

# A PREZ RELEASE from AGTS

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

**Oh the Horror....the smell of napalm in the morning!  
February 2004**

The classic Vietnam era film *Apocalypse Now* has several scenes and lines that are some of the most memorable in film history. A military assassin is sent to “dispose” of a renegade U.S. military officer who has gone off the deep end in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Just before his death, Marlon Brando utters the lines “Oh the horror...the horror...” revealing the depths to which this wretched renegade has sunk. Another memorable line is spoken by an air cavalry officer who leads a devastating attack on a village and, as his helicopter lands to survey the destruction, he jumps out and shouts above the noise of the engines, “I just love the smell of napalm in the morning.”

The twisted sense of reality of these two characters, so vividly portrayed in *Apocalypse Now*, has revealed itself recently in very public venues. The Janet Jackson-Justin Timberlake debacle during the Super Bowl half time show again reveals the confused state of affairs in our nation. Several weeks later, entertainer Beyonce’s half-time show at the NBA All-Star game revealed a current media dictum: the shock value of sex sell products and elevates the entertainer involved to even greater appeal in the market places.

The outcries of television executives, the frustration of TV viewers and the investigation by the FCC is being dismissed by the “stars” as just another example of the uptight prudishness of an America that still allows Puritan values to rule. **Nothing could be further from the truth.** This is not about using sex to shock and sell products alone. This is about the misuse of power and the “horror” of a moral septic tank we are swimming around in. To continue to enjoy the current version of “napalm” by the media “chattering class” will result in the escalation of the abuse of human dignity of the type that is now unfolding at the University of Colorado. The mess that is revealing itself in the lofty air of Boulder is the result of the media and sports industries and their perpetuation of “the good life: i.e. the conquering athlete receives sexual prizes. (Just another version of, “to the victor goes the spoils.”)

Is this the world we want for our children and grandchildren? Is this the atmosphere that brings the respect between diverse populations living in increasingly closer quarters? Can any region or nation hope to live with any kind of civility and peace without strong military or dictatorial power, if this kind of rampant indulgence and exploitation continues? Do we

really want to be a nation where the unchecked prowling of predators who are dedicated to greater doses of adrenaline and illegal drugs, is allowed to predominate and influence without serious critique and even control?

The world that Jackson, Timberlake, Beyonce and MTV live in rarely exposes them to the fruit of their labor. They live in a virtual reality of their own making where life is measured in adulation, record sales and whose name gets the most hits on search engines. But at the parties in Boulder where hormones rage out of control and drugs and liquor fuel the fire we see the “horror” of our own creation. Human dignity is sacrificed at the altar of self-indulgence and power is measured in media shock value. In that kind of world human value is cheapened, the vulnerable are victimized and few people avoid the napalm.

If we, who are followers of Jesus, settle for a protest against “revealing clothing” and “revealed body parts”, we will lose this moral challenge hands down. The Kingdom of God is a place where human beings have dignity because they are made in the image of God and have been offered a transformative redemption that releases them from an addiction to the “horror” of self-indulgence and human manipulation for personal gratification. The stakes are high, the barbarians at the gates are laughing all the way to the bank. Our confident hope, as we challenge the onslaught, is to build communities that actually protect the vulnerable and defend those least capable of protecting themselves. That starts with actually believing in the transforming power of the Gospel. That power can release us from the “horror” of our past. That Gospel can transform addictions to self-indulgence of all kinds into a constructive stewardship of human relationship. Our response to the barbarians must be to raise our children and grandchildren to resist a life centered on self-indulgence and manipulative relationship.

Jesus put it this way, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45)

**Byron D. Klaus, President**  
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## **Information on AGTS events for 2004**

### **March 19—Seminary Day at AGTS**

Interested in attending AGTS? Check us out on this one-stop invitation to experience AGTS.

Register online: [http://www.agts.edu/news/seminary\\_day/seminary\\_day.html](http://www.agts.edu/news/seminary_day/seminary_day.html)

**March 24-26—Growing and Leading The Large Pentecostal Church, Fort Myers, FL**  
Hear Dan Betzer, Wayne Blackburn, Lowell Harrup, Barry Meguiar and Maurice Watson speak on elements crucial to the large church moving in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

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

For details and registration for these exciting events check out our website [www.agts.edu](http://www.agts.edu)