

A PREZ RELEASE from AGTS

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

Suicide on Stage October 2003

St. Petersburg, Florida was the recent scene for a frightening court battle that is emerging. A local circuit court judge has slapped an injunction on shock rock band **Hell on Earth**. This band wants to have a terminally ill person commit suicide on stage while they do their concert. St. Petersburg recently passed an ordinance to make it illegal to conduct a suicide for commercial or entertainment purposes or to sell tickets to the event.

Hell on Earth spokesman, Bill Tourtelot says the band will defy the ordinance, stage the event in a hidden location and broadcast live on their web site. This of course will all be done for the “noble cause” of the right to die.

The dignity of human beings and the eternal consequences of any person’s death requires Christians to respond clearly to the **Hell on Earth** proposal. The irony of a band called **Hell on Earth** rattling their concert venue with ear shattering decibels while a person commits suicide is bone chilling. The fact you’d sell tickets to watch such an event speaks volumes about the adrenalin and voyeuristic addictions of the ticket buyers. To suggest that this would be all done for a noble cause is disgusting. Common sense by the City of St. Petersburg and clear action by the Circuit Court demonstrate that human dignity is still a public value. This dilemma in St. Petersburg is the cold reality that lurks just below the warm sunlit beaches of the Florida Suncoast.

The right to die movement has a clear connection to opponents of pro-life. It is simply another chapter in the downward spiral that cynically attacks the dignity of humanity while flaunting individualism into an art form. The global political question is on the brink of breaking into our conscious awareness one more time. The question is, “who controls the definition of a life with the capability to contribute to society?” Despots throughout the 20th century answered that question with chilling and destructive fury.

We cannot dismiss **Hell on Earth** as just another shock rock band wanting to feed their addiction to adrenalin (and other substances) while watching some pained human being enter eternity. Barbarians at the gates of common sense and human dignity must be courageously met by Christians who believe and act decisively. We must live our lives in light of the Psalmist’s clear understanding of human worth and dignity.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”
(Psalm 139:13-16 NIV)

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Watch for information on AGTS events for 2004:

March 24-26—Growing and Leading The Large Pentecostal Church, Fort Myers, FL

April 12-14—Leadership Roundtable with Dr. Stanley Grenz, Denver, CO

November 8-9—Leadership Roundtable with Dr. Stanley Grenz, Charlotte, NC