilo*, and the possibilities of a positive case for Chaos theory, see S. L. Bonting, *Chaos Theology: A Revised Creation Theology* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2002); J. E. Hutchingson, *Pandemoneum Tremendum: Chaos and Mystery in the Life of God* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2000); and C. Keller, *The Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 207.

#### 4. The creating Spirit's necessary love for the natural world

The creating Spirit's self-giving – *kenotic* – love for the natural world is an essential and necessary component to her nature<sup>37</sup>. Indeed, to say that love is an essential feature of the creating Spirit's eternal nature means God loves necessarily. All of the creating Spirit's actions in the past, present, and future are acts of love<sup>38</sup>. To use the double negative: the God whose nature is love cannot *not* love<sup>39</sup>. According to Oord, God necessarily acts intentionally, in sympathetic/empathetic response to Godself and others, to promote overall well-being<sup>40</sup>. He names this Essential *Kenosis* theology.

Oord's Essential *Kenosis* theology affirms that God's love covenant with the natural world tells us something essential and necessary of God's eternal nature. God's covenant of love with humanity is *not* arbitrary. It is necessary. Indeed, God's covenant with this world is part of God's necessary and eternal nature. Unfortunately, however, some theologians seem to think we must choose between two options when affirming God's necessary giving-and-receiving love. They assume we must choose between affirming either that God necessarily loves in Trinity or God necessarily loves creatures. Most Process theologians, of which both Oord and I are, affirm God's everlasting and necessary love for the natural world. Essential *Kenosis* theology affirms both the inner Trinitarian love of the Godhead, and the Godhead's love for the natural world, along with all entities that fill it. The most robust theological explanation of the God whose love endures forever says God both necessarily loves in Trinity and necessarily loves other entities. This also means God necessarily relates within Trinity and with the natural world. Self-love and entity-love are essential aspects of God's eternal and necessary nature. What Oord here attributes to God generically, I would like to apply to the creating Spirit specifically.

Oord avers that many advantages exist to affirming God necessarily and everlastingly expresses love both in Trinity and toward the natural world. For example, this affirmation affords a more complete basis for affirming love as God's primary attribute and the center of theology. Affirming necessary divine love in Trinity and for the world corresponds with the biblically-revealed irrevocable love of the Father for the Son by the Spirit. It corresponds with the biblically-revealed understanding of God's everlasting love for the natural world, or what theologians oft term, "creation". The affirmation also contends that God's love for creation is a necessary reflection of God's eternal

<sup>37</sup> Oord, *The Nature of Love*, 124.

<sup>38</sup> This is the position of H. R. Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1988).

<sup>39</sup> J. Moltmann argues this point well in *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 52-56. See also M. L. Taylor, *God is Love: A Study in the Theology of Karl Rahner* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986).

<sup>40</sup> Oord, *The Nature of Love*, 17.



nature, not an arbitrary divine decision<sup>41</sup>. And it allows intra-trinitarian love relations to be the model for at least some forms of entity love relations<sup>42</sup>.

Essential *Kenosis* theology – with its dual claims that God’s love is necessary in Trinity and necessarily expressed for other entities as well – also offers a strong psychological advantage over other theologies of love. For example, it makes a difference psychologically whether we believe God necessarily loves us. Our personal experience is affected insomuch as to believe God cannot stop loving us because God’s rudimentary nature is love for the world provides assurance and trust. Some theologies say that God chooses whether to love the world, because love for creatures is wholly voluntary. In such a view, God’s love is conditional, in the sense that God may or may not choose to love creatures. Oord’s Essential Kenosis theology, however, affirms the characteristically Christian testimony regarding God’s unconditional love. God’s necessary and essential unconditional love refers to God’s unchanging nature, his essence, if you will. God essentially loves creation, because God’s essential nature includes kenotically-donated, uncontrolling love for the natural world.

## 5. Conclusion

For the God of self-giving, kenotically-donated love, the decision to express love at all times comes first. In my conception, “full-Oorded” love would encompass what is ordinarily contained within the definition of *agape* love, but it would also include “*eros* love”, for the latter is the love of co-laborment. In my appropriation has of this terminology of *eros* love, it would be the type of love that the desires to, e.g., expand one’s territory or one’s domain, which makes it applicable to the modern theory of evolution by natural selection. Evolution – i.e., “descent with modification”, to invoke a Darwinian phrase – then, recognizes self-giving love, and the goodness thereof, in that species regularly undergo commensalist symbiotic relationships in nature, whereby one is aided by the other, while the “other” is neither “aided” nor “harmed”. This is self-giving love in its entirety, and a proper demonstration of it.

My understanding of necessarily-expressed, “full-Oorded” love also includes dimensions of *philia* love. *Philia* could be akin to the symbiotic relationship known as mutualism in biology, especially since *philia* love has historically been associated with friendship or the interrelatedness of the natural world. Notably, Aristotle indicates that even nonhuman animals can express *philia* love<sup>43</sup>. The relationships marked by *philia*, then, could be identified by

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<sup>41</sup> Oord, *The Nature of Love*, 132.

<sup>42</sup> Intra-trinitarian love is the model for *philia* and *eros* forms of love. It is not the model of *agape*, however, because *agape* repays evil with good. The members of the Trinity never do evil to one another, so *agape* is unnecessary in Trinity.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1155a, in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, eds. and trans. S. Brodie and Ch. Rowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

mutuality, reciprocity, and cooperation<sup>44</sup>, which fits the above biological connotation well. While *agape* or *eros* might benefit from cooperation, reciprocity, and mutuality, those two forms of love do not require any of those three nouns. *Philia* does. I contend, in fact, that the *kenosis* of the Spirit *into* creation amounts to self-giving, betrothed love through self-donation.

The union, then of *agape*, *eros*, and *philia* love could be expressed as mutual aid, or full-orbed, or even as I like to say, “full-Oorded” love. Flourishing lives – be they human or some other mammal – I aver, consistently and necessarily express “full-Oorded” love. Oord suggests that Process philosophy can aid one to see that full-orbed love – that which I have designated “full-Oorded” love – plays an important part in the work to increase the common good of society as a whole. Indeed, “full-Oorded” love would repay evil with good as *agape* would; such a “full-Oorded” love would additionally welcome the intrinsic value and beauty in others, just like *eros* love does; and “full-Oorded” love would also recognize the import of friendship and mutuality as does *philia* love.

Following Oord and Wojtyla again, since God commands that we show necessarily “self-giving”, “self-donating” love, we therefore indeed have the ability to love others as *kenotically*-donating entities, just as the creating Spirit does. When we act as a genuine conduit and amplifier of the creating Spirit’s self-donating and self-giving love, we can truly and entirely and infinitely love others, just as God does. Of course, we cannot expect that we humans will always love alike unto how God does because we do not have an eternal and unchanging nature that is necessarily inclined toward love<sup>45</sup>, but we are at least always *able* to do it.

**Key words:** *agape*, *philia*, *eros*, *kenosis*, necessity, Thomas Jay Oord.

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<sup>44</sup> Oord, *Defining Love*, 49.

<sup>45</sup> Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God*, 77.

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