

A PREZ RELEASE

from AGTS

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

From Crooked Street to Glory Avenue December 2002

My youngest daughter Olivia keeps me supplied with ideas for this monthly attempt at an op-ed page. She recently sent me a news release about a company called [Ticket to Heaven, Inc.](#) This company sells *tickets to heaven*. For \$15 (plus a handling fee) you receive a certificate of authenticity and wallet sized testimonial card. It's really quite a deal because no faith commitment is required.

This company may be selling *tickets to heaven*, but the company's web site has a disclaimer that removes any responsibility by the company to get you to heaven once you have bought a ticket. It "makes no warranties or representations" as to whether there is really a heaven, what it's like or how long it lasts.

My sense of reality must need some overhauling because my reaction to selling tickets to heaven is....**"Say what?"** Whatever the appeal is, this product is selling. Is it novelty, irony, a heightened sense of coastal chic or is it the picture of what our world has and is becoming? In a world where [Tickets to Heaven, Inc.](#) can survive—the fiscal bottom line has become an ultimate value and a shaper of the rule by which we live our lives. If a product will make a profit it is thus a good product—it has value—until—red ink is on the monthly financials.

Heaven is not a place or concept that gets much airtime in the Western world. [Even Ticket to Heaven, Inc.](#) won't guarantee there is a heaven, though they will sell you a ticket to get there. I'm old enough to remember the numerous sermons of an era that pointed to the imminent return of Jesus Christ to take believers to heaven. I remember singing "When we all get to heaven—what a day of rejoicing that will be! When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."

The songs that talk about heaven are few and far in between today—not because those old songs are cheesy, but because we live a fairly secure life. Heaven isn't longed for because we have a pretty good life here on earth. That reality is attested to by the fact that [Ticket to Heaven, Inc.](#) sells *tickets to heaven* as a novelty to customers with money to spend on irony. We live in a world where nothing is so sacred that it can't become a product for sale.

I don't think I am being smug, but I have a ticket to heaven. I didn't pay for that ticket, it's a one-way ticket bought for me by the work Jesus Christ did on the Cross (Col. 2:15). The heaven I have a ticket to travel to is a real place, my Lord is already there—that is all the guarantee that I need. I'm not looking to escape this earth, but I am longing to see a place where sickness, hatred, injustice and poverty are banished. The words of

Jesus about heaven are poignant—giving me confidence my ticket is guaranteed – “Don’t let this throw you. You trust God, don’t you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father’s home. If that weren’t so, would I have told you that I’m on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I’m on my way to get your room ready, I’ll come back and get you so you can live where I live” (The Message John 14:1-3).

Byron D. Klaus, President
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

PowerPoint presentations from our recent Leadership Roundtable held in Philadelphia, November 2002 are now available at www.agts.edu

Mark your calendar! The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, in cooperation with the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God presents, “**A Leadership Roundtable—Ministry on the Edge: The Mission to Post-Christian America**” with Leonard Sweet on March 24-25, 2003 in Carlinville, Illinois. Leonard Sweet is professor of Evangelism at Drew University and one of the leading voices on the cultural shift in America. For more information or to register for the conference visit www.agts.edu Graduate credit is available.

Do you know someone interested in pursuing a graduate degree? They could experience the whole enchilada right here at AGTS on **Seminary Day—March 21, 2003** by attending classes and chapel service, talking to current students, and meeting professors. For a brochure and schedule of events, visit www.agts.edu/news/seminary_day.html Get a taste of AGTS.