



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Go ahead: Google *African American*, and, *Woman*. The search engine of preference might goof and deliver you the latest on the life-or-death duel between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama ("*pistols, or swords?*") that is scheduled for tomorrow in Texas and Ohio. The LA Marathon only lasted 2:13:50; the Race to the White House has already gone on way too long. No, that *African American* and *Woman* search would go elsewhere...

This weekend, it would have landed on **Oprah** (that's Oprah Gail Winfrey, born 29 January 1954, in case you've been suspended in cryogenic suspension since her daily talk program hit national syndication in 1986). The campaign news went to the after-the-weather, before-the-sports slot on the 11:00 report, as the Forbes lister made headlines, yet again.

Sunday night, it was **Oprah's Big Give**. Maybe you tuned in. Dubbed "Apprentice Meets Amazing Race," ten contestants were called by Oprah to get involved. Coupled into two-person teams, they received an envelope packed with a gripping story of need... and the assignment to change their assigned life in five days, out of the goodness of their heart and their creativity unleashed. Three celebrities would judge their efforts; each week a



person will be "voted off the island." The Secret (not Oprah's book-club title, but the series-ending surprise): *the prize to the selfless winner will be a cool \$1 million.*

If that were not enough, this new week is yet another new opportunity. On the Eve of March's Super Tuesday, **A New Earth** debuts (tonight) at 9:00pm. Based on Eckhart Tolle's book of the same title, this web-delivered seminar will feature the author and Oprah in the first installment of a ten week/90 minutes per interactive learning opportunity. Preregistrations number over 700,000, but the audience may grow as the buzz explodes. Anything done by Oprah is noteworthy... and advertised on her televised daily afternoon chat with America.

The subject matter of **A New Earth**? According to Winfrey, "*Many people aren't that familiar with spiritual growth. They might need some help at first with the languaging of new consciousness and things like that. So I*

*thought, 'Wouldn't it be great to have these classes to help people through the process?'" Tolle's philosophy, by his description, "... includes Buddhist, Christian and Islamic influences..."*

If you're away from your television all day, perhaps you've been in Oprah's radio theater, via her XM Satellite radio station. Since January 1, she's featuring a one hour daily segment from a yearlong journey based on Marianne Williamson's book, **A Course in Miracles**. From Oprah's website, it is described as an *"educational program for re-training the mind that is spiritual, rather than religious, in its perspective. Although it uses Christian terminology, the Course expresses a universal experience, and its underlying ontology is reminiscent of ancient refrains, echoing the world's most hallowed traditions..."* An excerpt from the book: *"Some of the ideas the workbook presents you will find hard to believe, and others may seem quite startling. This does not matter. You are merely asked to apply the ideas as you are directed to. You are not asked to judge them at all..."* Really? I'd worry about such a thing, if I didn't find it on Oprah's own website...

If Mr. Obama succeeds in his pursuit of the presidency, perhaps Oprah's endorsement will result in a cabinet appointment: maybe Secretary of Spirituality, just in time for A New Earth?

Some say that the bullets flying in Iraq are our greatest risk; I believe that the words that are flying in America are even more troubling. Nicodemus was called "The Teacher of Israel" - kind of a First Century Oprah - when

he came to Jesus to interview him about spirituality. Jesus' honest words to him: *"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."* (John 3:3) Nicodemus was flabbergasted.

Jesus came back: *"You are Israel's teacher, and do you not understand these things?"* (John 3:10). America's teacher - Oprah - is, perhaps, the most influential thought-provoker active in American culture today... and she appears to be, philosophically, alongside Nicodemus: *well intended... and clueless*. Pilate asked Jesus the question: *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38) Jesus had already answered: *"I am the Truth."* (John 14:6) **My advice - to you, and to Oprah: if you're looking for the truth, start with Him...**

Bob Shank

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

*To learn more about TMP visit:*  
[www.mastersprogram.org](http://www.mastersprogram.org)

*To read prior issues of the Point of View visit:*  
[www.mastersprogram.net](http://www.mastersprogram.net)