

Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

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Dear Marketplace Friend,

The Christian faith is not a dead religion, but a vital and active way of life that springs from the introduction of “eternal life” into the mortal human condition. It was designed, by God, to change what we *believe*, how we *think*, what we *say*, and – ultimately – what we *do*. Christians are supposed to be obvious in their unique approach to life: *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:14-16)

Wow. “See your good deeds.” That challenge puts Christians on-the-spot to figure out how to “do life” differently than the folks next door, who make no claim of supernatural inclinations. Beliefs, thoughts, words, actions: all of it, transformed by knowing and following Jesus.

In America, in our generation, one of the last categories of life for transformation to be seen is “stewardship” (*that’s Christian-speak for what we do with our money*).

“Let your light shine” imagines that extraordinary behavior – by

Christians – would be spotlighted and applauded for its positive differences. In the realm of stewardship, that spotlight – and, the applause – has been rising in the midst of the Great Recession... but it isn’t Christians who are taking the bows. *What’s up, with that?*

Warren Buffett and Bill & Melinda Gates have captured the headlines and headlights with their Billionaire Challenge: for folks with net worth north of ten digits, commit to give half to charity, either during life or at death. Buffett’s personal reasoning is compelling (to see his personal pledge go to:

www.mastersprogram.org/link/buffet.html).

So far, the Big Three (Warren, Bill, Melinda) have signed-up 38 of the Forbes 400; their crusade continues. The decision to *give* is the *start*; the decision *where* to give is *crucial*. For the Gates Foundation, their philanthropy is *“driven by the interests and passions of the Gates family. The primary aims of the foundation are, globally, to enhance healthcare and reduce extreme poverty, and in America, to expand educational opportunities and access to information technology.”* Values positive.

Ted Turner is one of the 38 pledgers. He *“personally committed to donate \$1 billion to the United Nations Foundation (UNF) in 1998. The foundation is a public charity created by Turner to channel his contributions towards the population control, condom distribution and abortion issues that are important to him. Reuters reported the foundation has also raised millions from other corporations, governments and charities.”* If that’s what Mr. Turner plans to advance, I would prefer he spend it on frivolous, self serving indulgences. “Charity” can rescue AIDs orphans in South Africa, or it can build a mosque across the street from the site of the World Trade Center. *Philanthropy can be a mixed bag...*

Transformation for Christians includes a plan for using the power of money that aligns with God’s truth, rather than the “best of class” models offered by our culture. Here’s a tragedy: for many Christians, it is one of their last remaining areas of ignorance.

Wouldn’t it be great to get some clarity about what God – through the Bible – offers to clarify this important subject?

Book of the Week: Generous Loving, Generous Giving, by Dr. Walt Russell (2009, Biola University). In 28 bottom-line pages, Walt hits the bulls-eye in this crucial matter; though a tenured professor in a respected seminary, his background as a missionary, businessman, church planter and pastor make his perspectives clear and compelling. He’s a friend, and he knows his stuff.

You can’t buy this one anywhere, but I’ve secured enough to get one in your hands. Go to: www.mastersprogram.org/link/book-orders.html and give me your name/ mailing address, and we’ll send one your way. *Does God have better insight than Buffett and Gates on this subject?*

Bob Shank

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

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