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Slavery - It's Economic in Today's World

By UCAnation

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by: **UCAnation**

Slavery has taken a new dimension in our country. People are no longer owned and driven to perform tasks for no pay. Today, slavery is to our governments, with very little chance of ever breaking the financial bondage.

On average, Americans now spend more time working to pay their taxes than they spend working to provide food, clothing, and shelter combined. According to the Tax Foundation, the typical middle-income taxpayer in 2003 had to work until April 19 just cover their federal and state income taxes. That's almost a third of the year, 109 days, or 2 hours and 23 minutes of each eight hours in earnings. Now add on your local taxation fees and your homeowner tax. Each American is working almost half a year just to pay their annual tax burden. Close to half of your 8 hour, workday is going directly to pay your tax requirements. In comparison, in 1930, it only took 30 seconds of an individuals daily work time to cover their tax burden.

Many people discuss the "good 'ol days" of American life, and how today's generation has it tougher than our Grandparents did. If you look at old unplanned pictures of the 30's, 40's and 50's, the people going to work have smiles on their faces. I commute everyday, and you rarely see people smiling. Work is no longer a pleasure, but a necessity to survive. Losing your job in today's market is a virtual death sentence for you and your family's way of life. The burden on the "providers" is staggering.

These daily pressures are surely being noticed and absorbed by our children. Youth crime is skyrocketing. Drug use is still very prevalent in our youth, and moving toward the harder "mind altering" substances. Violence and violent actions are getting more severe in our younger generation. Our children are angry, nervous and stressed, and with less parental support due to working requirements, our children are losing control, lashing out at each other, authority figures, and anything else that may get in their way.

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Many experts have analyzed violence in today's world. They have talked about the lack of parental support due to both parents having to work. I am no expert when it comes to giving people advice on how to raise their families. However, I feel confident in my financial expertise. Our nation can easily afford to back-off on the tax burdens that affect the American family. Sure, there will be some pain within our government ranks, our school systems, and social programs that do not provide benefits to the general population. But the pain will pass, our governments and school systems will rebound and be more productive than ever before. The American family will be less burdened, which will result in our younger generations being less burdened. Our nation will once again be filled with the vibrant achievers of the world.

I have had numerous discussions with many different people regarding these issues. Many feel there is nothing that can be done. If our forefathers thought like this, we would still be an English colony paying homage to a far-away kingdom.

We can make change happen, but only if you get involved and make it happen. Pick a cause in life,

and fight for it with everything you have. When it comes to our country, I urge you to not be a spectator. Become an active participant - if not for yourself, then for your children, grandchildren, and every future American that shall inhabit earth. Only you can make it happen.

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Santeria: The Survival Of An Ancient African Religion

By Nelson Carrasco

Many perceive Santeria as a bizarre and undesirable amalgamation of primitive, pagan beliefs and Roman Catholicism. Many believe the religion to be a dangerous, perhaps even Satanic, variation of Voodoo featuring zombies, indiscriminate animal sacrifices and other totems that make those from "first world" religious backgrounds uneasy.

The truth behind Santeria is far less ominous. Santeria is a legitimate religion with roots that trace deep back into history.

European colonization of the "new world" brought with it the importation of slavery. Many slaves were Yoruba's (that territory lies in what is now a part of modern-day Nigeria). The Yorubans practiced a

highly evolved religion that included multiple Orishas, which can be roughly understood as beneficial forces akin to saints in Christian religious practices or lesser deities in polytheistic religions. Yorubans understood the concept of "Ashe," the life force of every person, and developed a number of worship and celebration rituals.

Slaveholders found the idea of Yoruban religious practices add odds with their own ostensibly Christian belief structure. Fearing the unique customs of the Yorubans and understanding the risk its unfettered practice could have upon the institution of slavery, European colonists in the Americas attempt to destroy the faith and while the Catholic Church worked to convert slaves to Christianity.

The religion we now call Santeria, however, did not die. It went undercover instead. Yoruban slaves worshipped the Orishas, but they disguised the figures as Catholic saints. While dancing to the sacred Yoruban drums would not have been tolerated, considerately praying before a representation of a Catholic saint was encouraged. In reality, those prayers were not directed to the Christian martyrs, but to the Orishas. This practice is the source of the name "Santeria," a Spanish word referring to the worship of Saints.

Yorubans continued other rituals and practices of their faith covertly, as well. Due to the historical context, the traditions were necessarily cloaked in secrecy. This allowed the religion to survive, but gave it an air of mystery that survives today.

Santeria does involve a level of mysticism to which many from Judeo-Christian backgrounds are not accustomed and limited animal sacrifices under specific circumstances (primarily chickens) can be practiced by Santerians. However, those who perceive the faith as a dark and dangerous force are incorrect. Santeria represents the survival of peaceful and ancient traditional African religion against tremendous odds. It is still practiced today in many parts of the Caribbean and the United States.

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