



# Prez Release

## Addiction to Arrogance

The saga of the New England Patriots is being played out this autumn with loud voices castigating Coach Bill Belichick and just as many loyal supporters defending him. What lies below the surface of this volatile situation is the realization, by an unknown number of football coaches and enthusiasts, that someone finally got caught. There is a relief that the accused is someone else and a collective wiping of the brow that we can go on with business as usual if a low profile is kept and the fines are paid. For awhile!

Sports, globally, are really a window into the soul of a society. National pride, personal fame and, above all, money are all part of this very volatile equation that impacts societies everywhere. Arrogance is the elixir provided to winners and scorn is the potion that is forced on losers. It's quite easy to see why winning would be such a motivator and continual winning could lend itself to an addiction to arrogance. That arrogance is lying somewhere below the surface in this story.

Oh yes, the NFL has dealt some very punitive action. The fines to Coach Belichick and the Patriots are not small. The cancelling of draft choices could have impact on the team's future. But all of this came one week after the NFL had issued a warning to all teams that there would be sanctions if they were involved in what the Patriots got caught doing. One has to wonder what evidence motivated the NFL's warning, yet one week later, the Patriots blatantly worked their pirating magic on video and audio frequencies. That smells of arrogance. Suggestions that this was a one-time mistake are somewhat neutralized when we view it coincidental with the commissioner's recent warning. A more reasonable scenario is that the Patriots had been successful at pirating and thought they could continue to be successful with impunity. That's arrogance by any definition.

This occurrence will signal the NFL's version of major league baseball's steroid controversy. This will not go away quickly and it most likely is simply a personification of the priorities present at all levels of sports. These stories are global; the Patriots are just a version of this pathogen in the U. S. I really hate this kind of stuff. I love sports of all kinds and do my fair share of weekend screaming at my large screen TV, but frankly,

this kind of occurrence irks me to such a degree that I may simply tune my satellite dish to RFD-TV permanently and throw away the remote.

The arrogance displayed in this story mirrors the account of King David recorded in II Samuel 11 and 12. The successful and trusted king sees something that he wants—the beautiful Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, a professional soldier. David demonstrates what power does to the powerful and exhibits an arrogance that shows he truly believes he is exempt from prosecution. Even when a pregnancy occurs with this one night stand with Bathsheba, David uses the professional commitment of Uriah to bring about this warrior's demise. David continues his arrogance by taking Bathsheba into his household as his wife. As king he could do what he jolly well pleased and certainly few would question his right to do so. But God's check and balance system included a prophet, Nathan, who spoke God's perspective on this occurrence. Nathan's prophetic voice cut across culturally accepted standards and impaled the presumption of a king. When God speaks specifically about what David would experience as the result of his arrogance, there are the following words that leap off the page. God says through Nathan to David, "You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight, before all Israel." (II Sam. 12: 11-12)

The story seems to indicate that God got David's attention. He realizes that his position as king meant little when compared to the demands God placed on him as the anointed leader of God's people. Psalm 51 is the poignant lament of David as he journeys through the consequences of his actions and God's subsequent judgment.

I wish there were a similar recognition by Coach Belichick. My guess is the fine will be paid and winning the Super Bowl will provide the redemption that Patriots know they probably need. But the blot is there and it speaks of the depth of tragedy in the football world. Fans like me will strive to get over the bad taste in our mouths and after a while reach for the chips and salsa and change the channel to invoke our self-imposed penance by not watching the Patriots for several weeks.

But I hear the words of Jehovah thundering from Nathan's mouth, "You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight, before all Israel." Maybe it is true that integrity is all about what you do when people aren't watching.



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Dr. George Wood is our board chair and General Superintendent elect of the Assemblies of God. He spoke this past week at AGTS. He laid out his five core values for the Assemblies of God as he assumes his new role in early October. To hear this message go to [http://www.agts.edu/news/news\\_archives/2007\\_09wood\\_george.html](http://www.agts.edu/news/news_archives/2007_09wood_george.html)