

A lighthearted analogy regarding the importance of doctrine, and the vanishing reverence for holding a steadfast accuracy in God's Word:

The Story of...

"The Traffic Sign Makers"

Once upon a time, there was a small factory in the country of "Live Long Life". The man in charge of the factory, Mr. Obedient, was a very dedicated and loyal servant to the leader of their country, King Boundary. Mr. Obedient believed that one should be very loyal to every wish of a king who was as just and fair and good as their king, King Boundary.

The well-respected Mr. Obedient ran a manufacturing facility which produced the metal traffic signs for the entire Kingdom of Live Long Life, and Mr. Obedient was a stickler for the procedures of the company's production of these signs, for he understood the seriousness of the results of incorrectly manufactured signs and the problems it would bring. This was mainly because he was taught these practices personally by King Boundary himself, and King Boundary was never wrong.

Mr. Obedient would regularly meet with his workers regarding the accuracy by which they made the traffic signs in their factory, and why the results could be very devastating to the whole country's population of travelers, if they failed to do so. The emphasis was always placed strongly on the wisdom of the procedure's originator, King Boundary, and the wonderfully perfect reputation of safety that has been regularly enjoyed since it's very beginnings, thus reinforcing the reason for continuing with the manufacturing practices that had been for so long, providing safe and enriching journeys for all those in their fair country going back many generations before them. To carelessly deviate from the time-tested accuracy by which they, with their properly-worded signs, had been directing the traffic in their country would not only be disrespectful to their inventor's diligent perfection in having *designed* such a system for their safety, but would also then endanger their own safety in so doing as well.

So on it went. Making "one-way" signs, "no parking" signs, "yield" signs, "do not enter" signs, "speed limit" signs, and even "stop" signs, just to name the most popular ones that were all made with total perfection and pride by the conscientious workers at the sign factory.

Then one day, King Boundary sent Mr. Obedient a

message stating that He would like to share their traffic safety system with the whole of the world, and that He had selected Mr. Obedient to become ambassador of traffic safety to the other countries, beginning with the country of "Crash Boom Bang". This was a momentous event for Mr. Obedient, and after some small preparations he stopped at the sign factory to bid farewell to the workers, and to pass on the authority and responsibilities of continuing the manufacture of the traffic signs (as always, under the exactness of the specifications laid out by King Boundary) to the workers and their faithfulness. Upon reassurances from all the servants in the various shops that all would be carried on as it had been since generations before, Mr. Obedient departed and began his journey for the far-off lands.

As they finished wishing Mr. Obedient a good and safe journey, they turned and went back to their dutiful tasks of producing the most perfect traffic signs that the world had ever known, joyfully encouraging one another to not lose sight of the honor of their factory's reputation in the absence of their master, Mr. Obedient, for he'll be back someday soon, and they'll be able to stand proud when he returns, if they've upheld the integrity of the way that they were taught to make signs that save people's lives.

Time went by, and as it did, so did the memory of Mr. Obedient's constant reminders of maintaining the pre-set manufacturing processes that were given them by King Boundary. And one day, during a lunch break, **Bill Fold** (one of the purchasing agents in charge of buying the paint for the signs) stood up and said, "I've been thinking things over lately, and I had an idea that might save the country's motorists some money, and better yet, might further please Mr. Obedient and King Boundary, in being more cost-effective in *their* paint expenses as well. Do you guys want to hear it?"

Mr. Trin (who was more commonly referred to as "**Doc**") spoke up and said, "Ideas are nice, Mr. Fold, but we have to make sure that whatever your idea might be, it must be approved by the manufacturing procedure specifications that Mr. Obedient gave us to go by."

"I'm sure it'll be easy to find others who will agree with me and my idea when I propose it, Mr. **Trin**, if

you'll just permit me to share it with everyone.", said Mr. **Fold**.

There was some mumbling and curious grumblings among the group in the lunchroom, but Mr. **Trin** eventually looked up and said, "well, I suppose it needs to be heard before we can truly make a judgment on it, so, go ahead Mr. **Fold**, explain your idea to us."

"Thank you.", said Mr. **Fold**, as he proudly began, "Many of you know that red paint is very expensive, right? ...and also, that a lot of times many people stop at stop signs needlessly, when nobody else is even anywhere around to stop *for*.. ...right?"

The workers found no real disagreement with this after looking back and forth at one another, and had basically agreed with him in gestures and shrugs, so Mr. **Fold** continued. "Well, it costs money to use our brakes to stop at every stop sign also, and then you have to use more gas to get going again too, so, I say we conserve our brakes, gas, and resources, and save the environment too, by watering-down the red paint that we use on our stop signs so that they don't look so hellishly important to people that might want to be less fanatical about stopping or something. I'm sure most people can judge for themselves as to which intersections might be dangerous for them or not, don't you agree? Besides, look at all the money we'll save Mr. obedient and the King, if we only have to buy half as much red paint!"

Despite Mr. **Trin**'s meek but serious way of expressing clear disapproval for this, the crowd hurriedly began to smile and become excited over the new idea, and began talking with one another as to how much it would even save many of them in their own automobile costs as well, giving further energy to Mr. **Fold**'s presentation.

Before "**Doc**" **Trin** could make an audible case for not taking this idea any further, **Polly Tickle-Krekness** stood up and added, "Well, do you know what I think? I think that ...well, what if someone doesn't *want* to go just *one* way? We should put *two* arrows or maybe even three or *more* arrows on the one-way signs, so that people won't feel offended in being forced to go just that one direction!"

Some within the crowd giggled at this thought, while others of the men with pastel-flowered silk shirts, found it interesting for some reason.

And as some were excitedly going back to their work stations to begin putting some of their new ideas into action, many were still disagreeing and voicing their *own* feelings of how some of the signs should be changed, all while **Doc** respectfully continued to try

and discourage them from taking this any further.

Suddenly the young Mr. **Ben Air Dunnat** said out loud, "I think you should add the words: 'or... whatever', to the yield signs. Most of us seen (sic) most of them anyway man, so, why should we be always slowing down for others, just *in case* they need us to slow down? That's like.. not fair!"

At that point **Kath Lick** spoke up, "I think we should give more respect to all the sign posts themselves, too, whether they are holding up important signs or not, because maybe they once *used* to hold up really glorious signs at one time, and I think they should get our most sincere respect, just like how we respect King Boundary himself, you know? I think we should list all of these old sign posts, and put fancy flowers around them and light candles around them and visit them all the time and stuff, because of how great they might have once been too, maybe even as great as King Boundary or Mr. Obedient!"

Except for **Luther N.**, the rest of **Kath's** crew liked that idea, and went off with her to start finding old sign posts that they could build great shrines around. She even ceremoniously put up a snapshot of Mr. Obedient's mom next to the time clock so that they could have a female friend that they could look up to in the sign factory because some of the girls felt uncomfortable talking to Mr. Obedient about their problems, because he was... (you know) ... a guy.

Just then two good friends, **Penny Costal** and **Carrie Smattic** resounded with their own long-considered inspirations and said, "Maybe we should just simply make all the signs the same, without words at all, and just paint them plain white, and put *them* up around the entire country for every need, and just let the drivers "feel" what it might be that King Boundary would have them do upon seeing each one. Wouldn't that be more "loving", than *telling* them what to do?" Quite a few went into resounding agreement with this idea as well, and it wasn't long after that, that you could see nothing but white paint splashing all over the area where **Penny** and **Carrie** usually worked, and a lot of loud voices excitingly repeating with great emotion as to just how "awesome" King Boundary is for having inspired Penny and Carey with this somehow!

Evan was very impressed with **Penny** and **Carrie's** enthusiasm, because he was their supervisor. **Evan Jellycool** was his name, and he had been at the sign factory almost as long as **Doc**, but was not as strict as **Doc** was, so he tried not to scare anybody away. He just sort-of let everyone do as they wished, so as not to offend anyone, while hoping that he'd continue to get

away with being so easy-going in Mr. Obedient's eyes in getting as many people hired as he could, now that they would be needing a lot more "creative" people.

Watching **Penny** and **Carrie** from the room next to them, **Libby Rawl** offered a powerful speech, "They have a very nice idea there! Maybe it'll make everybody so happy that they'll all throw away their guns, buy bicycles and take their oily cars to the junk yard and pay for the "Car-Bond Axe" too!" This triggered **N.R.A.** to the point that he almost went off on her, but **Hal Core** secretly slipped her fifty bucks for warming up to his ways. **Yoo Enn** just snickered.

Quietly taking this all in, was **Mr. Minist**. At least that's what he wanted everyone to call him, although everyone usually just called him by his first name, **Hugh**. Having a good vantage point by the water cooler, **Hugh** seemed to be excitedly taking it all in. You see, **Hugh** had always said that he felt that he should be in King Boundary's position, but few people ever paid him much attention in that area, leaving deep feelings of purposelessness for **Mr. Hugh Minist** in the past, where, maybe now things could be different (with Mr. Obedient out of the way). Of course this was when he met his fiancé **Eva Lucien**, who was always monkeying-around with her family tree in her spare time.

Anyway, **Doc** finally got some of the remaining workers' attention for a moment, and tried to reason with them, saying very clearly how they must abide by the ways in which King Boundary had set up the manufacturing procedure specifications, and that deviating from them would most surely be the end of the reputation of the factory to all those on the outside who were supposed to rely on all of them for their safety, ...but no one wanted to listen. His speech was quickly muffled out by the excitement in the factory as everyone was making signs in any fashion that they felt they were most happy with.

As **Doc** stood alone sadly watching all this take place, overwhelmed by a massive feeling of disbelief, **Mr. A. Theeist** walked over to him and said, "I don't see what all your frustrations are about **Doc**, I never saw a need for any of these signs at all in the first place. I say we just quit making them altogether and enjoy life since there's no real boss here to face anyway, and he walked away looking for a place to sleep.

Just when he'd thought that he'd seen enough, **Misty** walked in. **Misty Sizzum**, the supervisor on the 3rd shift. She had caught the tail-end of the happenings and began to sound like she was about to agree with **Doc** when she said, "I think that we need to keep some

of these signs, **Doc**," but then she continued, "at least one that would say, 'Merge.. ..into one', see what I mean? I think we *all* have a little bit of King Boundary within each one of us. ... don't you?" **Doc's** wide, disbelieving eyes and dropped jaw, was all the reply that **Misty** got, so, impatiently she headed for her crew to put her plan into production as well.

A little old scruffy-looking lady was shuffling past **Doc** right about then and said, "Who cares!?", and then said she was headed for the local watering-hole across town. **Doc** stopped her and asked, "I don't even know your name. What's your name?" "**Aggie**", she replied without even looking back, "**Aggie Nostic**".

At this the wearied **Doc Trin** sat down, knowing that he had done all that he could do in warning his fellow workers about the King's wishes for an uncompromising adherence to his procedure specifications, and so was left to do nothing but his part of the work that he would go back to doing the right away, which was to hold his ground and patiently await the return of Mr. Obedient. He knew, that after such a grievous amount of disloyalty to King Boundary and Mr. Obedient's instructions, that Mr. Obedient would hear of such changes, and would be headed back *very* soon, to reclaim his factory.

A few weeks went by, and the "adjusted", "easier to read" signs (as they preferred to call them) were beginning to make their way across the country, replacing rusted-out signs, badly faded signs, and even sometimes going up in new intersections where shopping malls were being built, and many other places. Everyone at the factory was excited about all the new interest that these new signs had generated in so many of the people around the country outside the factory, that had never before had *any interest whatsoever*, in the subject of traffic safety. *And...*the factory was saving three dollars and twenty-nine cents per week on red paint! ...just as Mr. **Fold** had predicted! And to top it all off, most everybody agrees that the signs *are* a lot less offensive, so why should anyone in the country complain? It was a glorious new era for their King and their factory, they thought, ...they had finally found a way that *everybody* could be a part of the sign-authoring team at the factory, even the non-factory worker that had practically no idea whatsoever what the signs or the old-fashioned procedure specifications were all about in the first place. "The old way was so 'intolerant' too. Nobody was allowed to do practically *anything* before they changed all the signs!", one outsider commented, "But now we can drive any way that we want, and it's so much *nicer* this way!"

It wasn't long after that, that there was a growing need for overtime on some new sign orders they had never made before... "Emergency entrance", "hospital", and "ambulance parking only", to name a few. The workers at the factory didn't know why they suddenly needed such signs, but they made them anyway, because they wanted to please their newly found fans out in the world, who were raving about their progressive new sign-making talents there at the factory.

But something was wrong in their little town, and they noticed it when they began to see people from the factory and people from their own families getting into serious and sometimes fatal automobile accidents around the town that they lived in. They didn't know why this was happening, and tried to blame it on the auto makers. But that didn't work so well, because the manufacturers were up to their eyebrows in safety regulations, and had done nothing outside of the safety standards that King Boundary had laid out for auto makers. They then tried to say that it was the road construction contractors, for poorly constructed roads... that too was not what was wrong, they were up to standards as well, according to the long established rules of King Boundary. Soon the whole country was getting hurt in bad car crashes, and many in the sign factory itself had lost a lot of their own relatives and friends to major impairments and even deaths.

Ignoring a small few who wanted to speak to Mr. **Trin** (for fear that he'd have something "too old fashioned" to say or something) they all summoned instead, a wise-looking man from the town of **Falls Profit** and asked him what he thought they should do.

He convinced them that they should go back to one of the sacred rituals of the people long before Mr. Obedient's time, and that they should gather together all of their gold and jewelry and melt it down and make a large car out of it and then cut it in half. (He said He'd need to keep one half as a "seed offering" for them or something.)

So they did this and while the man from **Falls Profit** drove away in the big truck containing their "seed offering", they began to worship the **Golden Half**. Many of them then put all of their effort into praying to their idol that the man had told them to pray to, that was supposed to bring a renewed harvest in safety on their nation's highways. Sadly, they didn't even consult **Newt Estamont** from the records and files department at all either, because they knew he'd only

stubbornly agree with **Doc**. They also had to reluctantly put **Kay Oss** in charge of their festivities and alter sacrifices since **Grace, Joy, Hope and Faith** had all gone on strike when they saw what the others were doing.

That very night, to everyone's complete surprise, Mr. Obedient came back and found many of them worshipping all of the shrines and new practices that their signs had created, along with the new ecumenically contrived **Golden Half**, and he saw that they weren't making signs the way that they had promised him that they would. Most weren't even *trying!* This terribly troubled Mr. Obedient, for he knew that he was obligated under the laws of King Boundary to deal with such disloyalty, with the disciplinary measures that were in the sometimes forgotten sections of the Manufacturing Procedure Specifications book that King Boundary had given them from even before the days that Mr. Obedient had begun physically working with them there.

Therefore, immediately upon His coming, Mr. Obedient sent burning **rims and firestones** down upon them of the sign factory, sparing only those who had not strayed from the loyalties they had learned from him. When the smoke had all cleared, only a few were left without a hair of their heads untouched, but those that were, became glorious new supervisors in a brand new, rebuilt, shining factory that will no longer make dangerous signs to mislead people ever again. The glorious new sign factory will now stand perfect forever and ever said Mr. Obedient, as he glorified all the true sign makers that had followed with diligence and loyalty and he rewarded their devotions with endless joys and riches.

THE END

The moral: They weren't asked to make signs and wonders ...just signs.

(revised presentation from a 2005 writing)



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