

A PREZ RELEASE

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A Bullish Market for Anger

Springfield, Missouri is a very hot and muggy town in July and August. The steamy heat of summer in Springfield is a poignant representation of the summer season that invariably yields some significant heat socially. Anger that often expresses itself in road rage is now increasingly embraced as just a way of life in places like Southern California. When temperatures soar and the freeways are clogged with overheating cars, the anger of countless people comes to a boiling point in an instant. The question that is so haunting in that situation is why the flashpoint of anger is so quickly reached?

Genoa, Italy, the home of Christopher Columbus was the site of another huge display of anger this summer. The G8 economic leaders' meeting in Genoa was greeted with another huge demonstration of "social angst" over the debilitating impact of globalization on the marginalized of the world. The death of one young protestor caught on film was a chilling reminder that social furor is on the rise worldwide. Yet as Time magazine commented on this event, their report asked where this anger and violence was coming from? The Vietnam protests of the 1960's and 70's seem to be an ancient memory and no young Americans are facing being drafted to fight an unpopular war. In addition, Time observed that no young Europeans were having their right and pleasures routinely stomped on by a jackbooted state. So why the anger and the violence?

A bullish market for anger seems to be alive and obvious in the music world. USA Today recently reported that "musicians like Eminem make it cool to be an angry angst ridden kid. The reality is that a lot of kids fantasize about grabbing a Glock and mowing down their classmates." Groups like Slipknot releases a recording entitled Mate, Feed, Kill, Repeat and sell a million copies. The Chicago based group Disturbed releases a mega-seller entitled The Sickness that "flits from emotional vulnerability to seething fury in tunes about hate, child abuse and scream therapy." An upcoming album by heavy-metal band Slayer is entitled God Hates Us All and is predicted to debut as number one on the music charts. Even MTV, who will attach its name to anything that is cool and marketable, shuttered at the stone-cold fury of groups like Slayer who are dead serious about their music and their anger. What are the depths of human pain that people are experiencing that give Eminem, Slipknot, Disturbed and Slayer such rabid fans and huge sales of their CD's?

Hate and anger are not mere trends. They are the products of a seething cauldron of human dysfunction. The road rage in LA, the violent protests in Genoa and the fury of rap-rockers and neo-metalists is not merely a fad, it is the ever-present reality of the world we live in. **Look it in**

the eye and see it for what it is: the soul of humanity attempting to figure out the complexities of life without an eternal reference point. You cannot escape the tentacles of this seething rage, because the human condition will inevitably produce it wherever and whenever life's realities do not meet with the human expectation that life should result in personal satisfaction and happiness.

I frankly have never experienced the kind of injustice that economic globalization is most certainly placing on the marginalized of this world. I have little concept of what can cause the rage and fury of screaming and adoring fans of Slayer. But I do take the realities being protested very seriously. My heart aches for the family starving in the countless squatters' camps of the world and for the young person who can only find comradery and human identity in the boiling cauldron of anger at a Godsmack concert.

Our world has more than enough dysfunction rooted in a refusal to acknowledge the eternal reference point that is found in our Creator. The problem is not merely the cauldron of anger that manifests itself in the ear-splitting riffs of Disturbed or the attack on civility by Eminem... Could it be that the real tragedy occurs when these self-defeating activities are viewed as an affront by Christians rather than a wake-up call to the needs the power of the Gospel can address in our world today?

I don't have an immediate strategy to respond to the reality I have just described. I do know that the source of an eternal response to this tragedy is summarized in the reflective words by King David, who says in the Psalm 63 that the loving kindness of God is better than any way he could imagine or fantasize the good life. Take it from King David who had plenty of what humankind strives for: power, personal wealth and the admiration of adoring fans. David says a single expression of the lovingkindness of God beats all his "accumulated stuff" hands down.

Yes, it's a bullish market for anger, but I wouldn't invest too heavily in an initiative that scoffs at God and welcomes death as the only avenue of escape from today's trials. God has a way of having the last laugh and certainly the final Word.

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Check it out...

For further reading on this topic, go to Time magazine, July 30, 2001 issue and USA Today, July 6, 2001 issue.