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Monthly commentary from the **President of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**

Do You Want the Biggie Size?

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The latest Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa has again highlighted the deep chasms existing in economic and ecological ideologies. Even discounting the usual Green Peace ecological warrior versus Armani suited corporate raider stereotypes, there are real and obvious differences apparent in global affairs.

Regardless of what end of the continuum people find themselves on, the reality is consumerist DNA has wormed its way into all parts of global society. By consumerist I simply mean that central to one's life is the drive to acquire things, experiences or position that can enhance personal enjoyment and/or elevation of personal influence.

New horizons are now being forged in the marketing of "consumables." Acclaim UK is currently seeking applicants who will legally change their name for a year to promote a video game series focused on Turok, a time traveling Native American who fights bionically enhanced dinosaurs. This marketing firm will pay five people \$800 each to transform themselves into human billboards. The Institute of Science in Marketing claims that this "identity marketing" is no gimmick, rather the "subjects" form their identities to the character being advertised so as to be a walking, talking, living and breathing advertisement.

The hunger to "consume" reality TV continues to challenge media gurus. After American Idol captured the attention of viewers, plans are now in place for a retro approach with a reality based Beverly Hillbillies in the plans! Producers are now combing the hills of North Carolina and Tennessee to find 21st century versions of the Clampett family. The new Clampetts will go to Beverly Hills and be filmed while doing such tasks as hiring servants, buying BMW's and other things to give "big-city" people a hoot!

Whether it's the identity marketing of Turok, extreme sports or reality TV: our appetite for the "biggie size" of food, material goods and self-satisfying experiences (vicarious and personal) is obvious. I can just hear someone now - what planet is this guy from? What's he against now?

Just for the record, I'm fascinated by new marketing approaches, amazed at X sports but think reality TV is over rated for how "real" it is.

I'm simply wanting to observe that the "biggie sizing" of McDonald's combos, marketing techniques, X-treme sports or reality TV clearly points to an insatiable desire in every human being to have "more of" and a bigger dose.

We are born consumers. Global conflict arises when this consumer DNA is accommodated for some and blocked for others. For some starving is fashionable, for others it's the only option available. That world will yield frustration, injustice and inevitable revolution.

When the consumerist DNA is allowed to remain unchecked, human dignity is squashed. The result is tragedy where people reshape their whole lives in the image of a product....people push the limits of adrenalin addiction....the "chattering elites" get their laughs at the expense of some simple soul from the hills of Tennessee. Uncritiqued consumerism gone amuck creates a world where Biggie sizing your burger combo is a simple decision, while others are surviving on less than a 1000 calories a day with no choice about it.

To be created in the image of God certainly includes every human being having greater worth than merely being the object of marketing a product or experience. The abundant life Jesus came to offer goes far beyond the accumulation of stuff or the adrenaline rush from the latest version frisking your life. Living communities of Christians have a wonderful opportunity today. We can refuse to become mere consumers of the hottest new spiritual experience as our primary reason for existence. We can "biggie size" our commitment to ministry that transforms lives based on a true encounter with Jesus Christ. That transformation includes a commodity this world's best products cannot provide. That divine provision is a life where you are worthwhile by God's declaration. You need no longer be defined by what you consume or acquire, but by a relationship with the one who created you in the first place. You get the "biggie size" from the get-go!

Byron D. Klaus, President [Assemblies of God Theological Seminary](#)

Put on your calendar November 18-19, 2002, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Earn graduate credit at the [Leadership Roundtable: Ministry on the Edge: The Mission topmost-Christian America, with Brian McLaren](#). For information and registration visit our website: www.agts.edu or call 1-800-467-AGTS and ask for Randy Walls.

P.S.S. I would also highly recommend your consideration of the Leadership Conference being sponsored by [Timberline Church in Ft. Collins, CO -November 3-5, 2002](#). This dynamic congregation, lead by Dary Northrop, is launching this conference offering as a way of networking with the goal of providing inspiration and resources for high-impact leadership. I'll be attending. I hope to meet you there. Register at www.timberlinechurch.org (Graduate credit available for this event. Call 1-800-467-AGTS)