



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Church was a little crowded yesterday; did you notice? There were people there whom I did not recognize; there were folks sitting in "my section" who aren't normally occupying those "season seats." I didn't know their names, but I'm pretty certain that the man just down-row from me was not Frank Colletti.

This month's **Smart Money** magazine mentioned Frank as a "color" story (*that has nothing to do with race; "color" as in illustrating an otherwise dry point in an article*). A CPA from East Meadows, New York, he is a man of routines. Sunday mornings for Frank always happen the same way. Out the door at 7:00 am, his directive to his wife and kids is clear: Don't call unless it's an emergency. *Why's that?*

Mr. Colletti is a *Seeker*. In fact, you could say that Frank is a very *serious* seeker. Armed with his metal detector, he scours parks, beaches and school yards looking for lost stuff. He may seem to be a middle-ager with too much time to kill, but is in-fact a man on a mission. Despite the "real cost" - *the sophisticated detection devices can run up into the thousands* - and the "opportunity cost" - *what could he be doing instead of his solo-scavenging to make points with his family, or money in his practice?* - he "invests" his time



and energy on the outside chance that he'll land a "whopper" that will make it all worthwhile...

During our generation's time on life's track, a style of church came into vogue that evoked strong pro and con reactions. Known as "seeker churches," over the last three decades they became a dynamic force in the expanding evangelical universe. Characterized by contemporary elements that seemed oddly out-of-place, they intended to set off the sensors for the seekers who were looking for spiritual treasure. Instead of focusing on the already-convinced competing for perfect attendance pins, they sought to register on the gauges of the not-so-sure who had limited interest in church, at least in *church* as they perceived it to be.

That *seeker* idea is a curious one. Who, exactly, is a *seeker*, in the spiritual realm? If you view God to be the best informed source for accurate information about the way people

really are, the input from Him can be a little alarming. To quote Him, "... *there is no one who is looking for God. People left to themselves are pursuing their own agendas, not His.*" Whoops. *No seekers; and we just changed the whole church setup for them!*

Yet, on Easter morning - and, truthfully, every Sunday morning - we get together to focus on the seeker. Not *any* old seeker, but the "Seeker of seekers." The plotline of the New Testament is built around a great adventure: there's something that is lost, and there's someone who is looking. And, there are bad guys who are trying to keep the two from connecting. Lost things only exist for one reason: *to be found*. Lookers - seekers - exist for one reason: *to hunt until they've found what they're looking for*. Bringing the lost and the looker together is the prerequisite for the party that signals success in the hunt.

When Jesus was here, He said that you could understand the story of Creation by likening it to a man who had 100 sheep in a herd who took inventory and found that one had wandered off. In business, keeping your inventory shrinkage to 1% would be cause for celebration, but in God's economy, dealing with that missing sheep commands attention from the CEO. *Nothing less than 100% satisfies His standards...*

Jesus said that the shepherd left the 99 to make finding the lost sheep his consummate mission. He would not rest until the rescue of the lost sheep restored the herd to the full headcount.

From Easter, 30 A.D. to Easter, 2008 A.D., the Seeker who walked out of the cemetery - out of death, back into life - has been

on the hunt. Church has always been about the Seeker, because God is the only one who wears that label with accuracy. We are, at best, seekers in training. The "hunt" is on, and continues today: lost sheep have God's attention, and He won't rest until they're found and brought back into the herd.

I wonder if anyone in East Meadows, New York is looking for Frank Colletti. He thinks he's a seeker; God would call him *lost*. In fact, God's holding up the final acts in this drama called History until a few more lost sheep are found...

Bob Shank

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

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