

Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

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Dear Marketplace Friend,

If there was ever a question, it has been proven once again: there is something about that crazy beltway that flips the old “power” switch.

Interstate loop 495 wraps around Washington, DC; the real estate inside that asphalt moat is home to more raw power per block than any comparable acreage in the world. On Saturday, the voltage spiked, though the President was at Martha’s Vineyard. some 500 miles away.

If power is demonstrated by the ability to draw a crowd, the match on Saturday was a face-off between two national figures. Al Sharpton was at Dunbar High School for his “Reclaim the Dream” rally. Glenn Beck was at the Lincoln Memorial and Capitol Mall for his “Restoring Honor” rally. Sharpton – the reverend – invoked Martin Luther King, Jr. as his inspiration. Beck – the incendiary Mormon talk show host – invoked God repeatedly as he worked his much larger crowd.

Power is – and, has always been – one way to measure success. I think that was in play when a mother – Sarah Palin would probably have called her a “momma grizzly” – scored an audience with Jesus: *“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons*

and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” (Matthew 20:20-21)

It was apparent to those who were close to Him: Jesus was on His way to a throne, and there were going to be opportunities around Him for those who knew how to gain – and, then leverage – authority. James and John – the mother’s sons – were in Jesus’ inner circle; would her lobbying pay off?

He called a meeting – immediately – with his 12 Apostles, and made Himself clear: *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25-28)*

Electricity exists in two forms: AC (alternating current) and DC

(direct current). About 130 years ago, Thomas Edison fought for DC as the standard; his opponent was Nikola Tesla. Both work, but one is better. Long story, told short: Tesla's preference prevailed, and AC is the power-of-choice, internationally.

Among people, power exists in two forms: authority (*organizational*) and influence (*relational*). People fight for authority; Jesus opted for influence. He denied the Gentile standard, and wired His Kingdom to run on influence. Leaders are short-lived; servants are never overturned.

With authority, kings take from those under them. Dictators are never benevolent; the power that corrupts is always the power of authority.

With influence, servants give to those around them. Servants are harmless... but the ones who learn to leverage their influence have the potential for benevolence that exceeds the impact of the despots.

On Fox News Sunday, Beck responded, "Not a chance!" when asked if a Beck-Palin ticket was in the offing for 2012's presidential contest. *Why pursue the constraints of authority when the freedom to exercise influence is not term-limited?*

Jesus knew how to generate – and, distribute – power. The "AC" current of heaven is the influence of righteousness, leveraged to advance His redemptive mission. Then, and still now: *the greatest leaders act like servants*

while exercising influence to impact people for Eternity...

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

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