



Ding, Ding!

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My daughter had a vision for what could be. She could see it in her mind and speak aloud what she was imagining. I was skeptical at first, wanting proof that her vision was logistically sound. What about licensing? How might it be regulated? My husband was intrigued but equally cautious. How well does it run? What's the investment of time and money? In the end, her vision carried us through. We are now the proud owners of a trolley.



The fully automatic trolley previously transported passengers in Helena, Montana. We picked it up in Horseshoe Bend. Now it will be a mobile store for my daughter's home décor business. Her business is named after her two grandfathers, both Boise natives, Robert and Wallace. We've nicknamed the new vehicle the Bob & Wally Trolley. I think they would have liked that.

My daughter has a gift for seeing what could be. Whether it's a house to be remodeled or a trolley whose passenger-carrying days have ended, she can envision a new future. She can speak of what could be. The young will dream dreams.

Prophets of the Bible tended to be unpopular folk. The visions God asked them to speak about the future were not pretty, and their exhortations forced unpleasant change at the risk of destruction for those who did not heed their warnings. For good reason, many of our biblical prophets tried to avoid the role and the gift. For these prophets whom God called, however, they could neither stay silent nor run away. Like a burning coal on their tongues, they spoke aloud what God put before their eyes.

The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem was, I admit, a more significant prophecy than the purchase of a trolley for home décor, and yet I still give thanks to God for those who have a visionary gift and the boldness to speak it out loud.

I sense that many of our congregations lack visionaries. We see what is; we remember what was; but we struggle to imagine what could be. I count myself in that group. Give me a good vision, and I can help bring it to fruition. Ask me to come up with the vision, and I start asking questions about licensing and gas mileage.

What we really need these days are visionaries – those with the gift of prophecy – those who can see visions and dream dreams – those who are willing to discern God's will and speak the words they are given. The Spirit is inviting us into a space of creative imagination about our future and so, if we've learned anything from our biblical prophets, it's time to check in with the visionaries. Often, I fear, we isolate them for their oddball ideas. Their gift of envisioning the future is diverted to their secular business, recreation, or other non-profit efforts. Could we instead encourage and support them in the church? Could we take a leap of faith – after proper discussion and evaluation – to try something new? Where are the spaces in our ministries that allow visionaries to thrive?

We can't promise a complete turnaround in our future, but we can climb aboard to see where the Spirit takes us. Ding, ding!