



Prez Release

I JUST DROPPED IN TO SEE WHAT CONDITION MY CONDITION WAS IN (with apologies to Kenny Rogers)

I'm sure most of us are tired of watching the Dow-Jones as it keeps spiraling downward. I've stopped my regular clicking on msn.com to get the latest stock reports. The gutting of my retirement funds is a big issue to me. The long-term strategy condoned by financial advisors doesn't work for me anymore; I'm too old to look at riding out the current storm for the long-term.

I just read an article in *Wired* magazine (www.wired.com) that turned my anxiety to anger. It caught my attention with its lead-in which said, "*In the mid-80s Wall Street turned to quants—brainy financial engineers—to invest in new ways to boost profits. Their methods for minting money worked brilliantly until one of them devastated the global economy.*" The article goes on to talk about a Chinese born mathematics genius whose formulas for measuring economic risk received wide acceptance. This formula is now being singled out as the most identifiable principle that has caused our current situation.

As I read this story I took on the persona of an Old Testament prophet like Amos. My prophetic tirade included endless ranting about the morality (or lack thereof) of the free market system, historical reference to DeToqueville and his 19th century observations about the double-edgeness of American individualism and ,of course, that old standard, our culture and its lethal consumerist DNA.

But I also have a sense that the current funk we are experiencing is not just something we will need to ride out and then everything will get back to normal. This current phase will certainly pass, but the new normal may not be what we think it will be. My parents were children of the depression, so at least I have the stories of what it was like in the 1930s. With great effort, I will have to adjust to this new reality, but for those who have no such connection to the past and for those who have always been on the receiving end of injustice, the future does not bode well.

Could it be that this moment in history is not just a hiccup that will pass, but a shift that God can orchestrate into vitality that we had not previously dreamed possible? I've been in those places in the world where most securities have been removed; the expectations of the good life have disappeared. Surprisingly, it is in those contexts that the brightness of Jesus Christ beams most clearly. It is in those tragedies that people see through their humanly constructed empires and envision a new community or reality where the power of the Holy Spirit makes most obvious the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I think we are clearly in an era that can be called a *defining moment*. We have seen these moments in history that have called forth the greatness in leadership and the will of a people. We are in one of those moments right now and we are struggling to imagine the sheer magnitude of this era. We will emerge from this time and will look back at it with hindsight that attempts to demonstrate bravado, when the truth is we don't quite know where the edges of the abyss are right now.

I take my cues from the Apostle Paul. His powerful ministry is chronicled for us in the Book of Acts and it is a litany of woe interspersed with stunning victories. As we read about the circumstances that ultimately take him to his final years in Rome, one encounter stands out for me (Acts 26). It is a defining moment where Paul recounts the central encounter that has shaped his life toward the cause of Jesus Christ. He is brought before a group of ruling elites and they think that he is some bumbling Neanderthal who will provide a good laugh. But he mesmerizes them with the account of his encounter with Jesus Christ Himself. So stunning is the narrative that Paul proclaims, that the "chattering elites" who listened to him could only use a small legal loophole to keep him in custody. Paul had spoken so clearly of the defining moment in his life where he had first encountered Jesus that these folks whose lives were awash in "the power and stuff of their royal position" saw an undeniable new reality.

This moment in history is not just about the obvious unsettling of the familiar. We are presently crossing a bridge to the next chapter that must have persons whose lives are captured by a defining moment with God. You can't finesse what is presently coming at us, but we can stand like Paul and tell our story of an encounter with the One who sets us free to trust Him boldly because our Savior's love is deep and His grace has made it possible for us to be saved to the uttermost and abundantly pardoned. We are not the first people to pass through an era that is seeing global changes of epic proportions; now is our chance to demonstrate clearly what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

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**AGTS Special News
Release**

Presidential Report to the AGTS Community—February 26, 2009

The presidents of AGTS and CBC initiate the first steps toward creating a seamless pathway for AG ministerial preparation.

AGTS announces new Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies

AGTS has been approved to offer a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies, beginning June 2009.

Get to know AGTS on March 12

Spend an hour with us—share a meal, get the tour, meet the faculty and check out the programs.

AGTS Hosts Golf Tournament

The Second Annual AGTS Golf Tournament will take place April 30. To view a brochure and/or register online, go to www.agts.edu/golf.