Divine Kenotic Creativity—the Divine Agency behind Natural Processes

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Article

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Abstract: Understanding creation as divine kenosis, which has become rather widespread since the last century, may emphasize the strong connection between the creation theology and the key Christian doctrine of the Incarnation while contributing to the dialogue between theology and science. At the same time, this theological project requires a thorough rethinking of divine action to avoid representing divine agency and natural causality as the competitive factors and to affirm divine kenosis as the definitive trait of God without compromising divine simplicity and freedom. To this end, the concept of "divine kenotic creativity" is suggested and discussed in this paper.

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Introduction

The concept of divine kenotic creativity (DKC), which is to be discussed in this paper, is a particular interpretation of kenotic creation theology (KCT). The latter may be defined as an "application of kenotic ideas … beyond a strictly christological focus to include other aspects of God's relationship with creation" (Polkinghorne 2001, 92). In other words, the KCT claims that the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, whose life was marked by self-humiliation and the sacrificial death, is not the unique occasion of divine kenosis. On the contrary, divine self-abasement is an inherent aspect of how God creates and sustains the world.

The KCT is rather a spectrum of ideas than a uniform system; but it's possible to demonstrate that some versions of it have been imbued with an idea of divine retreat, which even borders on divine absenteeism: God retreats from a certain space to make room for natural processes and human action. "A world which is not God exists alongside of Him. This, however, means that God does not wish to occupy the whole of space Himself, but that He wills to make room for other forms of existence" (Brunner 1952, 20).

Divine retreat may be interpreted as divine contraction, "God's withdrawal into himself": "in order to create something 'outside' himself, the infinite God must have made room for this finitude beforehand, 'in' himself" (Moltmann 1993b, 109).

The concepts of divine retreat and self-contraction are obviously premised on understanding divine agency and natural causality as competitive factors: either God would act or natural processes would unfold. David S. Robinson (2023) has rightly criticized this approach. He claims that the KCT would gain from a dialogue with the more traditional compatibilist perspective – natural events have natural causes, but natural causality is always grounded in the concurring divine action.

The purpose of this paper is to propose the DKC as a compatibilist interpretation of kenotic divine action and to show that it fits into the dogmatic framework of the Trinitarian Christianity, while contributing to the dialogue between theology and science.

The paper is organized as follows: the first section presents the basic terms that define the concept of the DKC. In the second section, divine action is contemplated through the lens of natural theology in order to explore the similarities and differences between the DKC and the concept of self-sustaining nature, which is inherent in ontological naturalism. The third section dwells on the

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temporal dimension of the DKC; the fourth section aims to put the DKC into the wider Trinitarian and Incarnational context, while the last, fifth section deals with some implications of the DKC for Christian dogmatics and ethics.

Divine Kenosis as the Self-Restraint of Divine Freedom

The existence of natural regularities, which are habitually called the laws of nature, is apparently the most obvious characteristic of the world since the advent of the modern natural sciences. Scientific formulae describe the autonomous or quasi-autonomous functioning of nature, whereas divine action is relegated to the background.

Kenotic creation theology allows for understanding this relegation as a part of divine plan. Wolfhart Pannenberg, who was not in the kenotic creation camp but approached it pretty close at times, has vividly summed up this idea: "If the Creator willed a world of finite creatures and their independence, then he … had to accept the concealment of his own deity in his creation, its covering over and questioning by the independence of his creatures" (Pannenberg 1994, 173).

So, "self-concealment" is a concept that one should necessarily invoke while speaking about divine kenosis in nature. But what are the other aspects of the latter? Is it necessary to think of divine kenosis in terms of divine retreat from the world?

Suppose that Augustine was right – even after the initial creation, divine support remains indispensable for every existing thing at every moment of time: "quae virtus ab eis quae creata sunt regendis, si aliquando cessaret, simul et illorum cessaret species, omnisque natura concideret" (Augustine 1845, 304; if this strength, which rules the created things, ceased sometime, the created species would cease and the entire nature would collapse immediately).

Instead of withdrawing from the world, the incessant divine action may indeed be the power that ensures the continuity and constant effectiveness of natural laws. To this end, it may humiliate itself by restricting its own freedom and confining itself to being the source of natural interactions.

Divine kenosis may be therefore interpreted as divine action restraining its own freedom, while divine presence in the world stands without any spatial or temporal limits. Inasmuch as divine action restrains itself in order to create and sustain the world, it may be named divine kenotic creativity (DKC).

There is an obvious connection between divine self-restraint and divine self-concealment: the former explains how the latter is enacted. Divine action that keeps itself within the limits of natural regularities becomes practically indistinguishable from the autonomous functioning of nature.

Divine Action vs. Ontological Naturalism – Is There Room for Natural Theology?

If divine action is practically indistinguishable from the autonomously existing nature, why should anyone stick to the former concept? Isn't it demonstrated to be completely superfluous? If ontological naturalism were the correct worldview, there would be nothing real apart from nature that would exist on its own. What would be the ground of the world in this case?

Nature is characterized by certain regularities. The current system of these regularities, the current order of nature, is understood to have been shaped by evolutionary processes. But no evolutionary process could unfold unless preceded by a kind of order. At the very least, the pre-evolutionary state of the universe must have been already characterized by interdependency of natural phenomena; otherwise, no events would have caused any consequences. The basic natural regularities must have also been relatively stable to enable the accumulation of changes leading to complex structures' formation.

Thus, our world must have had a pre-evolutionary order. Does it mean that the pre-evolutionary order must have been "tuned" by a rational and benevolent Creator? Both theists and atheists have often confused the religious and scientific aspects of the question, counterposing the multiverse hypothesis against the idea of "fine tuning". As Emily Qureshi-Hurst has argued (2021), the metaphysical criticisms of the multiverse hypothesis may indeed be rather unconvincing. But to be a scientific theory, the multiverse hypothesis has to propose a natural "mechanism" that will ensure

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multiple universes' emergence. And this mechanism has to be something real – otherwise it won't ensure anything.

Even a scientist who suggests universes' emergence out of nothing can't avoid making at least an implicit reference to a primordial physical reality. For instance, to describe the emergent universes quantum mechanically, by a wave function (Hartle and Hawking 1983), means to tacitly suppose that the primordial reality is a quantum field. Is the quantum field a kind of natural order? Obviously, it is. Otherwise, it would lack any distinguishable traits and, therefore, couldn't be suggested or presupposed by any scientific theory.

When all is said and done, science presumes a primordial order in nature.

This primordial order is absolutely independent by definition: it is not caused or influenced by any external factors inasmuch as nothing is allowed beyond the natural world; and, being a prerequisite for any evolutionary processes, the primordial order is not caused or influenced by evolution.

So, why has the primordial order ever taken any definite shape? Why is it an order rather than chaos? No scientific explanation – that is, explanation by causes and conditions – applies here. The primordial order can be what it is only on its own, by its own self-determination. Therefore, the primordial order is, essentially, the primordial self-determination together with its self-expressions.

Certainly, the term "self-determination" doesn't need to be understood anthropomorphically at this moment. Nevertheless, one may safely note that "self-determination" always implies "self-limitation" – because to determine a specific order means to simultaneously refuse any other possibilities.

An inquiry bereft of any connection to a religious tradition would likely stop here. But a Christian theologian may dare to ask whether the independent self-determination is the same as the creative action of God who is believed to become human in Jesus Christ and expected to return with power and glory. This question invokes the classic but controversial project of natural theology.

The Western culture's bias against natural theology has been gaining momentum for several centuries. But the most radical rejection of this approach was presumably voiced by Jürgen Moltmann. Whereas the earlier criticisms focused on the alleged fallacy of natural theology's particular forms or conclusions, the famous Reformed theologian has scathingly condemned the endeavor as such. He opined that the modern European *protest atheism* was partially justified insofar as the utter wickedness of the world doomed any attempt to infer the existence of a benevolent Creator from the observable and comprehensible nature or history.

As long as this world is not 'Godcoloured', it does not allow any conclusions to God's existence, righteousness, wisdom and goodness. Thus, as the world has really been made, belief in the devil is much more plausible than belief in God … If one argues back from the state of the world and the fact of its existence to cause, ground and principle, one can just as well speak of 'God' as of the devil, of being as of nothingness, of the meaning of the world as of absurdity. (Moltmann 1993a, 220-21)

Having completely rejected natural theology, he insisted that only the eschatological hope of the final liberation and consummation lends validity to the very notion of the gracious God (Moltmann 1993a, 255).

Ironically, the criticism of natural theology is the most justified insofar as one speaks about the impossibility to empirically prove the validity of the eschatological hope. Obviously, no conjecture about the eschatological future can be empirically checked in the here and now. But if the world, even in its current shape, didn't reflect divine goodness in any way at all, the eschatological hope would not only lack a decisive empirical proof – it would rather be a hope against hope, an isolated and hopelessly self-referential phenomenon without any support but its own stubbornness. The extreme position that refuses to discern divine presence in the natural structures of the here and now is however exaggerated and lacks sufficient ground.

Christian faith expects to attain to the fullest vision of God only beyond this world order (1 Corinthians 13:12). Hence, Christian theology doesn't pretend to scientifically prove its claims while the history of the world continues. But it may well look for divine footprint in nature (Romans 1:20)

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and seek to discover analogies or even a certain congruence between the things that can be discerned now and the things that the faith awaits with hope (Romans 8:24).

The rest of this paper discusses the presumed congruence between the independent self-determination, alias self-limitation, that is the ground of the world and divine creative action as perceived by Christian faith. In this context, the first aspect to address is the relation of the both concepts to time.

A Glance at the Problem of Time

Some proponents of the KCT have claimed that voluntary self-limitation of divine omniscience might be considered a significant aspect of divine kenosis. According to this opinion, God has renounced the knowledge of the future in order to give freedom to creatures: "God does not know everything in advance because he does not will to know everything in advance. He waits for the response of those he has created, and lets their future come" (Moltmann 2001, 148).

The idea of God renouncing the knowledge of the future has been also discussed by John Polkinghorne (2001, 103-4) in the same collection.

The future does not yet exist and this leads to the belief that even God does not yet know it. In other words, creation has involved a kenosis of divine omniscience. God knows all that can be known, and so possesses a current omniscience, but the divine engagement with the reality of time implies that God does not yet know all that will eventually be knowable, and so does not possess an absolute omniscience.

Whether divine omniscience is somewhat self-limited or not, this particular statement of Polkinghorne is rather problematic. It's obvious that the future does not yet exist for humans. But stating that it does not yet exist for God, one implies that God has renounced eternity and is present only at some particular time.

It's worth noting that the renowned physicist turned theologian has acknowledged that the classical Augustinian vision of God's relation to time is reinforced by the modern scientific understanding of space-time. "Since Augustine, theologians have understood the created nature of time, so that the universe came into being *cum tempore*, not *in tempore*. The modern scientific insights of general relativity, linking together space, time, and matter, have given endorsement to this view, some fifteen centuries after Augustine" (Polkinghorne 2001, 102).

Here Polkinghorne is explicitly pointing at Einstein's general theory of relativity, which demonstrated the interdependence between the geometry of a space-time and the characteristics of energy and momentum inside this space-time. It means that space and time are nothing else but the dimensions of the world. There is no space beyond the world and no time before or after it.

The nature of time *per se* is beyond consideration in this paper. But some clarifications need to be made.

The term "time" is employed here in order to refer to the time that can be noticed and measured in the world wherein we exist – not to a speculative idea of a "dead time" that could allegedly exist before the world's beginning (Mullins 2014,166).

Time is a dimension of natural order. But is it indispensable? Or does it belong only in some particular realms of nature, such as the macro-world (Qureshi-Hurst and Pearson 2020)? That's up to scientists to consider.

Suppose, however, that time is a dimension of the primordial natural order discussed in the previous section. Even in this case, the self-determination that has established this order must logically precede all the (other) aspects of it, time included. It doesn't happen in time but shapes and determines the latter.

Thus, it is atemporal in the same sense as the creative Word of God is atemporal according to the aforementioned Augustinian vision. This Word is nobody else but the Son of God, who is one with the Father (John 10:30): "Verbum Dei Deus apud Deum, Filius unicus Dei, Patri coaeternus est: quamvis Deo hoc in aeterno Verbo dicente creatura temporalis facta sit" (Augustine 1845, 248; the Word of God is God with God, the only Son of God, coeternal with the Father, although temporal creation is produced by God saying it in the eternal Word).

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The glance at the problem of time reinforces the hypothesis that was put forward in the previous section; now it can be restated in greater detail.

One may rationally demonstrate that self-determination is the ground of the world. It is absolutely independent of anything – but is restraining itself. It doesn't belong to any particular time but is the atemporal cause that underlies the entire natural order with all its dimensions, spatial and temporal. Hence, this very self-determination is akin to the central concept of Christian faith: the eternal Word of God, alias the Son of God, who is God himself, by whom the world has been created, and who embraces the past, the present, and the future (Revelation 1:8).

Nonetheless, the suggestion that the rationally conceivable self-determination, which is the ground of the world, and the biblical Logos of God are one and the same reality will inevitably face a number of serious theological objections.

The DKC in the Trinitarian and Incarnational Context

Is creating and sustaining the world the essential, defining characteristic of the Word of God? This hypothesis seems to contradict the basic tenets of Christian faith. It could imply that creating and sustaining the world were the essential characteristic only of the Son and not of the Father. In this case, the Son would be essentially different from the Father; thus, the doctrine of the Trinity would crumble. Or – presuming the essential unity of the Father and the Logos – the hypothesis in question would interpret creating and sustaining the world as the essential characteristic of God. In this case, God would be allegedly unable to exist without creating the world, which would make the Godhead a dependent, contingent reality.

To avoid an impasse, one should take a closer look at the very notion of "essence" with regard to God.

Every contingent thing, including the contingent sentient beings, is shaped by its causes and conditions before it gets an opportunity to produce its own effects. When a contingent being begins to act, it has already got a number of characteristics that define what it is. The being may be less than happy about its essential qualities – still the latter are there, produced by the being's causes and conditions.

In the case of God, this logic doesn't apply. God neither has any causes nor depends on any conditions. If the action of God encountered any divine qualities as given facts, the Godhead would be shaped by some necessity higher than itself. Hence, no qualities of God could logically precede divine action. The essence of God is simple – and it is the completely independent action. It may restrict itself, humiliate itself, and so forth – but all these curtailments will always be self-imposed.

How does this conclusion match the famous biblical definition of God as love (1 John 4:8)?

Love doesn't need to precede and predetermine God's action. One should rather say that God's action coincides with God's love. The completely independent action chooses to be the loving relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. That is to say, God chooses to be the mutual love of the Father, who gives every power to the Son (Matthew 28:18, John 3:35) and creates the world through him (John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:16), and the Son, who creates the world in order to bring it to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Thus, the Father acts through the Son, and the Son acts for the sake of the Father. Divine action is the common action of the Father and the Son (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6), their common "breath", alias the Spirit of God (see Pannenberg 1994, 78).

The unwavering constancy of God, which is emphasized across the Bible, should be explained by divine will itself – that is, without any tacit or explicit reference to any kind of necessity. God chooses to be the loving intra-Trinitarian relationship (which, however, produces and embraces the entire created world) and doesn't intend to transmute into anyone or anything else because it is unbecoming of Love to ever want to cease.

The Son is the eternally and freely chosen self-determination of the Father to produce the whole world of creatures by significantly restraining his own freedom, to sustain the temporal existence of this world, and to finally include the creatures into the communion of Love (1 Corinthians 15:28; cf. John 14:23, 15:7-9). As the Logos of God creates and sustains the world by self-abasement, he may be fittingly called "divine kenotic creativity" while he is contemplated in relation to the created world.

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In the New Testament, Jesus from Nazareth is consistently described as the embodiment of this very Logos. His deeds and words reveal the same pattern of creative, humble, and sacrificial Love that is ready to embrace anyone.

A person may be a sinner – but Jesus doesn't put forward any preconditions for sharing a meal with sinners (Mark 2:15-17; Matthew 11:19; Luke 5:29-32; Luke 15:1-2). Jesus introduces the only precondition for his trying to heal the sick: they should believe that he can help them (Mark 9:23-24). Jesus gives a helping hand not only to outcasts and sinners, but even to a mainstream religious leader (Mark 5:22-24, 35-42) and to a Roman officer (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10). In the end, Jesus prays for his own torturers and executioners (Luke 23:34; cf. Romans 5:6-8). Despite their animosity, Jesus is the friend of those who reject him.

One should notice that the nomenclature of outcasts whom Jesus was inviting into his community – "the tax collectors and the prostitutes" (Matthew 21:31 NRSVue) – is still able to offend sensibilities. Nowadays, the mainstream culture is quite lenient on "sins of the flesh" unless they are mingled with exploitation of underage persons, workplace harassment, and other types of power imbalances; the critics of the sex industry usually presume that sex workers are the victims of it. But the same mainstream culture is harshly denouncing the agents of oppression, who the tax collectors of the Roman Empire were beyond any doubt. Thus, at least a part of the sinners who were welcomed by Jesus are still deemed sinners. The deeds of Jesus remain scandalous and transformative until now.

Jesus's leadership in the nascent Christian community is of the profoundly paradoxical kind. He avoids becoming a political leader (John 6:15) or playing the role of judge (Luke 12:13-14); he discourages other people to judge (Matthew 7:1-5; John 8:3-11). Jesus urges the disciples to abstain from using violence against dissent (Luke 9:52-56) and to serve each other instead of subduing and oppressing each other as people usually do (Mark 10:42-45; Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:12-15; cf. 1 Samuel 8:4-7).

In the end, Jesus accepts the unhappy outcome of his life, albeit with a heavy heart, because it is required by his mission. He acquiesces in being arrested, tortured, and murdered; he is sure that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit" (John 12:24 NRSVue). The descent of Jesus into a destitute state of deteriorating flesh is the epitome of the self-humiliating activity that has been creating and sustaining the world.

Why is Jesus of the canonical New Testament writings the unique incarnation of the divine Logos?

First of all, self-restraint is a reflexive action – therefore, a self-conscious agent is the only thing that is able to represent it, to be "in the image" of it (Genesis 1:27 NRSVue). But, of course, to be in the image of God is the potential that Jesus shares with the entire humanity. Furthermore, Jesus is not the only noble, self-sacrificing human being in history.

But the Gospel writers describe Jesus as the person whose identity has totally and completely coincided with the creative self-abasement of God. Since the very moment of conception (Luke 1:35), there has been nothing in the personality of Jesus that has not been expressive of divine kenotic creativity. That's why Jesus is *the* Incarnation rather than *an* incarnation of the Son of God.

At the same time, it is only in Jesus that the human capacity to be in the image of God has been fully realized – that's why he is repeatedly depicted as the antitype of the first man, Adam (Romans 5:11-19, 1 Corinthians 15:45-47).

The Implications of the DKC for Christian Dogmatics and Ethics

The Incarnation of the Logos of God, who may well be called divine kenotic creativity while he is contemplated in relation to the created world, is the foundational event of the Christian faith. Therefore, the concept of the DKC should inform the Christian understanding of the other theological and ethical issues. Some of its most important implications are briefly discussed in this section.

It has been already demonstrated that the DKC concept helps to understand general revelation – that is, divine footprint in the created nature. But it may also be employed to outline the limits and clarify the content of special revelation.

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There are a lot of religious communities with their own cherished texts that claim divine inspiration. In today's diverse milieu, Jesus can't be considered God Incarnate only because one of these communities – the Christian Church – claims the same about the texts it holds sacred. Nevertheless, the New Testament records about Jesus have managed, despite the complicated process of their formation (which is the biblical studies' domain), to correctly describe the embodiment of God – as a person of humble, creative, and sacrificial love. That gives a sound reason to consider these records the true word of God. Certainly, this reason should never stand isolated from a believer's subjective involvement – that is, from the fascination with the image of Jesus, the joyous recognition of his divinity, which, according to the apostle, is a sure sign of being under the influence of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12: 3). But the correspondence between the image of Jesus and the discernible pattern of creation helps to make this fascination comprehensible.

As for the other biblical texts, which are not directly describing Jesus Christ, they are fittingly called "the word of God" insofar as they are related to the narratives about Jesus.

In short, being the fully accomplished image of God, Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God (Hebrews 1: 1-2) wherefrom all the Scriptures and church bodies get their authority.

The DKC concept may also be employed to discuss the Christian believer's behavior in the face of evil.

The behavior encouraged and commanded by Jesus Christ is the reflection of divine Love (Mark 12:30-31, Matthew 5:44-48, 22:37-40, Luke 6:27-38, 10:25-28, John 13:34) – for the Son of God is not a tyrant imposing his whims on enslaved people, but the creator and caretaker of the world who invites humans to take part in his work and life.

Some person may accept this invitation earlier, the other one would do it later, and yet another one would refuse it outright (Luke 13:6-9, Matthew 20:1-10, 21:28-31).

The reluctant humans are able to refuse the divine invitation as well as to distort its substance because God provides the incessant and indispensable support for every natural process and every human action but allows these processes and actions to unfold in line with their own inclinations. Therefore, "creatures will behave in accordance with their natures: lions will kill their prey; earthquakes will happen; volcanoes will erupt and rivers flood" (Polkinghorne 2001, 95) – and humans will torment each other and reject God if they like.

In this world, biological life is haunted by death, while human achievements are habitually corrupted by human evil impulses and undermined by human blunders. But Christians hope that this unfortunate constellation will end someday. Divine action, although self-limited, is essentially free and, consequently, able to bring the created world to a glorious consummation awaited by the writers of the Bible: death itself will be exterminated by the universal resurrection, and the whole creation will partake of divine life (1 Corinthians 15: 24-28).

This eschatological hope doesn't need to be interpreted as a metaphor. The same divine action that established the basic parameters of our world and has since supported and preserved them is capable of upending them. Likewise, divine determination to preserve the laws of nature throughout the history of the Universe doesn't preclude a few anticipatory signs, such as the appearances of the resurrected Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-8), that point at the future Kingdom of God exactly by breaking through the extant natural order.

The remaining hiatus between the glorious vision of the consummated creation and the complicated, often painful mess of the here and now is the major challenge faced by every Christian believer; it is a frequent cause of disquiet, doubt, and despair. A Christian believer may wish this temporary existence be over (Philippians 1:23).

But divine action has determined itself to endure the burdensome creation process; at the same time, God wants to adorn the world going through this burdensome process with the people who will bear witness to divine Love (Acts of the Apostles 1:6-8).

To establish this People, to recover humans for this community, God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, has paid an enormous price. Jesus has shared a painful, tragic human fate to become a freely accessible presence of divine love and mercy among humans in order to empower those captivated and rejoiced

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by his image to patiently endure the troubles of the here and now while looking forward to the eschatological victory of God (Romans 5:5-8).

In the meanwhile, Christians are called to oppose evil (Romans 12:21). But if the biblical narratives together with the millennia of secular and ecclesiastical history teach anything at all – it is that the People of God has often become a part of the problem rather than a part of solution. Any set of values, whether they be religious or secular, conservative or progressive, can be used as a pretext to serve some individual or group interest to the others' detriment, to belittle and bully the others and thus to get an affordable psychological gratification, and so forth. Christianity is also susceptible to these distortions. Moreover, there is no clear-cut procedure that the well-meaning Christian churches could implement to prevent these moral failures.

Christian communities have often tried to preserve or restore their moral integrity by making and enforcing rules. It is only natural: how would any human organization achieve internal cohesiveness, solve internal conflicts, and overcome a great number of other challenges if not by imposing and enforcing rules? For any community that consists of human beings, making some rules is practically inevitable.

But rules' enforcement (even if it rests on a threat of exclusion, without any kind of physical violence) will always imply judging people. And making judgment about any other person is a clear case of moral hazard, an occasion of sin, a powerful incitement to enjoy one's own purported righteousness while trampling on the others (cf. Matthew 7:1-5, John 8:3-11).

A crucial distinction between *justitia passiva* and *justitia activa*, once highlighted by the Reformation, may be invoked here: a Christian community is passively righteous as long as it remains the space where the written word of the Bible and the Sacraments display Jesus Christ. In other words, the passive righteousness of Christian churches, which they may surely possess, is to make Jesus Christ perceptible. But the active righteousness of any Christian community – that is to say, the righteousness of its individual members, its officials, its assemblies, and so on – is always inchoate and questionable, especially when it expends a lot of effort to ensure the correct thoughts, correct speech, and correct behavior.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has introduced the concept of divine kenotic creativity (DKC) as a means to reconcile kenotic creation theology (KCT) with the compatibilist understanding of divine action. To this end, divine kenosis is interpreted as divine action self-restraining its freedom without any spatial or temporal contraction.

At the same time, the congruence between the self-restraining divine action and the rationally conceivable origin of the world is demonstrated, which may contribute to the dialogue between theology and science.

The connection of the DKC concept to the basic Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation is also discussed here. In particular, it is shown that divine determination to create, sustain, and consummate the world through self-abasement may be considered an essential characteristic of God without compromising divine simplicity, separating the Trinity, and representing the Godhead as a contingent reality.

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