



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

So, are you an *Optimist? Pessimist?* Or, do you pride yourself as a "middle-of-the-roader" who is more likely characterized as a *Realist?*

This may be a moment when all three groups - Optimists, Pessimists and Realists - would find themselves in unusual agreement. Political thinking is highly divisive, but the honest evaluation of the vital signs of our national marketplace rises above partisan loyalties. I think we would all agree about the nature of our shared space, circa 1st Quarter 2009: *things are tough.*

But history has no long-term parking arrangements: time marches on and the circumstances that define time are highly dynamic. Conditions will undoubtedly shift; stimulated or not, economies have a habit of moving - sometimes predictably, sometimes not. If things are to change - if life just over the three-year horizon really will be different - what will that new environment be? Will it be *conducive to your dreams?* Or will it be the *realization of your nightmares?*

Whether you are a futurist or not, you'll project expectations into your compound tomorrows. The definitive details may be lacking in your predictions, but you have to determine whether life - for you - will be *bright and inviting* or *dark and foreboding.* As you place your



bets on your coming conditions, your emotional framework will reflect your determinations. What will it be, for you: a bright future that breeds *confidence* or a dark future that breeds *despair?* Those are your choices; *what'll it be?*

Christians in the First Century didn't have an easy life. For them, opposition - from the Jews, as well as from the Roman Gentiles - was creating uncertainty and frequent hardship. Their small group chatter would have sounded like ours; the details may have been different, but their sensitivities would have been common with job-challenged, mortgage-squeezed, energy-short, tax-stretched Americans. When the lead headlines of every home page introduce another life-threatening crisis, how do you salvage a smile that comes from the heart?

If you're looking for a good read to start your morning tomorrow, bookmark the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Political

leaders promise measurable improvements if they get a second term to finish their policy enactments, but Paul reminds Christians (like you and me) of the ultimate long-term life enhancement: it's the Resurrection.

Want things to be better? He says that our best days are not possible while stuck in these expiration-dated bodies. The deal-point for followers of the Lord Jesus is His promise to do for us what He did for Himself: the *certainty that a perfect body - back-to-life in a perfect world, under a perfect Sovereign - is the ultimate solution.*

*If you and I really believe that, the choice of confidence over despair is only natural. In fact, that's the way he finished his encouragement: "With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort" (1 Corinthians 15:58, from The Message).*

*Do your own survey today: how many folks do you see who are showing signs of despair? If someone (like, you!) were to show signs of confidence that is founded on the Truth... do you think they would have any influence among folks who long for some confidence ("belief that one can rely on something or someone; firm trust") to offset their despair?*

*Bob Shank*

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