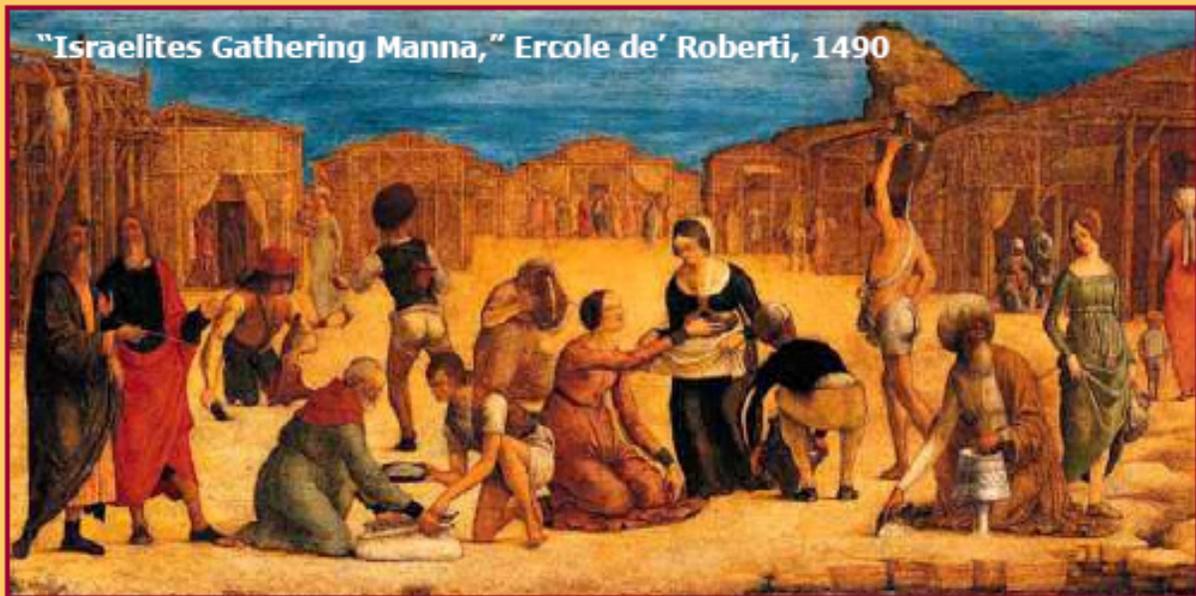


# From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing



A DVD presentation featuring theologian  
Ched Myers and financial advisor Andy Loving

**Study/Facilitation Guide**

[www.bcm-net.org](http://www.bcm-net.org)

## ***From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing***

This program starts broadly with an overview of the biblical ethos of sharing and justice in a broad-brush portrait of some of the most pressing social and economic issues facing our churches today. Throughout the course of the six sessions, the speakers funnel down our focus to examine how we might respond to the biblical vision of Sabbath Economics – how, in a world of economic disparity, we can put our surplus capital to work in low-income communities through the strategy of community investing, a concrete expression of Christian discipleship.

These sessions were filmed in January 2009, in the midst of a period of severe global economic uncertainty. The setting was a one-day workshop at Baldwin Park Presbyterian Church, Baldwin Park, CA, sponsored in part by the Presbyterian Hunger Action Network. The speakers' presentations are deepened by compelling testimonies of economic discipleship shared by people who have participated in community investing.

Given a number of times over the past few years, this workshop has inspired hundreds of people to move millions of investment dollars from Wall Street to Main Street and around the world.

As Ched Myers says at the end of the program, "Thank you for your time and commitment to work through what are really serious issues of faith and economic justice."

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## A note on the study guide and its author

The study guide is, by design, a work in progress. The author, Susan Taylor, would appreciate any ideas you have that may be helpful to others using the DVDs and study guide. She can be reached at [staylor@justmoneyadvisors.com](mailto:staylor@justmoneyadvisors.com).

A Ph.D. economist, Susan is a financial advisor with her husband, Andy Loving, at Just Money Advisors,\* specializing in socially responsible investing and community investing. Susan writes about issues of money and faith. Copies of recent articles are available at [www.justmoneyadvisors.com](http://www.justmoneyadvisors.com). Active parent of two teenagers, Susan teaches groups of children and young people about issues of money and faith. She also serves on the board of directors of Faith & Money Network.

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## Planning your time

Each segment of the program is 28-30 minutes long. It helps to plan ahead how you want to use your time for each of your group meetings, given how many group meetings you plan for each program segment and how long your meeting times are.

For example, if you have allocated one meeting per segment and your meeting times are one hour long, you will have only 30 minutes for people to be seated,

*We are each in our own place around issues of money and faith and can only engage in this material from that place.*

for prayer and introductions, and for discussion after the video program. This may mean you have time for only one or two discussion questions at the end. We encourage the group facilitator to choose the question(s) that best fit and challenge your particular group.

If you have allocated two or more meetings per segment, you will have more flexibility in the number of questions your group can discuss and the depth of your discussion. But you will also have to spend a few minutes at the beginning of the second meeting per segment reviewing your previous meeting, as there may be a few people who missed the program itself and/or part of the group discussion.

All of the usual guidelines apply for your discussion time to be respectful of each person in your group. We are each in our own place around issues of money and faith and can only engage in this material from that place. Attentive listening and non-judgmental responses can create a safe space in which people can explore ideas that may be new to them. Part of the role of facilitator is to ensure that each person that wants to speak is heard and that group courtesy is practiced.

## The speakers

When you watch the DVDs, you will see that **Ched Myers** is a teller of sacred stories, helping groups re-ground their perspectives in the biblical text. But hearing the stories is not enough; these stories are to be lived. Ched helps viewers imagine how we, as people of faith, can embody the vision of God within our contemporary contexts.



A fifth-generation Californian, Ched and his wife, Elaine Enns, are part of a small, intentional community in Oak View, CA, near Los Angeles. Together, they are part of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, a group of theological educators in Southern California who focus on building capacity for biblical literacy, church renewal and faith-based witness for justice.

“For the past 30 years I have sought to respond to the discipleship call in a variety of ways: as an activist, writer, community builder and popular educator,” Ched explains. “It is my conviction that the First World church can only be renewed by rediscovering its witness to God’s dream of the Peaceable Kingdom and justice for all. Historically in the U.S., people of faith have been on the forefront of struggles for social change (in our generation this has included movements for civil rights, labor solidarity, immigrant and refugee rights and disarmament). Today we need to help animate a new generation of ecumenical leadership committed both to the gospel and to social change. In the metaphor of Jesus, we must be willing to ‘address the mountain’ of injustice.”

To that end, Ched travels throughout North America and abroad giving seminars and retreats, teaching, preaching and facilitating gatherings across the ecumenical spectrum. He works with local churches, diocesan and denominational offices, and faith-based organizations. He is committed to such efforts as Christian Peacemaker Teams, Borderlinks, the Catholic Worker movement, Witness for Peace, and the Servant Leadership Schools.

Ched’s book, *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*, (Tell the Word Press, 2001), is another expression of some of the ideas you will see in these DVDs – tracing the biblical imperative for reading the Bible economically and the economy biblically. We invite you to use this book as additional resource for study as the vision of Sabbath Economics becomes open to you through these DVDs.

Ched has authored and co-authored several other books and published more than 100 chapters, articles and essays. For more on Ched’s work and the work of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, see [www.bcm-net.org](http://www.bcm-net.org).

**Andy Loving** is a Certified Financial Planner® and expert in community investments. In segments 5 and 6 of this DVD series, Andy describes just a few of the many ways people can respond to the biblical vision of Sabbath Economics by putting their capital to work in poor communities. Community investing allows people and churches to put their capital into financial institutions that serve poor people and poor communities, ranging from inner-city banks and loan funds to overseas microcredit groups.

Andy has won multiple awards for community investment work. He serves on the board of Faith & Money Network, [www.faithandmoneynetwork.org](http://www.faithandmoneynetwork.org), and in an advisory capacity to the board of directors of Oikocredit USA, [www.oikocredit.org](http://www.oikocredit.org).



Along with his wife and business partner, Susan Taylor, Andy runs a financial planning firm, Just Money Advisors, in Louisville, Kentucky.\* Just Money Advisors specializes in working with individuals and religious institutions who are trying to understand and redefine what it means to be a “responsible financial steward.”

A lifelong social justice advocate and ordained minister, Andy considers money, poverty and economic issues to have been a crucial part of his work life. He was cofounder of *SEEDS*, an award-winning magazine on hunger and economic justice, as well as minister to the homeless at an inner-city Episcopal church.

Andy believes that how we use money is one of the best indicators of how we understand the Christian faith journey. His deeply-held faith values and a lifetime of thinking about issues of money and faith are evident in his presentation on these DVDs, making a potentially overwhelming subject – What do we do with our money if we share God’s vision of an economy for all? – not only accessible to understand but possible and *desirable* to be a part of. (Please note that any mention of specific securities should be reviewed for suitability to your own situation.)

For more on Andy’s work and access to several of his publications, see [www.justmoneyadvisors.com](http://www.justmoneyadvisors.com).

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## **Project funders**

### ***Individual Funders***

Fr. James B. Callan (Rochester, NY)  
Steve and Christine Clemens (Minneapolis, MN)  
Marty Collier and Carter Garber (Decatur, GA)  
Bob and Barb Haddon (Los Angeles, CA)  
Charlotte Myers (Irvine, CA)

### ***Organizational Funders***

Duke University Chapel (Durham, NC)  
[www.chapel.duke.edu](http://www.chapel.duke.edu)

Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina (Raleigh, NC)  
[www.episdionc.org](http://www.episdionc.org)

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice  
[www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org)

Faith & Money Network (Washington, DC)  
[www.faithandmoneynetwork.org](http://www.faithandmoneynetwork.org)

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Work Group of the Presbytery of San Fernando (Los Angeles County, CA)  
[www.sfpresby.org](http://www.sfpresby.org)

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Task Force of San Gabriel Presbytery (Los Angeles County, CA)  
[www.sangabpres.org](http://www.sangabpres.org)

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Task Force, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii (Los Angeles, CA)  
[www.synod.org](http://www.synod.org)

North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Church & Society Team, Mission Team, Office of Mission & Justice Ministries (Raleigh, NC)  
[www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org)

Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (USA) (Louisville, KY)  
[www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger)

Sabbath Economics Collaborative  
[www.sabbatheconomics.org](http://www.sabbatheconomics.org)

Spiritus Christi Church (Rochester, NY)  
[www.spirituschristi.org](http://www.spirituschristi.org)

Sustainable World, All Saints Episcopal Church (Pasadena, CA)

*From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing*  
**Segment 1**

## **Introduction to Sabbath Economics**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Share the biography of the presenter for Segment 1, Ched Myers. It is available in the introduction in this study guide. To know a bit of a person's story and work gives important context to their presentation.
- 3) Share the following quote from Jesuit theologian John Haughey (pronounced "Hoy," rhyming with "boy"): "We read the Gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know nothing of the Gospel."

### Key ideas presented in Segment 1

- The economic implications of the tradition of Sabbath Economics as articulated through Scripture: three axioms
  - The world as created by God is abundant, with enough for everyone provided that human communities restrain their appetites and live within appropriate limits.
  - Disparities in wealth and power are not, in fact, part of the natural order. They are the result of human sinfulness. Therefore, this sin must be mitigated in communities of faith through strategies of just sharing and distribution of goods.
  - The prophets call us to strategies of redistribution, and throughout the Bible this is characterized as a proclamation of good news.
- We live in a world of great economic inequality. We have not solved the problem of poverty. Nor have we solved the problem of affluence.
- Manna lessons: retraining Israel to live in the economy of grace
  - The gift should be distributed equitably.
  - The gift should circulate rather than concentrate.
  - Keep the Sabbath, God's limits on human activity.

### Play Segment 1: Introduction to Sabbath Economics

## Questions for discussion

The questions for discussion cover a range of issues raised in the first segment of *From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing*. Your time (and possibly your group's interest) will likely be insufficient to cover them all. The facilitator should select the questions for discussion that will best resonate with and challenge your particular group, given where they are in thinking about these issues.

- From the very first axiom, as presented by Myers, we have bumped up against our culture. Do you agree with Myers' axioms? What examples can you think of that illustrate the gap between the axioms and our culture? For example, the first axiom says God has created enough for everyone as long as humans live within appropriate limits. What does our culture have to say about limits? Are they seen as valuable and necessary? Or are limits seen as chafing constraints to be overcome with higher incomes?
- To what are we likely to attribute wealth disparities? If we see someone with an expensive car or someone with a "clunker," what are we likely to assume about how that came to be? A large house compared to a modest home?
- "We read the Gospel as if we had no money, and we spend our money as if we know nothing of the Gospel," according to Jesuit theologian John Haughey (pronounced "Hoy"). What do you think he means by that? Do you agree with that or not?
- Have you ever heard the story of manna for the Israelites escaping Egypt from the perspective taught by Myers? How does it strike you? What differences do you see in this teaching from the messages you've heard taught from this passage before?
- If we took the lessons of manna seriously in our own time, what changes would we need to make as a society? As a church? As individual households?
- Myers attributes some aspects of homelessness, mental health issues, suicide and other human ills to such economic factors as poverty and wealth disparities—a widening gap between rich and poor. Is this something that you've thought about before? What truth do you see in that statement?
- Myers identifies having too much money as another form of pathology. Do you agree with this statement? Even if you don't agree wholeheartedly, can you think of examples of behavior resulting from or

enabled by too much money that may be troubling to a person of faith?  
To God?

- Do you observe the Sabbath? If so, how do you observe it? If not, has Sabbath-keeping seemed unimportant, or does it not feel possible for you? Why not? What would you have to change in order to observe Sabbath in some way?
- Who are you if you are not working/doing? (If people don't want to answer this question aloud, encourage them to think silently for a few minutes on their answer.)
- At the end of Segment 1, Gloria Kinsler offers her testimony of choices she and her husband, Ross, have made regarding money over their lifetime. Is there a testimony you would like to share from your own life of how your faith has shaped a decision about money?

## **Sabbath Economics in Torah and the Prophets**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Review one or two of the key ideas in Segment 1, by way of introduction to people who may not have been present for Segment 1, as well as serving as a reminder to people who were present for Segment 1.

### Key ideas presented in Segment 2

- The vision of Sabbath Economics – the Bible’s alternative economic story – can be traced through the rest of Torah and the prophets.
  - All productive capacity – our ability to work and nature itself – is a gift from God that can never be absolutely privatized. The Torah lays out ways in which that gift is kept in circulation.
    - Every year, allow gleaning in the fields by the poor.
    - Every seventh year, all of the land is returned to the commonwealth by allowing it to lie fallow for poor people and undomesticated animals.
    - Every seventh year, all debts are wiped off the books.
    - Every 50<sup>th</sup> year, a full restructuring of the economy occurs in a process known as Jubilee.
      - Debt forgiveness
      - Return of foreclosed land to its original owners
      - Release from slavery, specifically debt slavery
  - All of these forms of economic redistribution challenge the mechanisms that create structural poverty: indebtedness, foreclosure on such collateral as land, wage slavery when one no longer owns land or other means of production. The Torah says these mechanisms are to be periodically reversed to prevent structural poverty.
  - Isn’t this a utopian vision never practiced? Not according to the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos all protested the economic inequality in Israel, keeping alive the tradition of an alternative economic story.

### Play Segment 2: Introduction to Sabbath Economics

## Questions for discussion

The questions for discussion cover a range of issues raised in the second segment of *From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing*. Your time will likely be insufficient to cover them all. The facilitator should select the questions for discussion that will best resonate with and challenge your particular group, given where they are in thinking about these issues.

- Did you know that gleaning is still practiced today? Where have you seen it occur? If you haven't witnessed it yourself, in what circumstances do you think it might be practiced?
- Myers traces the mechanisms by which people became poor 3,000 years ago: indebtedness; loss of collateral, credit and land; selling your time for wages. What has changed about this process between then and now?
- Debt and credit are prominent tools of today's economy. Debt is encouraged not only for homes but for current consumption of goods and services. How does this benefit people who give credit? How does this benefit people who receive credit? What problems arise out of this system when people take on excessive credit? What problems arise when people do not have access to credit?
- Even for people who are not poor, many/most people in today's North American and European economies sell our time for wages and salaries. Are there ways in which you feel like a debt slave?
- If nature and all productive capacity is truly a gift from God, what does this mean for us as recipients of those gifts? How should we treat those gifts? To what extent are they ours to own exclusively? To accumulate?
- In the interview at the end of Segment 2, Ross Kinsler says, "The mission that God has given to us is to respond to those economic realities with a message of hope and an alternative way of building our lives in community around justice, economically and in every other way." In what you've learned about Sabbath Economics through your own faith journey and the first two segments of *From Mammon to Manna*, in what way are you motivated to respond? Can you imagine one alternative way of managing your own economic household to more deeply participate in God's Sabbath Economy?

## **Sabbath Economics in Jesus and Paul**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Briefly review one or two of the key ideas in Segment 2, by way of introduction to people who may not have been present for Segment 2, as well as serving as a reminder to people who were present for Segment 2.

### Key ideas presented in Segment 3

- Sabbath Economics in Jesus' teachings: The manna economy outlined in Torah and reasserted in the prophets echoes throughout Jesus' word and example.
  - Isaiah's prophecy of economic justice recurs in Jesus' parable of the vineyard in Mark 12 and in vineyard metaphors in John's gospel.
  - The Lord's Prayer ritualizes the memory of manna in the wilderness in "give us today enough bread for the day."
  - In Mark, Jesus is recorded as reasserting the right of people to glean, even on the Sabbath. "The Sabbath," Jesus said, that day that is observed as a fundamental tradition of economic justice, "was made for humankind."
  - Luke 16 sandwiches an attack on leaders as lovers of money between stories of rich men that teach and warn about God and mammon.
  - Luke 6:19: "You cannot serve God and mammon."
- Sabbath Economics in Paul's epistles
  - In every epistle, Paul writes about "the collection," economic redistribution from rich churches to poorer churches.
  - Paul's "collection" illustrates the principles of Sabbath Economics that everyone should have enough and that the gifts of God should keep circulating.
  - Paul's scriptural justification for "the collection" is the story of manna in the wilderness.

- In the tradition of the prophets, James admonishes the wealthy who exploit their laborers and live in luxury at the expense of others who do not have enough.
- Reflection on today's mammon economy
  - Community as manna economy compared to capitalism as an expression of the mammon economy
  - Five characteristics of today's social landscape, carved by the mammon economy in our time (See the questions for discussion section below.)
  - Three pathologies of affluenza, or the problem of having too much
    - We are riddled by anxiety and dissatisfaction.
    - We are alienated from community and the commonwealth, place, relational commerce and the Spirit.
    - We are a nation of addicts to limitlessness, money, stuff and work.

### Play Segment 3: Sabbath Economics in Jesus and Paul

#### Questions for discussion

Segment 3 is organized somewhat differently, asking for input during the presentation. As Myers transitions from the ancient vision of Sabbath Economics to modern practice, he discusses five core characteristics of the modern social landscape. After naming each characteristic, he asks viewers to generate some examples from their own lives and experience. You will need to pause the DVD at breaks provided for the length of time that is appropriate for your group. You will need to evaluate how much time you want to give for discussion at that point, given your total time period for Segment 3.

Five core characteristics of our modern social landscape:

- 1) The stratification and polarization of wealth and of power and increasing disparity between rich and poor. What are some of the ways in which you see this in your local area?
- 2) The dismantling of the commonwealth by privatization. What do we mean by that? What is something that used to belong to the public but has been privatized?
- 3) The dispossession of the local by the global. The difference between having a marketplace where you know the people and you have a general sense of where things come from, and placeless markets, where you shop for stuff you have no idea where it is from or how it got to you. What

- would be examples of dispossession of local marketplace by placeless markets?
- 4) The eclipse of “use value” by “exchange value.” In other words, a good isn’t a good itself, valued for its use. Rather, a manufactured product takes on a magical life that has the power to make us happy or to heal us or to give us sex appeal. What would be examples where this characteristic is particularly problematic?
  - 5) The atrophy of the communal and the sovereignty of the individual. What are some of the ways of things that used to be done collectively or within the household that are being increasingly privatized?

### Additional questions for discussion

The questions for discussion cover a range of issues raised in the third segment of *From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing*. Your time will likely be insufficient to cover them all. The facilitator should select the questions for discussion that will best resonate with and challenge your particular group, given where they are in thinking about these issues.

- Are you hearing new understandings of some of our biblical texts than you have typically heard? What differences are you hearing? Are there interpretations presented here that chafe? Which ones? Which new understandings have a deep ring of truth for you?
- Do you agree with Myers’ assertion that our wealth and the disparities between rich and poor have created widespread anxiety, alienation and addiction? In what ways have you seen these pathologies in your own circles of experience? If you do not agree that such pathologies are fed by affluenza, to what do you attribute these pathologies you have seen around you or experienced yourself?
- Is it possible to have an essentially capitalist economy while minimizing the gap between rich and poor and preserving community, the commonwealth, local marketplaces and the use value of goods? If so, what might we need to change about today’s version of our capitalist economy to point it more toward a manna economy?
- What steps can we as individuals take to move toward a manna economy within our capitalist economy? What could our churches do? Our church-based institutions?

## **A Sabbath Economics Household Covenant**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Review one or two of the key ideas in Segment 3, by way of introduction to people who may not have been present for Segment 3, as well as serving as a reminder to people who were present for Segment 3.

### Key ideas presented in Segment 4

- Transition from the biblical proclamation of the vision of Sabbath Economics to discipleship practices today: The seven-fold household covenant, developed by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries.
- The seven-fold covenant focuses on the realm of personal and family finances and life choices to help people of faith focus on their household discipleship practices of Sabbath Economics.
- Process: For households to make specific commitment in each of seven areas for one year. Participants brainstorm their own specific commitments to choices that are realistic and life-giving to them. (A copy of the covenant with a few ideas to spark brainstorming around covenant commitments is available in the Resources section of this study guide.) At the end of a year, participants assess their progress toward their goals and set new covenant commitments for next steps in the next year.
- It helps to have a sense of your personal economic story, a money autobiography. (A guideline for thinking through and/or writing your money autobiography is provided in the Resources section of this guide by Faith & Money Network.) Sharing our stories breaks the silence around money and class. It helps us not have to carry our economic anxiety alone, and gives us a basis from which to think of common solutions.
- The household covenant identifies seven aspects of household discipleship practices of Sabbath Economics.
  - 1) **Surplus capital:** What do we do with our extra? Where do we hold it or invest it? This is a key issue in an affluent country and in an affluent church.

- 2) **Negative capital:** also known as debt. In an economy where we have easy access to credit, we often make decisions that are not in our own or others' best interests.
  - 3) **Giving:** Do we give? Do we give strategically? Relationally?
  - 4) **Environmental footprint:** What next steps do we need to take to make our households greener? Our churches?
  - 5) **Consumption:** Where do we have a compulsive relationship with stuff? Clothes or cars or technology? How can I reduce my consumption and change my patterns to conform to sustainable patterns? To be able to give more away? To be able to depend less on high rates of return on investments?
  - 6) **Solidarity:** What am I doing to interact in a meaningful way with marginalized people?
  - 7) **Work/Sabbath:** How can I assure that I have regular rest from work and adequate space for spiritual reflection and renewal? How can I stop *doing* long enough to learn how to *be*?
- Change is difficult for people, particularly around economics, because so many economic and social problems we see are so enormous that we feel we can't make a difference. When we join with others making changes in personal choices, our collective actions can have an impact. But even if we cannot see that impact, the seven-fold household covenant is about trying to become more conscious, to practice manna economics in the midst of a mammon economy. It is meaningful as an act of discipleship.

#### Play Segment 4: A Sabbath Economics Household Covenant

#### Questions for discussion

The questions for discussion cover a range of issues raised in the fourth segment of *From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing*. Your time will likely be insufficient to cover them all. The facilitator should select the questions for discussion that will best resonate with and challenge your particular group, given where they are in thinking about these issues.

- What are some common features of the economic stories of people watching this DVD together in your group? You can use Myers' questions asked in the DVD and/or create your own. Myers' questions are:
  - How many of you grew up in a home you didn't own?
  - How many of you are first or 1.5 generation immigrants?

- How many of you have experienced unemployment directly or through your family system?
- How many of you know first-hand from parents or grandparents stories of the Great Depression?
- Practice using the grid to brainstorm together some steps a person could take, discipleship practices of Sabbath Economics. You are not making commitments at this point – just stretching your imagination and sharing ideas. (A copy of the Grid for Engagement is available in the Resources section of the study guide.)
- In reviewing the seven-fold covenant, which parts of the process are you willing to commit to? Are you willing to think through alone what steps you could take during the next year for each of the seven aspects of the covenant? Are you willing to commit to make those steps? Are you willing to talk about your commitments with someone else and ask them to hold you accountable for taking those steps? Are you willing to work through the covenant process within your household? (A copy of the covenant is available in the Resources section of the study guide.)
- Would you like to work with others on the covenant process? If so, how could you begin to do that? What support do you need?
- At the end of Segment 4, Wendy and David Gist share their gratification in the steps they have taken to work toward a Sabbath Economy and see those steps as “part of giving life.” Where do you see yourself using your money to give life right now? Where do you see yourself using your money to give life in the future?

## **Surplus Capital, Stewardship and Social Investing**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Share the biography of the presenter for segments 5 and 6, Andy Loving. It is available in the general introduction in this study guide. To know a bit of a person's story and work gives important context to their presentation.
- 3) Review from Segment 4 the components of the seven-fold household covenant and the purpose of the covenant.

### Key ideas in Segment 5

- Of the seven aspects of household practice included in the seven-fold covenant, surplus capital is the area that people tend to have thought about less but for which there are easy, specific actions a household can take to opt for Sabbath Economics redistribution without giving that money away.
- Two ideas that lie at the heart of Sabbath Economics thinking about surplus capital.
  - Asking the question of not only "What is the return on the capital?" but "What is the capital itself doing?" Where is it being held? How is it being used?
  - Capital deposited in any financial institution is a measure of power. Who are we giving that power to? Are they about, in any way, Sabbath Economics redistribution?
  - There are places to deposit surplus capital to work for the redistribution of wealth and power.
- Social investing, or SRI for Socially Responsible Investing: Trying to help investors know what their capital is doing and to align where they put their money with their social, religious and ethical values.
  - Screened investing
    - Negative screens: excluding companies from your investments because of what they do, e.g., produce cigarettes or weapons or contribute to environmental degradation.

- Positive screens: including companies in your portfolio because of what they do, e.g., fair labor practices, production of products that clean the environment.
- Shareholder activism: Ownership in a company as an opportunity to influence the policies and behavior of that company.
- Community investing: Capital from investors is directed to communities underserved by traditional financial services. In other words, poor people and poor communities in the US and around the world. Community investing gives people access to capital to buy homes, finance small businesses, repair churches and community centers, operate charter schools. Some community investments offer market-rate returns, while some pay below-market returns. All offer high social impact, a powerful force for using surplus capital to work toward Sabbath Economics redistribution of wealth and power.

## Play Segment 5: Surplus Capital, Stewardship and Social Investing

### Questions for discussion

- Think for a moment about all of the stewardship sermons and lessons you have heard in church throughout your life. What is the concept of stewardship you have grown up with? Can you think of a time that stewardship was described as more than *giving* of money, time and talent?
- Andy Loving describes surplus capital as money in our checking accounts, bank accounts, savings accounts, IRAs, pension plans, 403bs, 401ks, any investment kind of account or deposit account in the bank, money we're saving for health care in our old age or to send our kids to college, an inheritance – that's surplus capital. Take a few minutes to privately add up rough estimates of your surplus capital. A ballpark figure is fine for a group setting.

Two ways to handle this in a group setting have worked well.

- Ask people to write their total on a scrap of paper, without their name, and have someone total the group's estimated surplus capital. Even in a group of a few people, the number will likely surprise you. Many of the groups using these DVDs will be holding a great deal of surplus capital.
- Some individuals have been willing to share their personal numbers aloud. Again, a group total is illuminating.
- Go a step further and estimate your church's or institution's surplus capital. What would that total be?

- Given the amount of surplus capital represented in your group, imagine the power of even a portion of that money being used in poor communities to build housing and schools and small businesses. What thoughts or feelings from those images would people like to share?
- Now imagine churches all over the US making their surplus capital available for some period to poor communities. What difference could be made in poor communities with access to these amounts of capital? What difference do you think it could make in the ministry impact your church can make? Do you see this as in line with your church's mission?
- In the interview at the end of the segment, Rick Kidd describes beginning to be aware of where the bulk of his money had been invested and deciding to move much of it into things he and his wife believe in. Have you thought of your money in this way? Have you examined where the bulk of your money is invested? If you have, please share one example of a particular company or institution you were invested in that felt in line with your beliefs or one that did not feel in line with your beliefs.

## **Community Investing**

### Opening your session

- 1) We invite you to open each session with prayer, an opening of minds and hearts to new and possibly challenging ideas.
- 2) Review one or two of the key ideas in Segment 5 that introduce the concept of surplus capital.

### Key ideas from Segment 6

- Segment 6 focuses on pointing people to the specific Sabbath Economics practice of putting surplus capital into community investing.
- A few examples of specific options for community investing and how individuals and churches can participate. (Please note that any mention of specific securities should be reviewed for suitability to your own situation.)
  - ShoreBank: the largest community development financial institution in the US. A bank whose business model is not to make the most possible money, but to make the highest possible impact on low-income communities. [www.sbk.com](http://www.sbk.com)
  - ShoreBank Pacific, an environmental bank. [www.eco-bank.com](http://www.eco-bank.com)
  - Self-Help Credit Union, one of the largest community development credit unions. [www.self-help.org](http://www.self-help.org)
  - CRA Fund, an affordable housing bond fund. [www.ccmfixedincome.com](http://www.ccmfixedincome.com)
  - Calvert Foundation uses investment capital, rather than conventional philanthropy, to enable nonprofit organizations and social enterprises to address critical social problems. [www.calvertfoundation.org](http://www.calvertfoundation.org)
  - Oikocredit is one of the world's largest sources of private funding to the microfinance sector. It also provides credit to trade cooperatives, fair trade organizations and small-to-medium enterprises in the developing world. [www.oikocredit.org](http://www.oikocredit.org)
  - Community Reinvestment Fund provides capital to nonprofit community development lenders through its secondary market for loans, a process explained in the DVD. [www.crfusa.com](http://www.crfusa.com)
  - Equal Exchange is a fair trade company that offers coffee, chocolate, bananas and other products. [www.equalexchange.coop](http://www.equalexchange.coop)

- Shared Interest helps to move capital back into South Africa, providing financing to microcredit organizations that serve black South African communities and businesses. [www.sharedinterest.org](http://www.sharedinterest.org)
- One church's story: To their surprise, Jeff St. Baptist Community at Liberty, a small justice church in Louisville, KY, was able to pool more than \$180,000 of surplus capital and put it to use in poor communities.
- Loving prompts viewers to "Do it now." Don't overanalyze. Do something now, however small. Then reflect, learn more, do more community investing.

## Play Segment 6: Community Investing

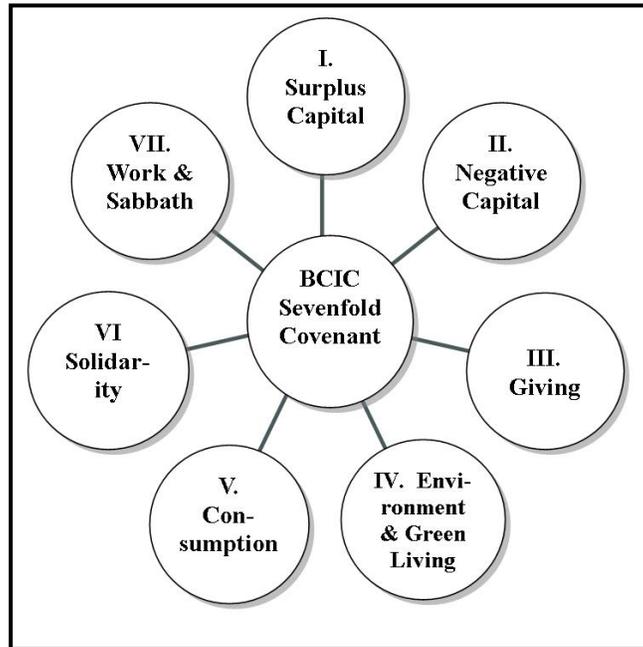
### Questions for discussion

- Andy Loving introduced a number of organizations and institutions through which people of faith can practice the discipleship through Sabbath Economics practice of community investing. Which of the organizations appeals to you? Why do you think that organization strikes your interest? Does it intersect with your personal experience in some way?
- In the interview at the end of the segment, Merilie Robertson said Loving's emphasis on doing something now prompted her to move a small amount of money immediately into community investing. Do you feel ready to move at least some money into a community investment with a minimum of additional research? If so, how much money do you plan to invest and in which option? If not, why not?
- In the interview at the end of the segment, Elaine Enns and Ched Myers talk about where they have experienced and witnessed Sabbath Economics in practice. Have you had experiences of Sabbath Economics, where community and relationships have taken the place of market transactions? To prompt your ideas, one such example is how neighbors often respond with help for each other during a storm.
- Would you like to talk with someone who has done some community investing with their own funds? Or to a church that has done so? How will you pursue having that discussion?
- Where do you want to go from here in your exploration of community investing? What would you like to see happen in your church around community investing?

## Resources

- *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*, by Ched Myers, Tell the Word, 2001
- *Sabbath Economics: Household Practices*, by Matthew Colwell, Tell the Word, 2007
- "Investing, the Poor and Social Change," by Andy Loving, from Money & Faith: The Search for Enough, Michael Schut, ed. Chapter available for download from [www.justmoneyadvisors.com](http://www.justmoneyadvisors.com).
- *BCM Household Sabbath Economics Covenant*, by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, pages 24-25 of this study guide or available on [www.bcm-net.org](http://www.bcm-net.org)
- *Guidelines for Writing Your Money Autobiography*, by Faith & Money Network, pages 26-27 of this study guide
- *Grid for Engagement*, by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, page 28 of this study guide

# BCM Household Sabbath Economics Covenant



The focus of this seven-fold covenant is **household economics**--the realm of personal and family finances. The process invites participants to think of at least one specific commitment they can make in each of these seven areas for one year. The suggestions below are only to help the participant brainstorm realistic and creative steps for themselves. For information about using this covenant contact Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries at [www.bcm-net.org](http://www.bcm-net.org) or 805- 649-1327. For a book-length treatment of this covenant, with a chapter devoted to each of the seven areas, see BCM's resource **Sabbath Economics: Household Practices**.

1. **Surplus capital:** Does my household have surplus capital? How can I move toward making more of my capital available for community development? What would I have to do to convert my investments to socially responsible (SRI) and/or community investment options? Examples:
  - a. Move 100% of investment capital into SRI funds.
  - b. Calculate a "social mortgage" or "usury tax" on your surplus capital to tithe away.
  - c. Place 50% of investments into a community development financial institution.
2. **Negative capital (debt):** What is my household debt level (mortgage, car notes, credit cards, and student loans should be calculated separately), and what is my debt-to-savings ratio? Because debt should never be an asset or strategy, how can I move toward reducing my debt load? Examples:
  - a. Begin using a "credit card condom."
  - b. Limit yourself to one credit card (and its limit).
  - c. Use some of your savings to pay off a percentage of your debt to reduce the amount of debt interest you service.

3. **Giving:** Gifting helps build social relations rather than private capital. What is the history and values around my giving? What is my relationship with those to whom I give, and how does my giving contribute to transformation of that relationship? Examples:
  - a. Experiment with communitizing my decision-making process in order to work on accountability issues.
  - b. Seek help in developing a strategic giving plan.
  - c. Examine the balance between my giving of money, time and talent.
  
4. **Environment:** What concrete steps can I take to make my household and lifestyle significantly “greener”? Examples:
  - a. Do a household audit on waste, including recycling, toxic products, volume, etc.
  - b. Look at energy usage, including driving, and aim to reduce by 10%.
  - c. Commit to growing something edible on a year-round basis.
  
5. **Consumption:** What ways can I go further in reducing my consumption and changing my patterns to conform to sustainable patterns? Examples:
  - a. Do a “fearless moral inventory” regarding possible issues of economic “addiction,” and make some concrete commitments about “recovery.”
  - b. Do an audit of what goods I consume that are fair-trade, anti-sweatshop, locally produced, minimum packaging, etc., and plan to increase these by 10%.
  - c. Commit to buying 25% of my food from sources that are organic, local/regional, community supported agriculture, and/or farmer’s market.
  
6. **Solidarity:** What am I doing to interact in a meaningful way with people from a very different social stratum than my own, particularly those who are marginalized? Examples:
  - a. Join a local living wage-type campaign.
  - b. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen, shelter or clinic to find out what local needs are.
  - c. Commit to one “exposure” type program, or sponsor a friend of family member to join one, each year.
  
7. **Work/Sabbath:** How can I improve and expand my disciplines of assuring I have regular rest from work and adequate space for spiritual reflection and renewal? Examples:
  - a. Try keeping some sort of Sabbath day each week, with specific restricting parameters.
  - b. Commit to a retreat once a year of at least 4 days, and/or set aside time each day for journaling, prayer, scripture study, etc.
  - c. Cut back work hours to 4 days a week or to 7 hours a day.

**Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, P.O. Box 328, Oak View, CA 93022  
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# GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR MONEY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Provided by Faith and Money Network

[www.faithandmoneynetwork.org](http://www.faithandmoneynetwork.org)

## A MONEY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

### **Why write a Money Autobiography?**

Writing a money autobiography is a challenging and crucial step in understanding our behavior and powerful feelings evoked by money. Even for those of us who find it difficult to write, reflection on money and our life's journey yields insight and deepened awareness.

Jesus calls us to be conscious at a new level. Conversion is hearing and knowing God's love and call in our lives, becoming conscious of what had previously been unheard or unaccepted.

As recorded in the New Testament, Jesus repeatedly spoke about money and challenged the disciples, the scribes, and the crowds to become conscious of money and their relationship to it. We need to examine our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, which relate to money. As we discern the ways we earn, inherit, invest, spend, give, or waste money-often without conscious choice or deliberate faith stance-we will be enabled to respond more fully to Jesus.

### **How to prepare a Money Autobiography**

Elizabeth O'Connor, in *Letters to Scattered Pilgrims* (Harper and Row), has given guidelines for writing a money autobiography. It is important to focus on feelings and relationships as well as reflecting upon factual accounts. Use some or all of the questions as appropriate and helpful. Following the guidelines are some excerpts from money autobiographies that may be useful examples.

### **Guidelines**

Write a three-page autobiography, which deals only with the subject of your life as it is related to money. Include the role of money in your childhood. What is your happiest memory in connection with money? What is your unhappiest? What attitude did your mother have toward money? Father? What was your attitude toward money as a child? Did you feel poor or rich? What was your attitude toward money as a teenager? What are your memories of this period? What role did money play in your life as a young adult, as a parent? At age 45, 50, 65? Did your attitude or feelings shift at the different transition stages in your life?

How do you feel about your present financial status? What is your present financial status? What is your monthly income? What are your other assets? What will your income be at age 65, 75, 80?

Are you generous or stingy with your money? Do you spend money on yourself? If so, do you do it easily? Do you feel guilty about the money you have? Do you count your money? Do you take risks with your money? Do you gamble with your money? Do you throw it away? Do you worry about money?

When you eat with friends and there is a group check, are you the one to pick it up? Do you make sure you pay your share and that it includes tax and tip? Do you tend to be more on the giving end of things, or on the receiving end?

If you lacked money, how would you feel about others helping you to pay your rent, or treating when you went out and were not in a position to reciprocate?

If you have money, how would you feel about subsidizing a friend's rent, or paying more than your share of things? What would you want in return? How would you feel if that friend spent money on something that in your value system seemed 'extravagant'?

Do you tithe? If so, how do you really feel about it? Do you tithe because this is how you want your money used, or do you tithe because you want to belong and are willing to pay the cost of belonging?

Have you made a will? If not, why not? Did you include anyone in your will besides your family? Did you include your church? If not, why not? Did you include come oppressed segment of society or any needy members in your community? The biblical faith says that we have a common life together—a common wealth. How do you feel about a private will?

### **Additional Questions to Consider**

Culture and church have taught different roles and behaviors toward money for men and for women. How has your approach to money and its use been shaped by being a woman or by being a man?

How have your thoughts and behavior about money been shaped by the church?

What experiences have you had of rich and poor living happily together? What did it require of each?

How do you feel about asking other people for money: for yourself? A worthy cause? Your church?

How does having or not having money affect your self-esteem?

How does having more or less money than your spouse, or friend impact your relationship with that person?

Do you ever use money to control events and/or persons? Do you ever use money to give others freedom and opportunity?

In what ways is your relationship to money a training ground for your spiritual journey, or an expression of your deepest values?

How would you feel if you discovered that your income is derived from questionable enterprises?

How do you feel when beggars approach you asking for money?

## Grid for Economic Engagement

	Land	Labor	Capital	Markets	Consumption	Marginalized People
Spiritual						
Personal						
Household						
Church						
Local/Regional						
National						
International						