

Spiritual Warfare and the IMF (Lesson from Yeltsin)

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As we Christians pray and prepare for reunification, we have to try to understand whether the Bible principles for practical life have a bearing on modern day practical life. I have already discussed the matter of land, and my conviction that a Biblically based policy with regard to land would be an important contribution that Christians can bring to the discussion and one which would be enthusiastically welcomed by the rank-and-file North Koreans.

Since I wrote that article, some very interesting developments have taken place in Russia. A team of "Georgist" economists, including one of our own Georgists from Korea, have spent many months introducing their essentially Biblical program to key parliamentarians, economists, tax specialists, and city mayors. They have had some of the best experts on taxation, land assessment, and related technical problems come to Russia for seminars. The seminars have been enthusiastically received by the officials and economists who have been involved. Although there was a receptive spirit in the top parliamentary circles, the team could never get right through to Yeltsin. (They made no attempt to influence the Orthodox Church or the new evangelical churches.)

There was a meeting in Moscow of the mayors of the 100 largest cities in Russia and the Georgists were given time to present their proposals, which were well received. The mayors published a sort of manifesto, at the end of their meeting, with regard to land-value taxation as the proper solution for Russia's land problem. In spite, however, of all the enthusiasm they met with among the Russians, the Georgists could never get anyone connected with the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund to agree with them.

One member of the team, an economist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, was given a chance to hold a seminar in Washington for a sub-committee of the I.M.F. He reported that he could never get them to look right at him. They all avoided his eyes and, though they had no evidence to back their claim, insisted that land value taxation would not work. They spoke of a situation in South America, where foreign aid was abused and a proposed land value taxation scheme was spoiled by political corruption, as if the real problem had been the land taxation scheme, itself. This was all the justification they could offer for their continuing opposition to LVT.

In the meantime, Yeltsin was talking about a "free market in land." This is what the Western powers want. They want to buy up Russian land, cheap, before the Russians understand what it is worth, and while they are in economically desperate straits. Then, as absentee landlords, they can control the Russian economy and milk it for their own profit. They have been insisting that no foreign investment can be expected unless land is sold. This claim flies in the face of reality, since the country with the most foreign investment and with one of the healthiest economies in the world, Hong Kong, has never sold one pyong of land! It is all leased, according to Biblical principles!

The members of our Georgist team were jubilant over the progress they were making and the warm reception they were receiving when, suddenly, Yeltsin dissolved the parliament, called out the tanks, burned the White House, and fired all the mayors! Everyone who approved of our Biblical economics was suddenly without a shred of power. What will happen in the elections, of course, we do not know. It is my own opinion that Yeltsin is a tool of the IMF, the World Bank, and the Western powers who intend to colonize Russia. I told my friends, at the beginning, that they were dealing with some of the world's most powerful supernatural forces and that only in the power of the Holy Spirit and of prayer, could they hope to succeed. But they are all nice, naive humanists who keep believing – or at least hoping – that logic will win out in the end.

What does all this mean for us, here in Korea? We, too, face not only a logical battle for the minds of our brethren in the North, we also have to take into account the “logic of the stick” that is the IMF's last resort, and meet this with the ultimate logic – which, to the world, is illogic – of prayer and spiritual warfare. More than ever, I have become convinced that only prayer will win the reunification struggle and that we must be “on praying ground.” That means, repenting and cleaning up our own act before we try to clean up someone else's act!

May I offer a homework assignment? Read Leviticus 25 again and ask yourself, “Can the Bible laws about interest be applied today? If so, how?” I hope to deal with that next time.