

Debts Without Atonement

In allusion to Shakespeare's frequently used theme of "guilt and atonement" the large German daily "Die Welt" last week used the above headline in a play of words since the German translation for guilt also means debt. The article then opened,

"For a fairly long time now a saver's life is frustrating. Interest rates are at the lowest level ever, and this will not change in the medium term. Why then not buy real estate and switch sides by becoming indebted? By all means this could turn out to be beneficial."

No matter how good and logic the provided arguments support this statement, from a biblical spiritual point of view it is nonsense, a subtle deception and an evil way of enticing people into slavery. Remember *Proverbs 22:7*? "*The borrower is slave to the lender.*" If I get the twist correctly here then the message is this: if the reward (interest) for exploiting and enslaving others is too small, why not getting enslaved through debt yourself instead?

Amazingly, what sounds like a ridiculous option is regarded sound fiscal approach in worldly terms! How often have I heard people defending debt for real estate to be no real debt, since its backed by an asset, yet, strangely, this professional article calls buying real estate on credit a debt. It just doesn't add up, does it? The whole financial system, driving our economies and daily lives, doesn't really add up. I don't want to tire pointing that out.

In a recent interview, renowned Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler condemned economical insanities. Here are just three, all of which are defended by experts as wise economical decisions with no alternatives to it, yet are destroying the very ones who need aid and support:

- In October 2008 the 16 Euro-countries released a €1.7 trillion package for an inter-banking loan to bolster and restore confidence in the financial markets. This "coincided" with the industrial nation's 50% cutting of their contributions to the UNO's world food program leaving it at a mere €3.7 billion for the 71 million most destitute world citizens it is supposed to feed in a year. - I leave the math and conclusions to you.
- The farmers of the industrial OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) states received \$349 billion (!) in production and export subsidies in 2009 alone, enabling them to dump their products cheaply on African markets, thus harming the economies of the 37 pure agrarian and highly indebted nations in Africa immensely. - Kind of defeats the purpose, don't you think?
- Chinese governments funds, US Hedge funds and other foreign investors buy or lease extensive land in Africa (22 million ha in 2009 alone) to grow vegetables for the industrial nation's customers or palm oil and sugarcane for biodiesel! - Thats just sickening.

All this is conflicting with a Biblical Money Management, which describes God's view of our everyday handling of money in the context of private use as well as economical business process, leaving no room for exploitation (e.g. *Proverbs 14:31, 22:22; James 2:5-8*), interest (e.g. *Exodus 22:25; Proverbs 28:8; Ezekiel 18:8, Nehemiah 5:11*), debt (e.g. *Luke 6:34-35*) or any other destructive money-driven approach.

Its high time to acknowledge to be wrong here and change the ways we operate as far as it depends on us. Otherwise we'll have to make atonement. As believers we should encourage each other to act on God's principles, which are different to the world's. It's possible!

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2, NIV, emphasis added)