



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Summer is quickly coming to a close. I'm in Alaska right now; fall is in the air, and they are preparing for the end of their brief flirtation with summer. Since it started, my weekly column has been featuring books as a key contribution to your summer experience. Have you been turning pages during these weeks? If so, has it been *recreational* reading, *inspirational* reading, or *preparational* reading?

Recreational reading takes your mind away from your realities; it provides a brief escape from your real-world demands. Inspirational reading assumes that your head is already full of the right stuff, and works on getting your heart on board. Preparational reading presumes that there are still areas of discovery that are mission critical for your future effectiveness in life, and it provides the intake for the insights that will one day make a profound difference in your leveraged life influence.

Where might those gaps be, for you? What books would help to fill in some remaining blanks in the essentials that cannot be dismissed? If you are out to live the life of a leader in God's Kingdom - whether you are employed in the marketplace or in ministry is irrelevant - where are your deficiencies?



George Barna's recent examinations of churchgoing American evangelicals - adults who self-identify as "born again" believers - are startling. When given thirteen basic teachings from the Bible, only one percent of them agreed with or accepted all thirteen. In other words, 99 out of 100 people who attended church with you last Sunday have some "holes" in their theological construct. *Among the 100 people who sat in your section last Sunday, are you the "1," or one of the "99?"*

Chuck Colson and Harold Fickett have just provided a critically-important book that is both biblically orthodox and comfortably readable. Most doctrinal treatises are scripturally sound but sleep inducing; they read like textbooks for seminarians. ***The Faith: What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters*** (Zondervan, 2008) is a crucial contribution to the American Christian community at a crucial moment in world

history. Why so? As they write in their preface, "Most professing Christians don't know what they believe, and so can neither understand nor defend the Christian faith - much less live it." Why does this kind of Sunday school elective rise to this level of importance at this moment in the culture's drama? *"The challenge of anti-theism* (the recent rise to prominent attention by authors and advocates denouncing God and religion) *and radical Islam could not come at a worse time for the Church, because most Christians do not understand what they believe, why they believe it, and why it matters."*

I found myself recognizing that the daily headlines, the presidential campaign - even the economic upheaval caused by the spike in oil prices - take on different dimensions of meaning when played against the backdrop of a biblical worldview. We're in deep trouble, and - as they say in their final chapter - *"The orthodox faith is the one source that can renew Western culture."* Is there a chance that can happen? Not unless something else happens, first: *"... it is our mission as Westerners to reevangelize the West."* If you aspire to any level of Kingdom leadership, you can't be one of the 99; you'll do whatever it takes to join the 1% who really grasp the Truth. Read ***The Faith***; it may raise your status in the pack...

Bob Shank

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