

February 1, 2011

Gleanings

Signs of the Times



Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.
President

Strategies@Work, LLC
Solutions that Transform

It is widely believed that China will soon be the economic leader of the world. In 2010, the annual GDP growth rate for China was on the order of 10 percent—more than three times the growth rate of America's economy. America appears to be losing its position as world economic leader. Consider some of the signs of the times that might explain why America is losing economic ground and what can be done to reverse the trend.

According to the labor department, the official unemployment rate in America is around 10 percent, but this does not include those who have given up looking for work and those who are underemployed. Many estimate the real unemployment and underemployment to be double the labor department statistic.

America continues to languish under a trade imbalance. The reported data for November 2010 was a negative \$38.3B. Undoubtedly, this is because American manufacturers are not globally competitive. For example, a company in India can produce aircraft similar to Cessna's for 20 percent less.

These factors are rippling through the municipalities of America. The majority of states have budget deficits because tax revenue is down and demand for unemployment compensation is up. At this point, the federal government is unwilling to help the states, but that could change.

American federal debt is climbing at an increasing rate. According to the debt clock, it is more than \$14T. Because of this, the credit rating agencies are considering downgrading the federal debt for only the second time in history. If the credit rating agencies follow through with their threat, this will shock the bond market, causing interest rates on federal debt to rise, which will accelerate the federal deficit and total debt.

President Obama shows concern about unemployment, the federal debt, and government efficiency. But seeking to address all of these simultaneously may be difficult. Stimulating employment will most certainly increase the debt. And making the government more efficient is a daunting challenge that could be very costly, which would probably add more burden to the debt before results are realized.

But perhaps the most significant sign of the time is the rejection of biblical values by America. Historically and biblically, the family unit has been the economic building block of the culture. Healthy families produce healthy productive workers—the heart of an economically prosperous nation. But now the very heart of America's economic prosperity is being attacked. Note the negative economic impact of the following practices.

Services

Consulting

Planning

Training

Coaching

- Divorce: Divorce destroys families spiritually, emotionally, and economically. Economically, divorce costs millions of dollars in legal fees. The emotional impact leads to lost productivity from stress and to counseling fees for adults and children. Plus there is the untold cost of setting up separate homes.
- Cohabitation: The response of many to divorce, particularly those hurt by divorce, is cohabitation instead of marriage. Biblically this is sin. Numerous studies indicate that cohabitation is not producing healthy environments for raising children to be productive contributors to society; therefore the economic penalty is inefficient workers.
- Abortion: Through legalized abortion, more than 50M people were murdered in America during the past four decades. Murder is sin. This robbed America of the economic contribution of these murdered citizens and their heirs. In addition, there are massive costs associated with performing the abortions. Also, there are enormous resources required for spiritual counseling of the women who underwent abortions. Then there are the extensive costs associated with fighting the legalization of abortion.
- Homosexuality: Homosexuality, which is also sin, has cost millions in AIDs research, which has been largely unsuccessful. AIDs would dramatically drop if homosexuality was illegal and the research funds could be more productively used.

Another decoupling from biblical values is the politically correct view called pluralism. Pluralism is a view of reality that accepts all worldviews as valid. Christianity is not pluralistic. The biblical view of reality is that there is only one valid worldview, which is based on Christ. Late last year, the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, courageously stated that the German experiment with pluralism was an economic failure. She noted that Germany's economic blessings are singularly rooted in Christianity and there is no expectation that

Affiliate Consultants



Free PodCasts
Click here to subscribe.

View online
Print

<http://StrategiesWork.com>
Gerald@StrategiesWork.com
972 473-8655 USA

pluralism would equal or exceed the economic blessings of Christianity.

In the midst of this negative economic news, the American stock market is climbing. Most view the stock market as a leading economic indicator therefore the current rally suggests that good economic times are coming. Given the above signs, it is hard to see how the market could be positive. And if the market is irrationally exuberant, there will be a major market correction.

Clearly, no one wants economic calamity, but if you believe that the Bible mandates the laws of economics and social values, then we must obey these laws or suffer the consequences.

Specifically, this means that individuals and organizations must live within their means and be competitive at what they produce. And people must live in healthy family units practicing biblical values. If these laws are not obeyed, there will be consequences—yes, economic consequences. America is operating under the assumption that these divinely ordained laws do not apply. Therefore, it appears that America is being economically defunded—one of the penalties for disobedience to God.

Dennis Peacocke says that a sign of judgment is when there are no easy options. I think it is fair to say that, currently, America has no easy options. America cannot continue the economic status quo. The day of reckoning is approaching quickly. America must face some very hard realities and make the necessary changes. So what are the key steps that will be required to put America back on a sound economic basis? Consider the following:

- Government at all levels will have to balance their budgets, which will most certainly mean a reduction in government employment and services.
- Families and organizations must live within their means. Easy credit must stop. Debt at all levels must be reduced.
- Manufacturing companies and workers will have to make whatever adjustments are required to become globally competitive. This will most certainly mean a reduction in the standard of living for many.
- Welfare programs need to be eliminated. The emphasis must be on helping people come to Christ and become productive workers. Families need to take care of their own family members. And when the need is too great for a family, local communities and churches should help.
- The focus on consumption will have to change to a focus on savings.
- The worship of pleasure and entertainment must stop. An evidence of this will be the dramatic reduction of the salaries for entertainers and athletes.
- There must be a return to biblical values, particularly the biblical definition of family. No-fault divorce needs to be changed to divorce for biblical cause only. Cohabitation, abortion, and homosexuality should be made illegal.
- Pluralism must be rejected. America's economic prosperity is rooted in its Christian values.
- Public education, at all levels, must stop promoting nonbiblical thinking. Education must be based on biblical values and principles. There is no other sound foundation from which to teach and train children and promote economic productivity.

For many, these suggestions will be viewed as too radical, too intolerant, and too old-fashioned. If this is your response, may I remind you that Christianity has been the sole reason why America is the most powerful and prosperous nation on earth. Even the Chinese have discovered this truth about America. Because of this understanding, they are busy trying to embrace biblical values, but without Christ. Their experiment will not work, because Christian values cannot be practiced well without Christ moving in the hearts of men and women. Likewise America's experiment rejecting biblical values and principles will not work because Christ is the only basis for enduring economic success.

The signs of the times are clear. Given the course that America is on, economic calamity is ahead. The only way to avoid it is to repent and return to Christ and the biblical values and principles that made America great. May the Lord grant America the grace and mercy to make the hard choices and to pay the price of repentance.

Training for Work and Life from a Biblical Worldview

Your Need	Training Venue	Information (click on date)
Finding Your Purpose in Life	Seminar : Strategic Life Alignment	February 2011
More Help Finding Your Purpose in Life	Seminar : Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	July 2011
Biblical Principles in the Workplace	Seminar : Biblical Principles of Selling	April 2011
	Webinar : Biblical Principles of Selling	June 2011
	Webinar : Financial Management II	March – May 2011