

A PREZ RELEASE

from AGTS

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

Take a Deep Breath! November 2002

College football is a favorite sport of mine. I'm sure part of my interest in this regimen of smash-mouth activity fueled by testosterone has to do with the fact I was never quite good enough to make the team (or even my high school team). Recently, several universities had huge victories that resulted in celebrations on their campuses which turned violent. Riot police, pepper spray, Plexiglas shields and dogs roamed the campuses like a revival of the 1960's uprisings I remember in my college years at an unnamed BIG 10 university.

Interviews with students did not reveal ideological passion—a cause to defend or a government to overthrow. One student that was interviewed revealed a chilling commentary on the destructive event—she said, **“It was sort of cool—like this is the closest to the movies I’ll ever get!”** As she chuckled—I shuttered. What’s wrong with this picture? It’s not about celebrating students having too many beers and overturning a few cars. It’s not about the destruction of private property by rampaging football fanatics! The significance of this student’s statement hit me broadside. She was seeing this campus riot as something that got her close to the defining element in her life—something she longed to be close to—something that described real life for her...a movie.

I’m still processing that interview. It reveals a reason for me to “take a deep breath.” This is more than fraternity row getting out of hand. This is more than sowing a few wild oats—no, this is the clear indication that life created by ever-expanding technology is the measuring stick for what is of value these days.

I’ll bet you think I’m going to take a shot at pop culture and make it my object of scorn...you’ve pegged me wrong. I have lived enough life and seen enough tragedy and injustice to know the reality necessary to alleviate human suffering must find its source in more than the creation of an image that is cool. The tragedies created by hatred and real evil in this world need more than our good intentions and thoughts to rearrange “negative energy.” Starvation, drug addiction, lack of clean water and sanitary conditions cannot be thoroughly addressed by people whose lives have been defined by virtual reality. An answer to the here and now struggles of countless billions of people depends on the indispensable biblical truth that personal spiritual regeneration centered in a life-changing

encounter with Jesus Christ is necessary for the challenges of global proportion we now face.

When push comes to shove, I'm not angry at the student in the TV interview—she simply reveals a description of our day. So take a deep breath and get serious about following Jesus Christ.

Either we create communities with followers of Christ who are connected to the eternal reality of Jesus Christ and living it out in tangible acts of transformation

OR

we will all disintegrate into a world that is nothing more than a global version of the Truman Show!

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Check it out! We recently held a Leadership Roundtable in Philadelphia with special guest Brian McClaren. What's it like to have an ongoing conversation with a person like the young student in this PREZ REPORT? Check out Brian's latest book More Ready Than You Realize. A true story that is a window into an emerging world. You can find this book at www.amazon.com