

Made In America vs. The World Economy

by Marilyn Reeves

The subject of World Economics is so complex that even the experts differ in their interpretation of how best to try to control it – if, in fact, it can even be controlled.

First, there's the phenomenon known as the Stock Market. I hear the folks on the evening news talking about the latest ups and downs in hiring and firing, or the inclement weather that has wiped out some vital crop, or that Greece is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy – any and all of which seem to affect the way that people buy and sell. It's a very nervous entity, the Stock Market.

I had a brilliant high school teacher who once made the observation that money is nothing more than the faith people put into it. If I hand you a piece of green paper with Abe Lincoln's portrait on it, you accept it on faith that that piece of paper is worth five bucks, or roughly the equivalent of a Whopper with fries and a drink at Burger King. Actually it's just a piece of green paper. It's our mutual faith in the system that gives it its denoted value. So if you follow that line of thinking, I would suggest that the ups and downs of the economy actually represent the ups and downs of people's faith in the system. Happy people are far more likely to support a healthy and happy economy than those who believe the sky is falling.

Regarding the subject of the American Economy vs. the World Economy, the problem is, there really isn't that much of a distinction any more. If China or Mexico's economy tanks, we're going to feel the effects here as well.

And the truth is, people in general are somewhat greedy – or at least frugal. While we mouth the words that we should always “Buy American”, when it comes to buying a car, for instance, we first consult our pocket books. How do I get the best bang for my buck? When buying a new shirt or skirt, do we really look for the “Made In America” label first, or do we try to find something in the right style and color that fits our form as well as our wallet?

Perhaps if every merchant displayed big, bold “Made In America” signs over the appropriate items, we might at least look through those things first, but rarely do we even notice that our latest purchase was labeled – in fine print – “Made In Timbuktu”.

The problem is that most of us put ourselves and our own individual needs before our ideals. But purchasing only those things “Made In America” is a lovely ideal.