

A PREZ RELEASE from AGTS

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

Two Pictures—Two Worlds May 2004

The photos released of American soldiers harassing and humiliating Iraqi prisoners have stunned us all. Political heat is being generated and apologies are flying left and right. Politicians have been quick to speak to the world about how “unlike America” these destructive activities of prisoner treatment have been. But should we be surprised at these travesties? Are we really shocked that human beings would take advantage of other human beings in their weaknesses?

Neil Steinberg, of the Chicago Sun-Times, wrote recently, “The potential to be cruel, to take advantage of situations and to abuse power is lodged deep within us and those who deny it are hypocrites or self-proclaimed saints.” We prefer to ignore this because it is soothing and self-fulfilling to do so. We are good people, so we tell ourselves. We do good...but look at the news! Steinberg has it right. The circumstances at Abu Ghraib prison is not so much about activities reflecting the heart of the American people as it is action that reveals the depravity of humanity (Romans 3:23). Let’s not kid ourselves—sin trumps any goodness generated in the American culture.

Yet, as tragic as the scenes from the Abu Ghraib prison are, they are balanced by the story of Pat Tillman, the football star turned Army Ranger. He left millions of dollars in a pro football contract to give us an updated picture of loyalty, honor, patriotism and courage.

These are two contrasting pictures, one of age-old propensity to human depravity and the other a picture of the human capability to pursue noble causes. Let’s not be surprised by sinfulness and let’s not be so cynical that our hearts can’t be warmed by the heroics of a man who gave up fame for a commitment to putting his life on the line and paying the ultimate cost.

The two pictures represent two worlds that co-exist together. Neither is dominant—both occur regularly. Sinful human behavior is a reality—heroism is always welcome. Neither is exclusive to America!

**Byron D. Klaus, President
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Information on AGTS events and resource for 2004

AGTS is listed in *Christianity Today's* 50 top Christian organizations to work for the second year in a row.

Check it out at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/005/26.42.html>

Leadership Roundtables with Dr. Stanley Grenz

November 8-9—Charlotte, NC

For details and registration for these exciting events check out our website www.agts.edu