

The Stakes are High!

Anti-gambling campaigners are angry at the Queensland Government's decision to offer new casino licences. It seems the \$8 billion casino in Cairns and the \$7.5 billion casino and cruise ship proposal on the Gold Coast are going ahead.

Queensland could have seven casinos within a decade. This means that more than a third of Australia's casinos will be in Queensland. Hoping to benefit from the massive increase in the middle class in China each casino will need about 75,000 to 80,000 visitors a day.

What does this say about our society?

A Root of All Kinds of Evil

Wealth in itself is not treated as evil in Scripture. Scripture does, however, warn against seeking wealth as an end in itself especially when using deception, oppression and exploitation of men, women and children (each made in the image of God), as a means of amassing it. Paul called *"the love of money"* (though not money itself) *"a root of all kinds of evil"* (1 Timothy 6:10). The exploitation of children overseas so that we can eat chocolate is but one example.

Teaching of Jesus

Howard Dayton, who founded Crown Ministries in 1985, noted that *"Jesus talked much about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of ten verses deal directly with the subject of money."*

Jesus had more to say about money and its use than He had to say about hell! Money is generally something that represents our life. We exchange money for parts of our life - our time and effort. What we do with it says a lot about who we are.

Love Your Neighbour

Jesus said: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself"* (Matthew 22:37-39).



We read in 1 John 3:17 *"If anyone has material possession and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"*

The second-century church father Justin Martyr speaks of the changes Christ brought about in the believers of his time. He wrote, *"We who once took pleasure in the means of increasing our wealth and property, now bring what we have into a common fund and share with everyone in need."*

Vishal Mangalwadi wrote, *"Our primary love must be for God and for our neighbour. We must judge every society by how it treats God's image – people. Corruption abuses people. Materialistic*

consumerism feeds our greed and blinds our eyes. Instead of serving people, we try to squeeze out their wealth for ourselves."

When Jesus encountered a rich young man, who wanted to make sure he was going to heaven, He discerned that the love of money was his problem. Jesus asked him to give away all he had to the poor. But when the young man heard this *"he went away sad, because he had great wealth"* (Matthew 19:22).

Stronghold of Mammon

Jesus said *"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."* (Luke 16:13).

The word *"Money"* in the NIV is capitalised as it is a translation of the name of the false god **Mammon**. Jesus is therefore not just merely speaking of money as riches or wealth but of Mammon, a demonic principality.

It may seem strange and outdated to speak of evil demonic forces that still exist, but we have New Testament authority for this view; Paul told the Corinthians that demons lay behind the pagan gods (see 1 Corinthians 10:19-20). Their presence and power is demonstrated by the effects we see in our culture. The love of money is therefore the worship of Mammon.

Love of Money

The attributes of Mammon worship are covetousness and greed, which are specifically described in the Bible as idolatry. The love of money is flagrant violation of several of the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:1-21).

Do you have a difficult time letting go of your money? Begin by considering how God *"did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all"* (Romans 8:32). God Himself is a generous giver! He is pleased when we

who are created in His image give cheerfully and generously. (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-9)

Sovereign God, You are God who gives us everything we have and asks us to manage it for Your glory. Help us to conquer greed and to honour You with our wealth for one day we must give account. The world shouts at us to amass as much money as possible. Deliver us from the deceitfulness of wealth and enslavement to possessions and money. Help us to choose eternal values over earthly treasures. We repent of the love of money that permeates our materialistic culture and pray against the demonic stronghold of Mammon. Help us die to the love of money and cultivate a genuine willingness to share our wealth with others – especially the poor and needy – men women and children made in Your image and precious to You. Forgive us for pushing You out of our lives by being so preoccupied with storing up wealth. Today's money will be worthless when Christ returns so help us to seek first Your Kingdom and invest it wisely into the lives of people. In the precious Name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

About 'Image of God' Leaflets

In the Bible we read that God "*created man in His own image*" (Genesis 1:27). Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:

"We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life's natural end."

'Image of God' leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

The 21 leaflets in SERIES ONE are dedicated to Sophie Scholl who was martyred at the age of 21 in World War II for writing and distributing leaflets.

You can download other 'Image of God' leaflets at The Canberra Declaration website.

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**The Canberra Declaration
to Protect**

- *Religious Freedom*
- *Marriage and Family and*
- *Human Life*
in Australia

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SERIES ONE

Leaflet 11

The Love of Money



and the
**Image of
God**