

Letter 83
The Grateful Deadhead
2012-03-18

Dear Dan,

In late 2003, way back when gas cost about \$1.59 a gallon, but was threatening to rise to above \$1.89 a gallon, I begin to wonder if there might not be a more economical way for me to get to work. At about that same time some friends of mine and I took a road trip to Ellensburg to see another friend. We went out to dinner at Perkins. After we ate we sat around talking. During the discussion I begin to postulate to myself whether there was any way I could incorporate taking the bus to work. I had not considered such a thing when I worked second shift, but now that I no longer had a part time job on the side, I thought just maybe taking Metro Transit might be feasible.

Later on I begin to study Metro's web site. The plan that developed was that I could take the 6:48PM Metro (AAA) from (L11) to (L12), layover for about 20 minutes, then take a Metro (BBB) or Sound Transit (CCC) on in to work. In the morning I could reverse order and get home the same way.

There were a couple a sacrifices in this initial plan.

One was that my total commute time would increase from a little more than an hour to about over three hours due to the bus schedules. The second required me to drive my truck into town and leave it overnight, which I did a couple of times. But I didn't like that idea due to the possibility of vandalism or theft. So I begin to consider whether I was able to ride a bicycle from my house into town, put it on the bus, and still have enough energy to ride back home in the morning.

I got the idea then of riding my bike to the bus stop and putting it onto the bus bike rack. I tried this and it worked very well. Over the years I have purchased four new bicycles with the money I saved in gas. And that was before it was \$3.00 a gallon.

One day I was talking with a coach operator about how I was getting to and from work and describing the long commute time. The operator then started to explain something about "deadheading" and that it might be an option. I gave it some thought for a while then tried it.

To clarify, "deadheading" is when a passenger gets on the bus at the last stop on the route, and rides to the base that the bus goes to at the end of shift. This is made possible by the fact that Metro receives federal transportation funds, and the Feds mandate that the coaches remain "in-service" until they arrive back at base. They don't stop at regular stops, only at the gate of the base. So one needs to have a way of getting to wherever they are going from base. That's where my bike comes in.

My first successful "deadhead" run was the night of the big rain and windstorm; I think it

was December of 2006, which left the region powerless for days and weeks. I had not figured how to deadhead back in the mornings yet so I would take a regular route home.

There is a sad point to this story. At the very same time that I was “deadheading” to work that first evening on the bus, a lady was drowning in her basement Seattle apartment. Because there was so much rain in so little time, the storm drains were overwhelmed. Her apartment, which was below ground level, flooded rapidly with water and she drowned, right in her own home.

For some reason the Lord has a way of highlighting certain events in my life with other events like this that He makes me aware of. In this case, as it turns out, the lady was a professional reader of books for audio production.

I now believe that this is how the Lord guides me in prayer, by getting my attention with certain things and giving me a commensurate burden for those things. The Foundation of His Heart on which to stand and pray.

This is also one of the jobs of the Angels in my life. To make sure I don't forget what it is I am supposed to pray about.

To describe this in other terms, they act as “external memory data storage”, “which no man can number”.

Blessings...

Romanus Theophilus