

Koinomics and Perichoresis: A Framework of Transformative Theological Engagement in Economic Concepts and Practices

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Overview

When in the ancient time, economy and moral values or theological framework are intertwined, modern practices and concepts of economic, social, and political concepts often get more separated from the abstract framework. The implication has been warned by the Club of Rome in their 1972 report. The global pandemic in 2020 that triggers multiple crises is the accumulation of such neglected problems—that take root in pragmatism and materialism added with selfishness.

Meanwhile, theology or theological education also decrease their engagement in the economic domain as the system is more complicated. Issues in micro or macro-economy seldom find places in theological discussion. Whenever such discussions take place, the needed operative dimension is left untouched. To fill the gap, this article proposes a framework coined as *Koinomic*. The framework is based on the relational-participative-and communion or koinonia derives from the Trinitarian theology.

One of the experts who consistently emphasizes the importance and centrality of the Trinity is LaCugna.³ 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). Even though various emphases and nuances appear during the study of Trinitarian, it is fairly evident that there is a consensus or agreement: the relational dimension of the Trinitarian God.

The term koinomics derives from two terms "koinonia" and "economics." The word "*koinonia*" or "*koinon*" – comes from the New Testament, especially the letters of Paul. The word *koinon* or *koinonia* has a broad meaning of 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 broad and many meanings, namely communion, acting together, friendship, reciprocity, taking part, participating, helping, sharing, solidarity, togetherness,

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³ LaCugna, C M, *God for Us, The Trinity & Christian Life* (New York, Harper San Francisco, 1991),

cohesion, unity, and wholeness.⁴ In the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, the word *koinonia* should be interconnected with *perichoresis*. *Perichoresis* means The Triune God moves to one another in a cosmic dance, complementary to each other.⁵

If the *perichoresis* and *koinonia* concepts are placed inside an 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-interest" and utility maximization. See for example the Eberhard Arnold article about economics in the early church era.⁶

The results of the study show four findings as followed.

First, possibilities and challenges existing together in the effort to create such an ideal reality both in the microeconomic setting as well as in the macro-economic context. The role of governments and cultures is more significant in the wider economic context both as a challenge and an opportunity. Second, the role of leaders in a local community in the micro-economic setting is significant. Third, in both contexts, the limited impact of *koinomics* or sharing life concept relates to the tendency of the believers of different kinds of religion or spiritual heritages to separate the sacred domain from the secular ones and abstract spiritual principles from practices. It is a dualistic view. Also, as long religions do not find a way to create synergy or togetherness to deal with such a dualistic view, either *koinomics* or other theological concepts will not yield a holistic and thorough impact in any economic system. Fourth, concerning the theological education process, the process should become more than just content-based but includes process-practice-and experiential education that gives tacit-knowledge to the students. Therefore, theological education institutions should serve as communities that foster seeds of *koinomics*: a caring-sharing-and growing culture. At last, each abstract theological topic should be expanded with implementation guidelines in micro or macro-context.

Note:

Full paper and references are available upon request to Dr Joshua Nurcombe-Pike (OCRPL)

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⁴ Lorelei Fuchs. *Koinonia and the quest for ecumenical ecclesiology*. Wm. B. Eerdmans.

⁵ See also Tihomir Lazic. *Koinonia*. MA Thesis submitted to Newbold College, April 2008. http://n10308uk.eos-intl.eu/eosuksql01_N10308UK_Documents/Dissertations/Lazic.pdf

⁶ Eberhard Arnold. The economy of the early church. *Plough Quarterly* no 2 (2014). Url: <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/community/communal-living/the-economy-of-the-early-church>