

Raising questions in Philadelphia

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Members of the Simple Way, an intentional Christian community in Philadelphia, took on Wall Street more than ten years ago, when 90 people staged a celebration of the Jubilee, complete with a drop of [hundreds of two-dollar bills](#).

I asked co-founder and author Shane Claiborne for his reactions to the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Are members of the Simple Way involved in the protests?

Yes. The beauty of being part of a community like Simple Way is that there's room for members to creatively discern how they are to do ministry. One of our members, an accountant, is on the financial team for Philadelphia's protest community; others are praying daily for the effort. I took some neighborhood college kids down to the site. They are aware of the civil rights movement, and we talked about how this movement might be echoing the earlier movement.

I personally will be joining the Occupy Wall Street "Move Your Money" Campaign. On November 5, I will divest from Bank of America, moving my money to the nonprofit credit union here in Philadelphia. It's one way to continue trying to get the log out of my own eye--to be a little less of a hypocrite tomorrow than I am today.

What did you see when you visited the Philadelphia site?

I saw wide diversity: 80-year-olds and 18-year-olds, people of all colors, homeless people, military people and professionals. It looked to me like a crowd that Jesus would have engaged. I didn't see cynicism. I saw a real sense of hope and the possibility of dreams becoming reality.

What to you think of the protests?

What an opportunity to create conversation! Jesus' own parable in Luke 12 is relevant to the entire effort. Why build bigger and bigger barns?

Occupy Wall Street may not come up with solutions, but at least it is asking the right questions in a nonviolent setting. I don't believe that love can be forced, but I believe it can be provoked. I don't believe that generosity can be forced, but it can be provoked. Occupy Wall Street is provoking generosity.

What would you like to see happen?

I'm hoping that Christians will see this as an opportunity to proclaim that God's heart is big enough for the 100 percent. It matters to God that some people are sagging with food while others need \$3 for a mosquito net. It also matters to God that many of the oppressors are, in spite of their money, desperately lonely and suffering. God cares for both and can set both free.

I believe we're building something new, proclaiming something else as possible. God wants to see us systemically dismantle disparity.