

## *Koinomics:*

### Application of Trinitarian Economics Concept based on Luke 16:1-9

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#### Abstract

*In many nations, the dynamics of economy, politics, and culture are often not determined by the majority, such as the farmers or fishermen. Instead, the main drivers and decision-makers of economic policy are often in the hands of the few who are well-educated, capital owners, and those who have access to the government. Three main roles of the societies at the middle ages which were the feudal lords/capital owners, the farmers, and traders still play similar roles today where the capital owners supported by some government units exploit the poor farmers and fishermen as they control the production process, market access, and supply chain line. With such a system, it has been proven that humanity ends up suffering from health issues, social or political conflicts, economic crises, and even ecological disasters. With the conditions above, various theologians proposed a Christian concept of an economic system that is based on the understanding of the Trinitarian God. As it is central throughout Christian theology, any theology that relates to economic systems can be linked to Trinitarian presuppositions, i.e. **relational identity**. However, there has been no economic system and its application regarding both. This writing is an effort to explore whether the concept of **koinomics** or economic system based on the Trinitarian dimensions, which is koinonia and perichoresis, can be applied to the economic system of a small community as a model. The article also explores other religious concepts and their application to address the issue.*

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, koinonia, participation, relational identity, economics thinking, Gospel in Life, indigenous community

#### Abstrak

*Dinamika hidup ekonomi, politik, dan budaya di berbagai bangsa umumnya tidak ditentukan oleh mayoritas penduduknya, khususnya, para petani, peternak, atau nelayan kecil. Penentu arah dan kebijakan ekonomi berada di tangan segelintir orang-orang terdidik, pemilik modal, dan memiliki akses yang luas ke pemerintah. Tiga pemeran masyarakat kini mirip dengan mereka di abad pertengahan yaitu adalah para pemilik modal (Feodal), petani, dan pedagang, dimana pemilik modal memanfaatkan para petani, peternak, atau nelayan miskin. Mereka dengan dukungan unit pemerintahan tertentu menguasai proses produksi, akses ke pasar, dan supply line. Terbukti dengan sistem di atas, kemanusiaan mengalami masalah Kesehatan global, konflik sosial atau politik, krisis ekonomi, bahkan bencana ekologis.*

*Terhadap gejala di atas, berbagai teolog mengajukan konsep Kristiani mengenai tatanan ekonomi yang berdasarkan pada pemahaman Allah Tritunggal yang dinamakan koinomik. Karena pemahaman Tritunggal sangat sentral dalam keseluruhan teologi Kristiani, maka sewajarnya suatu*

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*teologi mengenai hidup ekonomi dapat dikaitkan dengannya, yakni presuposisi khas Trinitarian: identitas yang berrelasi. Namun, nyatanya sampai kini belum ada sistem dan aplikasi nyata terkait dengan keduanya. Tulisan ini berupaya menelusuri koinomiks yaitu suatu Pemikiran ekonomi berdasarkan dimensi tritunggal yaitu koinonia dan perichoresis dapat diterapkan dalam sistem ekonomi dengan contoh suatu komunitas kecil sebagai model. Artikel juga menelusuri konsep-konsep dari agama lain dan aplikasinya yang serupa dengan pemikiran di atas.*

## **Introduction**

Since the *Club of Rome* emerged in 1968, the world began to heed to their warning concerning a serious problem in human civilization and its systems such as economy, cultural, political, and ecosystems. Aurelio Peccei, an industrialist from Italy and Alexander King, a Scottish scholar expressed their concern that human beings have not seriously and holistically deal with the existing problem. Their 1972 reports titled, *The Limits to Growth* received various responses at global community. Their warning became sharper as in 1973 oil crisis took place and impacting the whole world. Yet, nothing substantial took place along their suggestions.

In 1992, a public figure in the USA, Al Gore stated that the risk of global climate warming is serious as written in his work *Earth in Balance*.<sup>3</sup> At that time, even the Club of Rome was still producing tons of studies and receives sufficient attentions. Thus, two separate efforts were in parallel course. However, even until today, nothing substantial and holistic is done to deal with what they gloomily forecasted.<sup>4</sup> The epidemic of COVID-19 that creates havoc globally has a potential to bring awareness of the needs for interdependency, relationality, and sharing life (participation). Yet, instead, protectionism seems to colour many governments. Competition even for vaccines is apparent.

In this sense, the real issue might not be in the domain of politics, economy, culture, global health, or ecosystem, but in a deeper foundation of life. Therefore, this article explores the framework of theology that has been introduced since the 60s yet left unnoticed. The framework is the theological concept of Trinitarian God and its relational dimension.

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<sup>3</sup> Gore, Al, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*, 2000-04-22, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA, hardcover, 416 pp, ISBN 0-618-05664-5 .

<sup>4</sup> Simmons, Matthew R. (October 2000). "Revisiting the Limits to Growth: Could the Club of Rome Have Been Correct After All?" Mud City Press. Diunduh 29 November 2017. Juga lihat: von Weizsaecker, Ernst; Wijkman, Anders (2018). *Come On! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet*. New York: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4939-7419-1. ISBN 978-1-4939-7418-4. Downloaded 29 November 2017.

## The Method

The first method is literature study or exploration in the field of theology mainly the Trinitarian God and then the Biblical understanding of economy. Second, is to identify the challenges and obstacles of applying the results of those analyses on the real community. Therefore, the result is an operative theology that might contribute hints to shed light to the spirit of existing global economy.

## Results and Discussions

### A. Revisiting the Theology of Trinitarian God

The discourses about the Trinity have developed widely since the 60s. One of the expert who consistently emphasizes the importance and centrality of the Trinity is LaCugna.<sup>5</sup> She states that, “By connecting the doctrine of the Trinity with the concrete language and images of the Bible, creeds, and liturgy, the Christian doctrine of God can be reconnected with other areas of theology, as well as to ethics, spirituality, and the life of the church” (ix). Another person who tries unceasingly to relate the theology of Trinitarian God as the breath to encompass the whole life areas is David Cunningham as shown in his book, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology*.<sup>6</sup> Even though various emphases and nuances appear during the study of Trinitarian, it is fairly evident that there is a consensus or acceptable view. It is about the relational dimension of the Trinitarian God. This study uses the word dimension as it is based on an understanding that the multiple dimensionalities of God is beyond human capability to grasp and to articulate them. Especially, the mystery of God is one of them. Robert Vosloo from Africa states that “A so-called relational understanding of the Triune God, thus, seemingly holds promise to help us imagine or re-imagine God in such a way that we may view ourselves, others and creation differently.”<sup>7</sup> With such an understanding, it means that the concept of relationality in Trinity can be applicable to economic domain in which Christians also take part.

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<sup>5</sup> LaCugna, C M, *God For Us, The Trinity & Christian Life* (New York, Harper San Francisco, 1991),

<sup>6</sup> Cunningham, DS, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998); Fiddes, P, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Theology of the Trinity* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press).

<sup>7</sup> Vosloo, R. *The Gift of Participation: On the Triune God and The Christian Moral Life*, Scriptura 79, (2002). p 93

If such an understanding is potential to conduct analysis on the dimensional relationality with God's self and use it as a model or framework for economic system and other domains of life. In fact, many thoughts condensed in form of slogans, terms, metaphors, and narrative from theological study seldom affect economic life. Let alone the application of such thoughts into economic life of a nation, even the implementation into economic life of a single church already triggers internal challenges and obstacles.

The relationship of God within God's self is clearly difficult to be implemented into the relationship between human beings as they are simply creatures and not God, the Creator and Holy One. Indeed, they who have received redemption should have a capability to make choices either to live mainly for themselves or to live in relation and participation with others. Yet, the power of sin on Earth is still strong although gradually diminishes until the end of human history. Cunningham succinctly states that in God, the relationality unites with God's substance while in this world, the relationality is still challenged by self-centeredness, sectoral identity, and separateness in which people live.<sup>8</sup> In the domain of economy, relationality or even sharing life intention dominated by the human tendencies to privatize economic entity, to cling to individuality, to defend a narrow definition of communal or national identity, and to foster separational frameworks of West versus East, Southern versus Northern hemisphere, and the like.

To deal with such a fact, another option is to develop a framework for operation based on the participative dimension of Godself. This dimension is a communion or fellowship known as *koinonia*. With such a framework, each person or community learns to view themselves as an inseparable part of humanity. Participating or being in fellowship does not mean only to take part in a program or something, but to enter other peoples' life and to allow others to enter our own life. Without continuously living and being with others or partaking in humanity, an individual or a community already degrade their own essence as human beings. Another word in Greek might express the concept sharply. The term is *koinoikos*. Its meaning is social, sociable, apt to form and maintain communion or fellowship. It also means inclination to make others share in one's possessions, and to impart or to be free in giving.

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<sup>8</sup> Cunningham, D S, "Participation as a Trinitarian Virtue: Challenging the Current 'Relational Consensus'." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 1998: 14/1, 7-25.

This dimension of *koinonia* or *koinonikos* will be incomplete without being tied up with the term *perichoresis*. Slobodan Stamatović state that "... *perichoresis* as a theological *terminus technicus* originally appeared in the late Patristics (7th and 8th century) and that it irretrievably entered the theological endeavour through the influential work of John Damascene (†750 AD).<sup>9</sup> McGrath explains of *perichoresis* in the following way: "The basic notion is that all three persons of the Trinity mutually share in the life of the others, so that none is isolated or detached from the actions of the others."<sup>10</sup> In short, *perichoresis* means mutual union or blending process. The common text of the Bible as its foundation is John 14:11 "I am in the Father and the Father in me." However, as Stamatovic concludes Western theology has preserved only *perichoresis* within Trinitarian framework. Thus, *perichoresis* is viewed as a permeation of consubstantial and homogenous. Another concept of *perichoresis* is more related to the Christology. It emphasizes that permeation is also possible between that which is heterosubstantial and heterogeneous. Then, *perichoresis* is also possible between the heterosubstantial. Further he states that there is a place in theology for a third kind of *perichoresis*, i.e. the one between the Trinitarian God and His creation, together with man and the entire nature.<sup>11</sup> Following the idea, the term *koinomics* is offered in this article to underline the relationality which emphasizes synergy and interdependency, the larger sense of identity, partaking, communion, and sharing life.

## **B. Today Economic concepts**

The consequences of using the above concept as the framework that is based on the relational-participative-and communion or *koinonia* is the direct conflict with the existing and popular economic thought to be described as follow.

Many people think that since time immemorial, humans have tended to put their egos first than others. Such tendency seems normal as formulated by Adam Smith which can be summed up as follow, "...among other things society will prosper if everyone is free to pursue his interests individually." That is what then becomes the basis of a conventional economic principle, namely maximizing utility ("utility maximization"), so that egoism and greed are the basis of a capitalistic economy.

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<sup>9</sup> Stamatović, Slobodan. (2016). The Meaning of Perichoresis. *Open Theology*. 2. 10.1515/opth-2016-0026. p. 303.

<sup>10</sup> McGrath, Alister. E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (5th edition). Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 469

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 323

Such an economic principle seems to have received further confirmation by Richard Dawkins' book entitled "*The Selfish Gene*"<sup>12</sup>, which basically teaches that the cells in the human body too prioritizes its own interests. Dawkins is known as a figure of *Neo-Darwinism*. In other words, as a disturbing conclusion, selfishness seems to be justified or even encouraged in modern economics or biology. It is considered normal that many people today become very individualistic and just chase their own prosperity. Then, a question appears: "Is there an economic approach that does not rest on egoism and greed?"

The main obstacle that a nation faces today is the spirit of individualism with various metaphors and narratives that modern media spread and becomes life-style or a new god to bow down to. It permeates political and economic system that are developed based on narrow religious, cultural identity, and historical understanding that separate "*I-Thou*", as Martin Buber points out.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, there is globalization that serves a false framework to promise justice and economic equal wealth that justifies the creation of walls to distinguish nations or communities based on their social class.

In short, *koinomics* as a proposed framework for an economic practice and concept based on the Trinitarian theology needs to be shown as a better model to replace the popular and acceptable economic practices and concepts. Further Biblical text as a foundation might need to be identified.

### **C. Luke 16:1-9 message concerning utility maximization and individualism**

One of the possible foundations of *koinomics* can be discovered in message of Luke 16:1-9 that consists of narratives about a dishonest treasurer.

In the past, scholars offer at least five categories of interpretations about the message of the text. The first consists of scholars like Trench, Creed, Jülicher, Manson, Friedel, Hunter, Kloppenborg, and Culpepper. They posit that text teaches about being prudent or ethical.

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<sup>12</sup> See also Phil Madgwick, <https://medium.com/@philmadgwick/are-genes-really-selfish-eda0ef2b3a24>

<sup>13</sup> Martin Buber, *I AND THOU*. TRANSLATED BY. RONALD GREGOR SMITH. EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 1923. [https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs21/Buber-c1923-I\\_And\\_Thou-ocr-tu.pdf](https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs21/Buber-c1923-I_And_Thou-ocr-tu.pdf).

Another category of interpretations focuses on the responsible use of wealth. Plummer, Ireland, Marshall, Bock, and Hultgren are the proponents of this interpretation. Other experts as Jeremias, Dodd, Hiers, and Bailepoint out to that the text is about eschatology.

Meanwhile, Davidson, Fletcher, Collins, and Porter have stated that Jesus uses irony to teach his audience a lesson. Thus, is the interpretation is to be related to ethics.

This work follows the socioeconomic interpretation. It prompts the readers to learn from the behaviour of the steward. Gibson, Derrett, and Fitzmyer are the main advocates of this interpretation. It is admitted by scholars including J. Fitzmyer that this parable of dishonest servant is one of most puzzling parables taught by Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

At a glance, the parable of the treasurer who was dishonest (Luke 16:1-9) seems to be irrelevant to answer the question. Especially, if one only skims the text of the Sermon on the Mount, especially Matthew 6, it will easily appear that there is no need for a devout Christian to worry about financial matters, let alone the country's economy. However, when one realizes the multi-dimensionality of this parable in the Luke text, it turns out that there are many valuable lessons that can be extracted for socio-economic life.

First, there are six times the word treasurer (Greek: *oikonomon*) in Luke's gospel, and five times in the text Luke 16: 1-9. The fact must hint to an important message concerning what Jesus said about the work of a treasure or financial management principles. The message might be useful both for the family economy and the economy of a nation as well.<sup>15</sup>

Analysis on the text shows that there are several poignant things in this parable:

- a. Looking at the narrative of the parable of Luke 16, it appears that the accusations embezzled property the master may indeed have been done by the character of treasurer in the story, because he adheres the principle of "*aji mumpung*." Simple definition of *aji mumpung* is: As long as you take a position (in government, public offices, etc) and

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<sup>14</sup> J.A. Fitzmyer. THE STORY OF THE DISHONEST MANAGER. *Theological Studies*. Sep 1964

<sup>15</sup> For commentaries on Luke 16 parable, see for example:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Luke/Generosity-Handling-Money>

opportunity, just brush as much as you can.<sup>16</sup> Don't many of our officials also adhere to the principle of *aji mumpung* which is similar to this story? In the language of economics studies, this is expressed in the words: maximizing utility. Or if to quote Gordon Gekko in the film *Wall Street* (1987): "*Greed is good.*"<sup>17</sup> May be that's why some studies in the USA by P. Gerlach etc. found that the economics graduates, tend to be more "selfish" and obsessed with money, compared to other majors.<sup>18</sup> (Sorry to readers from economics background, it is not the author's intention to offend economics lecturers or economics as a discipline.) May be some of them totally agree with Dawkins who wrote a book called "*Selfish Gene*" (our genes are purely selfish). Is it true so also in many countries?

- b. However, the parable does not stop there. Similar with the story of Zacchaeus, which begins realized his mistake, then used some of his property to return it what he had squeezed. Likewise, in this parable of the treasurer, he began realizing that it is necessary to invest also in social assets: namely building friendship with the people who had been blackmailed by the treasurer. Then, it was the servant's master's turn, and it turned out that he also saw that social property was more important rather than mere material possessions, although he may also be at a loss.
- c. This change in perspective is expressed in the master's praise to his servant. At the end of the parable, Jesus summarizes His teaching in the closing sentence: "*And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting.*" (Luke 16: 9, KJV)

### **Summary of the parable in Luke 16:1-9**

One thing that is clear is that Jesus seems to be quite positive about financial management financial and its truth, as His teaching also appears in other parables, for example, the parable of the lost dirham or the parable about the talent.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://lektur.id/arti-aji-mumpung/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/greed-is-good-or-is-it-quote-and-meaning-3306247>

<sup>18</sup> P. Gerlach. The games economists play: Why economics students behave more selfishly than other students. *PLoS One*. 2017; 12(9): e0183814. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0183814

If we read Luke more carefully, there are three different levels of assets material assets, social assets (friendship), and then spiritual treasure (eternal tabernacle). The material assets are the bottom, followed subsequently by social assets, and on both of them there will be spiritual assets that God prepares for those who understands and obtains them.

Temporary conclusions and lessons which can be learned from this parable:

The people of the world know how to use worldly treasures and wear it in materialistic ways. But suddenly they got it let go of dishonest standards knowing that in its very essence honesty will pay off.

From the text about this clever treasurer, there are at least 5 things that we can learn:

- a. Be clever in using what is in us. Tip: if we refer to Greek interlinear, the meaning of the word "*huparcho*" used in Luke. 8: 3 is not significant wealth, but "what's in you."
- b. Let us always be smart and realistic in dealing with all problems, even accusations of people.
- c. Use property and material wealth not to deceive but to empower.
- d. Don't give up easily when you are stuck, rest assured that there is a way out.
- e. Use mammon to make friendships. Looks like we got it call this principle: the economy of hospitality.

In summary, the five lessons above may be referred to as Ethics Points of the Kingdom in the economic field, especially if we want to realize the Kingdom of God in earth as we always pray in the Lord's Prayer.

### **The Concept of Koinomics: a step towards a Trinitarian economy**

There are some theologians who have focused on examining the interrelationships between theology and economics, an effort to create something called an economic theology.<sup>19</sup> For

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<sup>19</sup> Rowan Williams. Theology and Economics. ATR:92/4. Url: <http://www.anglicantheologicalreview.org/static/pdf/articles/williams.pdf>

example Rowan William and Robert H. Nelson delve into the issue.<sup>20</sup> However, as far as the authors know, there has been no comprehensive study about how to relate the Trinitarian theological thoughts with economy.<sup>21</sup>

In this context, a new term, koinomics is proposed. The term derives from two terms "koinonia" and "economics." About economics, no explanation needed. However, the term koinonia needs a little explanation.

The word "koinonia" or "koinon" – comes from the New Testament, especially letters Paul. Koinonia itself in the NT does not have a single meaning. Various comprehensive studies found a variety of meanings. In the NT, the word *koinonia* occurs nineteen times.

The words that related to and the root-word koinon occurs 46 times, mostly in Paul's letters and some in John's letters, Peter's letters, letters Hebrews, and Acts. In the gospels the word koinonia does not appear. However, there are words that have roots in *Koino*.

From various sources, it can be summarized that the meaning of the word koinonia comes from the word *koinos*, which means *joint* or *communal*. The word *koinon* or *koinonia* has a broad meaning fellowship, friendship, and close relationships (Fuchs, 2008). In the document *The Church*, it is said that koinonia can be translated as fellowship, donating something, taking part in, participating, acting together, and sharing. Lorelei Fuchs, a nun and activist of the ecumenical movement, explained the word Koinonia has a broad and many meaning, namely communion, acting together, friendship, reciprocity, taking part, participating, helping, sharing, solidarity, togetherness, cohesion, unity and wholeness.<sup>22</sup>

In context the doctrine of the Trinity, the word koinonia and *perichoresis* can be interconnected. *Perichoresis* means The Triune God moves to one another in a cosmic dance, complementary to each other.<sup>23</sup>

If the perichoresis and koinonia concepts are placed inside economic context, it means that economic activities can be transformed into acts that empower or treat others as equals. Thus, others are viewed as dialogue partners and not as objects to be exploited on behalf of "self-

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Nelson. What is economic theology? *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* vol. xxv no. 1, 2004. Url: [http://faculty.publicpolicy.umd.edu/sites/default/files/nelson/files/economics\\_religion/What\\_is\\_Economic\\_Theology.pdf](http://faculty.publicpolicy.umd.edu/sites/default/files/nelson/files/economics_religion/What_is_Economic_Theology.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> David Muthukumar. What has Economic Trinity to do with Economics? 2016. Url: <http://intersectproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Symposium-MuthukumarEconomic-Trinity.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Lorelei Fuchs. Koinonia and the quest for ecumenical ecclesiology. Wm. B. Eerdmans.

<sup>23</sup> See also Tihomir Lazic. *Koinonia*. MA Thesis submitted to Newbold College, April 2008. [http://n10308uk.eos-intl.eu/eosuksql01\\_N10308UK\\_Documents/Dissertations/Lazic.pdf](http://n10308uk.eos-intl.eu/eosuksql01_N10308UK_Documents/Dissertations/Lazic.pdf)

interest" and utility maximization. See for example the Eberhard Arnold article about economics in the early church era.<sup>24</sup>

Could such as concept be applicable considering the domination of various modern economic concepts that are directing humans to be self-protective, self-centered, greedy and thus, some even call them "*economic animals*"? During a celebration of the best Christian School system in Indonesia, there was a book launching occasion *Berani Berubah* (Dare to Change). In such a large gathering in Jakarta, Gus Imam, the vice general secretary of the Nahdatul Ulama, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia with membership over 90 million Muslims succinctly stated in his speech to endorse the book in that "we are at war in five domains of life: Pop-culture, Digital Technology, Financial Transaction, Biological War, Energy and Food Supply wars." He points out that the Northern Hemisphere powers dominate and use the simple folks in Indonesian in those five domains of life.<sup>25</sup> This young and intellectual religious leader represents more voices in Asia, either Muslims, Christians, or Hindu and Buddhist as they sense that the system that modern civilization creates is profoundly flawed in health system, social unrest, economic crisis, and ecology.

Is there any possibility to start an alternative system beginning from the grass-root that believes in relationship, taking part, fellowship, sharing life, synergy, and inter-connected spirit? In the next sections, we discuss two models: Food Terminal in Jakarta and Subak in Bali.

### **C. Koinonia dan perichoresis in application: challenges in implementing into an economic system, the case of Food Terminal-Jakarta and Subak in Bali**

C.1. The idea of Terminal Pangan or Food Terminal started in April 2020 when 12 pastors from Indonesia were studying the national system of the food production, supply, and demand in Indonesia. A week later, an article in a national newspaper described that many farmers in Indonesia at that time were burning their own harvests as no middlemen appears as usual to buy anything from them. COVID-19 caused disruption in the food source and the supply line. Further study of one of the pastors show that most farmers had been under the

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<sup>24</sup> Eberhard Arnold. The economy of the early church. *Plough Quarterly* 2. Url: <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/community/communal-living/the-economy-of-the-early-church>

<sup>25</sup> Gus Imam, Speech in an occasion for book launching "Berani Berubah (Dare to Change) by Robby Igusti Chandra, October 28, 2020

heavy burden of loan to buy seeds or equipment. The study of those pastors yielded a result: A *Food Terminal* program.

The objective of the program is to establish a supply line that re-connects and benefits the farmers who live in remote areas as producers with the customers who live in big cities like Jakarta, the capital city. The farmers will receive a higher money for what they produce while the customers will mostly have fresh and organic products. With such an achievement, they will have more dignity and better life standard. The idea was then, supported by the Kayu Putih Church, a church in the capital city that allows their empty space to be used as a storage for the products. Also, a couple donors from other churches supported them with the initial capital which was about USD 1500.00 to buy the food products, refrigerators, and operational expenditure.

Given the fact that COVID-19 was rampant, the Food Terminal management asks purchase orders from their customers through digital channels and afterward send requests to several farming communities. Three days later, the food products will arrive at the church complex. Later, besides the fruits and vegetable products, fresh seafoods from a nearby fishing community started to enter the Food Terminal.

The Food Terminal opens once a week. The customers will receive their orders as the terminal hires church members who lost their job or are in need for additional income as members of delivery team. Thus, if this is a drama, the actors are the Food Terminal workers who are mostly voluntary, the fishermen and farmers, the customers, and the delivery team. The customers who mostly were the middleclass members of the society and church members received food at home. The farmers came to the city once a week as did the fishermen. The volunteers learned to sort food products out by their types, to create a rugged packaging, to record the transaction, and to create a promotional channel which were primarily word-of-mouth.

In a month, four responses emerged from the congregation members. The first was a rejection that a church got involved in business. The second, a harsh critique concerning the quality of products that was not at the level that the customers wanted. The third response was that the management of the Food Terminal is not professional enough as frequently they made mistakes as they sent few products that the customers did not order. In many cases, even, they forgot to charge for the food that they had sent to one or two customers. The last response

was more sophisticated as they asked the indicators of the impact of such programs in the lives of the farming or fishing communities.

However, aside from those shortcomings, within the members of the Food Terminal management team, the relation was amiable. They understood the real mission of the program. When the farmers or fishermen visited them, they were quite happy to realize that their effort touched people lives. They have crossed a social boundary that has been there for decades: city and village, middle-class and lower-class, the educated and uneducated, or the haves and the have-nots. Each of the management team members witnessed that they learned the meaning of sharing time, heart, and attention to others. They mentioned that they learned to view the farmers and the fishermen community as their families.

As time went by, most of the congregation members stopped giving negative feedbacks. Yet, an issue left remained. The Food Terminal team realized that they needed to increase the quality of food products to be sold. Culture and social gaps are evident because for the farmers or fishermen, the quality of their delivered products was satisfying while the consumers as members of the middleclass society expected a much higher quality, regardless they are Church members or outsiders. The buying-selling relationship is more dominant rather than sharing and caring relationship. Thus, the team members decided to pay a visit to the field and taught the farmers or fishermen a couple new ideas. Meanwhile, the team felt that the leaders of the congregation have not done much to develop the understanding of their laymen to support the mission. Their energy was focussed primarily to prevent COVID-19 spreading among their own community rather than helping the people who lived in the fringe.

The Food Terminal management team realized that they had to deal with operational issues:

- a. To increase the product quality control process that yields maximum customer satisfaction
- b. To increase the accuracy of their service in terms of recording, calculating, reporting, and distributing the types and amount of food products to be sent.
- c. To sort the products before being packaged in such a way to prevent wrong delivery
- d. To create a low-cost package that is able prevent product damages in the delivery process

There are also challenges in the marketing communication areas:

- a. To reach congregation members who never heard about the Food Terminal.
- b. To inspire other churches to create similar programs in their locations.

Furthermore, there is a financial issue

- a. To deal with pressure of maximizing monthly operational surplus
- b. To hire a fulltime manager for the Food Terminal.

Finally, the human resource issues

- a. To recruit new volunteers
- b. To train the existing and new volunteer
- c. To evaluate each performance
- d. To find a way to honour and reward the volunteers.

Those issues can become burden that potentially could shift the main mission which is sharing and community-building with others to become a self-serving church program.

Therefore, continuously, the Food Terminal management team should remind the mission of sharing, taking part in others' lives, developing *koinonia*, and even allowing others who used live outside the boundary to enter their lives.

Thus far, the impacts are evident. The farming and fishing community begins to realize the new quality level that they need to learn and achieve. Optimism and wonder are apparent in their conversation. Three months after connecting to the Food Terminal, they kept on asking "Why do you do it for us? What do you want to get from us?" When the answer was given, they just shook their head and said: "This is unheard and hard to believe."

The Food Terminal management learns that the main challenge of applying the Trinitarian economy or as this article coins *Koinomics* lies in the narrow sense of identity of Christian middleclass community as expressed in the question "Why does church have to be involved in business?" Hopefully, an increasingly better model needs to be manifested to gradually impart the ideas and practices. The Food Terminal has been working for six months by God grace. Many things need to be remedied and increased. Mindset is as important as skill sets, but the underlying spiritual perspective might be the main entrance to a successful and impactful relating-community program.

## C.2. Subak in Bali Island

If the Food Terminal is a new experiment, the Subak of the Island of Bali, is a system of rice cultivation that has been there for ages. Rice fields in Bali are kept watered by an old water system that goes back to the eleventh century. This system serves to establish the Balinese farming and social life.<sup>26</sup> A Subak is a holistic system consist of the economic, social, and religious systems of the Balinese.

In August 2020, Triwahyuni states that “the Bali land contour causes the land irrigation is difficult to create Added to such a problem, Bali is a heavily populated island. However, the people of Bali learn to manage water with their underlying spiritual principles: justice, openness, and togetherness. Such principles drive people to distribute and share water resources to all of them who need it.”<sup>27</sup>

A study of Sriartha *et al.*<sup>28</sup> examined the maintainability of the subaks despite the development of cities in Badung Regency, Bali Province. The information concerning subak were gathered by utilizing studying the 69 subaks as the units of survey, and the optional information on the components of local advancement were gathered by collecting community reports. The outcomes demonstrated that as a system, subak consists of three main elements: the farming land (roce paddy fields), the community, the temple, and the water system All of them are interconnected and synergistic with a deep consideration of the need to maintain harmony between human beings, communities, elements of nature, and spirituality.

Yet, the Bali exceptional subak system currently faces dangers. Regions of Bali as popular tourism destinations are presently overwhelmed by travellers. The islands' rich rice patios are gradually eaten up by temporary manors and lodging proprietors competing for a paddy field.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Internet source. <https://volunteerprograms Bali.org/subak-the-1000-year-old-irrigation-system/>

<sup>27</sup> Tri Wahyuni, Subak, Warisan Budaya Ribuan Tahun, dan Tantangan Pelestarian ke Depan (Thousand Years-Cultural Heritage and its Future Challenge to Maintain), In Mongabay: Website for Environment, August 2, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> I Putu Sriartha, Suratman, Sri Rum Giyarsih. The Effect of Regional Development on The Sustainability of Local Irrigation System. *Forum Geografi*, Vol. 29 (1) July 2015: 31 – 40

<sup>29</sup> Internet source. <https://i-discoverasia.com/bali-subak/>

More problems also emerge. According to a study by Dwipradnyana,<sup>30</sup> the issue confronting Indonesian agriculture is the recovery of farmers. Information of the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS/National Statistic Organisation) shows the quantity of cultivating business families encountered an intense diminishing land of them. Initially in the 2003 farming lands were used by 492,394 families. In 2013 it was diminished to 408,233 family units or diminished by 84,161 family. In the 2020, the number decrease more. This will be a difficult issue in keeping up the subak system that became world legacy

The issue is that traditional economic system is overwhelmed by the modern practice of transformation ranch and farm into town, factories, or hotels and tourism hubs at the cost of the social system and the ecosystem.

Therefore, as a summary, the holistic traditional system consist of spiritual framework, water system, social system, and farming culture has proved to be beneficial until the modern economic system supported by the government does not take into account the danger of ecosystem sustainability.

### **Concluding remarks**

To sum up, in applying the *koinomics*, the primary things to focus and create are the sense of *true koinonia*, the realization of the danger of dualistic faith (sacred and secular), and the recognition of the existing of inter-community-sharing. Without such underlying foundation to be accepted, *koinomics* will not be applicable in a local community let alone in global context.

If Hinduism has influenced a cultural heritage to create a sustainable and holistic system that brings justice, togetherness, harmony, and sense of interconnectedness, other major religions in the world might have similar teaching or achievement. However, modern system might prefer to replace them with a short term and partial or material achievement while ignoring the past heritage.

We hope that this exposition of the parable of dishonest treasurer (Luke 16:1-9) along with our narratives of Food Terminal and Subak in Bali could trigger more discussions and then, convinces the readers that the ideas of *koinomics* and similar ideas in different religions

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<sup>30</sup> I M.M. Dwipradnyana. TANTANGAN BERAT REGENERASI PETANI BALI DALAM MEMPERTAHANKAN SUBAK SEBAGAI WARISAN BUDAYA DUNIA. *AGRICA*, 10 (2) : 75 – 82 (2017) ISSN : 1979-0368

can be applied in modern world that is facing health issues, economic crisis, social or political conflicts, an ecological disasters..

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### **Further reading**

[1] Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis. The Origins of Human Cooperation. A chapter appears in Peter Hammerstein (ed.) *The Genetic and Cultural Origins of Cooperation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

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[3] Adam Grant. *Give and Take*. London: Penguin Books Ltd. 2013.

[4] Jaroslav Flegr. *Frozen Evolution: Farewell to selfish gene*. Prague: Charles University in Prague, 2008.

[5] I Putu Sriartha, Suratman, Sri Rum Giyarsih. The Effect of Regional Development on The Sustainability of Local Irrigation System. *Forum Geografi*, Vol. 29 (1) July 2015: 31 – 40

[6] I M.M. Dwipradnyana. TANTANGAN BERAT REGENERASI PETANI BALI DALAM MEMPERTAHANKAN SUBAK SEBAGAI WARISAN BUDAYA DUNIA. *AGRICA*, 10 (2) : 75 – 82 (2017) ISSN : 1979-0368

[7] J. S. Lansing & K.M. Fox. Niche construction on Bali: the gods of the countryside. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B* (2011) 366, 927–934. doi:10.1098/rstb.2010.0308