

A PREZ RELEASE

from AGTS

(Monthly commentary from the President of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary)

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IS IT A RERUN? . . . or A CLASSIC?

Have you noticed lately that instead of hit TV shows admitting they are repeating old shows (re-runs) they actually hype the rerun and call it a classic? Programs like ER no longer show re-runs but offer **classic** episodes to take us back to “where it all began.” Call it the frantic hyping of the TV ratings war or the keen sense of marketing by network spin doctors... the reality is there exists a perceived difference between a re-run and a classic. The re-run is a past memory that has minimal value and is filler... the classic is worth remembering and has future marketability. New cable channels like TVLand give us access to classics like *Leave it to Beaver* and *Andy Griffith* 24 hours a day. ESPN Classic lets me enjoy the quick wrists of Hank Aaron and Ernie Banks one more time.

Yet with the advent of “classic TV” we see what contemporary globalization has done to just one segment of human experience... the world is now seen as simply a marketplace where products are continually hawked to ever larger markets. When you eat Mexican food, put on your Vietnamese made Nikes or listen to LadySmith Black Mombasa you are living in a globalized world. However, there are larger questions, particularly for the Christian... should we celebrate broadening international economic opportunity or should we fear the reduction of all cultural difference to just an eclectic pot of consumerism? The current globalization forces are more than one big happy family now enjoying each culture’s uniqueness, what we are seeing is the significant reduction of unique human and cultural differences into mere profiles for marketing purposes.

While I am increasingly aware, as a Christian, of the ethical challenges to global free-market realities I am not even a fledgling economist. I will not attempt to pontificate on conceptual frameworks I’m a novice at. But, I do believe that Christians need to acknowledge that the world we live in is not remaining static. Mayberry, Andy, Opie, Aunt Bea, and Barney Fife are wonderful retreats for nostalgia, but that world no longer exists (if it ever did.)

When the World Bank reports that 1.2 billion people must try to survive on *a dollar a day* and 3 billion must try to survive on \$2 a day, Christians must take note. Not only because devastating poverty denies billions of people the dignity God created them with, but because the billions are bombarded with the same idolatrous rhetoric that we in the West are subject to. . .namely that human fulfillment comes primarily from an ever-increasing supply of material things and pleasurable experiences. Regardless of our socio-economic place in life, the preoccupation with

accessing material goods destroys families, community, environments and yes even spiritual vitality.

So, the next time you enjoy a youthful Hugh Downs on a rerun/classic episode of Concentration, think a minute. Who knew there was a market for a 20-year game show and what was the motivation for airing that grainy looking old TV show anyway?

How is St. Paul's warning in Romans 12:2 at play even in the simple pleasure of watching a television show from a previous century devoid of innuendoes and the flaunting of alternative lifestyles?

Listen to a challenge from Harvard theologian Harvey Cox. *"There was a time when Pentecostals warned themselves and anyone else who would listen not to become entangled and dependent on the things of the world. Pentecostals were suspicious of passing fads of stylish clothing, the latest hair-do, glitz and new consumer products. They were also, as it turns out rightly suspicious, that the powerful new mass media could be a seduction, tricking people into empty values of the consumer market. Perhaps it is time for a rebirth of that ethic of simplicity, the suspicion toward the things of the world for which early Pentecostals were famous."*

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Check it out . . .

Mark your calendar!

PRE-COUNCIL EVENT

August 6 & 7, 2001

Westin Crown Center Hotel

Kansas City, MO

Transforming Church Ministry for the 21st Century

"Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix"

***A seminar offered in partnership between the AGTS and the Division of Home Missions Church Planting
featuring***

Brian McLaren, founding pastor,

Cedar Ridge Community Church, Washington, D.C. area

For more information contact AGTS Continuing Education at 1435 N. Glenstone, Springfield, MO 65802 or call

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