

OpEd: Thoughts on What We Could Never Pay, What We Will Always Owe

✖ Let's
talk about debt.

Of course the recent struggles in Washington sorely tempt me to opine on the egregious spectacle we have just endured. However, our status as a non-profit ministry (and hopefully some common sense) limits any political comment. But one obvious fact can be safely asserted: *debt has consequences.*

Let's look at our spiritual debt, our financial debt and our love debt.

What we owe (and what we don't owe) spiritually.

We could never have satisfied the debt and depth of our bankruptcy before God. The just "wages" for our sin was death and severance from God and His glory (see Rom. 3:23; 6:23). But "when we were helpless ... Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). This is the liberating good news of the gospel. Our debt of sin has been paid

with Christ's atoning blood. Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30). His literal statement in the original language was, "Paid in full!" The debt of all our sins is fully, forever canceled!

Now that we have been liberated, a "debt" of love consumes us. We live for Jesus—not in payment for salvation He has already purchased, but in gratitude for so great salvation. As the old hymn says, "Jesus paid it all / all to Him I owe."

What we owe financially.
For a number of years trusted prophetic voices have warned Christians to get out of debt. Now as the frailty of our entire economic system has been exposed, this warning packs fresh urgency. Whether the debt is incurred by a government, a family or a ministry, "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7).

You should know that when you give to Global Advance, you are sowing into a ministry that is financially debt-free. For this we give glory to God and deeply felt appreciation to our generous partners. God enabled us to pay off the note on our office complex years early. We are grateful that our vision is not strapped by debt.

In this fragile financial climate, some tend to hoard and stop

giving.

While this may seem to be a smart course in tight times, it is actually the worst possible strategy for protecting assets. God has

woven the principle of sowing and reaping into the very fabric of the

universe. The planting of seed is categorically required to bring

life and growth. God has hardwired this planet and people so that

failure to plant seed ensures barrenness and eventual death.

So

whatever you do, don't stop giving—especially to the poor and to

missions. These two Christ-honoring investments come with guarantees

that are vital for you and your loved ones in this volatile time.

Scripture affirms, “He who gives to the poor *will not lack*”

(Prov. 28:27, emphasis added.) And it was only to those who supported

Paul's missionary endeavors that he promised, “My God will supply

all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”

(Phil. 4:19).

What

we owe the world.

In finances the apostle Paul's counsel is, “Owe no one anything”

(Rom. 13:8). Yet in the same letter he confesses a deep sense of

personal indebtedness to get the gospel to everyone, everywhere. “I

have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News" (Ro. 1:14-15, NLT). No race distinction, no class distinction—everyone needs the gospel; everyone needs Jesus.

My missions-hearted father, Warren Shibley, said it so well, "Missions involvement isn't first charity or philanthropy, it's just an honest man paying his debt." Why have we gone to the nations for decades? Why will Global Advance send eight teams to five nations this month? Because with Paul, we know that we owe our generation the gospel.

Financial debt is insidious on many levels. One abhorrent consequence of debt is feelings either of helplessness or entitlement. Regrettably, most people somehow intrinsically feel the world owes them something.

Then there are those wonderful few who believe they owe the world something. When these folks read Paul's passion-driven declaration of debt to reach everyone with the gospel, they get it. They know what he meant. They feel what he felt. They live to give. They love to sow seed. They expect a harvest—yes, even in times of

drought.

Bottom

line: Transfer your debt out of your financial portfolio and into

your heart. Your greatest debt has been paid! Now you are both free

and obligated. You owe Jesus *everything*.

Make a payment on your debt of love today.

David

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and resourcing some 30,000 leaders in developing nations annually. To read more of his insight, Shibley encourages you to visit his website.