



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Boy, did I start something. Last week, I "announced" that, barring a can't-pass-it-up news item (the Democratic Party's Rules Committee and their decision to discount Florida and Michigan by 50% does not rise to that level), my weekly pass-along each Monday this summer would focus on a *book report*, not a *cultural rant*. I ended with an invitation to recommend to me a favorite book...

I received two types of reaction: the first came via the e-mail "reply" clicks. Those were some great book suggestions, from some anxious-to-engage Point-of-Viewers. Great stuff! The second reaction came more in person. I crossed paths with numerous PoVers who said, "Must be nice! You're taking the summer off so you can read books!" *Hardly!* I only read books during two periods of the year: Summer... and non-Summer. I have to practice what I preach. My unrepentant message says it all: **Leaders are Readers**. A line stolen by me, 30 years ago, from Charlie "Tremendous" Jones, is still true, today. **Leaders are Readers...**

US News reported two years ago that George W. Bush was in a friendly personal competition with Carl Rove. The race was simple: "most books read" was the only score. As of August of '06, the year-to-date tally was: Bush, 60; Rove, 50. Bush won. You may not



like some of his policies, but you have to respect his disciplines. **Leaders are Readers.**

Book of the Week: **Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day**, by James Emery White (2004, by InterVarsity Press). White has an impressive resumé; though he pastors in Charlotte, he leads in the Kingdom. He is like those pesky leaders from the Tribe of Issachar, back in King David's day, who "... understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32).

White's work is daunting, not in its word count (*with 162 pages, he isn't excessive*), but in its gravity. He begins with a satellite view of history, making the case that particular periods in time have marked an "ending" and a "beginning," and the people who spot those moments of influence have had the chance to leverage life in profound and powerful ways. That isn't just dry academic musing; it is a summons to seriousness that aligns with the nature of the nightly news...

To quote White, "... the demise of the world is not a joke. It is a challenge of our day, and responding as Christ followers is the great call on our lives. The serious nature of our day has presented us with a *kairos* moment - how we live and act in response takes on new meaning and urgency. *Kairos* is time filled with opportunity, a moment pregnant with eternal significance and possibility" (p. 69).

Have you tried to suppress those feelings of immensity, while pushed to give yourself to "business as usual" ... and, "minding your own business?" Have you felt the tug of *calling*, while sucked into the demands of that life category called *career*?

White spotlights the *kairos* characters of the past: people like Wilberforce, Bonhoeffer, St. Patrick, St. Benedict, C.S. Lewis, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther. Not extensive biographies; just the short-and-sweet summations of lives well lived.

"My friend," John Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson, "you and I have lived in serious times." My friend, you and I are now living in serious times...

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