

Editor: Emanuel Prasetyono

TUHAN

dan

UANG

Pertautan Ganjil Dalam Hidup manusia

**Fakultas Filsafat UNIKA Widya Mandala Surabaya
2012**

Tuhan & Uang

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TO BE RICH OR NOT TO BE RICH? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Ramon Nadres

This paper was written in response to a request to be one of the speakers in a lecture series entitled “God and Money”¹. I was asked to tackle the issue from the point of view of the teachings of the Catholic Church. At first glance, this might sound to us like we already know the answer to this. On the contrary, I think that many Catholics will often realize, to their pleasant surprise, that the issue about God and money has more to it than meets the eye.

One and the Same Thing

“No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You can not serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6: 24)

The backgrounder for this series paints the issue within a framework of two extremes. On the one hand, it says, there are people who “sell God” in order to satisfy their economic needs and political ambitions. On the other, we find people who make money their god. The two actions are indeed different, even contrary. But I say that the underlying problem or principle is the same.

The people who “make money their god” do not really make money their god. A god is supposed to be someone who has power over you such that he can command you to do his will. It is true that, metaphorically, money can exercise power over you and make you do things in accordance with the very essence of what money is. However, strictly speaking, money cannot command. It does not have a mind and free will. Only a being with free will can command.

So in the end, it is not the money that commands but the person who possesses it who commands. And that person commands himself to make money the end all of his life, the reason for his being on earth, the ultimate value of all that he says and does, the rightful receiver of his love.

On the other hand, the man who “sells God” does not really have God as his top priority. God has become a mere instrument for another ulterior end. He does not submit himself to God: he submits God to himself. What is that ulterior end? Money. In the end, the man who sells God is the same as the man who makes money his god.

1. “Tuhan dan Uang” in Bahasa Indonesia.