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Prez Release

Michael! Michael!
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The recent circus surrounding the life and trial of Michael Jackson is no long dominating CNN and Fox News. We can all take a deep breath and wait for the inevitability of next media circus. While we wait and the buzz wears off, it might be good to just sit back and ask what this episode really means.

The web sites previous to the jury's decision were packed with opportunities to cast votes on innocence or guilt. The incentives to vote included Jackson CD collections and even \$300 cash (with certain strings attached) just to cast your Internet vote. The polls showed that opinion was fairly even on guilt or innocence. It's really all moot, now since the jury has spoken. There was a decision of innocence and that is final.

Bizarre doesn't begin to describe this episode replete with the pajama clad accused and the withering examinations and cross-examination of the accuser. The legal process has been completed, but the residual is ever present. Here's what I've learned:

- Money makes the world go around. The downloading of Jackson's music is on the rise and his CD's are selling very fast. The potential of a World Victory Tour is on the horizon, which will certainly create a new frenzy of fans worldwide. Jackson's notoriety and novelty could actually earn him millions.
- Hyperbole is alive and well. Jackson's own web-site compared his court victory as akin to the release of Nelson Mandela from Robbin Island and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Only in a world where media hype trumps historical reality could such sheer nonsense be tolerated. The injustice that imprisoned Mandela and enslaved people under totalitarian rule can never be allowed to be compared with a media star who admits he likes to have sleepovers with young boys. Such comparisons are so laughable that their existence, taken seriously by some, speaks of a level of civic tragedy that we cannot allow to continue.
- Legality doesn't always equal morality. Jackson was acquitted. The legal process has been adjudicated. Morality is not even on the horizon. Whether or not child abuse is part of this episode is somewhat of a moot point.

Discussion of “Jesus juice” and pajama games between a grown man and innocent children smacks of something that could only be considered reasonable in a place called Neverland.

- Power detaches a person from reality. Jackson’s bizarre behavior is tragic to watch. He clearly has lived in a world devoid of accountability and exists in a space where the pursuit of self-interest has produced a person afloat on the waves of tragedy that is self-made. I’m not mad at Jackson—he is the picture of Jim Morrison’s (The Doors) song back in the 1970’s –“We’re riders on the storm.” As a follower of Jesus, I have accepted the dignity that a Creator God gives. No self-created fantasy world can supplant what God alone can provide. Jackson is not to be despised; he is to be pitied. I pray that his storm will one day find a safe harbor; that his journey through Neverland would reach the hope of Tomorrowland with Jesus.

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