

Excerpts from *God's Money*

I have in one of my drawers some pieces of paper that say I own a few acres and a cabin, in the middle of nowhere. What those papers mean to me as a Christian is not that I have absolute ownership of this little garden of creation, but that I am its steward, its caretaker. I can do better at this little job. It really does, lizards, trees, cabin, and all, belong to God. (page 11)

When I have a single dollar bill in my pocket, I am part of the entire system of banking, markets, stocks, bonds, taxes, property rights, courts, etc. I do not have to agree with everything that goes on in that big complex system, yet I am part of it. What is my personal responsibility in this complexity? (page 12)

Biblical debt is always meant to be temporary... the Jubilee Year of Leviticus 25 meant that when people went into debt because they could no longer afford to eat, the price would be based on the number of years until the next jubilee, for it is really the number of crops that can be sold. All debt is meant to be forgiven eventually. No one is meant to be enslaved forever. Is this the real reason we have laws that allow and govern the humbling experience of bankruptcy? (page 23)

One of my brothers tells of an exchange with some friends pushing him to join them at their regular watering hole. Brother begged off saying "I don't have any money." One friend: "we're just going for one or two." Brother repeated, "I don't have any money." The other friend persisted, "just one." Brother drew them a picture:

"OK, say I go into a bar, and I ask for a beer. At some point I am going to be told how much it costs. I will have to say, 'I don't have any money;' if I don't go to jail, I'll be where I am now, home, with no money."

The friends finally got it:

"Oh, you don't have *any* money!"

Why is it so hard for us to admit that right now, we do not have any money? Is it because the plastic lets us live as if we always do? (page 25)

The very existence of the Securities and Exchange Commission, regulating the stock markets, can be seen, by a Catholic anyway, as a governmental acknowledgment of the existence of original sin, with a focus on greed. Now, I am not going to slip into a homily on how even we baptized breathe in daily oxygen still infected with the effects of original sin. Let me instead, with charity to all people trying to make a living, refer to our Master Teacher:

*What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world
and forfeit his life? Matthew 16:26a (page 38)*