



ASSEMBLIES of GOD
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Prez Release



An eNewsletter to AGTS Friends

June 2007

AGTS Alumni Reception

At General Council

Indianapolis, Indiana

Wednesday, August 8

9 p.m.- Midnight

Marriott--Indianapolis Downtown

AGTS offers 3 enriching seminars at General Council

Do you Know Your Neighbor? The Growth of Islam in America

Speaker: Dr. Mark Hausfeld
AGWM Area Director, Central Eurasia
AGTS 2007 J. Philip Hogan Professor of
World Missions

Tuesday, August 7

8:45-9:45 p.m.

Wednesday, August 8

8:45-10:15 a.m.

10:30 a.m.- Noon

A Tale of Three Ladies

I am too busy a person to pay attention to the banalities of some of pop culture's icons. I am well aware that pop culture has a huge role in how Americans see the world; I simply won't allow that vision of reality to be the dominating factor in my equation of life. But there are times that the news from planet of *Pop* (which seems to have replaced Pluto on astronomy charts) simply approaches the same levels of pain caused by listening to finger nails on a chalkboard.

Breaking news about Paris Hilton's date with jail has been leaping off of web-sites and bloggers are working themselves into frenzy as they speculate about her new adventure. First, we had the whining about the injustice that was being experienced by the young socialite whose jail sentence is viewed, by some, as a legal travesty that calls for a new *Magna Carta* or Bill of Rights. Then we were inundated with the tales of how Paris is going to exploit this month in jail (ala Martha Stewart) and make big bucks. She was going to do a prison diary and media pundits are saying if she makes this written record believable, she could easily score a million dollars selling the publishing rights. But "wowie zowie," Paris' jail life has been cancelled due to her "medical condition." Medical personnel deemed this reason enough to reassign her to house arrest with a neat ankle tracking device. But wait...maybe she'll have to go back to jail, but....yes, she is back in jail.

**Biblical Exposition:
Foundations for Pentecostal
Preaching**

Speaker: Dr. Douglas Oss

Director of the AGTS Cordas C. Burnett Center
for Biblical Preaching and
Professor of Bible Exposition

Wednesday, August 8

8:45-10:15 a.m.
10:30 a.m.-Noon

**Women in Leadership:
Leading with Courage in a
Changing World**

Speakers:

Susanne Cox
Dr. Eve Fenton
Kate Gordon
June Lui
Dr. Lori O'Dea
Dr. Carolyn Tennant
Dr. April Westbrook

Tuesday, August 7

8:45-9:45 p.m.

Wednesday, August 8

8:45 a.m.-10:15 a.m.
10:30-Noon

HOW DO I REGISTER?

Register for these and other
Pre-General Council Leadership
Seminars at www.ag.org

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and all of the Pre-General Council
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The world has always had rich young socialites who have bent the law and lived their lives without accountability to anyone or any community standards. The difference in the 21st century is that their "merry tales" are available to the world and the technological advances used by media have led us down a path toward entertainment as the source of life.

Your response may be, "What a bore!" Some may even cynically quip, "I'll bet you don't even own an iPod? Don't you know we live in a new day?" But the world that is ever evolving and is fed by technology empowered media entertainment as the new "staff of life", comes at a cost. This new "source of meaning" in life is not morally neutral.

Another of the current news items is actress Lindsey Lohan. She spends her weekends acting out the tragedy of being a 20-year old star bent on destroying Mercedes Benz convertibles, drinking like a fish and imbibing all the OxyContin (and numerous other unnamed substances) that she can find. In her "desperation" she is now doing the fashionable thing of checking herself into rehab. The real tragedy here is that it is questionable whether "fans" really want her to recover, because that would disconnect them from the "buzz" of her entertaining antics.

A source of startling insight in this tale I am spinning comes from a most interesting source. Cindy Sheehan, the public face of the anti-Iraq war effort, has decided that she has run out of energy in her efforts. This bereaved mother's efforts, begun as a result of her soldier son's death in Iraq, have simply drained her and she says she is leaving "protest central" in Crawford, Texas to return home to California and try to be normal. Her bitter commentary on this chapter in her life includes a statement of near prophetic insight when Sheehan says, "My son died for a country which cares more about who will be the next American Idol than now many people will die in Iraq in the next few months." While this grieving mother is a lightning rod for criticism from all sides, she is tragically insightful about the sources that influence, entertain and even control our nation.

The tale of these three ladies in the American spotlight is not only testimony to the personal stories that each represents; what is revealed in these stories is the fabric of a world in the grasp of new realities left largely

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uncritiqued. We are not the first people to be inundated by massive cultural change; there are those who have faced similar challenges in other eras. The biblical figure King Solomon records for us his quest in understanding the fabric of his day. Some of his conclusions are found in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. He said, "*I devoted myself to study and to explore all that is done under heaven...I denied myself nothing my eyes desire; I refused my heart no pleasure. Yet when I survey all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun*" (1:13, 2: 10-11). While the evaluation of Solomon concludes with frustration and hopelessness, it does represent an honest attempt to survey the circumference of his current realities. In a sense, Solomon and Cindy Sheehan give us glimpses into their current states of reality.

For followers of Jesus who are serious about speaking into the world of Hilton, Lohan and Sheehan, I would make several observations. We reside in an era where the past cannot be jettisoned as irrelevant to the future. However, we do need to acknowledge that the past doesn't predict the future in ways previously thought. We must discover and respond to the future as much as we plan for it. St. Paul's injunction to be ready to speak at a moment's notice, about the faith in Jesus that is at the center of our lives, must be taken seriously. Much of the reason for that desperate need for informed action is that, in the world of media and entertainment, those who speak first...get heard. When the voice of followers of Jesus is only reactive and not backed up with communities of faith who live out alternative values, our cultural critique lacks compelling substance.

P.S. I do own an *iPod* (Shuffle)



BYRON D. KLAUS

*Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
President*