

# Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

## September 13, 2010



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Dear Marketplace Friend,

Okay, I'll admit it: this is, after all, Orange County. We're just south of Los Angeles, but we live across the street from traditional, and next door to trendy. Our country clubs still disallow denim in the dining room, but there are beaches where clothes are optional. Drop us in Delaware, and people would talk. Leave us in Southern California, and people don't even blink.

Proof, positive, this morning: above-the-fold in the Local section of the Orange County Register, the headline proclaims the message: The Mark of the Lord. Wow: an evangelistic news item on a Monday morning! Read on...

Marking the one-year anniversary of their founding, City Church of Anaheim made the paper. We've become accustomed to start-up churches meeting on beaches or in bingo parlors, in school gyms and on soccer fields... so why would it be unusual to hear about a church meeting in a night club called The Chain Reaction Club?

Their Lead Pastor – 26-year-old Kyle Steven Boneberger – had issued a challenge: double their Sunday attendance from 100 to 200, and he would lead 12 of their most devout members in a new church ritual. Most churches –

the ones with steeples and organs – use water (sprinkled or immersed) to connote commitment; at City Church, they use ink.

When the crowd finally hit the 200 mark, Boneberger sat down across the worktable from the artist who engraved the church's logo on his arm. Wow, a tattoo; that's going to complicate the church-hopping in a big way: how do you overwrite the City Church logo with another congregation's symbol?

It took Boneberger's stunt to push Terry Jones and his Dove World Outreach Center down in Gainesville, Florida, off the front page. Jones' church (50, they say, on a big weekend) was going to have a cook-out on Saturday, using Qu-rans as briquettes.

Since most Americans no longer attend church – and, they find reality defined by their most recent media exposures – how would the oncoming generation define what a “church” is? Will they think of threats – ala Jones – or tats – ala Boneberger?

Jesus was very attuned to the crowd's conclusions; he knew that

perceptions would shape realities. He assembled a trusted focus group – the 12 men who had been closest to the action, during his three year public ministry – to share their perspectives. What was the buzz? How was his message being heard by the people in the “cheap seats?” Listen to the transcript of that conversation...

*“When Jesus... asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ they replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it...’” (Matthew 16:13-19)*

Jesus didn’t burn anything in protest of other religions. His only physical marks were scars from his crucifixion, not a stunt to increase the crowd to 5,000 (plus women and children) for the feeding miracle. *He had another plan...*

He would build his church on the truth that He was the Christ – the one-and-only Messiah/Savior – and that message would be the foundation of what would follow. Today – as it was, then – that is the most controversial thing we could say or do: to maintain

that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father in Heaven is the offense of history. *Consider me offensive, with no headlines...*

Bob Shank

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