

**ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN JESUS' INSTRUCTION: "GATHER UP THE LEFTOVER FRAGMENTS THAT NOTHING MAY BE LOST" (JOHN 6:12).**

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**ABSTRACT:** *John 6:1-15 reveals certain dispositions that characterize the success of Jesus' earthly ministry. These include: his sensitivity to the needs of his people, dialogue and collaboration, charity, prayerful dependence on the Father, and prudent management of resources and the avoidance of wastage. These are equally and essentially Jesus' teaching to all his followers. The avoidance of wastage and the prudent management of resources are underscored in Jesus' insistence on preserving the fragments of the multiplied fish and loaves in John 6:12. An effective management of a nation's resources requires among others, these two dispositions. In some nations of the world, and especially in the African continent, these virtues are sometimes taken for granted. The consequences often contribute to underdevelopment. Using the qualitative method of research this work undertakes a narrative exegesis of John 6:12. It uses, consequently, the instruction of Jesus therein as a model to suggest that accountability and frugality are indispensable instruments for any purposeful economic management strategy that is aimed at achieving development. It recommends accountability and the avoidance of waste at both individual and corporate levels.*

**KEYWORDS:** Accountability, Common Good, Economic Management, Faith, John 6

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## INTRODUCTION

The definition of economics embraces an awareness of the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services as well as the choices related to the allocation of scarce resources. Pertinent to this definition is the management of business or administrative units. This implies managerial economics, which as the subfield of economics provides reasoning and principles for the improvement of managerial decisions and choices in an organization. Economic management therefore denotes the supervision of the resources, finances, income and expenditure of a community, business enterprises, or organization for the purpose of sustainability or longevity. Sustainability is pertinent because survival or thriving of organizations depends on their ability to effectively meet the needs for which they were created. The decisions and choices involved in such management are therefore based both on microeconomics and macroeconomics. This managerial economics is at the basis of Jesus' instruction to his disciples about gathering up the leftover fragments of the bread and fish in John 6:12.

The text belongs to the pericope of John 6:1-15 on Jesus' multiplication of five loaves and two fish for the consumption of more than five thousand people. The pericope is set in the context of the larger world of human need within the sphere of human life and weakness. Thus, in the context of this inevitable human need for food and often the risk of hunger and famine a magnificent providence, encouraged by human cooperation overflows in abundance. Structurally the pericope is divided into the following subunits:

vv. 1-4: The Impact of Jesus' Signs on his Followership

vv. 5-9: The Problem of Hunger and the Collective Quest for Solution

vv. 10-11: The Multiplication of Loaves and Fish

vv. 12-13: Stocktaking and Valuing

vv. 14-15: The Effect of the Sign of the Multiplication.

Verse 12 belongs to the section on Stocktaking, Valuing, Appraisal or Accountability. It provides the basis for assessing the quantity of fish and loaves multiplied in the light of what is left after consumption. It thus contributes to underscoring the preciousness of the food, the prodigiousness of the sign and the reason for the crowd's reaction in vv. 14-15. In other words, the items multiplied are not only sufficient for the multitude of over five thousand but are in abundance (John 2:6; 4:13-14). The instruction of v. 12 therefore forms along with the entire pericope, the common fund of human experiences on which the sign is based. It deals with the familiar occasions of human need for food and the provision and preservation of same. It provides, from the point of view of human experiences, the bases for Jesus' ability to feed so many. These bases, include prudence, accountability and frugality. They are indispensable elements for effective economic management. The economic management of any enterprise is an attempt to effectively satisfy the purpose for which it is created; and this essentially consists in providing for the needs of its consumers. These qualities are required of managers of organizations especially in the African continent which is constantly challenged by lack of accountability, and wastefulness.

The work begins by reviewing the understanding of Narrative Exegesis and with this undertakes a narrative exegesis of Jesus' instruction in the light of the entire pericope of John 6:1-15. It identifies in this instruction the relevant elements of economic management as prudence and accountability, free exchange of ideas, and respect for the common good. It concludes by proposing the elements put forward in the instructions as indispensable for any effective and purposeful economic management in Africa.

### **Narrative Exegesis**

Narrative exegesis seeks to understand and communicate the message of the bible in the form of a story and personal testimony. It is based on the peculiarity of the Holy Scripture as a narrative of the story of salvation and the utilization of the basic means of communication among human persons. The Old Testament represents a recital of God's intervention in human history; this lively recital provides the substance and incentive for humankind's profession of faith, liturgy and catechesis (Ps. 78:3-4; Ex 12:24-27). The New Testament on the other hand, is a story of the Christian kerygma regarding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. This is evidently narrated in the Gospels while the narrative of its catechetical form is found in the Epistles (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

Central to the narrative approach is the methods of analysis and theological reflection. Narratology is based on the study of the ancient models of narrative and pays attention to the literary elements of a text like the plot, characterization and the narrator's point of view. It "studies how a text tells a story in such a way as to engage the reader in its 'narrative world' and the system of values contained therein" (Fitzmyer 60). It makes a distinction between 'real author' and 'implied author', 'real reader' and 'implied reader'. While the real author is the original composer of the story, the implied author is the image of the author imagined by the reader while reading the text. This include both the author's culture, character and tendencies, and faith convictions.

Real reader on the other hand is any person who actually reads the text while the implied reader is the one in the mind of the author which the text presupposes and creates. Such a presupposed person is in a position to perform the mental function necessary for reading the text, entering into the

narrative world of the text and giving a response to that world in a manner anticipated by the real author. One of the basic functions of exegesis is to facilitate the process of making the real reader identify with this implied reader. The influence of the text is of importance in this identification. Narrative exegesis therefore projects a 'narrative world' which is meant to influence the perception of the reader in such a manner that allows the reader to be moved towards certain values instead of others. Theological reflection on the other hand, centres on the implication of the story in relation to the content of faith; it is a pastoral hermeneutic which in narrative exegesis insists on the informative and performative nature of the story. The informative aspect consists in the story telling while the performative aspect consists in the faith action the story propels the reader to embark on which in this case is mirrored on salvation. The story is told (informative) for the purpose of enhancing salvation (performative).

Narrative exegesis therefore highlights the biblical account as an existential appeal addressed to the reader. It is therefore well suited to the narrative character peculiar to numerous biblical texts. It enhances the transition from the meaning of the texts in its historical context (proper to the historical-critical method of exegesis) to its relevance to contemporary reader.

### **Presuppositions of John 6:1-15 in the Light of Jesus' Teaching**

The literary elements of John 6:1-15 include two inclusions and two parallelisms. The first inclusion is the awareness and effects of the signs of Jesus in vv. 2 and 15, The second inclusion is the rapport between Jesus and the mountain in vv. 3 and 5. There is a parallelism in the followership by the crowd in vv. 2 and 5: 'a multitude followed him' v. 2 == 'a multitude was coming to him' v. 5. Another parallelism consists in the antithesis between the available resources and their insufficiency recorded in vv. 7 and 9:

two hundred denarii of bread would not be sufficient v. 7

=== five barley loaves and two fish; what are they among so many? v. 9.

A narrative analysis of John 6:1-15 reveals the gravitation of the crowd towards Jesus. This followership is explained by the author as the multitude's responses to the miracles Jesus previously performed (v. 2). These miracles are referred to in John's Gospel as σημεῖα; signs which from the meaning, point not to themselves but beyond what is seen to a higher reality behind the portents. The previous three signs in John 2:1-11, 4:43-54 and 5:1-18 reveal Jesus' concern for the welfare of the family and the human person in general. They reveal his glory and provide motives for belief in him (2:11; 4:53). They are defined by Jesus as ἔργον; work done in collaboration with and informed by the work of his Father (5:17) for the sustenance of his creation (21:31).

The care for human needs overflows into and informs the motive of the miracle of loaves and fish in John 6. Jesus identifies with the human problem of hunger and seeks to resolve it. He seeks to resolve the problem in dialogue and collaboration with his disciples and the little boy. While the identification of the problem is particular to Jesus; the discovery of ways to solving it becomes the outcome of dialogue with his followers. The actual resolution involves the collaboration of those for whom the solution is directed; the fish and bread provided by the little boy become the resources for the many (v. 9). The term παιδάριον used to describe the lad is the double diminutive of παῖς. The normal diminutive is παιδίον. The choice of the term underscores the littleness of the boy over and above the cheaper nature of his barley loaf which was food affordable for the poor. Thus, in his littleness and the lean and cheaper nature of his resources the goodwill of the lad provides more than enough for so many.

The sitting and the consequent numbering of about five thousand men implies a sense of organization and orderliness (v. 10). The thanksgiving acknowledges God as the source of the resources (v. 11). This recognition gives added value to the resources and imposes on humans, whose privilege it is to utilize them, the obligation to care for and esteem them. It consequently traces through Jesus, the subsequent abundance of bread and fish to God who in his providence shepherds and provides his people with plenty and security (Psalm 22[23]) (Naseri, Bassey and Owolo 119). The recovery of twelve baskets of fragments of barley loaves constitutes the information needed for an effective planning (v. 13). The awareness comes from the sense of accountability and this discovery underscores the magnanimity of the gestures and the miraculous in the miracle. This miraculous in the multiplication evident especially in the noted twelve baskets of leftover fragments informs the multitude's acknowledgement of a reality beyond the physical in Jesus. They recognize the transcendent and 'expected one' (v. 14). By meeting the needs of the people Jesus intensifies the crowd's followership of him and increases their confidence in him.

### Narrative Exegesis of John 6:12 in the Context of John 6:1-15

ὥς δὲ ἐνεπλήσθησαν, λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· συναγάγετε τὰ περισσεύσαντα κλάσματα, ἵνα μή τι ἀπόληται.

And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples,

“Gather up the fragments leftover, that nothing may be lost” (John 6:12).

συναγάγετε τὰ περισσεύσαντα κλάσματα, ἵνα μή τι ἀπόληται.

Literarily, the instruction is made up of two phrases joined together by the subordinating conjunction ἵνα. ‘Gather up...’, versus ‘nothing may be lost’. They are therefore interconnected; ‘gather up’ is in apposition to ‘lost’ while ‘nothing’ refers to ‘Fragments left over’. It implies that if the fragments are not gathered up, they are bound to be lost and unaccounted for. The gathering up leads to nothing being lost. Abundance consists in the avoidance of wastage, while avoidance of wastage results from being conscious and taking account of all. The narrative depicts an abundance that comes from God to his people through Jesus and teaches that if the abundance must be sustainable then the followers of Christ must avoid wastage.

The instruction occurs only in John's account of the multiplication of loaves and underscores the implied allusion to the manna event of Exodus 16. In Exodus 16:19 Moses orders against leaving around any manna. Disobedience to this instruction leads to the perishing of the manna in v. 20. Jesus' instruction thus serves as a correction of the disobedience of Exodus 16. This connection is evident in 6:25-59 regarding manna and the bread of life. John 6:12 therefore serves as an anticipation of this manna and bread of life motif. The verb συναγεῖν is the same verb found in the manna event of Exodus 16:16ff (O'Day 594), (Brown 234). The Greek word συναξίς which is of the same root with συναγεῖν is used to describe the first part of the Christian Eucharistic gathering.

Early Christian interpretations of the text is based on Johannine symbolism and denotes the gathering of believers into the unity of the church. The term τὰ κλάσματα *ta klasmata* is used symbolically in *Didache* to describe the Eucharistic fragments. “Just as this broken loaf was scattered over the hills as grain, and, having been gathered together, became one; in like fashion, may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom” (The Didache 9:4). That nothing is lost expresses the Jewish high regard for bread as a gift from God. Theologically however, the indication is about the symbolic character of the bread Jesus offers.

Rudolf Schnackenburg links the instruction to the caution in 6:27 about not labouring for the food that passes away. It points to the imperishable bread of which the multiplied perishable bread is only but an image (Schnackenburg 18). The pieces so commanded and collected symbolically depict the bread which abides forever (Dodd 207).

The term *συνάγειν* translated as ‘to gather up’ is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *קָטַף*; and refers to the collecting of agricultural and food items (Ex. 23:10), money (2 Kings 22:4; 2 Chr 24:11), ritual ashes of a burnt red heifer (Num 19:9) and particularly the gathering together of persons and nations (Ex. 3:16; 2 Sam 10:17). In John, it is used with this OT background to denote the gathering of fruit for eternal life by Christian workers in John 4:36 and the gathering of fruitless branches for burning in 15:6. It expresses Christ’ mission of gathering into one (by his death) the scattered children of God in 11:52. The *klasmata* of John 6:12 in this context symbolizes the future members of the fold who would come to believe in Jesus through the disciples (John 17:20-21); they must not be lost. The Johannine Jesus’ interest in gathering is once more underscored in his gathering of his disciples to Gethsemane in 18:2.

The gathering up underscores the interest of the gatherer in the things so gathered and expresses responsibility for and accountability, as well as the value for and the desire to preserve. The ‘value for’ extends into the sacredness of the resources so reproduced and especially the inviolability of that which comes from God through Jesus Christ. This acknowledgment is implied in the giving of thanks to God *εὐχαριστήσας* by Jesus for the gift of the bread and fish in v. 11. The gathering thus denotes the sacramental dimension of the sign as Eucharist (Panimolle 139). It does not imply that the feeding is a Eucharistic meal, rather the meals and the providence manifested therein provide the background to the Eucharist and give it meaning (Brodie 263). The sense of accountability is theologically expressed in the eschatological contexts of Matthew’s Judgement scenes of 25:32; 13:30 and 3:12. In Matt 25:32 nations are gathered together at the last judgement and in 13:30 the Messiah gathers the wheat into barns (cf. 3:12). The sense of value for and desire to preserve is evident in the Lukan Jesus’ warning that he who does not gather with him scatters (11:23). It is also expressed in his gathering of the elect (Luke 3:17). The reckless spending of his gathered good by the prodigal son in Luke 15:13 contrasts with the Johannine Jesus’ instruction to gather so that nothing may be wasted (John 6:12).

Used in the imperative, the verb *συνάγειν* denotes the obligation followers of Jesus have in relation to gathering together and keeping within their custody all that comes from God. That which comes from God in this case are the resources God makes available in abundance through his Son Jesus. The leftover fragments denote this abundance. The abundance depicts the surplus which characterizes the resources of the earth that God makes available in creation. Out of this abundance, humankind has, as collaborators with God in creation, the obligation to make use of them for the common good and benefit of all members of the created world. The obligation equally implies caring for, preserving, distributing equitably and using efficiently so that it may not be wasted or depleted. This collaboration implies discipleship so that those whose responsibility it is to superintend over the resources of any organization are by implication the disciples of God who remains the source of those resources. The instruction therefore helps to underscore Jesus’ attention to the preciousness of the food which he gives (Morris 305). His gifts to those whose need he is ever conscious of and who come to him in search of bread must not be lost. Those whose responsibility it is to preserve this gifts are his disciples. “They are commissioned to care for the *klasmata* that they may be available for future believers wishing to share from the bread that Jesus distributed on the occasion of the feast of the Passover” (Moloney 198). The purpose of the gathering is important;

when the gathering is for selfish motive it perishes, but when it is for the avoidance of wastage; it is available for subsequent needs.

### **Gathering as Preservation (John 6:12) and Gathering as Hoarding (Ex 16:17-21).**

There is no verbal contact between Jesus' instruction to guard against loss of the fragments, and the manna of Exodus 16:19-20. As noted earlier there is however, the verbal contact in συνάγειν about 'gathering' between the two episodes of provision of manna and multiplication of bread and fish. The contrast between the consequences of the two gathering is striking and therefore constitutes the basis for comparative evaluation. Both involve gathering, but it is the intention that makes the difference; one implies hiding away while the other implies preservation against wastage. The gathering in Exodus that breeds maggot denotes squirrelling away for a selfish motive while in John it denotes preservation against wastage "the Exodus gathering leads to the corruption of the manna, while the gathering ordered by Jesus keeps the *klasmata* available for later use" (Moloney 198). The instruction of Jesus to gather the fragments leftover is for the purpose of not wasting any of the gifts. The instruction by Moses against individuals gathering the manna beyond the day's necessity is against hoarding (Ex 16:17-21). The consequence of such hoarding is the perishing of the manna while the implication of the gathering in John 6:12 is prevention from perishing and being wasted. Hoarding in Ex 16 implies lack of confidence in the power of God to care for the future needs of his people. Gathering in John 6 denotes cooperation with God in caring for and preserving his gifts for sustainable use among his people of the present and of the future. Exodus entails the effect of caring for the self while John 6 denotes the result of caring for the common good. The caution against self-centeredness is evident in the outcome of the gathering in Ex 16:17-18; despite the quantity collected by each person, the measured product is the same for everyone.

The guiding principle which provides positive outcome in both events is obedience; obedience on the part of the Israelites in the desert would prevent the manna from perishing. Only disobedience to Moses' instruction leads to the perishing of the manna. In a similar manner, it is by the disciples' obedience to Jesus' instruction of gathering the *ta klasmata* that the leftover fragments are accounted for and preserved from perishing. Thus, obedience and respect for constituted authorities in the line of commands makes for the prevention of wastage (see Ex 16:4). This obedience is reflected in the earthly ministry of Jesus and summarized in the Priestly Prayer of John 17. Jesus' selfless and faithful execution of his mission from the Father consists in his guarding of those the Father entrusted to him. This guarding which translates the Greek φυλάσσω prevents loss ἀπόλλυμι (John 17:12); ἀπόλλυμι is the same verb used in John 6:12. Thus, obedience in guarding those entrusted to Jesus leads to the prevention of loss or wastage. The gathering in John 6:12 therefore has the sense of guarding against loss or wastage in John 17:12. Just as Jesus' faithfulness and sense of accountability in guarding those entrusted to him leads to the development and spread of the early Christian faith, his followers equally have the same responsibility of guarding members of the faith community with the same selflessness, faithfulness and accountability.

### **Economic Management and the Common Good**

The goal of every economy is the common good which entails an acceptable standard of living for all. Commercial logic of economics sees the goal of economics basically as the maximization of profit and consequently the creation of wealth while the distribution of wealth is seen to be the responsibility of the political order. The objectives of planning and management include identifying, setting and meeting the annual targeted rate of growth, correction of imbalance in regional development and the achievement of consistency among all these different economic objectives. The detachment between the economic and political communities in the exercise of these two offices

constitutes the scandal of wealth which leaves especially the developing countries with a continuous widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. The model evident in the teaching of Jesus is the invitation to make the two offices the responsibility of both the economic and political communities. His dialogue with the disciples and final provision of food for the many through the contribution of the lad shows this shared effort in the management of the economic need of his audience. Members of the economic community should ensure that the distribution of wealth which is a common good informs their goal of maximizing profit. Because as perceived by Christine Gichure, an economic community dedicated solely to profitability is no good and may be morally deficient (Gichure 131). It is this motive of serving the common good that informs the sharing by Jesus of the private bread and fish of the individual (the lad) for the benefits of the more than five thousand persons. Jesus' immediate identification of the needs of his audience teaches on identifying, setting, and meeting targets which border on growth. The gesture by the lad of offering to sacrifice the little he had for the common good ends up in a goodwill that serves and saves the multitude. The same motive is also behind Jesus' insistence on gathering the leftover for the prospect of planning and meeting future needs of the community. Jesus thus teaches on actual involvement in developing the common good as incentive for any economic progress. Attention to the common good and the readiness to overcome egoism and make sacrifices for that good form the basis for economic growth, balancing of economic growth and the modernization of the economy.

This is an approach encouraged by Benedict XVI (nn. 24-25). It was earlier sustained by Bernard Lonergan who insisted that wealth distribution was intrinsic to the analysis of markets. The dynamism of market economy; the creation of wealth, results from anti-egalitarian prospect. A stable boom and further progress in production on the other hand requires an egalitarian environment where the generated wealth is redistributed among workers to give them purchasing power over the goods produced. Thus, for Lonergan, wealth redistribution is a part of the 'economic logic of the market' and constitutes the task of an economy that runs properly. This redistribution does not only serve the common good but contributes to the long term development of the individual firms within the private sector (Ormerod, Oshington and Koning 412). In other words, economic prosperity entails the use of property in a system that enables it contribute to the common good by serving the benefit of everyone. "...property must contribute to the common good by being used in such a way that it benefits everyone" (Laurent 529).

### **Faith and Economics**

Capitalism and Communism have paid attention to the human person in relation to the material goods of the world with no attention to the transcendent origin of the human person. This man-centred approach that ignores the theological orientation of the human person makes the management of material goods and indeed economic theories alien to the transcendent. The implications are numerous and tend to enhance individualism and the exploitation of goods and services without an acknowledgment of their divine origin. Jesus expresses this acknowledgment in the prayer of thanksgiving over the fish and bread provided by the lad (John 6:11). Accountability to God makes for accountability in the management of economic affairs of humankind. An approach to governance lacking in theological anthropology has produced economic policies especially in Africa that have enhanced dictatorship and oligarchy. The result has been a wide gap between the very rich and the very poor. Management and planning of any nation must therefore, bear in mind the divine origin of the human person. This provenance bestows on the citizens the dignity on which they are entitled to a decent life in an economically viable and equal society.

To be acknowledged however is that unlike in the West, there is a flourishing public display of religiosity in Africa which may imply references to the transcendent. This religiosity is, in most cases not fundamentally translated into practical day to day life experiences in Africa. Thus, while the crisis of faith in the West poses challenges, the ubiquity of religion in Africa constitutes an obstacle. The benefits of this religious exuberance appear to work in an inverse proportion to the social, economic and political catastrophes of the continent. The credibility and the sustainability of faith in Africa is therefore called to question because inversely, the translation of faith is not in dialogue with the economic exigencies of its followers as well as with the economic analysis and policies of its contexts: “if economics without theology – without the awareness of theological anthropology – was doomed to failure, so too was theology without a proper understanding of economics” (Ormerod, Oshington and Koning 395). Jesus’ consideration for the welfare of his followers is an appreciation of the fact that their ability to benefit integrally from his faith encounter is equally dependent on meeting their basic economic needs like the quest for food. Management and planning of any faith organization must think of the necessity of its members to satisfy not only their spiritual needs but also their basic economic needs.

### **Democracy and Economics**

One presupposition of Jesus’ instruction in John 6:12 is the participatory nature of the attempt at solving the problem of hunger. It implies the freedom of expression and free exchange of ideas characteristic of a democratic society. This free exchange of ideas makes room for financial speculation on the part of Philip. It makes for innovation on the part of Andrew who identifies and thinks of the possibility of using the lean resources of the two fish and five loaves. The exchange thus creates an environment for the emergence of human ingenuity and creativity, and the importance of optimism, caution and risk taking in problem solving. A purposeful economy requires a democracy enriched by education, rather than a dictatorship. The management of such economy is to be participatory and depend on the coalition of experts, propelled by the free exchange of ideas and attentiveness to public opinion. There is need therefore, for recourse to the principle of subsidiarity in the articulation and implementation of economic policies. Leaders must be willing to involve their experts and make their opinion relevant and tested. This collective decision making reduces the risk and fear of failure, distributes responsibility for the consequent risks across board and puts to optimal use the available ideas and intelligence of the citizenship. The involvement of the private sector in the drafting of plans and policies encourages active participation in the implementation of the policies and plans. They share and adopt the same general assumption about the economic growth. They are made aware of the existing obstacles to growth and participate in identifying constructive solutions for overcoming the obstacles.

### **Prudence and Accountability in the Management of Resources**

Economic management involves job creation, industries, tax revenues and the management of both human and natural resources of a people. One step in improving economic growth is identifying existing assets and obstacles. Africa especially is rich in both human and natural resources; these are its assets. However, the barriers consist especially in the inefficient and lack of equitable management of these resources. The recurrent scandals of developing countries rich in natural resources include lack of adequate preparation for the management of consistent inflow of funds. The revenue from the exploitation of oil for example is often so sudden and huge that the administrative systems in some developing countries like Nigeria appear ill-equipped to handle such flows. This inefficiency presents itself especially in wastages arising from lack of accountability and opens a system for corruption and improvidence. Africa continues to lag in relation to the global index values of human development (United Nation Development Programme) and forms part of the

zones considered to still live in situations of retrogression. Even the 2015 Progress Chart of the Millennium Development Goals reveals that in relation to the quantitative targets of social and economic progress, the slowest rate is in Sub-Saharan Africa (United Nation). While the global average score for corruption is 43, most African countries score below 40 in the 2016 Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International).

This inability to attain both qualitative and quantitative standards of social and economic progress is identified as part of the output of the so called ‘anthropological poverty’. The concept of anthropological poverty first proposed by Engelbeth Mveng reflects a defeatist mentality which promotes a low self-perception incapable of achieving progress (Mveng 154-65). The underlying prompting for Africans is the quest for development that begins with liberating the citizenry from its subservience to a collective oppressive colonial memory and culture. This mentality often seeks relief in blame games and a myopic understanding of progress as restricted to the enrichment of the individual over and against the collective. It translates into selfishness, lack of patriotism and self-aggrandizement.

Accountability provides avenues for the measurement of revenue, cost and profit. An analysis of the health of any given economy of a state or an organization is based on accepted general principles. These principles are formulated based on the data provided by the various units that constitute such an economic structure. Individuals and businesses must make available their tax returns to determine the percentage of their income for taxation. Corporations on their part must produce their financial statements to enable creditors and investors evaluate the health status of the corporations. Entities that seek growth must therefore aim at accountability, responsibility and sustainability. These may not be effectively achieved without sustained effort at plugging loopholes for wastages and being transparent and frugal in the use of available resources.

These are the virtues behind the gesture of Jesus and his disciples in John 6:12. The insistence on not wasting any of the fragments underscores the value for the bread and fish. It appreciates the ability to make surplus use of the lean resources of two fish and five loaves for more than five thousand persons (v. 9). Jesus takes the leadership initiative on behalf of his community and passes it down the line of command. It is a prudence which guides in the effective and sustainable use of resources. As the narrative reveals, the disciples’ obedience to the instruction reveals a clearer picture of the resources at their disposal as well as the enormity of the multiplication effected by Jesus.

Nigeria as a nation is challenged by the enormous capital lost to gas flare and the environmental damages caused by oil drilling in the Niger Delta. Its citizens are confronted by the many abandoned and failed projects. These are testimonies to the amount of wastages arising from insufficient planning ineffective implementations, and discontinuity between past and incumbent political administrations. They reflect absence of foresights on the part of the leadership class and lack of loyalty within the chain of command. Both attitudes translate into a lack of concern for the community good and imply a system of planning and management that is not purposeful.

## **CONCLUSION**

Every economic system aims at growth; growth is intangible if it is not translated into the economic empowerment of the citizens. This prospect hinges on an economic system whose vision of the human person is integral. In other words, a vision that recognizes the spiritual dimension (theological anthropology) and economic dimension (economic anthropology) of the human person.

Moral principles are to be understood as constituting the intrinsic nature of economic enterprise. These principles present the common good at the centre of every economic analysis and system so that the quest to maximize profit is balanced with the desire to distribute wealth. This is the lesson derived from Jesus' multiplication of loaves in John 6 and especially in his insistence on preserving against wasting the fragments gathered from the multiplication. This desire to serve the need of all which must always overflow into the obligation to avoid wastage will go the distance towards enhancing an economy that is managed purposefully, lucidly and democratically. Political system must help produce leaders who possess the quality of congregating people for the common interest and decisions. To this end, political actors must be able to assess and guide the economy based on informed knowledge of economic dynamism.

The overriding motive for Jesus' prevention of wastage extends beyond the value for the fragments to include the care for humanity's future need. A guarantee of this future need implies the prevention of the toxic effect of wasted resources on the environment. This integral care for the good of the human person for which a healthy material good serves the need of the human person therefore translates into a healthy concept of environmental ecology. The instruction in John 6:12 therefore serves as an engagement between the sacred and the secular; faith and economics. Christian moral teaching must pay attention to the dynamics of economics and develop links between the goals of morality and economic systems. Economic systems must identify the goals of moral principles and built their analysis around those goals and apply them. This can help produce a contented humanity in an economically developed society as well as an economically empowered humanity in the ubiquity of religious faith. Economic management is not judged solely by material, statistical or technological data; it embraces especially the qualities of an integrally developed human person indebted to faith, ethics and morality. The goal of economic management embraces development and such a development entails the improvement of the whole man on a level that is economic, social, political and religious. The moral principles arising from the Christian faith encourage respect for the common good and consequently accountability in the use of what is meant for the many. When this vision informs approach to the economy, prudence and transparency will remain the watch words.

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