

Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

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Dear Marketplace Friend,

The old adage seems likely to recur: “Defeat snatched from the jaws of victory.”

If you are open to a mild case of whiplash - while sitting in your favorite front-of-the-television easy chair – just flip back-and-forth between CNN and ESPN. It’s the Fall season, and you know what that means: *the games never end*. USC is playing their “why does it matter” roster of games (*their NCAA sentence disallows any bowl appearances this year*) on Saturdays; the Vikings are playing their “why don’t we establish a mandatory retirement age of 40?” schedule (*with their aging \$22 million quarterback playing catch with the defensive backs on Sundays*)... and the Republicans are becoming Tea Party-poopers as they struggle to determine who they (the party) are, at the values core. On the Democratic side of the house, things are similarly fractured: the congressional ranks are breaking like a BP deep water well pipe. *Incumbents are home saying, “I’m no friend of Nancy!” to save their skins....*

Let me make some predictions: USC won’t be in the Rose Bowl. The Vikings won’t be in the Super Bowl. And, if they’re not careful, the politicians

(*pick your party!*) won’t be in the Capitol Bowl.

The football antics – college and professional – don’t have much to do with our economy’s health or our country’s future... but the political news report on November 3rd – the morning after the election – will trumpet headlines that will set a course for the next decade (or more).

Whether Democrat or Republican, the biggest agenda for either side of the spectrum going into the Fall elections is the same: *unity*. If either side lacks common commitment among those flying their partisan colors, there will be a consequence. My prediction: ***the side with the most unity will win.***

Unity is a powerful strategy for victory. I make that statement based on a pretty reliable source: *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father*

of all, who is over all and through all and in all... It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:2-6, 11-13)

Paul didn't write one letter to the 1st Presbyterian Church of Ephesus, and another to the 1st Baptist Church across the street; instead, he wrote to “*the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus*” (1:1). He recognized that the ongoing health of the body of Christ in the community would be measured by their “unity in the faith,” which would be one key mark of their maturity.

A few weeks ago at the Capitol Mall, Glenn Beck pulled off a big rally where the caption could have read, “*Unity!*” Rallies like that used to happen in football stadiums, with Billy Graham on the platform. Beck's unity message was unity based on cultural values; Billy's unity message was unity based on the biblical Gospel. *Beck is out to save the country; Billy is out to save the world.*

I'm already tired of the CNN/ESPN noise. *Conflict du jour* is the nightly special, for the rest of the year. Maybe we would benefit from turning off the static, and pondering the more important question: *what would we need to do to see the body of Christ*

built up until we all reach unity in the faith?

If that's the objective, whatever we're doing right now isn't working. We're establishing Kingdom leadership communities – **Barnabas Groups** – as our unity strategy. *What's yours?*

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

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