

# Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

**July 19, 2010**



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Dear Marketplace Friend,

Some guys collect classic cars or wood-shafted putters. Sports memorabilia line many shelves; new gadgets draw the attention of people who can afford to be early adopters. What is it that occupies my private space?

The shelves are jammed with books; my desk is piled with articles, pulled out of publications. When things catch my eye and stick in my throat, I set them aside. Most, ultimately, get recycled. Some of them show up in my Monday missive...

Over the last month, mention has been made – in small, obscure articles – about a plan at Claremont School of Theology – originally, a seminary established by the Methodist church - to expand their mission. Enabled by a \$10 million grant by a venture capitalist in Phoenix, they are *“transforming into a multifaith university, with a new vision and a new mission statement and a new set of values. The new vision and new mission statement and new set of values say nothing about Jesus Christ, nothing about preparing pastors, nothing about United Methodism, nothing about theology or Biblical studies, and nothing about the Christian Church. The statements stress preparing ‘leaders’ for an increasingly diverse, multi-faith world. As evidence of what the*

*seminary is all about, a Muslim graduate of the class of 2009 read from the Koran at the graduation ceremonies...” (Dr. Riley Case of [The Confessing Movement within the United Methodist Church.](#))*

Just days ago, Brad Greenberg wrote in the **Wall Street Journal** under the headline, “How Missionaries Lost Their Chariots of Fire.” He lamented the mission-shift of Christians who leave home on “missions” that do not involve sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. *“Spreading Christianity through deeds alone aligns with a quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: ‘Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary, use words.’ But research suggests that non-Christians often miss the message without the words... Christians, today typically travel abroad to serve others, but not necessarily to spread the Gospel.”*

St. Paul might take exception to St. Francis: *“...if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the*

*Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?’ (Romans 10:9-14)*

I pulled a friend’s book off the shelf this weekend, for a re-read. **The Name**, by Franklin Graham (*Thomas Nelson, 2002*) could have been written yesterday. Though referencing Scripture, Franklin writes from personal experience as he paints the cultures addiction to tolerance alongside its aversion to the affirmation of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is Jesus just another religious leader... or, is He God? Does the answer to that question really matter anymore?

*“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)*

I read **The Name** in 2002. It’s one of the “read-agains” on my shelf. Order a copy and recalibrate your spiritual instruments. *“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye Soldiers of the Cross...”*

For The Kingdom,

Bob Shank

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

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