

Vision of the Bus in the Sand

The Terrain Is Changing

As is often the case, I woke up at about 4am to pray, this time particularly about the message the Lord wanted me to give at an upcoming conference. As I began to pray, I had a very unusual experience. It began when, in my spirit, I felt something like sand hitting me on the right side of my face. Naturally, if something is hitting you in the face, you move away from it. As I began to move backwards away from the flying sand, I saw that it was coming from the rear tires of a yellow school bus that was spinning its wheels in a desert.

The vision unfolded and I continued to back further away from the bus as it continued to spin its wheels in the sand. I then was able to see that there were people on the bus singing worship songs. There was also a leader in the front of the bus waving his arms as he led the singing.

I watched as some people inside the bus began to get concerned when they realized that the bus was not moving. They saw that the scene outside the windows was not changing. They knew the bus should be moving, the scenery should be changing, but it was not. So, they got off the bus to investigate what was happening. They saw that the bus was stuck in the sand, simply spinning its wheels.

They got back on the bus and told the leader that the bus was stuck in the sand. The leader was not concerned. He just wanted to keep the people occupied in the never-ending activity of simply singing one song after another. He dismissed them smiling and said, "It doesn't matter if we are not moving, let's just sing another song."

The people in the bus were also not concerned about the fact that they were not going anywhere. When they were told the bus was not moving, many said, "We don't care if we are not moving, or not going anywhere, or if the scenery is not changing. We hear the engine running, and we like singing songs. That's really all we care about." They were quite content to simply be on the bus, happily singing one song after another, as long as they heard the sound of the engines running.

They liked things just the way they were. They like church the way it has always been. They do not want any change.

Then more and more people noticed the same thing. The engines were running, but the scenery was not changing. "We are not going anywhere," they said. "Something's wrong. What's wrong?" These were the people who wanted to get moving and arrive at their destination. They were willing to get off the bus and take the necessary steps to get the bus moving again.

They got off the bus to find out what was going on. Soon there was a group outside the bus looking at the situation. Here was a yellow school bus, full of happily contented singing people, that was sitting there spinning its wheels, and spitting out a lot of sand.

As the people outside of the bus were talking about what was going on, they saw a set of steel tank tracks lying nearby. They realized that if they took the tires off the bus and replaced them with the 2

tank tracks, the bus could begin to move ahead through the sand. The tracks were right there, lying next to the bus waiting to be installed.

As I watched this picture unfold, I heard the Lord say: *"The terrain is changing and the things that worked for the church in the past will work no longer. The church needs tank tracks to move ahead."*

I understood that the Body of Christ is no longer traveling on smooth paved roads. We are now in the desert where there are no roads. We need "tank tracks" to move forward because the old "rubber tires" will no longer work. What worked for the church in the past will not work now.

This is even more true today as we face the changes the coronavirus has brought and will yet bring. We will need new forms, strategies and tactics of ministry.

As I continued to meditate on this rather startling vision, I began to understand what the Lord was showing me about how He sees much of the church, and His strategies for moving forward.

It was a school bus. This represents the fact that the Body of Christ is supposed to be in a School of the Spirit. The bus is supposed to be filled with students. The very word disciple means student. The school bus is supposed to take disciples to school! In this school of the Spirit they are to be taught and trained to find their gifts, fulfill their destiny and bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

The fact that it is still a school bus, but it needs "tank tracks," speaks about the spiritual war we are all in and the new ways the Body of Christ has to function in order to move forward in the fulfillment of God's purposes.

The bus is in good condition, the engine (the Holy Spirit) is running well, but we need "tank tracks." Our understanding of how the authentic Body of Christ is supposed to function has to change, just as the terrain has changed.

We must pray to see the real situation that so much of the Body of Christ is in and be willing to stop spinning our religious wheels. We must pray that we will be willing to leave old beliefs and practices that are not working and see how the "terrain," the world we live in now, is changing.

Just as the tank tracks were lying right by the bus, all we need is available to us if we are willing to get off the bus and do what is necessary to get it moving again. God will give the Body of Christ supernatural "tank tracks," the new ways of conducting our ministries, so His people will grow to spiritual maturity and Kingdom fruitfulness.

We must pray that the leaders of the Body of Christ will not want to keep things going as usual but make the sometimes difficult and challenging changes the Lord directs. Pray that leaders would be willing to do what is necessary to take the "old tires" off the bus, stop "spinning religious wheels," and put on the "tank tracks" of the Kingdom of God.

This means a willingness to leave the comfortable old normal and traditional beliefs and practices that no longer move the Body of Christ toward spiritual maturity and Kingdom fruitfulness, and 3

put on new and uncomfortable "tank tracks" that require learning new ways of ministry that bring the Body of Christ to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God.

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