

A PREZ RELEASE

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

Are Bush and Kerry the Real Choices?

March 2004

The remainder of 2004 will see a spirited presidential race. There will be an ample amount of vitriolic rhetoric and millions of dollars spent on media advertisement. We may very well see a repeat of the result of the 2000 election as to the final outcome.

I'm not about to enter the arena of political speech nor suggest that God has a favorite candidate. I also think that the suggestion that Christians vote as a single block doesn't acknowledge the breath of political opinion that exists even among evangelicals.

I do believe that the largest statement that Christians can make about the future may not be in what presidential candidate they support, but the issues that we place our emphases upon.

I live in Greene County, Missouri—the buckle of the Bible Belt, yet the reported domestic abuse rate is twice the rate of the state of Missouri. How can this be? Sex trafficking is rampant, not only in Southern Asia, but also increasingly in the Americas. Pedophilia and child pornography are not just peddled on the streets of Bangkok, Manila or Bucharest, but on the Internet, which knows no boundaries. If you want to test the viability of my statement just get yourself an Internet-based email account like hotmail.com and see what kind of emails inundate your account with absolutely no solicitation.

Why did it take a rock star like Bono to heighten the attention of America on the AIDS epidemic on the African continent? When over half of the HIV infections in Africa are due to children being born HIV positive, the innocent cry for someone to plead their cause. We've got to get beyond the venerable "letting your light shine" strategies to address the tragedies we face in our world in Jesus Name.

Don't get me wrong—I have my opinion about the fall 2004 presidential elections, but the Church's responsibilities remain regardless of who is in the White House. I live under the rule of a Kingdom that says to me—"*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.*" (II Corinthians 5:20) That appeal to the world starts with the transforming power of Jesus Christ that abundantly pardons and saves to the uttermost. But that transformation also means that we are part of a transformed community—who are acting transformed and sacrificially providing a concrete and Spirit

empowered expression of what it is to make an appeal for God in the middle of 21st century chaos.

That Gospel appeal stands alongside the child whose life has been filled with physical abuse in Greene County, Missouri and whose dignity has been taken on the streets of Bucharest. The impact of my opinion about Bush or Kerry pales in comparison to the challenge toward action as a Christian, when I observe the African continent socially disintegrating due to AIDS. The presidential election of 2004 is very important to me, but what is even more important is that the Church votes to act like Who we say we belong to!

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Information on AGTS events and resource for 2004

Dr. Benny Aker's biblical critique of *The Passion of the Christ*

Access his article online: www.agts.edu/faculty/aker.html

Leadership Roundtables with Dr. Stanley Grenz

April 12-14—Denver, CO

November 8-9—Charlotte, NC

For details and registration for these exciting events check out our website

www.agts.edu