

Deception

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.” (Matthew 15:8-9, NLT-SE)

Concerning media coverage of the financial crises and its effects on the economies, this week has been like almost every other week in the recent past. Some reports expressed doubts that the world is already coming out of its recession. But an increasing number of reports proclaimed mantra-like that the financial crisis is under control and a turning of the tide noticeable. In fact, especially the finance sector has largely returned to business as usual. Watching interviews with bankers, stock brokers and fund managers, I was flabbergasted by their arrogance, ignorance and even blatant denial that they have been a decisive part of a machinery that has caused financial destruction to the tune of \$55 trillion world-wide in just a couple of years. Thats more than a years economical output of all the nations in the world! But mind you no signs of remorse. Instead, a trumpet call to make use of current opportunities as times have never been better for financial sharks with their often unscrupulous business practices. Join the free for all, do what you like and if you mess up, governments will fix it with taxpayers money. So why not join the party? Why spoil it?

Thus it came as a real surprise to me that this month two TV programs dared to scrutinize publicly the logic and sustainability of our current finance system and questioned the often rather illogic and devastating solutions to combat the crisis as decided upon by policy and decision makers. In fact, the one program even highlighted the Christian's responsibility to abolish interest. Now thats remarkable for a non-Christian program ...

In my personal observation many believers still struggle to see that, biblically, there is something inherently wrong with our monetary system, which is used as a basis for all economical activities and our daily provision. Because in one way or another everybody has been taught throughout his life that this is how finances work, the thought that something could be unsound doesn't even cross our minds. It's always been like that, it has always worked, not perfect though, but it has, so what should be wrong with it? Christian business people make use of it, churches and mission organizations make use of it, Christian leaders and politicians make use of it. So where's the problem? The majority can't be wrong, can they, so why making such a fuss about it? Checking the system out for unbiblical practices clearly appears to be a non-issue, at least by and large.

It might sound harsh but staying in that kind of attitude doesn't look very much different to what Jesus commented on in the verses above. He reprimanded the Pharisees for selling man-made traditions (customs, beliefs) as God's approved way of doing things. Thats dangerous! Of course, we are not Pharisees, but still, how can we profess to serve and worship God by sticking to our man-made, highly flawed and corrupt monetary system as God's solution? Remember? “You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in).” (Matthew 6:24b, Amplified Bible) So perhaps the following admonition must find a wider application in our lives than we originally thought?

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, NLT-SE)

At a time where even unbelievers look for righteous alternatives to an unethical and defective money system, why don't we, as God's children, seize the chance, stop falling for the deception that our system is ok and irreplaceable and allow the Holy Spirit to renew our thinking?