



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

If the Postal Service can't make their budget *this* month, they should sell their assets to Al Gore and his Internet, or induce FedEx to make them an offer they shouldn't refuse. At our house, the mailbox has been on overload. The stats say that there are less envelopes and boxes this year; *you couldn't prove that premise from our experience...*

Hey, have you watched the evolution of the Christmas card? It seems that there are two emerging genres landing on our kitchen counter.

One style presumes that "*a picture is worth a thousand words.*" A year's worth of life - for entire families - is portrayed in photos that have been crafted into a holiday mosaic, captioned with Christmas messaging. For some, we have heard the tales already; for many others, we're making up stories that would align with the pictures, candid and staged, that have captured 2009 for friends.

The other approach puts *prose* over *pose*: in more conventional cards,



a folded "Dear Friends" letter seeks to summarize 12 months of life - for expanding generations of kids and grandkids - in witty ditties or Readers Digest narratives. *Haven't read 'em all yet, but I've begun to scan for highlights...*

Here's a discovery, already: the things that have led the nightly national news programs, or been parked in headlines above the fold in the declining but still-in-business newspapers are interestingly absent from the family remembrances of 2009. Consumer confidence; Wall Street bonuses; Washington-engineered reinventions of historic companies or entire industries; eerie epidemics that promise to put an end to the human race: none of those features have popped out as emphases from our

friends' "can't leave 2009 without mentioning this" epics. When the chips are down, and we're thinking about what really matters, the standards are raised to what we know to be important.

You're working to compress a week's worth of professional activity into three days' frenzy, hoping to sneak out on Scrooge at end-of-business Wednesday, to go home to your family. *Could I give you a verse to set your mind in motion for the build-up to Christmas?*

Here's the Story of Christmas, in a sentence you know better than your ATM password: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16). Christmas?

No shepherds; no Wise Men; no angelic choir. No Mary and Joseph; no manger; no Herod. No script to support a Sunday School production; camels and donkeys and lambs have the verse off.

Just a Father, and a Son... and a gift that wasn't on "the list," but was needed by every man, woman, boy and girl who would ever occupy Earth. *God only sends the Best...*

Here's the Shanks' Christmas letter, short-and-sweet: *this year, the*

last of our five grandchildren initiated a prayer from the heart to accept the gift of the Son, from the Father. Avery Jane - aged four - makes it a "clean sweep" for all 11 of the people in our brood's Christmas picture.

The Family of Heaven made a place at their table for *you* and *me* - for *your family*, and for *mine*. The headlines in heaven never mirror the lead stories from CNN or Fox; instead, they report the names of every person who accepts the Father's gift of forgiveness and life, delivered by His Son, Jesus.

If God sent out a Christmas letter every December, we - *His kids* - would be featured! Don't let the appalling "bad news" of 2009 distract you from the amazing Good News of 3 BC (estimated date of Jesus' birth): *"God so loved the world that He gave..."*

Bob Shank

Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).

To read prior issues of the Point of View visit:
www.mastersprogram.net

To read a Program Summary of TMP visit:
www.mastersprogram.org/summary/