

Change Born Out Of Tragedy

By: Keith R. Keyser

May 14, 1988 witnessed one of the worst bus accidents in United States history. A church bus returning from an outing at an amusement park near Cincinnati, collided with a Toyota pickup truck traveling the wrong way on Interstate 71 outside of Carrollton, Kentucky. The driver of the pickup was found to be intoxicated with a blood-alcohol level of .24 %. While the gross negligence of this repeat offender caused the initial crash, the twenty seven dead and thirty four injured passengers were mainly the result of inadequate safety precautions on the converted school bus. Most of the dead and injured were killed or hurt by smoke inhalation and fire. The NTSB investigation after the tragedy determined that there was only one viable emergency exit available for evacuation after the collision. The subsequent media and public outcry motivated the Kentucky legislature to adopt some of the strictest safety standards in the United States for school buses. Many of the survivors and victims' families aggressively combated the scourge of drunk driving through involvement in organizations like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving – one even became the national president of this organization.) Today a sign marks the site of the accident along the Interstate highway.

It is sad that it often takes a terrible calamity such as this accident to bring about change. The human tendency is to ignore problems as long as they do not encroach on one's daily life. It is only when trouble comes to our door that we contemplate amendment. When we behold momentous happenings like the World Trade Center / Pentagon bombings or the more recent Tsunami, then we act to do whatever we can to avert future disasters. Certainly it is far better to implement corrections before catastrophes occur.

The worst type of disaster happens daily with many professing Christians paying little heed. Every day thousands of people pass into a lost Eternity, forever separated from the God Who created them to know Him. All around souls are lost. What are we doing to present the Gospel to them? It is true that not everyone has the gift of evangelism; nevertheless, all Christians are called to be witnesses to what the Lord has done (Matt. 28:18-20.) There is no superior technique of spreading the Glad Tidings to compare with the time-honored practice of a believer telling someone else their personal testimony of how the Lord saved them. It is true that this opens the Christian up to the possibility of rejection and mockery. If so, we are in good company, for they treated our Savior in exactly the same manner (e.g. Matt. 10:24-25.) One of the most vibrant assemblies in the New Testament was founded through the witness of anonymous believers, who faithfully preached Christ to Jews and Greeks that they encountered during their exile (Acts 11:19-26.) Let us prayerfully consider how we may begin conversations that may lead to eternal change for lost ones around us. Spiritual tragedy can be avoided, if we faithfully proclaim Christ by holy lives and active lips.

Information on the Carrollton Bus Accident was obtained at <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/church+bus+and+school+bus+safety>.