A person is silhouetted against a warm, orange background, holding up a large, ornate, circular banner. The banner features intricate, colorful patterns, including what appears to be a central figure or symbol. The person is standing on a dark, possibly wooden, floor. The overall scene suggests a cultural or ritualistic context.

Worldview-based Storying:

**The Integration of Symbol, Story, and
Ritual in the Orality Movement**

Tom Steffen

Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement

Tom Steffen

What People are Saying

“If you want your communication to move from window to mirror, from telling a story to the story telling you, then pick up this book pronto.”

—**LEONARD SWEET**, best-selling author, professor (Drew, George Fox, Tabor), and founder of preachthestory.com

“Tom Steffen has combined the best of two worlds: his hands-on field experience as a missionary, knowing the value of worldview firsthand, and that of thorough and academically well-researched characteristics and components of worldview. This book is a worthy read and study for both the novice storyteller and those experienced who desire a better understanding of worldview components of those they work among.”

—**J.O. TERRY**, Bible Storying Consultant/Trainer

“Dr. Steffen demonstrates the vital importance of understanding social worldview in storying and provides valuable tools and insights to improve cross-cultural mission effectiveness and enable Scripture-based worldview transformation among oral learners.”

—**DAVID SWARR**, Int’l Orality Network President/CEO

“Tom Steffen does it again! He leads us into the realities of dealing with intercultural communication in the noisy globalizing world of the 21st century and convincingly argues that ‘symbol, story, and worldview’ are paramount in making the Good News known.”

—**ROBERTA KING**, associate professor of Communication and Ethnomusicology, Fuller Theological Seminary

“In *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement*, Tom Steffen gives us a book that lives up to its title. After recounting the history of the Orality Movement, he shows the practical importance of symbol, story, and ritual in fostering worldview change. Steffen simplifies a swath of research. I commend *Worldview-based Storying* as a significant contribution to the task of missions.”

—**JACKSON WU**, author of *One Gospel for All Nations* and *Saving God's Face*

“Many godly cross-cultural workers have encountered huge barriers as they seek to present the Gospel cross-culturally. The ever-evasive ‘how do I actually do this *effectively*’ continually confronts them. Are there no practical, effective helps? Wonder no longer! Thoroughly researched and practically illustrated with walk-me-through-how-to-do-this kind of help is now available through *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement*. Don’t pass by this transferable model into any ministry situation!”

—**GEORGE WALKER**, Trainer for Ethnos360 (NTM) Cross-Cultural Training Center

“In *Worldview-based Storytelling*, Steffen provides both a historical and anthropological basis for storytelling that truly transforms cultures. By digging underneath the local culture’s symbols, stories, and rituals, he demonstrates how to carefully select and apply biblical stories that are culturally relevant. He concludes with practical advice for storytellers and the orality movement in general. This is an important book for anyone interested in transforming oral preference cultures. I heartily recommend this book!”

—**W. JAY MOON**, professor of Church Planting and Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary

“This book, in Steffen’s signature readable style, gives the context for the orality movement, pulling together its various strands from its rural roots in Palawan, the Philippines, to the successful use of oral methods in the urban contexts of New York, Paris, and Los Angeles. Steffen makes the case for *Worldview-based Storying*, which fills the gap in so many storying movements: the local context and worldview of the audience. *Worldview-based Storying* is required reading for anyone involved in the orality movement.”

—**AMINTA ARRINGTON**, assistant professor of Intercultural Studies, John Brown University

“Dr. Steffen was there when the contemporary evangelical Orality movement was initiated. He was with New Tribes Missions personnel in the Philippines when the necessity for better communication with oral learners birthed Bible storytelling. He was there at the South East Asian Leadership conference in 1981 when Trevor McIlwain launched Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT). As this movement developed, Steffen has been perhaps the definitive historian of the Orality movement, tracking its growth and branches, its key figures and seminal moments. He traces the convergence of *three* movements of our time—the secular, sacred, and strategic story movements; as well as the *three-fold cord* of symbol, story and ritual, as essentials of worldview. Utilizing this trilogy, he makes a convincing case for world-view based storytelling as vital for effective communication of God’s Story. Whether you communicate cross-culturally, with primary oral learners or secondary oral learners, you will benefit greatly from absorbing this book.”

—**WILLIAM BJORAKER**, professor of Judeo-Christian Studies and Contemporary Western Culture, William Carey International University

“*Worldview-based Storying* is a must read for cross-cultural workers and pastors due to the oral majority in the world. When it comes to orality and missions, you cannot afford to miss Dr. Steffen’s works, this book particularly. Part One summarizes the history of the orality movement. This possible standalone read provides intriguing highlights into how God’s people have attempted to relate His redemptive story cross-culturally. Part Two takes the discussion to the deepest level, worldview driven by symbols, stories, and rituals. This book is readable, contains many fun, insightful missionary stories, and is easily applicable to cross-cultural ministry. Expect this book to be used for many years to come.”

—**HANSUNG KIM**, associate professor, Department of English and Global Studies, ACTS

“One would be hard-pressed to find someone better equipped to summarize the Orality Movement’s history and give counsel for its future maturation. *Worldview-based Storying* will be a key missiological tool in the hands of Bible storytellers as they ‘resymbolize, restore, and re-ritualize’ for true worldview transformation.”

—**GIL THOMAS**, International Director of Good Soil Evangelism & Discipleship Ministries, ABWE

“Metaphors used in storytelling have contributed to personalizing the Jesus Story to tribal people in the past. As the world moves toward a story-based lifestyle, this should be retrieved in our modern day worldview-based digital society as well. With clarity and foresight the author nns the restoration of symbols, stories, and rituals in ministries at home and abroad.”

—**EUNMOO LEE**, Director of PhD Program, George Christian University

“This is a must read for any serious missiologist, professor of missions or practicing missionary who struggles to more effectively share the Gospel with others. Steffen traces the outlines of one of the most important trends in missions during the latter half of the 20th Century, and now well into the 21st Century. He also gives practical guidelines to practitioners in the field who want to deepen their own understanding of a new culture, and finally he sets out an extensive agenda for the future of this movement. This is solid food for those seriously engaged in fostering an whole new paradigm shift in mission theory and practice.”

—**DOUG HAYWARD**, professor of Intercultural Studies, Biola University

“Steffen, one of the ‘grandfathers’ of the orality movement, has done a masterful job tracing its history and development. He makes a convincing case for increasing the application of deep-level worldview research to further strengthen the movement. This is an essential read for missiologists and for anyone engaged in literacy-based ministries to relationally-based audiences.”

—**DAVID BEINE**, professor of Intercultural Studies, Moody Bible Institute-Spokane

Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement

All rights reserved under International Copyright Law. Contents and/or cover may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise in whole or in part except for personal use, brief quotations, discussion preparations, reviews, or articles with the express written consent of the publisher. Requests to the publisher for permission should be addressed to info@orality.net.

Readers should be aware that Internet websites offered as citations and/or sources for further information may have changed or disappeared between the time this was written and when it is read.

This edition is published by Richmond, VA: Orality Resources International, Center for Oral Scriptures

Copyright © 2018 Tom Steffen

ISBN 978-0-9992806-1-4

Printed in USA

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible (Public Domain).

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2001 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Scripture quotations marked VOICE are from The Voice Bible Copyright © 2012 Thomas Nelson, Inc. The Voice translation™ © Ecclesia Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

“To respond to a matter before you hear about it shows foolishness and brings shame.”
Proverbs 18:13 (VOICE)

Contents

List of Tables / 9

List of Figures / 10

Abbreviations / 11

Acknowledgements / 13

Preface / 14

Foreword by F. Douglas Pennoyer / 17

Introduction / 19

Part One: Tracking the Orality Movement

1 Pioneers of the Past | 32

2 Rural Roots | 54

3 City Connections | 77

4 Movement Morphings | 98

Part Two: Making the Case for Worldview-based Storying

5 Making the Case for Symbol | 116

6 Making the Case for Story | 137

7 Making the Case for Ritual | 161

8 Making the Case for Worldview-based Storying | 182

9 Envisioning the Future | 204

Bibliography / 223

Appendix A: Rethinking Theological Education / 235

Appendix B: The Earthiness of Story / 238

Appendix C: Some Questions About Questions / 239

Appendix D: What Makes A Story Good? / 241

Appendix E: Substitute Songs for the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao / 242

Appendix F: Four Value Frames of the Gospel / 245

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Title Changes Within the Orality Movement | 103

Table 5.1: The Hermeneutic of Symbol | 126

Table 6.1: Types of Story Expression | 144

Table 7.1: Ritual: (Un)fixed “way of acting” | 167

Table 8.1: Discovering Worldview | 187

Table 8.2: Steps to Worldview Discovery | 189

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: The Merging of Present-Day Story Movements | 25

Figure 1.1: McIlwain's Seven Phases of Chronological Bible Teaching | 37

Figure 3.1: 3 STORY[®] Connections | 81

Figure 4.1: A Holistic Model of Orality | 104

Figure 5.1 Significance Expressed on Multiple Levels | 123

Figure 5.2: Worldview: A Storehouse of Symbols | 132

Figure 5.3: Master Symbols Emerge through Multivocal Expression | 133

Figure 6.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Stories | 144

Figure 6.2: Story Defines Symbol | 153

Figure 7.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Rituals | 172

Figure 7.2: Ritual Intensity | 175

Figure 7.3: Systemic Level of Ritual | 175

Figure 7.4: Ritual Participants | 176

Figure 7.5: Ritual Focus | 177

Figure 7.6: Ritual Administrator | 177

Figure 7.7: Ritual Flow | 178

Figure 7.8: Ritual Relevancy | 179

Figure 8.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Symbols, Stories and Rituals | 188

Figure 8.2: Couple Displays Symbols of Wealth | 194

Figure 8.3 *Uy-uy* Ceremonial Dance | 194

Abbreviations

ABWE	Association of Baptists for World Evangelization
BS	Bible Storying
BTNA	Bridges Training Network Africa
BTNSA	Bridges Training Network South Asia
C2C	Creation 2 Christ
CBS	Chronological Bible Storying
CBT	Chronological Bible Teaching
CCCI	Campus Crusade for Christ International
C.A.R.	Comprehensible, Applicable, Reproducible
CSICS	Cook School of Intercultural Studies
DTS	Dallas Theological Seminary
E2E	Eternity to Eternity
FBT	Foundational Bible Teaching
FCBH	Faith Comes by Hearing
FEBC	Far East Broadcast Company
FTT	Finishing the Task
GRN	Gospel Recordings Network
IBCM	Indigenous Biblical Church Movements
ICE	International Council of Ethnodoxologists
IMB	International Mission Board
ION	International Orality Network
JFP	JESUS Film Project
JP	Jonathan Project
LOP	Lausanne Occasional Paper
MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship
<i>NGSI</i>	<i>Nothingsgonnastopit!</i>
NOBS	Network of Biblical Storytellers
NT	New Testament
NTM	New Tribes Mission (now Ethnos360)
OBS	Oral Bible School
OT	Old Testament
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POB	Persian Oral Bible Project
SEANET	Southeast Asian Network
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIU	Scriptures in Use
S-T4T	Storying Training for Trainers
STS	Simply the Story
T4T	Training for Trainers
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TWR	Transworld Radio
UPG	unreached people groups
WBT	Wycliffe Bible Translators
YWAM	Youth With A Mission

Acknowledgements

NO BOOK IS AN INDIVIDUAL endeavor. I therefore want to express my deep appreciation to those who have added depth, accuracy, and clarity to this work. I begin with the astute Biola graduate students who interacted with the manuscript. Their catches, questions, and insights brought clarity and depth to the various chapters. Deep appreciation also goes to Curtis Ott of SIL for his editorial insights for the first half of the book. Thanks Curtis for improving this book. Joyce Jow's editorial contribution also deserves deep appreciation. Thanks Joyce for your keen insight for detail. Greg Melendes of New Tribes Mission (now Ethnos360) spent countless hours making this book readable. His editorial prowess is evident throughout the book. Thanks Greg for your willingness to commit to this project in the midst of your present fulltime ministry. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife and partner of over a half century, Darla, for putting up with all those hours I spent before my computer—which she calls my second wife.

Preface

“THERE IS MORE TO THE STORY” is the tagline for a series of books written by consultants from Worldview Resource Group (WRG), a service organization that equips mission leaders and practitioners in a story-based worldview approach. The content in the series describes how storytelling has been incorporated into the global mission enterprise and challenges some of the prevalent thinking and current methodologies employed in evangelism and discipleship around the world.

Cross-cultural communicators of the gospel all too often neither provide adequate backstory nor sufficiently know whom they address, much less how they story. In fact, some even consider such awareness totally unnecessary! This all too often leads to an ineffective, truncated biblical story. This series “attempts to preempt the rapidly-prepared, quick-fix approaches that tell only small portions of the biblical story, and in their place, presents a comprehensive, big picture, local-culture sensitive, viable, reproducible, and thoroughly biblical alternative.”¹

With relevant academic backgrounds, extensive cross-cultural experience, and years of experience as consultants, the authors in the series write that all too often the gospel story is presented before the cross-cultural communicator is adequately aware of the hearers’ symbols, stories, and rituals that validate and propel their worldview. The series reflects on the past, analyzes the current state of affairs, and offers new pathways forward toward effective cross-cultural communication that minimizes communication noise. Proposed methodologies designed for different learning styles are field-derived. Observable data has been gathered from various parts of the world. At the same time, the series content is also supported by precedent literature representing multiple disciplines. The goal for each book in the series is the same—help cross-cultural messengers make the Bible message clearer through the discovery of the host culture’s worldview.

- Book One: *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement* by Tom Steffen
- Book Two: *Introducing Story-Strategic Methods: Twelve Steps toward Effective Engagement* by Robert Strauss
- Book Three: *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality* by Michael Matthews
- Book Four: *Storytelling According to Culture* by John Cosby

I have always been interested in the historical background of movements related to missions. Such studies provide insights that can have tremendous implications for present-day realities. As one involved in the initial use of story (Chronological Bible Teaching or Firm Foundations) in the Philippines with New Tribes Mission (now Ethnos360) in the early 1980s, I decided it was time to track this movement. The first half of this book does this.

1. Prepared by the WRG team.

The second half of the book develops an area that could be improved within the present-day Orality Movement—understanding the host culture’s worldview. I chose to discover worldview through a model that integrates symbol, story, and ritual. I first published on this trilogy in the initial version of *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry* in 1996 followed by a revision in 2005. I then applied the concept to a specific urban church to discern its congregational character (from stories to story).² I later came across N. T. Wright’s use of the trilogy in *The New Testament and the People of God*,³ and borrowed freely. Authors Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou developed the three areas further with a single chapter on each in *Understanding Folk Religion*.⁴ Their book provided more insights even if it seemed to lack an explicit emphasis on the integration of the three. Insights from these books and others, interaction with insightful Biola graduate students, and life experience among the Ifugao of the Philippines provide the backdrop for this book.

One of my greatest concerns in writing this book was producing something so complex that no one would use it. Yet there are some basic cultural theories and principles that must be discovered and discussed if practice is to be fruitful. With that in mind, I have purposely tried to keep the book simple without being simplistic. I recognize that much more depth and definitions could have been added in many of the cultural areas that are discussed in the following chapters. Even so, what is provided in the following pages is definitely adequate to discover the worldview of another culture.

Why write this book? Here are some of reasons for this endeavor:

1. Distorted missions history prevails in relation to the Orality Movement’s origin, strategies, and future direction.
2. God is doing a new thing that requires documentation for heritage and future reflection.
3. Movements morph over time.
4. Syncretism is real, requiring tools that will help minimize it.
5. Worldview studies will help minimize communication noise thereby resulting in a closer, truer, timeless Tale.
6. As anthropologists become seen as less relevant within missions training and education (note the drop of anthropologists in missions academia in the past decade), tools to discover worldview of the host culture and the Christian worker have become rare, and will become even rarer.
7. There is more to the Orality Movement than story and storying—much more.
8. Any movement that is to survive long-term requires an envisioned future.

This book is dedicated to the present global generation of Bible storytellers. It will challenge readers to know and learn from the rich history of the Orality Movement, do their cultural homework related to the integration of symbol, story, and symbol, tell the greatest story ever told with cultural and pedagogical clarity so that individual, communal, and national transformation can result, and create generations of like-minded Bible storytellers.

2. Steffen, “Congregational Character: From Stories to Story,” 2000.

3. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 1992.

4. Hiebert et al., *Understanding Folk Religion*, 1999.

WORLDVIEW-BASED STORYING

This worthy and weighty endeavor will bring honor to the Eternal One and His Sacred Storybook. Enjoy the read and the journey.

Foreword

WITH THIS VOLUME and his extensive publication list, Dr. Tom Steffen again demonstrates that he deserves a place among the premier missiologists. A relentless, fearless cross-discipline researcher in search of new paradigms, he pushes through well-worn principles and philosophies, and always delivers something significantly different.

I met Tom and his extended missionary family in the Philippines in the 70s when we were in our 20s. He was a young buck in my parents' mission asking a lot of penetrating questions about tribal ministry and agency leadership, while I was a doctoral student doing anthropological research in a tribe no one had ever studied. Nearly a quarter of a century later, we were happily reunited at Biola University when I became his dean in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies.

In 16 years as his dean, I did everything in my power to liberate him from committees and other on-campus responsibilities so he could concentrate on research, writing, teaching and service to the wider missions community. My only regret is that although he embarked on a fast, well-deserved rise to the highest professor rank, he retired during my pending proposal to award him the first Distinguished Professorship in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies. He left with two awards: Who's Who Among America's Teachers, and Biola's Excellence in Scholarship. Last year he was awarded the Toraja tribe of Sulawesi's title *Puang* (Lord) by the tribe's princess for his contributions on her doctoral committee.

His formidable energy over the years has produced groundbreaking books on church planting (*Passing the Baton*, and *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication*); narrative/orality (*Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*); church missions committees (*Business as Usual in the Missionary Enterprise*); and, business as missions (*Great Commission Companies*, with Steve Rundle). His volume in the Baker missions series with Lois McKinney Douglas (*Encountering Missionary Life*) is destined to be the definitive treatise on this subject for coming decades. And, together we co-edited a book on missionary care in the Evangelical Missiological Society annual series: *Caring for the Harvest Force in the New Millennium*. He is the author of over 40 articles in missiological journals, 30 book reviews, 15 popular articles, and 6 book chapters. More than all these, he challenged and mentored faculty to publish more and cite each other in publications to raise the awareness of our school's contributions in missions education.

Tom has taught 18 different classes, and one can find versions of his extensive course packs and PowerPoint presentations spread all over the world by his students and their students. His classroom is always a spawning place for missionaries and future teachers and writers. In *Story in Scripture & Service*, a class directly relevant to this new Steffen book, Tom has students participating in storytelling, designing a seminar on the missiological applications of narrative, and developing a series of culturally relevant lessons that emphasize the narrative medium in areas such as evangelism, church planting, community development, leadership development, and counseling. He has published a volume with contributions from his students, giving voice to their stories.

A Senior Consultant with the Center for Organizational and Ministry Development for fourteen years, he has also consulted with more than 20 mission agencies and served on the boards of five. Tom and I were on the way to his board meeting at Pioneers and the

Evangelical Missiological Society meetings in Orlando when he suggested I meet Pioneer's president Dr. Doug McConnell. A discussion in the back of a taxi cab eventually led to a signed memorandum of agreement; the establishment of our Chiang Mai, Thailand extension center where students could graduate with an MA ICS or DMiss without coming to campus; and, a Pioneers on-site coordinator. Tom taught the first Thailand class, and became a mainstay of our two overseas centers, often teaching two compressed classes, eight hours a day for five days, for two weeks.

Tom writes for impact. He doesn't waste his time or the reader's. He digs down deep for the roots of the orality movement but his digging is meant to understand the movement's foundation—where it started, where it is, and where it might go with his proposed model.

Take a journey with him from his church background to the tribe as he learns to replace his propositional paradigm with storytelling, symbols, and rituals. Continue along the Worldview-based Storying sidewalk and find a world alive with rival symbols, stories, and rituals. Use the tool he provides and suddenly communication noise diminishes, and a brilliant kaleidoscope of God's message emerges in the synergistic interaction of once hidden elements.

F. Douglas Pennoyer
Hacienda Heights, CA
February 25, 2017

Introduction

“The events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order: the continuous thread of revelation.”

—EUDORA WELTY

WE LIVE IN A ORAL, VISUAL, DIGITAL world,⁵ and we’ve been doing so since long before Tim Berners-Lee introduced the worldwide web in 1990. So how does that impact the message of Scripture when we literate-preference, cross-cultural workers deliver the message of God’s grace to oral or semi-oral or digital-preference peoples? According to Dawn Herzog Jewel, our well-intended message may be falling on deaf ears. In an article titled “Winning the Oral Majority” she quoted the late Avery Willis, then director of International Orality Network (ION), who claimed “Seventy percent of the world’s people today can’t, don’t or won’t read.”⁶ Some might suppose that Willis has overestimated by 10 or 20 percent that the world is primarily self-identified as oral. Even so, everyone should certainly be alarmed that most of the literate-based ministry models originating today in the West will have inconsequential results—whether they are implemented at home or abroad. Not everyone at home or around the globe focuses on print, fragmented parts, propositions, cognition, and individuality as we in the West do.

“...**noise** can be external, internal, or semantic. **External noises** are sights, sounds, and other stimuli that draw people’s attention away from the message....**Internal noises** are thoughts and feelings that draw people’s attention away from the message....**Semantic noises** are emotional distractions aroused by specific word choices.”

(Verderber, et al., 2014, 12)

Even more alarming should be our recognition that literate-based ministries create noise in the communication process between the messenger and the non-reading, relational-oriented audience.⁷ We shouldn’t be surprised that such resulting *noise* hinders the spread of the gospel, the maturation of Christ’s disciples, and is a strong detriment of

5. According to a study by the US Department of Education, National Institute of Literacy released April 4, 2013, some 774 million people around the globe cannot read. (This is approximately 1 in every 5 people.) Females hold the highest illiteracy rate at 66 percent. In the US, 14 percent cannot read while 21 percent read under fifth grade level. Of high school graduates, 19 percent cannot read. <http://www.statisticbrain.com/number-of-american-adults-who-cant-read/>.

6. Jewel, “Winning the Oral Majority,” 56.

7. See Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 1987 and Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 1982.

true worship of the Sovereign. In order to ensure worship of the King becomes central to our message, we should ask ourselves:

- What can be done to minimize the communication noise that exists between oral learners and literate learners?
- What can deter legalism, nominalism, and/or syncretism from overtaking God's intent for His people?
- What can help the practice of piety to be authentic?
- How can we maximize the clarity of God's message to oral learners so that worship of the King is central in their lives and contagious to others?

We must find answers! Then we must thoughtfully implement them lest we present a false hope to the lost or a false view of God to those who do follow Him.

A New Watershed?

God has never been nor will He ever be surprised by the events of history—not by the Fall, the Enlightenment, Gutenberg's press, globalization or Google.⁸ However, all these major communicative watersheds have created deep implications for ministry— implications not always recognized by God's co-workers.

Today cross-cultural workers find themselves in the midst of one of those pivotal moments in history as various forms of orality (oral, aural, visual, digital, social) and electronic media have brushed aside literacy (reading, writing, processing) as preferred means of enlightenment by a growing majority around the globe. Do cross-cultural workers recognize the ramifications of this change? What happens if they do not? What if they only recognize it when it is far too late?

It would not be the first time God's workers awoke to find themselves in the midst of a new paradigm. New paradigms call for fresh thought, often birthing a new vocabulary or a retooling of existing vocabulary to carry meaning for this load of new concepts. We will delve into some of these and explore the relationships between worldviews (social and spiritual principles that guide the way we "lean into life"). We will also explore the meanings of symbols, the importance of rituals, the effects for storying, and helps for storytellers. And we will learn together how to utilize tools that will help us effectively address the monumental historical changes we face in these tumultuous times.

But before that, there are other stories to tell.

Two Life Journey Threads

My two life journey threads tie this book together. The first thread has to do with my growing up in the Apostolic Christian Church in Midwest America. This experience created in me a desire to understand the role of culture in forming worldview. The second thread relates to my first experiences in evangelizing the Ifugao of the Philippines, diligent and well-intended efforts frustrated by my mistaken pedagogical preferences.

8. Some other outside influences would include the sale of Apple 1 in 1976; the first Chatrooms in 1980; the introduction of laptop computers in 1981, and cell phones (the "brick") in 1983.

Thread 1: Growing up Apostolic Christian

The first thread carries me through my years growing up in the Apostolic Christian Church (ACC), a story I will unfold in later chapters. As I looked around my church I often found myself experiencing internal conflict as I sincerely tried to understand, on the micro level, the difference between what was scriptural (required practice) and what was cultural (socialized practice). Within the ACC we commonly greeted one another with a “holy kiss.” Wasn’t that just an Eastern cultural practice? What’s wrong with a handshake? Would not that be the same for women who were required to wear veils during church services? Wedding rings were thought to be worldly accessories that no real practicing Christian would wear. The same attitude was true of facial hair on men. So what if Jesus, a Middle Easterner, had a beard!

Such attitudes were also transferred outside the friendly confines of the church. Church leadership frowned upon participation in high school sports because everybody knew that “bodily exercise profiteth little” (1 Timothy 4:8, KJV). This was unwelcome news to an active 14 year-old who wished to display his physical prowess to the girls. But legalism had a way of spawning creative means to an end, and I eventually earned my school letter jacket with four varsity letters, even if I didn’t get the girl.

On the macro level, growing up in the Apostolic Christian Church created within me the desire to learn how culture (what is being said and not being said) shapes worldview both in the individual and community. Our own church culture had itself delineated easily observable “in groups” and “out groups.” Little did I understand then how those seeds of my church culture would affect what God had for me next.

Thread 2: Evangelizing the Ifugao

God began the second thread of my life journey with my earliest attempts to evangelize the Antipolo-Amduntug, Ifugao of the Philippines. To my great surprise this hospitable, friendly, animist tribe with a Roman Catholic veneer, living in the remote, terraced mountains of central Luzon found it extremely difficult to follow my propositional approach to evangelism—teaching on the Word, God, Satan, Creation, Humanity, Sin, Judgment, Jesus Christ. I was shocked and surprised. How could this be? Didn’t an orderly God ordain systematic theology? It made sense to me and the rest of the North American Church, so why didn’t it make sense to the Ifugao?

"Culture is the prerequisite to communication."

(deSilva, 1999, xiv)

It finally dawned on me that I had ignored a fundamental issue. I was not teaching in the preferred pedagogy (learning style) of *my* audience. I had neglected to seek out my *host's* pedagogical preference.⁹

My ACC experience had shown me the broader need to understand the role that cultural institutions and values play in worldview formation. As my local church had

9. See Steffen, “Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol.” *Missiology: An International Review* 38 (2010) 141-159.

shaped my view of reality, so the Ifugao family structure, clans of in groups and out groups, had shaped theirs. I needed to learn their worldview, but even before that I needed to understand my own sub-culture. I also needed to understand the worldviews of Bible cultures.

My experience among the Ifugao also taught me the need to discover and utilize local pedagogical preferences. Before long I replaced my propositions with storytelling, symbols, and rituals. These two approaches—worldview and pedagogy (a sub-discipline)—weave together the tapestry of this book.

Three Movements

Nothing takes place in a vacuum, including paradigm shifts. Three movements related to the use of story originated almost simultaneously in different parts of the world with little interaction between them. As such, it would take some time, several decades, before these three movements began to take notice of each other, much less interact. Eventually, the Secular Story Movement and the Sacred Story Movement would help give legitimacy to the use of story in the Strategic Story Movement.

Secular Story Movement

In *The Muse Learns to Write*, Eric Havelock declared that 1962-1963¹⁰ was the birth of the “modern discovery” of orality. A Secular Story Movement was underway globally pioneered by the likes of Milman Parry (1902-1935), Albert Bates Lord (1912-1991), Eric Havelock (1903-1988), Jack Goody (1919-2015), and Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), among others. Possibly the most influential of all was Walter Ong (1912-2003). Joseph Sobol, who heads up the Graduate Program in Storytelling at East Tennessee State University, claims that “starting in the 1970s there has been a significant wave of storytelling revivalism in the United States, Canada, and across much of Western Europe.”¹¹ Publications on various aspects of orality were sure to follow, and they did indeed pour off the presses. Citing Daniel Bertaux’s edited *Biography and Society* (1981) and Elliot Mishler’s *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative* (1986), Jane Elliott, of the University of London, believes that “explicit interest in narrative in the social sciences can perhaps be traced back to the early 1980s” and “gathered momentum in the early 1990s.”¹²

10. In *The Muse Learns to Write*, Eric Havelock provides this summary: “Within the span of twelve months or less, from some time in 1962 to the spring of 1963, in three different countries—France, Britain, and the United States—there issued from the printing presses five publications by five authors who at the time when they wrote could not have been aware of any mutual relationship the works in question were *Le Pensee Sauvage* (Levi-Stauss), ‘The Consequences of Literacy’ (Goody and Watt, an extended article), *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (McLuhan), *Animal Species and Evolution* (Mayr), and *Preface to Plato* (Havelock)” (25). Interestingly, he bypassed *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History*, 1963, by Walter J. Ong.

11. Sobol, “Oracy in the New Millennium,” 110.

12. Elliott, *Using Narrative in Social Research*, 5.

In the secular disciplines of the world, book publications that emphasized story in various disciplines surfaced in the 1970s and spiked through the 1990s.¹³ This was observable in such disciplines as medicine, psychology,¹⁴ psychiatry, anthropology,¹⁵ education, orality,¹⁶ business, leadership, research,¹⁷ law, mythology, folklore, theory, history.¹⁸

Sacred Story Movement

It would be only a matter of time before those involved in the sacred (theological studies) world¹⁹ would discover the role of story in their discipline. A second story movement began around the same dates as the Secular Story Movement, this time in both the ecumenical and evangelical sacred worlds.

The movement was most prominently advanced in 1974 with Hans Frei's seminal book titled *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in 18th and 19th Century Hermeneutics*. In his treatise, Frei contended that author-intended meaning would be lost, eclipsed, until interpreters learned to distance themselves from Enlightenment-influenced hermeneutics that served the gods of abstraction (ideas) and fragmentation.

Frei argued that interpreters must return to the "realistic narrative" to discover true meaning. He understood that the meaning of the story is defined by the story; that Scripture is narrated in a unified and cumulative way. While propositional theology was birthed in Europe, it seems that narrative (or postliberal) theology was birthed in the mid-1970s at Yale Divinity School where Frei taught. This likely marked the simultaneous birth of the Sacred Story Movement.

More emphasis to the literary (in addition to the grammatical-historical) nature of Scripture followed.²⁰ Robert Alter's classic *The Art of Biblical Narrative* was published in

13. See: Bochner, *Coming to Narrative: A Personal History of Paradigm Change in the Human Sciences (Writing Lives)*, 2014.

14. In *Acts of Meaning* published in 1990, Jerome Bruner proposed that psychology should "venture beyond the conventional aims of positivist science with its ideals of *reductionism*, *causal explanation* and *prediction*" (xiii), to a narrative framework for analyzing individuals to secure a more comprehensive understanding of personhood.

15. Paul Bohannan asks, "Does such a concern with story take us the next step beyond fieldwork? ... But the mainstream of cultural anthropology is only just beginning to ask: How do we use stories? How do other peoples use stories?" (150-151). Bohannan, *How Culture Works*, 1994.

16. See Foley, *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*, 1985. See also Quick, "Annotated Bibliography, 1986-1990." *Oral Tradition Journal* 12 (1997) 366-484.

17. David Nunan and Julie Choi trace the term "voice" through 40 years of research history noting its rise in narrative and storytelling research methodology in the 1980s. The authors refer to voice as "the centrality of the human story to qualitative research in terms of *what* the story is and *how* the story is told" (222). See Nunan and Choi, "Shifting Sands: The Evolving Story of 'Voice' in Qualitative Research" in *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, 2, edited by Eli Hinkel, (2011) 222-236.

18. I have a syllabus for a narrative course that contains an extensive bibliography documenting spikes related to narrative in various disciplines that is available upon request.

19. I make a distinction between the terms *secular* and *sacred* in the Introduction for semantic purposes to differentiate the narrative movements. Theologically I would not make such a divide in our personal lives. "Whatever you do—whether you eat or drink *or not*—do it all to the glory of God!" (1 Corinthians 10:31, VOICE).

20. D. F. Tolmie summarizes, "During the 1980s the number of narrative-critical analyses of the Hebrew Bible or parts of it steadily increased ... In the case of the New Testament the first signs of a new approach

1981. In 1984, Wheaton College's Leland Ryken wrote *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Ryken and Tremper Longman later edited *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* in 1993, and Meir Sternberg's *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* came out in 1985. Numerous authors continued the story genre emphasis.²¹

Homiletics also joined the Sacred Story Movement. *Preaching the Story* co-authored by Edmund Steimle, Morris Niedenthal, and Charles Rice, and published in 1980, became the groundbreaker for narrative preaching.²² In 1981, Fred Craddock, another early advocate of the use of story in preaching, gave a series of lectures titled "Preaching as Storytelling" at Furman University. In one of them he asked the penetrating question, "Is there room for the story to serve as a major vehicle for communicating truth?" In the series he concluded, "A story can carry the freight."²³

Bible translations also entered the Sacred Story Movement, resulting in the *Word of God* giving way to the *Story of God*. Two bookend examples include *The Story: From Adam to Armageddon*, published in 1986, and *The Voice: Step Into the Story of Scripture*,²⁴ published in 2012. "Story" would replace "Word"²⁵ in the titles of many later translations and paraphrases, an effort to front the shifting paradigm.²⁶

began to appear in the 1970s" (3-4). For more texts, see the "Introduction" in Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives*, 1999.

21. Here are just a few: Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, 1997; Hauerwas and Jones, eds., *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, 1989; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul*, 1989; Pratt Jr., *He Gave Us Stories*, 1990; Sailhammer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 1992; Witherington, III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World*, 1994; Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 1998; Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*, 2002; Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 2004; Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 2005.

22. Other initial homiletics publications emphasizing storytelling include: Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 1988; Jensen, *Telling the Story*, 1981; Jensen, *Thinking in Story*, 1993; Larson, *Telling the Old, Old Story*, 1995; Miller, *Spirit, Word, and Story*, 1989.

23. Craddock, "Preaching as Storytelling (8 thirty minute lectures)," 2004.

24. In the Introduction to *The Voice*, the authors wish to convey to their readers that "each book of the Bible tells part of the story. Each chapter fits into this grand scheme. Each verse contributes some fact, some detail, some nuance to the overall drama ... When we immerse ourselves in its story, we find our places in the world ... Some well-meaning people tend to reduce the Bible to a set of manageable propositions. They select certain verses to memorize and judge for themselves which parts to read, which rules to follow. But the Scriptures are not meant to be stripped of their storied context" (xvi).

25. Other Bible translations that focused on story include: *The Book of God: The Bible as a Novel*, 1996; *The Narrated Bible In Chronological Order*, NIV, 1999; *The One Year Chronological Bible*, 2007; *The Literary Study Bible*, 2007; *The Story Bible, NIV: The Bible as One Continuous Story of God and His People*, 2011.

26. A great study could result by answering these questions: Was the "Word of God" that originally emphasized the oral nature of Scripture ("hear," "heard," "said," "say," "speak," "listen," "ear") in an aural age lost to a textual, frozen book during the Enlightenment? Does the current change from the "Word of God" to the "Story of God" in Bible titles take us back to the original oral nature of Scripture? Why is it important not to lose either the oral or textual side of Scripture?

Strategic Story Movement

As the Secular and Sacred Story Movements arose, a third movement related to orality in the evangelical missions community,²⁷ the Strategic Story Movement, quietly began in Asia. It originated in the Philippines developed by New Tribes Mission's (now Ethnos360) Trevor McIlwain. He called it, "Chronological Bible Teaching" (CBT).

CBT taught Bible stories in a chronological order beginning in Genesis through the life and ministry of Christ to evangelize and disciple unreached people groups. As word of its success spread, so did its use by other mission agencies around the globe in multiple, often abbreviated, versions.²⁸ Although the Strategic Story Movement began with rural tribal people (see chapter 2), it would soon influence city audiences as well (see chapter 3). From these humble roots the present-day evangelical²⁹ Orality Movement, as it would eventually be labeled, was born. See Figure I.1.

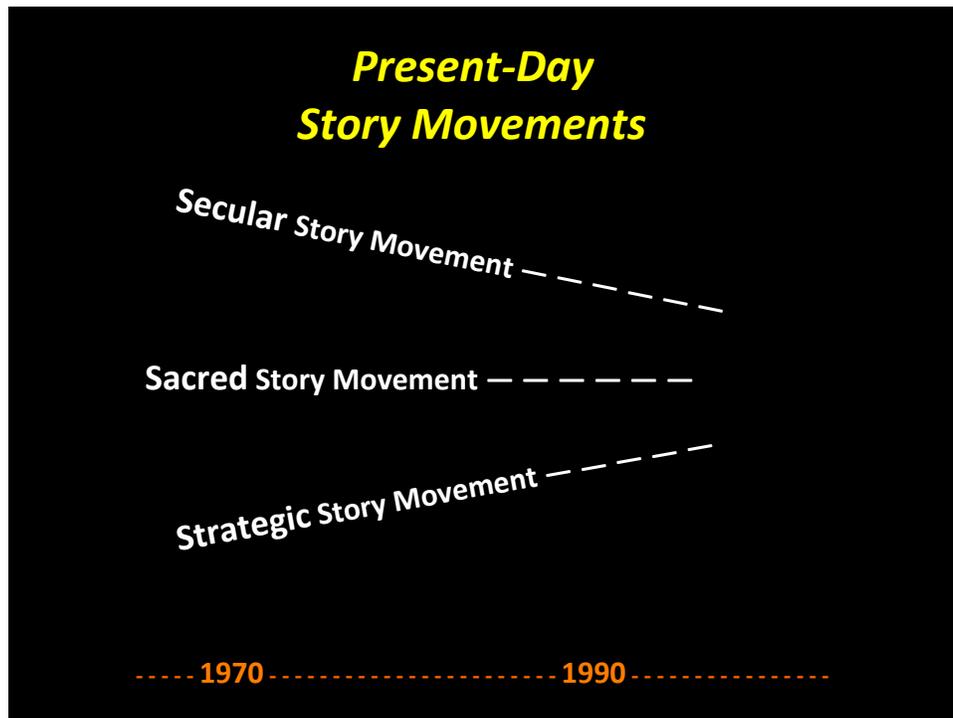


Figure I.1: The Merging of Present-Day Story Movements

27. Due to space and scope, only some of the influential Roman Catholic activities will be noted. Another in-depth document is needed to address the role that Catholics have played in the use of orality in missions.

28. See Steffen, "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 1." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994) 86-97 and "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 2." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994a) 98-109.

29. Not all of those included in the following chapters would identify themselves as evangelicals yet their major contributions have impacted the Orality Movement.

Breaking Down the Book

I divide this book into two parts with the goal of bridging the gap between history and practice. **Part One: Tracking the Orality Movement** reviews God’s initiation of the present-day evangelical Orality Movement. As with any new movement, those of us on its cutting edge encountered many surprises as we ventured into uncharted, often choppy waters. Readers will discover some of those surprises in these chapters. They will also see the movement’s developers shift focus of the primary audience from rural dwellers to city dwellers—a rarity. In the midst of these advances, the movement also morphed in multiple ways, including its title.

Part Two: Making the Case for Worldview-based Storying seeks to address a major deficiency I observed as the Orality Movement developed—inadequate attention given to understanding and utilizing the host culture’s worldview in the communication process. This oversight has often resulted in communication noise, jeopardizing a clear understanding of God’s message. The “how-to” content presented in these chapters proposes a simple-to-use yet engaging tool for deeper understanding of the host culture’s worldview(s), thus enhancing the opportunity to more clearly present the message.

“If a way of life can be learned through touchstone stories, symbols, and rituals, it can also be unlearned through the same means. The gospel provides such a rival story, offering a totally new way of life through an allegiance transfer.”

(Steffen and McKinney-Douglas, 2008, 194)

This book builds on a number of basic assumptions:

1. Symbols and stories can be reviewed and reinforced through ritual.
2. The gospel contains rival symbols and stories that
3. are reinforced through rituals.
4. Every communication encounter includes noise.
5. The deconstruction of worldview enhances the possibility of true transformation.
6. The greater the cultural distance between the cultures, the louder the noise.
7. Communication noise cannot be eliminated, only minimized.
8. Reduced communication noise brings increased clarity to one’s message.
9. Understanding and utilizing worldview-based storying can reduce communication noise and thereby enhance message clarity.

Chapter Considerations

Now, almost 40 years after the dawn of the present-day evangelical Orality Movement, it is time to document the movement, to consider the major changes that have occurred, and to identify the need for further in-depth studies of worldview and learning style preferences.

Part One follows the growing seeds of the Orality Movement:

- Chapter 1 briefly highlights some foundations of the Orality Movement that are often overlooked. Beginning with the Church, moving to the Middle Ages, the Post-

Middle Ages, and concluding with the 1980s, this chapter searches for “big picture” presentations of Scripture from eras past.

- Chapters 2 and 3 document the Orality Movement as it advanced from the Philippines in the 1980s to the world, then shifted from the country to the city.
- Chapter 4 muses over various changes that have taken place over almost 40 years, and those now being considered. This chapter closes by raising questions central to this book: Is there a need for more in-depth worldview (and pedagogical studies) to help ensure that Bible stories communicate with accuracy and clarity, making authentic, committed, telling transformation possible? Does the messenger’s knowing the recipient’s symbols, stories, and rituals really matter now? Or are such studies now passé, part of a bygone missions era?

Part Two, chapters 5-8, makes the case for Worldview-based Storying as a means to strengthen the Orality Movement:

- Chapters 5-7 make the case for the trilogy of symbol, story and ritual in relation to comprehending worldview, whether one’s own, that of those living in Bible times, or the worldview of the people we wish to bless with God’s story.
- Chapter 8 unifies chapters 5-7, making the case for Worldview-based Storying not only as a tool to discover worldview, but also as a means of presenting rival symbols, stories, and rituals with minimal communicational noise. These chapters will help the reader succeed in cross-cultural communication by decreasing the noise thereby increasing the clarity of the message.

The book concludes by envisioning the future of the Orality Movement, asking, “Which new directions will help strengthen the present-day Orality Movement?” As the big idea of this book I submit that deep-level worldview research through discovery of the interaction and integration of symbol, story, and ritual will help minimize communication noise in order to enhance clarity of God’s message communicated to both primary-secondary oral audiences at home and abroad.³⁰ This premise should prove true and apply to rural, urban, or suburban contexts, in the least developed or most developed countries,

30. I am indebted to Lynn Thigpen for the following insights. She discovered in her research among Cambodian adults with limited formal education (ALFE) that learning moved beyond the use of story to an emphasis on the visual and on connection. ALFE learners “retained a preference for observing and learning from trusted people in a process similar to socialization,” (Abstract). She also noted that Cambodian ALFE who do not live in a primary oral culture experienced a great deal of shame due to their lack of reading ability or their limited education. She then offers new terminology to capture her findings: “I would have a tendency to refer to this construct some have been calling ‘oral preference learning’ as ‘primary’ or ‘foundational learning’ or even, if you will, ‘connected learning,’ if it were shown to be pervasive among other cultures” (193). In this book I define a “primary oral audience” as those who cannot read and those having limited reading abilities (blurred boundaries); they therefore self-identify as relational (connected) learners through integrative, holistic (e.g., roles of body movements, power, smells, space, time, touch) verbal and visual means of communication. A “secondary oral audience” refers to those who can read, but prefer and practice a more verbal-visual-digital-social means of integrative, holistic (e.g., roles of body movements, power, smell, space, time, touch) communication. Thigpen, *Connected Learning*, 2016.

and among the unreached or misreached peoples of the world. Since they influence how God’s symbols, stories, and rituals are interpreted, knowing their symbols, stories, and rituals is as important as knowing one’s own.

Ultimately, bringing someone wearing a gourd or another wearing a three-piece suit to a posture of pure worship is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet as God’s Ambassadors and co-laborers He has charged us with the clear, natural and accurate transmission of the most precious message ever delivered. To fulfill that charge we must speak with the best of our linguistic ability through a worldview grid that will lead the person on the path and the person on the pavement to say, “This speaker is not a foreigner to me, and now neither is his God.”

Why Read and Digest this Book?

If you are concerned about communicating God’s story with increased accuracy and clarity resulting in transformed faith-followers of Christ, then this book is for you.

The Bible is God’s story communicated to the world for all generations. Christian workers have a significant role as co-laborers with God helping believers become authentic worshippers. As co-laborers with Him, our responsibility, besides relying on the Holy Spirit and the Sacred Story, is to communicate His message as accurately and clearly as possible to minimize legalism, nominalism, and/or syncretism. Paul’s instruction to Timothy applies today: “protect what was entrusted to you!” (1 Timothy 6:20, VOICE).

"Worship (my emphasis) is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose— and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable."

(Temple, 1952, 68)

This entrustment becomes much more complex in cross-cultural contexts. The Worldview-based Storying tool presented in this book will help protect what God has entrusted to His co-laborers by raising levels of accuracy and clarity, thereby increasing the opportunity to produce truly transformed followers of Christ. That is why one should read and digest this book.

Who Should Read and Digest this Book?

I wrote this book for both short-term and long-term cross-cultural workers/teams (youth workers, pastors, evangelists, church planters, relief workers, trauma workers, community developers, business people, professors, English teachers, Bible translators) at home and abroad. I want to help all (professionals, semi-professionals, amateurs) who are attempting to spread God’s message through word and works to initiate, mature, and multiply holistic communities of faith by means of primary-secondary orality.

Some readers will be more inclined to the theoretical side. For those I have included frequent footnotes for further in-depth studies. Others may prefer to just keep turning the pages. Either way, readers will encounter the history of the movement and what I call “Worldview-based Storying.”

What are some of the Key Terms Used?

Anchor (symbol, story, ritual): Every culture has numerous common symbols, stories and rituals. Anchor, when wedded to a symbol, story or ritual, refers to that entity which crisscrosses multiple cultural domains as it brings emotive, imaginative, and factual focus within a given culture. Becoming an anchor symbol, story or ritual can take time, and requires much repetition to rise above all the common ones within a culture.

Master (symbol, story, ritual): A master symbol, story or ritual is a synthesis of multiple anchor symbols, stories or rituals. Compared to an anchor, it's on steroids, showing up in multiple cultural institutions, often with an extended history. It reviews, reflects, and reinforces one's worldview.

Metanarrative: A metanarrative succinctly summarizes a specific culture's anchor and master stories thereby informally validating how life should be lived. By so doing, it tacitly creates strongly held beliefs and behaviors that determine distinctiveness and offer continuity over time. These internals often cause sharp divisions between those within the culture (insiders) and those without the culture (outsiders), as well as between sub-cultures. A metanarrative is the story that shapes all other stories. Some prefer the term "grand narrative" or "arch-narrative."

Narrative: A narrative distills the content and rationale of systems of symbols, stories, and rituals into a coherent whole. For example, "His statement challenges the Whitehouse's narrative."

Noise: Communication noise refers to external, internal, semantic or cultural impediments that derail successful communication.

Orality: Orality (oral, aural, visual, digital, social) denotes pedagogical preferences designed to process, remember, and communicate verbally and pictorially through social connections, rather than through literate forms.

Orality Movement: The modern-day Orality Movement finds its origin in the chronological story movement that began with New Tribes Mission's Trevor McIlwain in the Philippines in the early 1980s. McIlwain promoted evangelism and discipleship that was driven by a series of Bible stories, beginning in Genesis (Chronological Bible Teaching). His seven-phase model that covered Genesis through Revelation quickly leapfrogged beyond New Tribes Mission, exploding into the global Orality Movement as it marched from the countryside to city centers. The Orality Movement is currently spearheaded by the International Orality Network (ION).

Primary orality: Primary orality refers to those who cannot read and those having limited reading abilities (blurred boundaries); they therefore self-identify as relational (connected) learners through integrative, holistic (e.g., roles of body movements, power, smells, space, time, touch) verbal and visual means of communication.

Ritual: Ritual refers to a series of sacred and/or secular wordings and actions conducted routinely in a familiar way by individuals or groups to rehearse something considered important for the preservation of the culture over generations. It may be initiated by an unforeseen event or follow a prescribed annual calendar.

Secondary orality: Secondary orality refers to those who can read, but prefer and practice a more visual-oral-digital-social means of integrative, holistic (e.g., roles of body movements, power, smell, space, time, touch) communication, such as YouTube, Facebook, or smartphones.

Story: A story is an account given of a sequence of events that takes place in some setting(s) and time(s) in which competing characters (real or fictive) advance towards a mysterious resolution that solves a plot driven by conflict.

Symbol: A symbol refers to abstract ideas associated with such entities as colors, clothes, animal skulls, water, food, feathers, smoke, sounds, smells, etc., all of which are susceptible to multiple interpretations.

Worldview: Cultural worldview is one's filtered perceptions/assumptions of the world through which all of life (culture) is interpreted. This privileged perspective emerges through a symbol/story/ritual-grid from which people learn, establish systematized priorities to constantly evaluate themselves and others, and "lean into life."

Worldview transformation: Transforming one's worldview is the replacement of formerly held symbols, stories, and rituals with rival ones. This resymboling, restorying, and re-ritualing results in much more than changed observable behavior, it results in the deep-level alteration of the heart; it results in a new worldview script.

Now Where?

As someone has astutely quipped, "Before you play your instruments in public, please tune your strings first!" The Worldview-based Storying tool is designed to aid in the tuning process so that Bible symbols, story sets, and religious rituals are crafted for specific worldviews thereby maximizing clarity so that the message becomes like a memorable chat. Yes, "there is more to the story." May the communication noise diminish. May message clarity prevail.

Some backstory is necessary. Who laid the foundation for the present-day evangelical Orality Movement? How has it morphed over time? What should be done to enhance the present-day movement? History reminds us of where we have been, and provides possible clues for enhancing its future.³¹ But to begin, I will first identify some of the pioneers of the past.

31. William Faulkner wrote some 50 years after the US Civil War, "the past is never dead. It's not even past." <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/12124-the-past-is-never-dead-it-s-not-even-past>.

Part One:

Tracking the Orality Movement

1

Pioneers of the Past

“That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons of history.”

—ALDOUS HUXLEY

“YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BED until I hear about what you’ve been doing in Palawan,” I impetuously dictated to Trevor McIlwain in the New Tribes Mission (now Ethnos360) guest home in Manila in 1980.

During that time McIlwain was developing a story-based evangelism and discipleship methodology eventually labeled Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT). What Trevor shared held me captive well past midnight, and once I had thoroughly picked his brain I finally allowed him to head to bed. Looking back, that conversation was a watershed in my life and ministry. It would forever change my (and many others’) appreciation of the storied sweep of the sacred Scriptures. And it would change the spiritual destinies of countless others who would hear and understand those sacred stories as never before.

That was over 30 years ago. Since then, CBT has gone global, having reached beyond rural tribal settings to the most populous urban centers of the world. With CBT, McIlwain reconnected the missions world to the powerful use of story in ministry. Sadly, many seminary professors and church leaders remain unaware of the movement’s existence, much less its value to ministry.

As noted in the Introduction, two broad story movements began during the 1970s, the *secular* and the *sacred* movements. Around that same time, the third story movement emerged—the *Strategic Movement*, later identified within the missions community as the *Storytelling Movement*, and more recently called the *Orality Movement*.

What was considered to be a new missions strategy by many, as this chapter will reveal, was not as new as perceived. The story road had been previously cut, but centuries of other communication theories had led to neglect and obsolescence. As we rediscovered this simple, straight path, we who were privileged to be in the forefront were surprised by what we found out about the process, and about ourselves.

Some Personal Surprises

One thing my unchallenged Modernist bias failed to take seriously was the unlikely concept of communicating Scripture through story.³² For me, stories were for children, certainly not suitable means for teaching concepts as exact and precise a science as theology. I assumed that stories were certainly too ambiguous, too multi-directional, too messy. Systematic theology, with truth wrapped in neat, bite-sized outlines, seemed to be the answer for the needy from New York City to New Guinea. I would carry this conception in my backpack as I headed to the Philippines in 1971.

My years of contact with the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao of the Philippines, however, would challenge my assumptions regarding teaching through stories,³³ driving me to add story to my abstract propositions. Up to this point in time, the Ifugao had been totally unimpressed with my linear, abstract presentation of the gospel through dry doctrines. So much for multiplying communities of contagious God-worshippers. It was the Ifugao who rekindled my respect for the piercing power of stories I had once enjoyed in my youth but had lost over time.³⁴

Movements are “informal groupings of people and organizations pursuing a common cause.”

(Addison, 2009, 27)

During our first home assignment in 1976 I visited Ed Pentecost, then Professor of Missions at Dallas Theological Seminary. During our visit he asked if I was familiar with Hans Weber’s *Communication of the Gospel to Illiterates*. I sheepishly replied that I was not. Embarrassed yet intrigued, I hurried down to the library after our visit to find the book. I soon discovered a text I should have been familiar with *long before* I set

foot on Philippine soil to work among the animistic Ifugao.

Shortly thereafter I was introduced to Alan Tippett’s classic, *Solomon Island Christianity*. Both authors, Weber to a greater degree, used story as a means to convey the sweep of Christianity. I learned two critical things during this time: (1) much precedent existed for a sweeping presentation of Scripture, and (2) it is wise to build on the shoulders of our predecessors rather than reinvent the wheel!

Syncretism Births the Storytelling Movement

In 1975, Dick Sollis of New Tribes Mission (NTM) organized the first South East Asian (SEA) Leadership Conference to be held in Manila. Since syncretism³⁵ was prevalent in NTM tribal ministries in Brazil and Colombia,³⁶ Sollis sought someone who could provide

32. See Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 2005.

33. See Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, 1997, chapters 10 and 11.

34. See Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 2005.

35. Alan Tippett defines syncretism as “the union of two opposite forces, beliefs, systems, or tenets so that the united form is a new thing, neither one nor the other” (13). Tippett, *Solomon Island Christianity*, 1967.

36. View the story of syncretism and solution experienced by Tim and Bunny Cain as they serve among the Puinave that reside along the frontier borders of Colombia and Venezuela in NTM’s DVD *Now We See Clearly*. Upon discovering the Chronological Bible Teaching, Tim exclaimed, “This is it!”

Tuggy and Tolivar argued that the problem with the Palawano people movement was a lack of shepherding and teaching. McIlwain argued that the evangelist’s lack of using the receptor language and culture, and the

an effective evangelism model to help combat it. After all, “If you mess up the message, you mess up the movement.”³⁷

Bob Gustafson, then Field Chairman of the Philippine field, suggested Trevor McIlwain as plenary speaker since he had been reflecting on the gospel message and its implications among the Palawanos, who were also bound up in syncretistic beliefs. One reason for Palawano syncretism was traced to the initial expatriate evangelist, who had no understanding of their worldview and therefore could not challenge them to change at the heart level.³⁸ The Palawanos, of course, interpreted his message of “good news” through their grid of myths unknown to the well-intentioned evangelist. They well understood the surface-level changes he expected them to make and thus he interpreted their obedience to his message as “salvation.” However, over the years they simply melded old and new into what truly was *not* good news at all.

McIlwain spoke to the SEA field leaders on “The Gospel,” a presentation of his quiet experimentation with story among the Palawanos that would later provide the foundation for a chronological approach to tribal evangelism and church planting. McIlwain would soon return to Australia where he taught and continued to develop the chronological model at the NTM training center from 1976-1979. It was upon my return from home assignment in 1980 that I had my late night conversation with Trevor, who himself was returning from his home assignment.

Seeing the potential of McIlwain’s CBT, and with another SEA Leadership Conference in Thailand just weeks away, I encouraged our Field Chairman, Dell Schultze, to add McIlwain to the Thai Conference agenda. Before heading to Thailand, McIlwain presented an overview of his model to the Philippine field personnel at their annual conference in January of 1981.

At the SEA Leadership Conference held in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1981, McIlwain again presented his model. From mimeographed notes he introduced his new ideas for four hours each day, the sessions tape recorded and videotaped. His seven-phase church planting model driven by biblical theology and dispensationalism emphasized:

- ✓ The Bible is history (His Story).
- ✓ The Bible is one story—the story of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ The gospel requires a firm Old Testament (OT) foundation.
- ✓ We should tell Bible stories as a means to define the nature and character of God.
- ✓ The Bible not only tells us what to teach, but, by example, shows us how to teach—chronologically.

failure to provide a solid foundation for the gospel to offset a tribal worldview, including the myth that claimed that a white person would come with a black book and that the Palawanos should do whatever he says, baptism included, would lead to widespread syncretism. McIlwain believed that the real issue was on the front end, an inadequate presentation of the gospel, not on the backend, follow-up. Tuggy and Tolivar. *Seeing the Church in the Philippines* (1972) 120.

37. Steffen, *The Facilitator Era*, 132.

38. See Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, 133.

- ✓ We should not discuss or present Jesus as the solution until listeners understand their separation from a holy God.³⁹

As it turned out, the distortion caused by syncretism among the Palawanos gave birth to McIlwain’s CBT. At the time it was hoped that these steps (and others) would help preserve a clear and objective⁴⁰ gospel that would result in authentic followers of Christ.

Storytelling Spreads Beyond Philippine Shores

The SEA Leadership conference held in Thailand in 1981 became the seminal moment of story-based evangelism as McIlwain’s chronological model began to spread beyond the shores of the Philippine Islands to South East Asia, and eventually around the world within NTM. Leaders returned to their respective fields of ministry and disseminated McIlwain’s crudely reproduced materials with the singular goal in mind: to multiply tribal churches that would remain true to the Bible. While no one anticipated or expected it, the present-day orality movement was born.

McIlwain’s CBT model and the movement it launched would not go unnoticed for long. In *Scripture and Strategy*, David Hesselgrave identified CBT as one of the major contributions to missions in the twentieth century. With all that was accomplished in the “quiet revolution” of twentieth century missions, Hesselgrave confesses, “I readily admit to a special appreciation for McIlwain’s work.”⁴¹

“To love a person is to learn the song that is in their heart, and sing it to them when they have forgotten.”

(Arne Garborg)

McIlwain returned to the Philippines and taught seminars on his chronological model on several islands for all foreign and national NTM missionaries. It should be noted that his model assumed extensive culture and language acquisition. It was designed for long-term, incarnational, church planting driven by an exit strategy that empowered locals immediately in all aspects of ministry. His ever-expanding mimeographed notes eventually resulted in a nine-volume series titled *Firm Foundations*. The first volume, published in 1987, provided the philosophy for the CBT. It claimed CBT was “God’s way,” “follows divine guidelines,” and had a “divinely revealed order of teaching.” Of course some eyebrows were raised by such bold claims but few could argue with the verifiable results. God was using the methodology among people groups around the globe.

The remaining volumes of *Firm Foundations* were Bible lessons designed specifically for tribal peoples. The evangelism phase (Phase 1) consisted of 68 Bible stories, 42 from the OT, and 26 from the New Testament (NT).

Five other CBT phases followed the evangelism phase. Phase 2 was an abbreviated review of Phase 1, focusing on security of salvation and the young believer’s newfound

39. See McIlwain, *Notes on the Chronological Approach to Evangelism & Church Planting*, 3-27 for more detailed discussion.

40. McIlwain’s preferred term. He believes that felt needs are not part of the gospel. The supracultural need of a Savior because of inherited and practiced sin takes one to the heart of the gospel.

41. Hesselgrave, *Scripture and Strategy*, 119.

position in Christ. They rejoiced that they were no longer separated from the holy God. Phase 3 covered Acts, recounting the history of the early church and setting the foundation for the Epistles. Phase 4 surveyed the Epistles, culminating with Revelation. In a rather short period of time, the listeners were exposed to the metanarrative of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Phases 5-7 repeated the cycle focusing on issues of sanctification for the maturing believers.

For a variety of reasons, few contemporary storytellers have invested the time and effort to venture into the final three phases of teaching. Some interpret this as aborting the process instead of addressing the deepest truths of Scripture, thus again exposing young churches to the recurring ravages of syncretism. See Figure 1.1.

More recently, NTM has revised Phase 1 to take the church beyond the death, burial, resurrection and ascension by including a quick plunge into the “end” of the story—the destruction of the Evil One in Revelation.

In chapters 2 and 3 I will continue to document some of the highlights of the storytelling movement as it advanced, contrary to most movements, from the country to the city. I will now briefly explore some of the biblical and historical foundations for a sweeping presentation of the sacred Scripture, or what Luke calls “the purpose of God in all its dimensions” (Acts 20:27, VOICE).

Sweeping Presentations of Scripture

OT Sweep Summaries

One would expect Bible authors writing to self-identified oral audiences in the Old and New Testament to provide repetition of sweeps and/or summary statements to reinforce understanding. Repetition and recapitulation are commonly employed by the best of storytellers in oral communities. Old Testament authors do not disappoint even if often “frustratingly fragmentary.” Consider these story sweep verses: Exodus 3:15-17; 4:29-31; 6:6-9; 15; Deuteronomy 1:6-3:29, 6:10-25, 26:5-9, 32:7-43; Joshua 24:2-15; 1 Samuel 12:6-13; 1 Chronicles 16:14-22; Job 38; Psalms 76; 78; 105; 106:6-12; 136; Jeremiah 2:1-19; Nehemiah 9:5-37. The Book of Deuteronomy serves such a purpose, as do the numerous genealogies throughout the Old Testament and New Testament narratives.⁴²

Church Era to Middle Ages Sweep Summaries

New Testament

New Testament authors carry forth the Old Testament precedent but in more depth in that the story has expanded. Note these passages that present the sweeping story of the sacred Scriptures in some detail: Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38; Acts 17:22-31; 28:23; Jude 1.

In Luke 24, Jesus presented a sweeping overview of the overarching tale of Scripture to two despondent disciples as they walked the seven miles from Jerusalem to

42. Richard Bauckham notes, “Scripture does not and could not summarize its story from a standpoint outside the story, which is unfinished. The summaries are themselves part of the story and even contribute to the story’s own development” (42). Bauckham, Richard. “Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story.” In *The Art of Reading Scripture* edited by Ellen F. Davis and Richard. B. Hays (2003).

Emmaus. Luke wrote that Jesus began telling the story with Moses and covered all of the prophets. During the journey of less than three-hours, through stories of colorful characters and no doubt well-known symbols, Jesus had replaced hopelessness with hope.

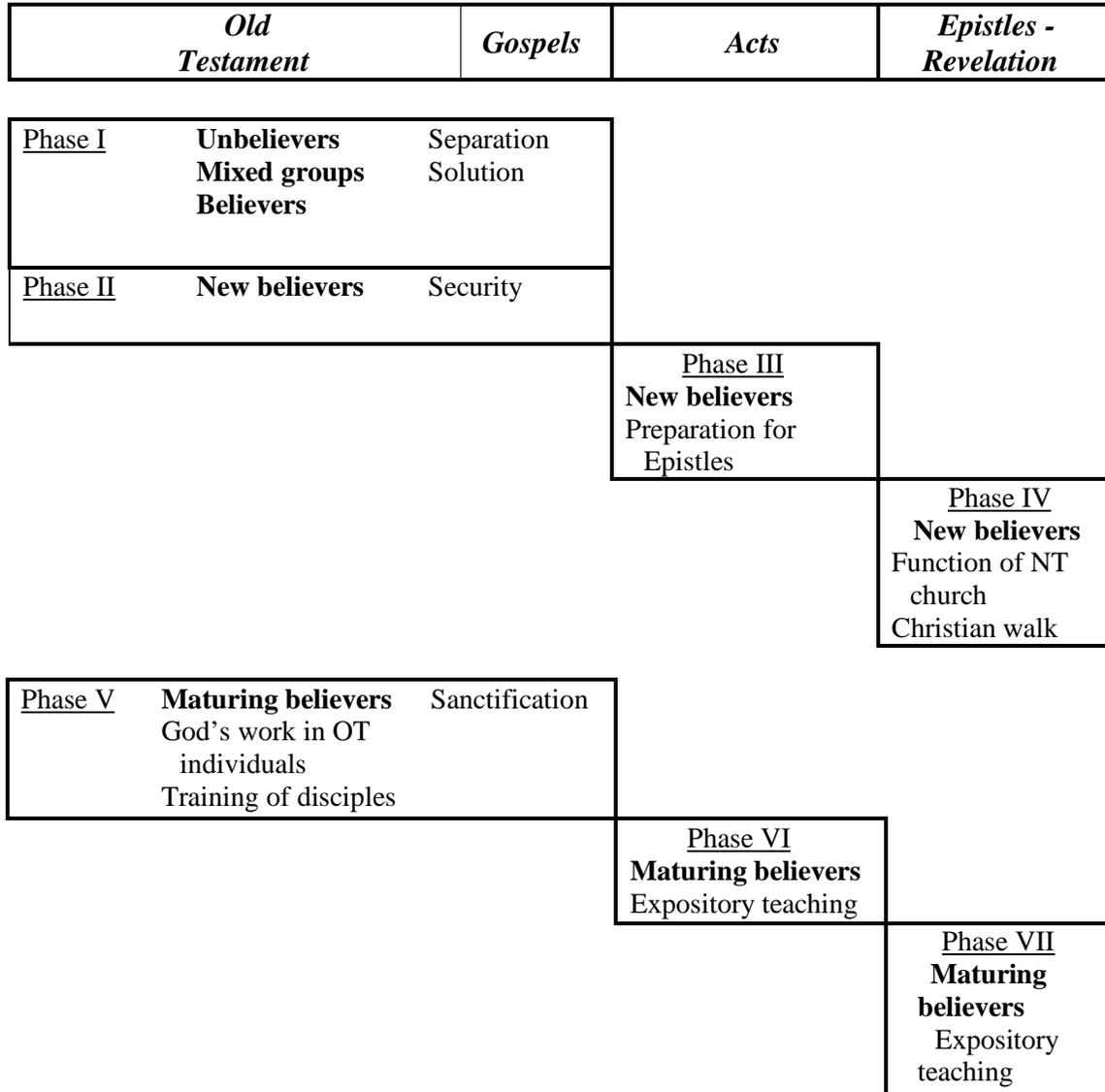


Figure 1.1: McIlwain's Seven Phases of Chronological Bible Teaching⁴³

43. This figure is adapted from McIlwain, *Notes on the Chronological Approach to Evangelism & Church Planting*, 1981, 12a-12c and *Building on Firm Foundations*, 2005, 81.

Stephen provided a second overview of the divine drama as recorded in Acts 7. In the speech that cost him his life, Stephen mentioned 11 characters and two symbols, the tabernacle and temple.

Paul's speech to Jews and Gentiles at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-40) recounted narratives of groups (people of Israel, Egypt, seven nations, judges, children of Abraham, God-fearing Gentiles), individuals (Samuel, Saul, David, John, Jesus, Pilate, God, Moses), and symbols (Sabbath, tree, law).

The author of Hebrews provided a fourth sweeping picture. In chapter 11 he noted 19 carefully chosen characters and 10 significant symbols.

As noted, genealogies also provide hearers and readers an overview of the sweep of Scripture. Luke 3:23-38 ties Jesus back to Adam while Matthew 1:1-17 begins with the line of Abraham and ends with Jesus.

Early Church Leaders

Many well-known church leaders during the first four centuries of Christianity focused their instruction to new Christians on the pilgrimage to baptism.⁴⁴ These teachers often took up to three years to do so, following a "coherent plan to instruct new believers."⁴⁵ Origen (185-254) was one leader who employed this model. During daily services large portions of Scripture were read publicly to the faithful, followed by his sermon. Origen believed that those who purposed to follow Christ should immediately become familiar with the unfolding historical drama of Scripture.

Augustine (354-430), theologian and bishop of Hippo in North Africa, taught in similar fashion as he molded the doctrine for the Middle Ages. Like Origen, he believed that all uninstructed new believers should understand the sweep of Scripture, i.e., "salvation history" through a comprehensive catechism. In *On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed*, a letter written to mentor a "struggling and discouraged" but gifted Bible teacher in Carthage, Augustine wrote:

The narration is full when each person is catechized in the first instance from what is written in the text. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," on to the present times of the Church. This does not imply, however, either that we ought to repeat by memory the entire Pentateuch, and the entire Books of Judges, and Kings, and Esdras, and the entire Gospel and Acts of the Apostles, if we have learned all these word for word, or that we should put all the matters which are contained in these volumes into our own words, and in that manner unfold and expound them as a whole. For neither does the time admit of that, nor does any necessity demand it. But what we ought to do is, to give a comprehensive statement

44. Clint Arnold notes, "Tertullian displayed a similar 'abiding and passionate concern for the formation of catechumens,' but so did Hippolytus (Rom; 170-236), Ambrose (Italy; 339-97), Cyprian (North Africa; d.258); Gregory of Nyssa (Asia Minor; 330-395), John Chrysostom (Byzantium; 347-407), Theodore of Mopsuestia (Asia Minor; 350-428), Cyril of Jerusalem (Palestine; b. 349), and many others. In fact, some of the most important works extant from the hand of Cyril are a set of catechetical instructions and messages" (45). Arnold, "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (2004), 39-54.

45. Arnold, "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelism," 43.

of all things, summarily and generally, so that certain of the more wonderful facts may be selected which are listened to with superior gratification, and which have been ranked so remarkably among the exact turning-points (of the history). ... We ought to dwell on them for a certain space, and thus, as it were, unfold them and open them out to vision, and present them to the minds of the hearers as things to be examined and admired. But as for all other details, these should be passed over rapidly, and thus for introduced and woven into the narrative.⁴⁶

Caedmon

For our purposes Caedmon's (d. 680) story begins with a simple, introverted cowherd in the monastery of Whitby who would flee with embarrassment when the harp was passed around during the evening "happy hour." On one such occasion he fled to escape public shame, returning to the stable to sleep. As he slept someone supernaturally appeared to Caedmon and asked him to sing a song. At first he demurred but eventually asked what he should sing. The person in the dream asked him to sing about Creation. So he did, singing verses he had never heard before. When he awoke in the morning Caedmon remembered and recorded all that he had sung, and later continued to add more songs to his sacred repository.

When St. Hilda, mother Abbess of the monastery, heard of Caedmon's encounter she ordered him to meet with her and some of the learned brethren. They concluded that something truly supernatural had definitely taken place. The sages taught Caedmon a section of Scripture, ordered him to put it to song and to return in the morning. The next morning he sang so inspirationally that the impressed St. Hilda instructed Caedmon to leave his secular occupation and take up the monastic life, which he readily did. Members of the monastery taught him the entire sacred stories which he then supernaturally converted into picturesque, poetic song. In time, his erudite teachers became converts of the former shy cowherd.

To help illiterates better understand the sacred Story, Caedmon translated his works into Latin Vulgate. His poems addressed topics such as: the creation of the world, the origin of man, history of Genesis, fall of angels, Exodus, Daniel, the incarnation, the passion and resurrection, the ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, preaching of the Apostles, heaven and hell. His sacred poetry, so winsome to the ear, set a high standard for all who would attempt to follow in his footsteps.

Medieval Cycle Plays

As early as the fifth century, Bible stories were represented in church by means of live tableaux accompanied by singing. From such simple beginnings, liturgical dramas gradually developed over several centuries as part of the liturgy and embellished by the insertion of short spurts of affirming speech, or "tropes." Later these morphed into dialogues and short reenactments of scenes from the Easter story and the Nativity.

By the 11th century, Bible stories were performed in the church in Latin by clergy. The plays continued to develop, moving outside the church, and from the 13th to 16th century were performed throughout England in the vernacular by guilds of laymen. These

46. Augustine, "On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed," 3, 6.

Medieval cycle plays dramatized Bible stories from creation to consummation as a means of teaching their illiterate parishioners the stories of the Bible.

While the story of Jesus, particularly his betrayal, death, and resurrection, provided the central theme, other plays were added to foreshadow the Passion of Christ and “reveal its consequences.” Additional themes of the plays included: (1) the making and keeping of the divine promises of the coming Messiah, (2) the human role in divine activity, and (3) the faithfulness of God to his chosen people.⁴⁷

While variations of the plays prevailed from city to city, other common episodes included: Fall of Lucifer, Creation and Fall of Man, Cain and Abel, Noah’s Flood, Abraham and Isaac, Moses, The Prophets, The Nativity (Annunciation; Shepherds; Purification; Magi; Flight into Egypt; Massacre of the Innocents), Baptism of Christ, Temptation of Christ, Raising of Lazarus, The Passion (Conspiracy; Judas; Last Supper; Caiaphas; Trial; Crucifixion), Resurrection, Ascension, Assumption, and “Coronation of the Virgin Mary,” and the Last Judgment.

Episodes from the Old Testament are dramatized because they are seen to prefigure the central drama of Christ’s life: the temptation and fall of Adam prefigures the temptation of Christ; the murder of Abel and the sacrifice of Isaac anticipate the Crucifixion; Noah’s flood anticipates the Last Judgment (sic); the Prophets look forward to the Annunciation and nativity, declaring the genealogy of Christ, while Moses also anticipates aspects of Christ’s life and ministry.⁴⁸

Encouraged by the clergy, secular and religious trade guilds funded and performed different versions of the plays in four major towns, York being the most common venue with 48 productions. The dramas were performed by hundreds of lay actors in 24 to 48 outdoor plays on or beside pageant wagons that moved from station to station throughout the city. Unlike the Catholic Church, which was mired in its use of Latin, the guilds used the local dialect to assure the masses understood every word. They also were well known for interjecting humor into the religious story. And the close proximity of actors to audience often resulted in strong psychological interaction between the two.

One such play was held in June during the days of longest light. To punctuate the Creation story they started at 4:30 am when the first light penetrated the darkness, and ended in twilight with the story of the final judgment of God. Such ingenuity and use of reality spoke loudly and clearly to the audiences. Rather than feeling coerced and coaxed by the clergy, audiences were won by story and truly desired to change and follow God.

By late 16th century many of the mystery plays were suppressed by the Protestant reformation in order to curtail any whiff of Catholic doctrine. Similarly, at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Catholic Church called for the abandonment of religious plays due to their secular and anti-Catholic nature.

47. See Happe, *English Mystery Plays*, 1975.

48. See http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/mi-sampler/mystery_plays.htm

Post-Middle Ages to 1980s Sweep Summaries

Francis Xavier

In 1549, Francis Xavier (1506-1552) and two other co-workers initiated missionary work in Kogoshima, Japan. By 1582, Christianity spread rapidly with some 130,000 adherents in Kyushu, and 20,000 more in Kyoto. By 1614, there were 300,000 Christians in the area. Richard Drummond provides several reasons for this unequalled faith expansion “in both numbers and influence in a highly civilized country.”⁴⁹ The missionaries arrived after “the longest period of sustained military strife and consequent social disorder and human suffering in the known history of Japan.”⁵⁰ That end to oppression and atrocities plus an interest in different peoples and cultures set the stage for the unprecedented growth of the new faith in Japan.

The first Japanese Jesuit priests were ordained in 1601. Following the highly effective foreign priests’ model to serve the church and the community, these Japanese priests took charge of the bulk of the preaching and teaching responsibilities.

All catechumens were taught the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer (the Our Father), the Ave Maria, and a few other prayers, such as the Rosary, the Hail Holy Queen, and the Litany of the Saints...an exposition of Christian doctrine in essentially historical order from the fact of the triune God and divine creation of the world, the fall of Lucifer, and the sin of Adam. Believers were then taught of the Incarnation, the holiness of the life of Jesus, his death, resurrection and ascension, the power of the mystery of the cross, the last judgment, the pains of hell, and the happiness of heaven. ...Additional instructions were given regarding the Ten Commandments, the necessity of avoiding non-Christian superstitions.⁵¹

The capsular teaching produced Japanese adherents who rarely “renounced their faith and returned to their former lifestyle.”⁵² This unprecedented success story, unfortunately, soon reversed as the Jesuit priests wrestled with the most appropriate way to conduct missions: encourage the destruction of the symbols of paganism or use gentle persuasion to introduce heart-level change. Sadly, the winners of the debate chose not to understand Buddhism and its worldview and teach in light of them. Instead they forced conversions, destroyed Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, and confiscated the properties of exiled Buddhist clergy, all of which resulted in a tragic loss for Christianity—and for centuries of would-be Japanese adherents to it.

Moravians

Moravian missionaries sent to the island of St. Thomas in the Caribbean in the 1730s served the spiritual needs of slaves working in the cane fields by telling Bible stories. Since earlier missionaries realized little success through the teaching of abstract theology, the group’s

49. Drummond, “Missiological Lessons—From Events New and Old,” 24.

50. *Ibid.*, 21.

51. *Ibid.*, 23-24.

52. *Ibid.*, 18.

protector and eventual leader, Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), urged all Moravian missionaries to focus first on Jesus in their witness. He instructed them that they were not to let themselves:

Be blinded by reason as if people had to, in order, first learn to believe in God, after that Jesus. It is wrong because that God exists is obvious to them. They must be instructed of the Son; there is salvation in no other ... you must go straight to the point and tell them about the life and death of Christ.⁵³

Since the heathen already knew about God, Zinzendorf reasoned, missionaries should make “the crucified Christ” the center point of teaching as this would naturally lead to a discussion of the already known God behind the fully unfolded drama of salvation history.⁵⁴

Francis Blanchet and M. Demers

Working out of one of the Hudson’s Bay Company 28 outposts, Fathers Francis Blanchet (1795-1883) and M. Demers of the archdiocese of Quebec began the first Catholic mission outpost north of the Colombia river in Cowlitz, Washington in 1839.⁵⁵ During the construction of the Cowlitz Mission the Nisqually Indians asked Father Blanchet for instruction in Christianity by a “real blackrobe.” Not knowing their culture or language, Blanchet made a “ladder” (long flat stick) in July of 1842 to teach the main truths of the Catholic faith.

The markings on his ladder included a series of dots and bars (40 horizontal bars represented 40 centuries BC, 33 dots represented the life of Christ. 18 more horizontal bars represented 18 centuries AD, 42 dots stood for the 42 succeeding years leading to 1982). The ladder also featured a tower, an ark, a mountain represented Mount Sinai, a temple, star of David, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, three crosses, the Twelve Apostles, Reverends Blanchet and Damers). Father Blanchet presented many of the “Catholic Ladders” to the chiefs among the Northwest Indians as gifts, ensuring that the Christian story would spread throughout the 100,000 Indians living in the territory. The Catholic Ladder, much like the totem pole, told stories through symbols. Unlike the totem pole it could be transported from place to place with little difficulty.

Johannes Gustav Warneck

In his book *The Living Christ & Dying Heathenism*, Johannes Warneck (1834-1910) documented the power of Bible stories in converting the peoples of Sumatra, Nias, Borneo and New Guinea in the 1860s. He persuasively argues that the best way to communicate the gospel message is by proclaiming the *deeds of God*, not delivering intellectual lectures on his existence and character. According to Warneck, this is best accomplished through

53. Christian History Institute, “Christian History,” 26.

54. While Zinzendorf did recognize the slaves’ understanding of God, and its necessary foundation for the Jesus’ story, one wonders if he was aware of how incorrect ideas of God could skew the Jesus story presented in the Gospels.

55. See Nichols, *The Mantle of Elias; The Story of Fathers Blanchet and Demers*, 1941.

the telling of Bible stories that speak most loudly to God meeting the specific needs of people as described in the Old and New Testaments. He wrote:

The Bible stories reveal God to the heathen as a God of deeds. The inference they draw is that such a God will perform works of power and love among them also. The divine dealings, in which God makes Himself known by progressive stages that men may be gradually prepared for His greatest and final act of revelation, viz., the redemption by Jesus Christ.

.... The stories of the Old Testament exercise a great power over heathen hearts. The narratives of the creation of the world and of man, of paradise, the fall, the flood, the confusion of languages, of the patriarchs, Moses, and the giving of the law, of Israel's journey through the wilderness, the stories of Samuel, David and Solomon, are all listened to with keen interest, and are cherished

The hearer of the Old Testament stories learns how God must be feared; he learns also how He should be loved and trusted. ... The story of salvation brings God into their life; their dim eye learns to see Him as His nature is progressively revealed. ... The Old Testament stories are therefore of the utmost importance for the Christianizing of a heathen people. ... The question need not be decided what stories of the Old or New Testaments make the first and most effective impression on heathen hearts. They work together as members of one revelation. The order of rank will differ among different peoples.⁵⁶

Warneck was convinced that communicating God's deeds of "power and love" through a sweep of selected sacred stories would make a great impression on the hearts of animists. He was right.

Christian Keysser

George Vicedom, former Lutheran missionary to Papua New Guinea before becoming a professor at Augustana Kirchliche Hochschule in South Germany, tells the intriguing and instructive story of a church planting movement that took place on Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea, from 1900 through 1960. By 1960 the movement consisted of some 200,000 baptized Papuans from whom emerged 1200 national evangelists.

Christian Keysser (1877-1961), another German Lutheran, played a major role in initiating the movement while serving in New Guinea from approximately 1900 to 1920. Concerned over sparse response to decades of the conventional call for individuals to follow Christ, Keysser "pondered deeply the question of methods."⁵⁷ He recognized that such an individualized approach did not reflect the social structure of the tribal people, who were more apt to make important decisions in a group context. His solution was a call for "tribal conversion," i.e., group decisions that would lead to group conversions that in turn would lead to group baptisms. He also insisted on teaching Bible stories that demonstrated collective responsibility before the Creator. Vicedom summarizes, "If any case of theft, murder or adultery had occurred, the whole tribe was held responsible for the crime. Old

56. Warneck, *The Living Christ & Dying Heathenism*, 227-230.

57. Vicedom, 16.

Testament stories were used to make plain to the non-Christian the way in which God speaks and acts in relation to a whole people.”⁵⁸

Keysser required potential candidates for baptism to learn 40 Bible stories from both Testaments so they would understand the implications of entering into their new system of belief, their new relationship with God. Vicedom notes the value of such a sweeping series of sacred stories:

Candidates were required to learn these by heart, in order to ensure that those illiterate people should have a basic understanding of the Word of God. In connection with these stories Keysser used to discuss with the candidates all the customs of Papuan life and the old religion. Each learner was required to decide for himself which and how many of these old customs were in accordance with the will of God, and how much must be given up. It was the aim of the missionary that everything which had been learnt should at once be put into practice.⁵⁹

Keysser believed that the efforts required by baptismal candidates to learn the Bible stories paid great dividends. Vicedom continues:

They tell men what God does for them in a quite definite situation, and what he requires of them. They explain more fully the relationship in which men stand to God. They make plain the response of God to the action of men. In this way they make it easier for the seeker after God to reach the decision which is required of him. Many of the people of the Bible became for the Papuans patterns of the way in which they themselves are expected to behave. Thus their faith and their obedience grow out of these great examples from old time.⁶⁰

But not all of Keysser’s missionary contemporaries were quick to endorse his controversial methodology. Lively debate continued until 1915. Opponents criticized his “tribal conversion” model even though research showed that Papuans who had made group decisions for Christ made more radical breaks from past tradition than those who made individual decisions. They also maintained that Keysser “laid too great stress on the Old Testament, and that not enough time was given to the preaching of the Cross.”⁶¹

While Keysser’s colleagues debated the Bible story methodology, Papuan evangelists told stories of biblical characters, and more importantly the God who led and empowered them. They did this in “conversational fashion” as well as with visible illustrations and acted-out parables.

George and May Ingram

Early ministry efforts among villagers and tribal peoples in North India during the early 1900s resulted in nothing but frustration for George and May Ingram. Translation of the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and several catechisms did not open

58. Ibid., p. 16.

59. Ibid., 22-23.

60. Ibid., 23.

61. Ibid., 28.

spiritual eyes as they had expected. The people, for some reason, “found it difficult to profit from the common method of Christian teaching.”⁶² This led the Ingrams to conclude that the village work was “not a great success.”

The couple then developed the *Twelve Bible Stories* and began to teach through the story-set “as our Lord taught.” Spiritual eyes began to open, so the Ingrams continued to modify and expand the original series into the *24 Bible Stories*, first published in 1920. The first 12 stories were geared towards “inquirers and young Christians” while the last 12, mostly from Acts, were for those who had internalized the first set and integrated them into their new worldview.

The Ingrams based their story selection on two factors: (1) the “life and teaching of our Lord,” and (2) “conscious lack amongst the Christians.” They expected the teaching time to take two years, about a month per story, or “until they are really known and understood.”⁶³ In the third edition (1952), the first lesson from Genesis was divided into five new lessons, bringing the number of stories to 30. The number of the original title remained unchanged until the 1997 edition was renamed: *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters*.⁶⁴

The Ingrams included the 30 Bible stories⁶⁵ in the two-year program designed for inquirers and young Christians. Each simple lesson outline follows a common plan with eight parts.⁶⁶ The lesson begins with the entire portion of Scripture to be studied followed by the selected passage for public reading. The main points of the story are then selected to keep the teacher on target. This leads to a more precise focus, identifying the “one obvious spiritual lesson with each story.” The communicator adds “local color” to drive home the point. One verse that “contains the gist of the spiritual teaching” is then chosen for memorization. The seventh part calls for a “personal application.” The final part of the lesson puts the story to song so that it could easily be remembered and rehearsed by all. Brief Notes “for teacher’s guidance” were provided for most lessons.

At the beginning of every month, paid teachers gathered two days for the Monthly Workers’ meeting. In these they received encouragement and watched as the leader modeled the new story and “lyric” (song) for the month. They also received their pay. After practicing their own delivery they returned to their homes in the District and taught the same lesson to their congregation. Following this plan, the Ingrams reported, “the same story and text and lyric are taught all over the area at the same time for a definite period.”⁶⁷ To keep the main point of ministry the main point, four questions were always asked of each participant during the monthly gathering:

62. Ingram and Ingram, *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters*, 1.

63. *Ibid.*, 5.

64. *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters* is available in English, Hindi, and Tamil.

65. The lessons included: (0) God, the Creator, (1) The Fall of Man, (2) The Birth of Christ, (3) The Prodigal Son, (4) The Sower, (5) The Great Supper, (6) The Lost Sheep, (7) Healing of A Paralytic, (8) Healing of the Man Born Blind, (9) Raising of Lazarus, (10) The Crucifixion, (11) Resurrection and Ascension, (12) Heaven. Need-oriented stories for Christians included: (13) Paul’s Conversion, (14) The Holy Spirit, (15) United Prayer, (16) Personal Work, (17) Sunday, (18) Giving to God, (19) The Ten Virgins, (20) Our Lord’s Second Coming, (21) Persecution, (22) The Sin of Lying, (23) The Sin of Idolatry, (24) Death, (25) Daniel, A Man of Prayer, (26) A Christian Wedding, (27) The Judgment of God, (28) Three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace, (29) A Story to Illustrate the Giving of the Tithe, (30) The Family of God. Ingram and Ingram, *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters*, 1997.

66. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

67. *Ibid.*, 5.

(1) Has anyone in your area come out for Christ during the past month and accepted Him as Savior? (2) Are there any who are truly seeking Him? (3) Have any in your area sought and received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39)? (4) Are any seeking this great gift?⁶⁸

The Ingrams' 30 Bible studies progressed seamlessly from the inquiry stage through the Christian growth stage, providing an integrated albeit limited picture of the sacred Scriptures. It incorporated more Old Testament stories for Christians than for inquirers, but it did employ the Genesis stories to create the need for a Savior. The model tended to teach topical studies through telling Bible tales.

Hans-Ruedi Weber

Dutch missionary-theologian Hans-Ruedi Weber (1923-) arrived in Central Celebes, Indonesia in 1950. In 1952 the provincial synod of Luwuk-Banggai asked Weber to find a way to disciple some 30,000 Christians in Luwuk-Banggai. The candidates for training, for the most part, had only three years of elementary education and had little, if any, grasp of the Bible. The synod gave him no helpers nor even funds. During 1953-54, Weber trained the Luwuk-Banggai in their language in the basics of the power of Scripture. He describes the five-day Bible course taught in a central area:

On the first evening we sketched our travel route through the whole of the Bible: the Creation as the starting-point and the Kingdom of God as the final goal, with Christ as the all-governing centre. We began our teaching with the Fall and the story of God's covenants with Israel; these we followed with the intervening period of the early Church, to the final culmination in the Second Coming. We used a catechetical method, at the same time writing and 'drawing' on the blackboard the results of our question-and-answer game. In the four following days Genesis 3.1-19, Exodus 19.1-6, Luke 2.8-14 and Acts 1.6-11 were thoroughly studied and discussed.⁶⁹

Weber, who had come to teach "letter-blind" people (two-thirds were illiterate), became their student, learning from these "imaginative artists who thought and spoke in colourful, glowing pictures, actions and symbols."⁷⁰ He realized that if these people were to learn the Scriptures, church workers must stop obligating the believers to learn "from the abstract ideas of our catechisms and doctrines . . . We must proclaim picturesquely and dramatically rather than intellectually and verbally."⁷¹ What great discovery came out of this experiment? He wrote, "The greatest discovery, or re-discovery, was the Bible itself, which suddenly became new through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit."⁷²

68. Ibid., 6.

69. Weber, *Communicating the Gospel to Illiterates*, 15-16.

70. Ibid., 18-19.

71. Ibid., 19.

72. Ibid., 21.

Weber's book *Communicating the Gospel to Illiterates* called for a re-examination of missionary teaching methods used among tribals. He viewed the Bible as "*God's picture book*" which included "*great drama*" and "*great symbol.*" Weber argued that this should translate into the use of teaching approaches that emphasized concrete dimensions through group interaction. He advocated tribal evangelism that incorporated storytelling accompanied by simple drawings, which he called "chalk and talk." Weber drew simple pictures associated with the covenants, told accompanying Bible stories, then contrasted them with traditional legends. In this way he successfully replaced the latter with the former.

Weber's philosophy and enthusiasm is evident in his writing, "The most exciting discovery of that time, however, was a new Bible: the Bible as the story and oral tradition of God's great acts, the Bible as God's picture-book, the Bible pointing to the symbols by which God both conceals and reveals himself."⁷³ In relation to stories, Weber astutely argued that:

It is fundamentally wrong to treat illiterates as children and merely to tell them Bible stories. They are much better equipped than many Western intellectuals to see the whole: the complete redemptive history—creation and eschatology, Christ the centre of redemption, and linked with this centre the history of Israel and of the mission ... Every Bible story that is told must be set within the framework of the whole history of redemption. Every Biblical figure must be shown as having a part in the great drama of salvation. This is best done when every story is set within the context of liturgy and sacraments. And the whole redemptive drama must be confronted ... with the mythological cycle ... making apparent to everybody that the Christian faith means revolutionizing all patterns of thought.⁷⁴

He went on to claim that the New Testament by itself was insufficient to challenge traditional tribal myths during evangelism, and that the New Testament alone should not be the final goal of Bible translators:

We can only confront mythological thinking with redemptive history if our proclamation comprises the whole of the Bible, the message of the Old and the New Testaments. It is therefore fundamentally wrong to tell illiterates only stories from the New Testament, as is so frequently done. It is wrong to translate only the New Testament, or portions of it, as is the general practice.⁷⁵

Weber made another cogent point when he wedded the written Word with the liturgical. "This Bible as a manuscript and as a liturgical drama (including the cycle of feasts in the ecclesiastical year) forms a whole."⁷⁶ Both aspects were necessary for God's message to be understood as an unfolding story that had a beginning, middle, and end.

73. Weber, *Experiments with Bible Study*, 4.

74. Weber, *Communicating the Gospel to Illiterates*, 44.

75. *Ibid.*, 44.

76. Weber, *Experiments with Bible Study*, 29.

Weber now teaches in Switzerland and remains enthusiastic about the use of Bible stories and symbols. He has since added comparisons of Christian symbols with those of Buddhism, Taoism and Communism. Weber believes that contrasting Bible stories and symbols with traditional stories and symbols effectively challenges the local worldview and brings about true worldview change, thus offering eternal hope to those who hear and see the contrasts.

Donald McGavran

Also during the 1950s, Donald McGavran (1897-1990), the father of the modern Church Growth movement, used eight stories to evangelize peoples of India. He writes:

Eight Bible stories were generally used. The first was of the creation of the world and the fall of man. Then skipping the entire Old Testament we told about Christ's birth. The third story was Christ's curing the leper, His tremendous mercy. Then came the stilling of the storm, His tremendous power. Or that story might be changed to His healing people and casting out evil spirits and to heal the sick was emphasized ... A fourth story was Christ's forgiving the woman taken in adultery. In Satnami villages ... adultery was common. Gonorrhoea and syphilis were everywhere ... A fifth story was that of Christ's teaching good conduct....Another story was that of the rich young ruler ... Then came the story of the crucifixion ... The last story was Christ's resurrection and His present rule throughout the world.⁷⁷

Jacob Loewen

During the 1950s and 1960s Bible stories were again used, this time in Panama, Central America. In a provocative chapter entitled "Bible Stories: Message and Matrix," Jacob Loewen provided a growing understanding of the use of a sweeping sacred Story in ministry. His thesis:

Narrative, because of its extensive use in so many (if not all) cultures, its flexibility for emphasis, dramatization, and personal style, and because of its holding power over even a very heterogeneous audience, is a form par excellence for a beginning witness of the Good News.⁷⁸

His first attempts, using isolated stories with no introductory story or transitions between stories, resulted in confusion and misunderstanding. This resulted in confusion and misunderstanding, leading Loewen and his colleagues to conclude: "We soon realized that the sequence was as important as the truths contained in the stories. So we began to tell the Old and New Testament stories in a chronological sequence over a period lasting many months."⁷⁹ This worked fine for regular attendees, but was "seriously flawed for new

77. McGavran, *The Satnami Story*, 55-56.

78. Loewen, "Bible stories: Message and Matrix," 370.

79. *Ibid.*, 373.

additions or the erratic attenders.”⁸⁰ This and another experiment led Loewen to conclude that a matrix was necessary to avoid negative restructuring (syncretism):

We would like to assert that over and above form, point of contact, emphasis, or even the meeting of felt need, the individual parts of the message need a matrix, a setting, which will meaningfully relate them to a whole and which will provide somewhat of a barrier against negative restructuring.⁸¹

In the late 1950s, Loewen developed a matrix of some 26 lessons⁸² that provided a “telescoped version of the Bible narrative.”⁸³ He based individual story selection on certain criteria. He selected stories that: (1) provided “a bird’s eye view of the span of Biblical history,”⁸⁴ (2) identified the bridges and barriers of local mythology, (3) introduced key concepts, such as sin, salvation, and so forth. “The greatest emphasis, of course, was placed on the New Testament narrative of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ,”⁸⁵ and (4) emphasized Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection.

F. Glenn and Billie Prunty

NTM missionaries F. Glenn and “Billie” Prunty were the first to use Loewen’s expandable series among the Chocó in another part of Panama in the late 1950s. After several unsuccessful years of ministry using traditional methodologies, the Pruntys entered into a period of deep discouragement. But things were about to change as they began telling stories as part of The Story, God’s metanarrative. After hearing the Bible stories in their own language the whole village decided to walk “God’s road.” The new stories sparked interest, capturing their hearts of the Chocó, and providing Glenn and Billie a much-needed spiritual lift. In 1959, the booklet of Bible stories served as the final primer (of seven) for a literacy program. In 1961, the Chocó church at El Mamey used the matrix to start four other churches.

Loewen believed that a comprehensive story approach provides a number of ministry benefits, proved by the Pruntys’ experience:

1. It permitted us to give a relatively “whole” message very early in our language experience, long before such problems as the name for the Holy Spirit were solved.

80. Ibid., 373.

81. Ibid., 373.

82. Loewen’s 26 stories included: Origin of Satan / Creation / Entrance of Sin / Cain and Abel / The Deluge / The Ten Commandments / Prophecies Concerning Jesus / John the Baptist / Birth of Christ / Baptism of Jesus / Ministry of Jesus / Calling of the Disciples / Feeding of the 5000 / The Rich Man and Lazarus / Blind Bartimeus / Resurrection of Young Man / Zacchaeus / Prodigal Son / Announcements Concerning Jesus’ Death / Last Supper / Judas Betrays Jesus / Jesus Before Pilate / The Crucifixion / Burial of Jesus / Resurrection of Jesus / Ascension of Jesus. (374) Loewen, Jacob A. “Bible stories: Message and Matrix.” *Practical Anthropology* 11 (1964) 49-54. Reprinted in *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective* (1975) edited by Jacob A. Loewen, (1975) 370-376.

83. Ibid., 373.

84. Ibid., 374.

85. Ibid., 375.

2. The narrative form permitted us to meet the demand of cultural relevance in both form and content, while at the same time permitting us to avoid a number of theological problems that would have hindered comprehension for the novice.
3. It provided the expansible framework which permitted us to “anchor” the message of the Gospel of Mark as an expansion of the known message of God.
4. It has apparently prevented serious and harmful restructuring of the “new” message even though during most of the year the new churches were without the counsel of a resident missionary.
5. The “feedback” in the retellings, dramatizations, and local applications of stories provided answers to serious translation problems.
6. The narrative simplicity offered new literates a personal encounter with a challenging and already culturally accepted, relevant message.
7. It provided the new Chocó Christians with a form of the message that so closely paralleled their own folk tales that everyone could immediately begin telling and sharing the Good News with others.⁸⁶

Raymond and Dorothy Valenzuela

Working with the Methodist Mission in Chile under the Comisión Evangelística Latino Americana de Educación Cristiana (CELADEC) in the 1960s, Raymond and Dorothy Valenzuela recognized the Methodist church curricula that had been developed in Spanish for the urban middle-class Chilean churches did not work in rural congregations. So, in consultation with others, they pioneered in Spanish “La Nueva Vida en Cristo Plan de Estudios” (“The New Life in Christ Curriculum”).

The series contained 30 stories accompanied by 32 pictures designed for illiterate and semi-literate believers in rural congregations. The co-editors, who had no training as writers or editors and who had no experience ministering to semi-literate people, recognized that their new curricula should not be “graded down,” but rather constructed in a “different way.” They also did not want the lessons to teach *about* God and Christ. Instead the lessons should set the stage for people to *encounter* God and Christ. Lessons were therefore called “encounters.”

The couple presented their series at a conference in Chaco Province, Argentina, in 1966, where they met Loewen and compared his 26 Bible stories with their 30. They discovered the major distinction was that Valenzuela’s “Encounter 1” provided a framework for the total course, summarizing all the lessons. The individual “encounters” that followed expanded and developed the framework. Both Loewen and Prunty (previously mentioned) eventually used the Valenzuelas’ modified course, finding it effective.

Vincent Donovan

Father Vincent Donovan (1926-2000), a Spiritan priest, worked among the Masai people of Tanzania in East Africa from 1955 until 1973. Shortly after his arrival he found himself frustrated by two major church policies that he perceived as reasons for little church growth: (1) missionaries had bought slaves to Christianize them, and (2) they had

86. Ibid., 376.

established schools that had obligated the missionaries to focus their attention on children, even as the national government was taking over the schools. Along with that, there was a growing nationalistic spirit among the Masai. All combined, Donovan faced an uphill battle.

Frustrated and concerned, he wrote the following to his superiors in 1966: “The best way to describe realistically the state of this Christian mission is the number zero. As of this month, in the seventh year of this mission’s existence, there are no adult Masai practicing Christians from Loiondo mission.”⁸⁷ He was certain that it was time to develop a new missiology for effective evangelism among the Masai.

For Donovan, the gospel was “not a philosophy or set of doctrines or laws. That is what culture is. The gospel is essentially a history at whose center is the God-man born in Bethlehem, risen near Golgotha.”⁸⁸ Distancing himself from the institutional church, Donovan concluded that evangelism should be entirely separate from discipleship. He called this approach the “naked gospel.” Recognizing a foundation was necessary for comprehension of the gospel, he began by telling contextualized stories from the Old and New Testaments. He believed that Truth is teased out rather than forced upon someone. He asserted that telling and recounting sacred Bible stories was the best means of teasing out Truth:

No other method could better serve our purpose. I would try to convey to them what I knew from the written gospels and simply ask them to recount afterwards what they remembered of the stories and sayings of Jesus. Even as pagans they sat around at our regular get-togethers, recounting and discussing the stories of Jesus as they heard them. In the future, if they came to believe in Jesus, they would be able to gather as Christians and do the same thing, each one contributing what he or she knew and remembered about Jesus, and when, as a community, they had finished this, they would have their gospel, their scripture reading, their own liturgy of the word.⁸⁹

The Masai’s traditional stories, however, often contradicted Bible stories. The Masai interpreted the biblical creation story from an agricultural perspective. Only barbarians would cut open the earth, expose it to the sun, and turn it into a desert, which of course would kill their cattle, the societal symbol of wealth and status.

Donovan also recognized the value of Christian symbols and sacraments for every area of life. He believed that Christianity must become a total way of life under the rule of God. He felt missionaries should facilitate life under His Lordship, then leave.⁹⁰

87. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 15.

88. *Ibid.*, 31.

89. *Ibid.*, 76-77.

90. Today, little, if any, of Christianity remains among this group of people. One of the major reasons for this may be Donovan’s separation of evangelism from follow-up. With no follow-up, what had taken root soon may have withered and sadly was blown away by the wind.

Gabriel J. Fackre

Emeritus Professor of theology at Andover Newton Theological School, Gabriel Fackre concludes that “The Book tells the tale of its meaning and destiny.”⁹¹ It is the “theater in which the drama of evangelism develops.”⁹² The good news is:

The story of the deeds of God from creation to consummation, with the highlight on its central chapters: Bethlehem, Galilee, Calvary, and Easter—Jesus Christ. Evangelism is ... *empowerment by the Holy Spirit to get the story out, by word in deed, so that people will be turned around to Jesus Christ, into his body the church, and toward the neighbor in need.*⁹³

When heard, the gospel “upsets, exhilarates, wounds, heals, liberates, reconciles. It changes things! It converts. It turns people around.”⁹⁴

Fackre then asked two foundational questions. “What is the story we are called to get out?”⁹⁵ and “*If we are to get the story, how do we get to the story?*”⁹⁶ To answer these questions he drew a chart of four concentric circles. The center circle includes the *story*, i.e., the good news of Jesus Christ that turns darkness into light. The second circle contains the *storybook*, i.e., the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Circle three includes the *storytellers*, i.e., the Church’s collective wisdom throughout the generations. The outermost circle contains the *storyland*, i.e., one’s private and public experience.

The Holy Spirit roams all four circles connecting His story with our story, bringing understanding and faith. Even so, “if we are to get the story out, we must first get the story *straight*. ... It is important for the Christian community to get the Story straight also because the world is aggressively telling its own tale.”⁹⁷

To help get the story straight Fackre outlined a linear “sweep of the revelatory process” that included: Creation, Fall, Covenant, Christ, Church, Salvation, and Consummation. He then interpreted these Christian doctrines (which he called “chapters in the biography of God”) using systematic theology. Fackre defined systematic theology as an “ordered reflection that seeks to elaborate and render intelligible the faith of the Christian community. It is the explication and interpretation of the chapters of the Christian Story.”⁹⁸ Fackre’s books wed story to systematic theology, acknowledging that the latter originated from and found its true meaning in the former, God’s Christian Story. The sweeping picture of Scripture, then, defines systematic theology.

91. Fackre, *The Christian Story*, 74.

92. Fackre, *Word in Deed*, 21.

93. *Ibid.*, 28.

94. *Ibid.*, 28-29.

95. *Ibid.*, 29.

96. *Ibid.*, 42-43.

97. Fackre, *The Christian Story*, 2.

98. *Ibid.*, 16.

Concluding Reflections

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “All my best thoughts were *stolen* by the *ancients*.”⁹⁹ Another sage quipped, “Nothing is new under the sun; *the future only repeats the past*” (Ecclesiastes 1:9, VOICE). While both sayings are true, each sage would likely concur that prior foundations provide platforms to build on and to contextualize in our current contexts. Something old remains, something new emerges. This is the critical contextualization evident in the case studies previously noted. Songs, symbols, sequence, redemptive history, systematic theology, drama, art, group decisions about Christ were amalgamated with telling stories and a pedagogy that emphasized the concrete. Yes, there was, and is, more to the story.

Now, did McIlwain build off of this history? Was he even aware of those who went before him? How and why did CBT expand in the countryside? What new constructs found their roots in the pre-existing ones mentioned? Who instituted the changes? What title changes took place within the movement? Chapter 2 will answer these and other related questions.

99. <http://www.streetlightpublications.net/quotes/all.htm>

Rural Roots

“One person can begin a movement that turns the tide of history.”

—JACK CANFIELD

TREVOR MCILWAIN UNKNOWINGLY launched the present-day evangelical Orality Movement at the New Tribes Mission (NTM) South East Asian leadership meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, in January, 1981. Unaware of those pioneers who had in the past presented the sweep of Scripture through Bible stories, including earlier NTM missionaries (chapter 1),¹⁰⁰ McIlwain began an extensive tour to present Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT) inside and outside of NTM. Those who attended the Pattaya meetings returned to their respective countries armed with notes, videos, and ideas on how to use Bible stories to communicate the sweep of Scripture in a manner that would help thwart the spread of multi-faced syncretism.

Movements often experience multiple starts, sputters, and setbacks but they tend to inevitably march along. Their survival and growth confirm their legitimacy. Movements also tend to have outliers, i.e., those not directly connected to the movement but who promote related ideas. All of this can be said of the present-day Orality Movement as my

100. I have often wondered who and/or what influenced McIlwain to begin with Genesis and progress to Christ chronologically. Was it Bob Gustafson, then Field Director, who, when he heard about the syncretism while visiting in Palawan, told McIlwain that he had to start all over, he had to start from the beginning (paraphrase)? Were some of the authors McIlwain cited in those early mimeographed notes in 1981 influential in a Genesis through Christ presentation? These included: J.C. Ryle, Leland Ryken (“The Bible: God’s Storybook”), C. H. Spurgeon, Edmund P. Clowney, Robert D. Brimsmead, Eldon Ladd, J. Sidlow Baxter, Dean Alford. No book or article titles accompanied the author’s name except for Ryken. No publication dates were tied to the authors. Biblical theology seemed to drive CBT.

Here is McIlwain’s response to my question, why start in Genesis? “The reason I developed the CBT was because I was frustrated trying to teach the NT to people (Palawanos) who had no background in the OT. As I tried to teach the NT by continually filling the gaps in the knowledge from the OT I thought this is crazy. I should begin where the story begins and lay the foundations before trying to teach the NT. It had absolutely nothing to do with anyone else or any book. It was the Lord answering my prayer to show me how to teach the Palawan churches” (personal communication, June 26, 2011).

vignettes below will demonstrate. I have not presented them in chronological order but rather in clusters of related events that bind them together.

This chapter concurrently documents some of the seminal stories I've discovered that have shaped, and are shaping, the spread of the evangelical Orality Movement from remotest countryside to suburbia.¹⁰¹ These stories will provide important answers to these questions: Who are the major contributors to the movement? What contributions have they made? What changes have they introduced? What label changes have occurred over time? Who does the movement reach? Who are the significant outliers promoting similar ideas?

Philippine Foundations

After the Thailand conference in early 1981 McIlwain returned to the Philippines and taught seminars on his chronological model to all NTM missionaries. His ever-expanding mimeographed notes eventually resulted in a nine-volume series titled *Firm Foundations*. The first volume, published in 1987, provided the philosophy behind CBT. The remaining volumes consisted of Bible lessons taught in phases from Genesis through Revelation designed specifically for tribal peoples.

Around 2005 the title of the original curriculum, "Chronological Bible Teaching," was changed to "Foundational Bible Teaching" (FBT). NTM's USA training school staff felt the emphasis placed on "chronological" time represented only one aspect of the model being taught. While Phases 1-3 were basically taught chronologically, Phases 4-7, the epistles, were not necessarily in historical sequence but laid out in a logical sequence paralleling the believer's spiritual growth and development. Also, with the stories of its evangelistic success coming from so many fields, users equated CBT with evangelism alone (Phase 1) instead of understanding CBT as an overarching narrative and teaching program. Therefore, the term Foundational Bible Teaching better reflected the concept of laying a strong Old Testament foundation for the gospel while the curriculum as a whole provided the very foundation of growth for the young church plants.

A Movement Advances

New Tribes missionaries in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea were the first to implement CBT in their tribal contexts, thus providing a wind that fanned the flames of the new movement. It is time to tell tales.

The Bisorio of Papua New Guinea, 1981

Two field leaders of NTM's Papua New Guinea field returned from McIlwain's seminar in January of 1981 with 15 cassette tapes and a 42-page bullet-point handout. George and Harriet Walker studied the notes, listened to the cassettes, and were sold on CBT.

In 1978 the Walkers and Bob and Noby Kennell had started ministry among the monolingual Bisorios who reside in the foothills of the East Sepik province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). In 1981, after three years of culture and language acquisition, they became the first PNG workers to implement this new chronological approach. And as with all

101. Some of the material in this chapter originates from, Steffen and Terry, "The Sweeping Story of Scripture Taught Through Time." *Missiology: An International Review* 35 (2007) 315-335.

things new, it had its share of skeptics. Around 40 Bisorio men and women met with them at first, but before long there were close to 100 overflowing the tiny bush shelter, some needing to sit under the shade of its eaves and of nearby trees. They listened as the missionaries taught five days a week, sometimes up to three hours a day, for 24 weeks. They opened each day's lesson with a thorough review of the previous day's lesson, and alongside the new lesson they acted out carefully scripted dramas to make the stories come to life for the listeners.

On the day of the gospel presentation, Wakeya, the oldest Bisorio man present, was the first to publicly declare his faith in Christ before all one hundred assembled. Once he understood, he cried out, "I do believe, I do believe on Christ!" Some 70 Bisorio made a profession of faith in Christ that day! With the genuine results of this first use of the chronological model in PNG, other NTM missionaries soon developed the CBT among their own people groups. From the Indonesian border in the west to PNG's island provinces in the east, NTM planted church after church using culturally appropriate forms of CBT. Walkers and Kennels eventually developed a manual of 40 Bible lessons, *Evangelizing Cross-Culturally, The Bisorio Example, and Drama in Chronological Teaching: The Use of Skits*. Those publications remain available today through NTM.

Jason and Shirley Birkin, Tala-andig Compose CBT Songs, 1983

The Tala-andig, an animistic, nomadic, monolingual tribal people, reside in the mountains of Mindanao, Philippines. Jason and Shirley Birkin (NTM) began work among them in 1983, learning their unwritten language and developing an orthography. The couple then developed CBT lessons and a literacy program. After years of relationship building, one Tala-andig person braved the onslaught of the spirits and listened to Bible stories from Genesis to the Ascension (Phase 1). His faith in Christ opened the door to the other Tala-andig, and many have entered the Kingdom through his commitment.

During the early years of the church, the illiterate believers would often use traditional Tala-andig singing and chanting to affirm the Bible stories in their hearts. Soon the younger believers introduced traditional ways of singing into the fellowship meetings. From this was born the incorporation of singing into the CBT program, an early example of ethnomusicology in church development.

Eventually the young Tala-andig believers came in contact with other believers in Mindanao, exposing them to a western style of singing accompanied by guitars. Though it was very foreign to them some believers learned how to play the guitar and sing in unison. Contemporary music soon became part of the life of the church, enhancing both worship and the fellowship meetings.

Over time, certain gifted believers became responsible to train others in the art of composing songs. They were given Bible lessons and asked to compose one traditional and one contemporary song for each. When sung in the following fellowship meeting the songs provided a review of the previous week's Bible story

Eventually, all of the Tala-andig Phase 1 and 2 CBT lessons were recorded along with the "review songs" for each lesson. (The portfolio was comprised of 200-plus traditional and 200-plus contemporary songs!) All these recordings have been placed onto MP3 Saber players purchased from Global Recordings Network, and are now scattered over Tala-andig land. The old traditional ways of singing, once dying out, have now been revived. More important, the good news is being proclaimed and heard like never before.

Children and teenagers as well as the elderly can clearly hear the mighty acts of God in history being sung in the version geared for each age-appropriate audience.

Ron and Michelle Jennings, Produce Picture Scrolls, 1984

In 1984 Ron and Michelle Jennings (NTM) developed a picture project to accompany CBT for the Higaunon people, who reside on the island Mindinao, Philippines.

Once the tribal teachers became interested in evangelizing their own people, the Jennings realized that accompanying pictures would serve as an excellent means of bringing to life the historical, foreign concepts of the Bible. One of the tribal men showed some artistic talent so they created a grid of squares out of tracing paper and used that to have him copy the larger pictures brought from Australia (sans the wings on angels, of course) on smaller paper. Cathie Baker (NTM) helped the Jennings draw pictures for less commonly told stories. They developed a set of line drawings and trained some tribal women in the church to make copies, and others to color them in with wax crayon.

The Jennings then developed a bamboo scroll mechanism for holding the pictures that enabled tribal teachers to move the scroll held on two nylon cords stretched across the room in order to expose the next picture. Later they made a review chart that worked in the same manner. After eight years, however, the original sets produced for outreach purposes were eaten by the local cockroach population with a penchant for the foreigners' crayon wax!

More recently the Jennings have generated CBT pictures by computer and the Higaunon use color pencils to highlight the characters. Plastic tube replaced bamboo. Today the Higaunon church produces picture sets for use in its own outreaches and also for those of other tribal ministries, even for a lowland Cebuano church in Butuan, Mindinao. The Jennings, the Cebuano church, and others make donations to the Higaunon Resource Center to cover the cost of these outreach tools. Each set consists of 83 pictures of scenes from Genesis to the Ascension, 23 pictures in Revelation, a review scroll, a scroll that teaches about Bible textual origins, and a scroll that covers biblical principles. Printed teaching materials accompany each scroll so that teachers do not need to rely solely on memory or visual cues.

Dell and Rachel Schultze, *God and Man*, 1984

In an effort to simplify McIlwain's lessons and reduce the total number of stories to 35 yet retain the story nature and chronological order, Dell and Rachel (Sue) Schultze (NTM) wrote and privately published *God and Man* in 1984. They dedicated the 140-page book to their good friend and colleague Jack Connor who had recently gone to be with the Lord after a brief bout with cancer. They wrote:

“As we were preparing these lessons we remembered when we were students with Jack at the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota. Jack spoke in chapel presenting salvation and the gospel of grace, chronologically, covering

the same things contained in this volume.” Those themes included creation, sin, and promise.¹⁰²

The Southern Baptist’s International Mission Board (IMB)¹⁰³ liked the Schultzes’ story emphasis, a contrast to McIlwain’s highly expositional teaching model, and used it globally. Though this small volume proved tremendously helpful, those who translated it verbatim discovered a weakness when applied in contexts outside of its original Ilongot audience. Listeners simply failed to grasp the meaning of the stories. When the IMB staff understood the nature of the problem their solution was to provide the resources to develop story sets based on specific worldview studies (expanded below).

The evangelical Orality Movement had by this point in time taken deep roots within NTM membership. Its influence soon impacted Bible translators within as well as outside of NTM. Translators who formerly began Bible translation with the book of Mark now began with selections from Genesis. Teachers and translators worked closely together to develop a set of Old Testament stories to be translated in an effort to bolster their CBT lessons.

CBT had become the backdrop for countless conversations on most NTM fields as they sharpened it as a tool for both evangelism and discipleship. The deep changes CBT had brought to NTM’s church planting efforts—genuine, verifiable, thriving local churches—did not go unnoticed by other agencies.

CBT Expands to Other Agencies and Audiences

CBT soon spread beyond NTM to the International Mission Board (IMB). This resulted in several additions and adaptations within the movement.

Jim Slack, IMB in Philippines Acquires CBT, 1983

Jim Slack served as a Church Growth consultant for the Foreign Mission Board in the Philippines in the early 1980s. He had read Hans Weber’s book *The Communication of the Gospel to Illiterates* in a doctoral seminar with Cal Guy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in the early 1960s. He and his wife Mary, along with Susan Stokeld, used Weber’s ideas and George and Mary Ingram’s *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters* (from India) at the Southern Baptist College in Mindanao in the early 1970s.

A friend of NTM’s Dell Schultze, Slack soon heard about McIlwain’s Chronological Bible Teaching model. Impressed by it, he invited McIlwain to teach CBT seminars for the IMB in Luzon and Mindanao. McIlwain taught a seminar in Baguio in 1983 and a second one in Davao in 1984. Some 600 IMB missionaries and nationals attended one of the two one-week seminars. CBT had now moved beyond NTM to the IMB, where, over time, it would morph into very different forms.

The IMB missionaries in Mindanao decided not to follow McIlwain’s expansive expositional model. Rather, they invited NTM’s Jay Jackson to provide a more streamlined, flexible version that still retained the chronological approach. The IMB’s Stan Smith, Sam

102. Schultze and Schultze, *God and Man*, iii. This book remains available electronically from jot2@sbcglobal.net

103. Formerly known as the Foreign Mission Board (FMB).

Stallings, Paul Stevens, and later, Jeff Palmer used Jackson's "Phase Planning," driven by a worldview focus, and chronological lessons produced by NTM's Bryan and Diane Thomas, to develop a 54-lesson story set titled, "Chronological Bible Storytelling." This model was much less expositional, less rigid and slightly shorter than McIlwain's CBT. It also introduced a significant change in philosophy and practice. Research gleaned through the study of the host culture's worldview, often on an elementary level, would begin to shape the Bible sets.

Caloy Gabuco, 105 Pictures, 1985

Since both NTM and IMB were now employing similar church planting strategies, Jim Slack approached Dell Schultze about developing a set of pictures to accompany each of the Phase One Evangelism Bible stories. In that the IMB had or would have a good number of missionaries working among tribal peoples and lowland Filipinos who read little, they preferred 2-dimensional pictures over 3-dimensional ones. NTM agreed, and the project was on. The IMB invested \$100,000 and NTM took oversight of the "Picture Project."

Caloy Gabuco, a Filipino artist, painted the original set of 105 pictures. Color picture sets in various sizes were made off of his 105 oil paintings, as well as black and white line drawings.¹⁰⁴ Two-dimensional pictures were then made available for each evangelism Bible story in order to provide a symbolic reference.¹⁰⁵

After several printings Gabuco's pictures, J.O. Terry and others introduced a shorter set of 40 pictures based on the most commonly used stories. This reduced the load storytellers had to carry, as well as the cost of each set.

A recently released set of 210 pictures by British artist Graham Kennedy is now available through NTM.¹⁰⁶

J.O. Terry, Chronological Bible Storying, 1992

Jim Slack enlisted J.O. Terry, a media specialist for the Asia-Pacific region of the IMB, to help further develop the mission's version of CBT. Terry had been experimenting with the use of stories in various countries beginning in 1988. He joined Slack in 1991, and together they traveled the world co-teaching CBT. Terry then trekked much of Asia, and in the process became the quintessential Bible storyteller. He continued to revise his materials from his own travels and from information streaming in from his many contacts around the world. From this wide collection of first-hand field experience and feedback he was ready to announce a major change in the direction of the IMB's handling of CBT.

Over the years Terry became less and less comfortable with McIlwain's highly expositional teaching approach and CBT's rigidity. He felt McIlwain's model was geared toward literates and Terry preferred telling the Bible story, not just talking about it. Telling, in his opinion, counted on the power of the story, allowing the listeners to discover its meaning. He favored interactive dialogue to determine their level of understanding, rather

104. See www.ntmbooks.com

105. The original artwork was eventually shipped to NTM headquarters in Sanford, Florida, and remains stored there in a fireproof, climate controlled room.

106. For the most recent pictures see <http://www.foundationmatters.org/store/index.php?dispatch=categories.catalog>

than top-down exposition to provide the necessary information. For Terry, offering curriculum guidelines with options would offset CBT's rigidity. He concluded that this change in philosophy and practice necessitated a label change, and in 1992 he renamed CBT "Chronological Bible Storying" (CBS).

Terry also experimented with what he called "fast-tracking," i.e., covering Genesis through the cross in a matter of a few minutes or over a period of a few days. He also tried a rapid-fire approach whereby he told multiple stories or a sequence of stories without stopping for dialogue or exposition. This methodology was eventually called Creation 2 Christ (C2C).

Terry discovered that a panoramic overview of the Bible presented first helped in the overall understanding of its individual stories. The "fast-tracking" step helped people realize that the Bible was a progressive story linked story-by-story. He also used fast-tracking to probe for responsive listeners, those who some call "persons of peace" who might serve as conduits to the spread of the Gospel (Matthew 10, Luke 10). The fast-track versions also proved valuable for radio listener rallies and in preparing an audience of viewers for The JESUS Film. Terry believed that individual Bible stories unanchored to the metanarrative were often misinterpreted. Presenting first a metanarrative (the big picture from Genesis to the Gospels or Revelation) could help alleviate the problem.

"Remember: telling Bible stories enables a people movement to spread. Church planters should have stories ready that present each vital Christian truth and each essential area of the Christian life."

(Patterson and Scoggins, 1993, 53)

Terry also wanted storying to become less dependent on linear chronology¹⁰⁷ and more conversational in nature, more situational, more topic-focused. He envisioned fast-tracking could be used in other specific ministry contexts and opportunities with time constraints, like short-term missions. He encouraged flexibility and adaptability in Bible Storying in order to fit different strategic situations and ministry needs, rather than prescribing a "one-size that fits all" solution.¹⁰⁸ He also wanted to provide one-on-one storying opportunities the same attention that one-on-group had received. In his new approach the evangelism theme would be more subtle early on but more pronounced in later stories.

To meet various felt needs and serve as precursors to evangelism, Terry wrote a number of need-based story sets.¹⁰⁹ He laid the stories out chronologically yet they could

107. See Evans, "You Think in Lines, We Think in Circles: Oral Communication Implications in the Training of Indigenous Leaders." In *Developing Indigenous Leaders: Lessons in Mission from Buddhist Asia* edited by Paul De Neui (21013) 21-37.

108. See Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, 2008.

109. Some of J.O. Terry's story sets include: *Hope Stories from the Bible* (32 stories), *Food Stories from the Bible* (44 stories), *Death Stories from the Bible* (42 stories), *Water Stories from the Bible* (22), *Grief Stories from the Bible* (39 stories), *Bible Storying Handbook for Short-Term Mission Teams*, *Mission Volunteers* (32 stories), *Oralizing Bible Stories for Telling*, and *The Holy Rosary Gospel Stories of Jesus* (20 meditations). Forthcoming ministry-themed story sets include: *Heaven is for Women*; *God's Gift of Forgiveness*; *Peace for Hindu Women*; *Ebenezer Stories*; *HIV Hope*; *Let's Just Talk*. The books are available through www.churchstarting.net/biblestorying/Books.htm Request digital downloads at jot2@sbcglobal.net

be told in an order deemed best by the storyteller. His 35-40 story set provided the storyteller ample opportunity to pick and choose appropriate stories for each situation.

This dramatic change of direction within the IMB called for a more generic, more inclusive title that could cover several modules; CBT, CBS, fast-tracking, thematic story sets, and shorter story sets. In 1994 Terry dropped the “chronological” reference from CBS and simple “Bible Storying” became the new label. The IMB continued limited use of CBS, evident in *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* produced through the Lausanne Issue group in 2004.

Film Furthers the Movement

Another defining moment of the movement occurred when film and video technology became widely used in an effort to evangelize and recruit new advocates.

Mark and Gloria Zook, *EE-Taow! Video*, 1989

In December 1986, after chronologically teaching Old Testament Bible stories over two months with no mention of Jesus Christ, Mark and Gloria Zook (NTM) opened the story of Jesus in the New Testament to the Mouk of West New Britain, PNG. Over the next weeks they taught through His life, finally arriving at the climactic day when they presented Jesus crucified, buried and risen to the 310 Mouk packed within hearing distance.

From this event a people movement soon began and the gospel quickly expanded to outlying Mouk villages. The award-winning video entitled *EE-Taow!* (“It Is True”), produced in 1989, not only documented this movement of God, but popularized it through a reenactment of the Mouk story. *EE-Taow-The Next Chapter*, a follow-up video, demonstrates to doubters that this was no flash-in-the-pan movement, but an authentic, sustainable movement of God. Zook continued to teach others how to use CBT nationally and internationally until his death in 2014.

Ron Green, *JESUS Film Project*, 1996

After serving overseas for a number of years, Ron Green became the Director of Overseas Translations for the JESUS Film Project (JFP) in 1990. After five years in this leadership role, Green became increasingly aware of two enormous challenges faced by Campus Crusade for Christ International (CCCI, presently CRU), and the JFP. First, unwritten languages without Scripture and without a gospel witness presented a huge hindrance to the translation of the JESUS Film script. Second, the fact those responding to the JESUS Film were primarily nonreaders posed a challenge to their discipleship and growth in Christ.

In the summer of 1994, Ron, his wife Carol, and two sons were involved in a family ministry project among the Yao people of Mozambique when they met an IMB missionary, Steve Evans. Evans shared the concepts of oral cultures and CBS, already a part of the IMB but novel to Green and The JESUS Film leadership. That initial exposure began a journey of discovery that led Green to meet with leaders of NTM, the IMB, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), Scriptures in Use (SIU), and other agencies on a similar ministry path.

In 1999, UBS, SIL, IMB, CCCI, and The JFP co-hosted an Africa consultation on reaching the remaining unreached peoples of the continent. Steve Evans and Ron Green

co-led a number of the sessions at the conference, which focused on oral strategies for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. While attending Amsterdam 2000, Green asked the IMB to provide training in storying to his JESUS Film staff. During that fall, Evans and Jim Slack traveled to Campus Crusade's headquarters to train the JESUS Film staff there. This was the first of many such training sessions that eventually birthed two new partnerships: The Oral Bible Network and the OneStory Partnership (expanded below).

In broadening the use of Bible Storying to film and digital formats this cooperative spread the methodology further and wider than any of its early advocates could have imagined. In recognition of this feat, Missio Nexus awarded the JFP the "2014 eXcelerate Award." The citation read: "For Strategic innovation in ministry by modeling continuous improvement that leverages digital platforms to share the gospel. In presenting this award we affirm and celebrate initiatives that accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission."¹¹⁰

Old Testament Introduction Added to JESUS Film, 2003

By the late 1990s, despite the success of the JESUS Film, Ron Green was facing a serious problem. TJFP statistics were showing that many "converts" were falling away after supposedly making "decisions for Christ." The film had viewers stepping into the last third of the Bible narrative, the New Testament, without any comprehension of the Old Testament backstory and the God who wrote it. This was especially true for viewers who knew nothing of Jewish culture so prominently leaned upon in the many parables portrayed in the film. This opened the door to multiple misinterpretations of the Story, resulting in false converts worldwide.¹¹¹ To correct the concern, they added an eight-minute Old Testament introduction to the JESUS Film for Muslims released in 2003. The "conversion challenge" also led The JESUS Film Project leaders to help form two new cooperatives, the Luke Partnership in 2001 and StoryRunners in 2003 (expanded below).

Dorothy Miller, The God's Story Project, 1998

In 1998, inspired by the *EE-Taow* video, Dorothy Miller introduced The God's Story Project (TGSP). Using paintings by Norm McGray, lead illustrator for Disney and Hanna Barbera Inc., and with the help of filmmaker Pat Matrisciana, Miller supervised the transfer of McGray's paintings into a full-length film. Miller's 80-minute video, *God's Story: From Creation to Eternity*, presents an overview of Scripture from Genesis through Revelation highlighting God's plan to rescue the fallen human race. It is now available in over 250 languages.

110. See <http://reachingthenationsamongus.org/2014/10/jesus-film-receives-missio-nexus-award/>

111. See Steffen, "Don't Show the JESUS Film..." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 29 (1993) 272-275.

Timely Educational Tools

The young Storying/Orality movement continued to grow, yet its practitioners sensed the need for more theoretical tools to understand the worldview of each distinct audience. To meet these needs and to further their understandings, formal courses and concentrations were developed over the next few years.

J.O. Terry, *IMB Worldview Studies, 1995*

Many questions were raised during those days that required thoughtful and applicable answers if the growing Storying movement were to avoid problems encountered by their JESUS Film counterparts. Should the teachers do more than simply tell Bible stories? Is chronology only a western concept and value? Should there be some worldview study conducted *before* telling the stories? Would worldview research improve the selection, development, and communication of appropriate story sets? Would it help minimize syncretism? How much worldview study is too much? Too little? Are generic worldview studies sufficient to help us reach the unreached and misreached?

While some in IMB leadership pushed to plant more churches faster, Terry, familiar with market research from his background in radio broadcasting, came to a different conclusion. He traced the lack of the IMB's success to the use of imported story sets, not necessarily to a lack of local cultural knowledge. He concluded that their storyers did not need a lot of extraneous local cultural details. While interesting, they were not immediately relevant to story selection nor were they necessary in the discovery of evangelism bridges and barriers.

But they did need *some* cultural understandings. Terry designed a "Y" diagram¹¹² in order to call the storyers' attention to the need for understanding the worldview of their audience as they selected, crafted, told and applied Bible stories. The storyers should apply Scriptural principles, represented by the right wing of the "Y", while recognizing the cultural values and communication styles of the audience, represented by the left. As the storyers processed both the principle in light of the local culture values, they would discover the relevant information for storying, represented by the leg of the "Y".

While the "Y" was very helpful for grasping the big picture, it lacked a detailed process for discipleship and leadership training. And there was still the need for a serious methodology to discover and prioritize acquired worldview information needed to develop sets of Bible stories that effectively served as a challenge to local worldviews. Such a methodology was needed to help listeners compare and weigh worldviews and eventually choose Christ, leading to the formation of faith communities. To address this need, IMB introduced "Worldview Informing and Instructing Bible Storying." Later, other simplified IMB worldview study helps continued to emerge.¹¹³

112. Since the diagram was used during 1995 training in Lome, the capital of Togo, the diagram was dubbed the "Lome Y."

113. For other IMB worldview studies see "Bible Storying Toolbox" in Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, (2008) 131-151; Sanchez, "Discovering Worldview Issues and Processing Worldview Information." In *Bible Storying for Church Planting* edited by Daniel R. Sanchez et al. (2008) 195-198; Hayward Armstrong, Hayward. "Discover How Worldview Shapes Our Lives." In *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying* edited by Hayward Armstrong, (2003) 32-35. See

Slack, Terry and Lovejoy, Storying Courses at Southwestern, 1994

Later in 1994, Jim Slack and J.O. Terry teamed up again to assist in the development of CBS at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas. Because they believed the needs to meet were communicational in nature, they approached the seminary's Homiletic Department instead of its Missions Department. It was time to bring structure to practice. That brought Grant Lovejoy, a homiletics professor, into the picture.

The initial course taught in 1994 focused heavily on orality. In time, more emphasis was placed on the practice of telling Bible stories and the development of short story sets. Trying to bring scholarship and practice together in the academy is never easy. During the initial accredited courses, Slack and Terry spent much time and energy addressing objections and doubts of skeptics. That would change over time as the need for orality became more evident.

Postscript: Jim Slack completed his doctorate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1995. Beginning in 2004 he traveled together with Mark Snowden to train others and vet church planting movements. Grant Lovejoy left the seminary to become International Director of Orality Strategies for the IMB (SBC) in Richmond, Virginia in 2004. Terry, now retired, joined with Daniel Sanchez to continue teaching the orality modules. Related courses are now offered on a regular basis at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Oklahoma Baptist University.

Tom Steffen, From a Course to a Concentration at Biola, 1995

Having had a part in the development of CBT in the Philippines from its early stages, I continued to track and document¹¹⁴ its spread and influence and published several articles on the use of narrative in relation to church planting. In 1995 I introduced the course "Narrative as an Educational Philosophy" (presently titled "Story in Scripture and Service") at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University. My goal was to assist graduate students in recapturing the power of story in Scripture and ministry. The course was ready to teach but I needed a textbook that would serve as a resource to help them learn the lost art of Bible storytelling and address cross-cultural pedagogical issues that CBT and CBS did not tackle.

To provide this I published *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Crosscultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad*, in 1996/2005. The text provided the needed technical and philosophical foundations I desired, but I felt I needed to go further; I needed to practice what I preached. I needed to *tell* the story. So, in 1999 I published *Business as Usual in the Missions Enterprise?*, a textbook on short-term missions cast in story format.

www.oralidadstrategies.org/media_detail.cfm?ResourceID=550 See also Terry, "Role of Worldview in Story Selection." *Journal of Bible Storying*, 13 (2015) 1-6.

114. See Steffen, "Storying the Storybook to Tribals: A Philippine Perspective of the Chronological Teaching Model." *International Journal of Frontiers Mission* 12 (1995) 99-104; Steffen, "Paradigm Changes for Effective Evangelism." *Evangelism: A Lausanne Cooperating Periodical* 9 (1995) 136-140; Steffen, "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 1." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994) 86-97; Steffen, "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 2." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994) 98-109.

This was no easy task for a highly propositional thinker, but it was certainly a necessary one.

In 2011, Biola University's Cook School of Intercultural Studies (CSICS) began to offer a graduate concentration of eight courses (24 units) on oral communication for those preparing to serve among oral peoples. This concentration, still offered, addresses both primary-secondary orality. CSICS's goal is to equip students with both the theory and researched-based practices associated with understanding the special demands of communication in oral cultures, whether self-identified oral learners or oral-digital-social preference learners, and to provide models for using a wide variety of oral communication strategies.

Whether the audience consists of literates, semi-literates, illiterates, or more likely, some fluid combination of each, this concentration is designed to help prepare students to effectively reach a variety of oral learners. It is also designed to be applicable in multiple venues/contexts: presenting the gospel, discipling, training leaders, training followers, teaching community development, working with youth or trauma victims, counseling, conducting business, working with Deaf, translating the Bible or participating in short-term missions.

Roberta King, Storytelling and Song Course, 2004

Since 1978, Roberta King has taught throughout Africa and played a major role in the integration of oral communication and music. One of her textbooks, *A Time to Sing: A Manual for the African Church*, was developed over a span of 10 years she worked with the Nyarafolo (Baptist) believers in Ferkessedougou, Côte d'Ivoire.

Other King publications include *Music in the Life of the African Church*, in collaboration with Jean Kidula, James Krabill, and Thomas Oduro, and *Pathways in Christian Music Communication: The Case of the Senufo of Côte D'Ivoire*. She first taught the course "Communicating Christ through Oral Performance: Storytelling & Song" at the School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, in 2004. Her course "Global Storytelling and Song" went online in 2016.

Oklahoma Baptist University, Orality Minor, 2007

With the assistance of Avery Willis and Grant Lovejoy, Bob Dawson developed an orality degree and minor at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in 2007. The minor included two courses: Chronological Bible Storying, and an Orality Practicum. The Orality degree was then changed to a cross-cultural ministry degree with an emphasis in orality in 2012. In the process, Bruce Carlton added a third course, Communication in Oral Culture. In the fall of 2015, through the help of Mark McClellan, Grant Lovejoy, Hayward Armstrong, and David Sills, OBU launched an on-line Master degree in Orality.

Woody and Lynn Thigpen, First Oral Bible School, 2002-2004

After spending five years in Singapore, Woody and Lynn Thigpen moved to Cambodia in 1999. Realizing they would never truly understand the culture and worldview of the Khmer people by living in the city, they moved to an outlying province. There they came to grips with another reality—that a literate approach to reaching these oral folk-Buddhists would

not work. Jeff Palmer and Johani Guaran (both IMB) from the Philippines provided needed guidance by encouraging them to use pictures in an effort to reach them. The pictures successfully used in the Philippines, however, soon raised questions: “Is that blood? Did they kill an animal?” Shortly thereafter God provided an Asian graphic artist, Adele Inamine, who produced Khmer contextualized pictures that helped them better understand the stories without communication static.

Rather than teach the Bible stories themselves, the Thigpens taught a Cambodian to regularly teach the stories in chronological order. As the number of teachers and listeners increased, comments like this could be heard, “I would rather listen to these stories than go to the wat and hear the monks chant.” Addressing the questions raised through trial and error, the Thigpens continued to improve their approach that now includes the use of recorded Bible stories.

In 2004, the Thigpens moved back to Cambodia’s capital city of Phnom Penh. A search of the internet turned up no equivalent label so they christened their ministry *The Oral Bible School* (OBS). A website followed that provided a house group leader with an integrated curricula sufficient for one year.¹¹⁵ Other curricula include tracks for evangelism, the book of Acts (church life), discipleship, and stories of hope for women. They just completed a study of 2 Peter 1:1-11 taught through narratives, metaphors and graphics.

Bridges Training Network of South Asia Launches Oral University of South Asia, 2017

The Indian partners of Scripture in Use, under the banner of Bridges Training Network of South Asia (BTNSA), formed the Oral University of South Asia. The goal is to create an Indian accredited (Asian Theological Association) university that focuses solely on oral preference learners. The purpose is to provide a broader theological learning experience for oral learners in India and Nepal. Currently, the BTNSA network has about 40 active independent ministries that collaborate, forming over 50 satellite training hubs spread out into most of the states in India.

Publications Promote the Movement

As the orality movement grew, practitioners enthusiastically began to document their experiences. Their writings helped promote the movement while providing new practitioners with guidelines to success in new areas and contexts.

Herbert Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture*, 1982

An interesting thing happened one year after McIlwain introduced his chronological teaching model in Thailand in 1981. Herbert Klem, an outlier, published a seminal book from his own research on orality entitled, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art*. Klem wanted to find a way for the Yoruba people of West Africa to learn the Bible without becoming literate. Klem asked, “If indigenous music was added

115. See <http://www.theoralbibleschool.com>

to an oral presentation of the Bible, would learning increase?” He used the book of Hebrews to test his hypotheses, concluding that both the educated and the uneducated performed better, and at close to the same level, when oral communication tools were used.¹¹⁶

J.O. Terry, *Bible Storying Newsletter*, 1994

Between January, 1994 and October, 2013 Terry edited and published his four-page “Bible Storying Newsletter.” In it he archived many stories describing how CBS was implemented around the globe. It provided a platform to share reports and insights with a broader audience and as such served as a valuable reference for many.

J.O. Terry, *Journal of Bible Storying*, 2004

In 2004, Terry introduced the *Journal of Bible Storying*,¹¹⁷ publishing three issues annually. Over the years, the journal has addressed a variety of topics including storying to children and storying to women, both of whom serve as “gateways” to the evangelization of their families, friends, and neighbors.¹¹⁸

Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) No. 54, 2005

The Lausanne Committee for Word Evangelization (LCWE) called a Forum held in Thailand in 2004 to discuss 31 of the major issues facing those taking the good news to the world. Twenty-eight participants attended the one-week discussion on the key topic of orality. Mark Snowden was its facilitator and Grant Lovejoy served as general editor of the Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) No. 54. This small document focused on making the Word of God available to unreached people groups through the use of appropriate oral strategies for primary-secondary oral learners.

The paper included a controversial term that served as the topic of much discussion, “oral Bible.” They also noted the oral needs of Deaf. Based off of the LOP No. 54, *Making Disciple of Oral Learners* came out in 2005¹¹⁹ with an updated second printing of 10,000 copies released in 2007. It is also available in Korean (2007) and Chinese (2009), with plans to publish in French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic.

Samuel Chiang, et al, *Orality Breakouts*, 2010

In 2010, Samuel Chiang and others edited a sequel to *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. Their volume, *Orality Breakouts: Using Heart Language to Transform Hearts*, confirmed and verified the assertions posited in the 2005 text. The Editorial Committee divided the book into three sections: Back story, The Word Became Fresh, and An Unfinished Story,

116. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture*, 178.

117. The journal is available at journalstorying@sbcglobal.net

118. Issue 10 considered “The Oral Bible Phenomenon”; issue 11 addressed “Bible Storying to Children.” In discovering the key role that woman played as the gateway to families, friends, neighbors, and ultimately their husbands, issue 12 focused on “Bible Storying to Women.”

119. Lausanne Issue Group, *Making disciples of oral learners*, 2005 is viewable at www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP54_IG25.pdf

a total of 19 chapters written by practitioners and/or professionals. The contributors highlighted passion, prayer, paradigm shifts, successes, failures, lessons learned, worldview studies, story models and strategies, oral evaluation, and breakouts. They also defined the movement beyond storying to include song, art, dance, drama, community development, and appropriate technology.

Ed Skowron, *The Bible Taproot*, 2017

In *The Bible Taproot*, Ed Skowron provides “an explanation for and history of one of the most popular and effective methods of teaching God’s Word around the world” (1) — Chronological Foundational Teaching. Skowron considers it benefits and challenges outside and inside the West, noting the players and related teaching tools (manuals, books, workbooks, charts, maps, posters, DVDs, etc.) used in this long-term incarnational church planting model.

Ministry Models Proliferate

As the orality movement mushroomed, new evangelism and discipleship tools emerged to address a variety of audiences.

Joy Ridderhof, *Gospel Recordings Network*, 1939

Joy Ridderhof, another outlier, started Gospel Recordings Network (GRN) in 1939. GRN’s goal is to tell the story of Jesus in every language, no matter how small the population or distant the village. Since its conception, GRN has used Bible stories to communicate spiritual truths to oral populations. They train missionary recordists to use indigenous bilingual interpreters to record Bible stories. These are then disseminated through audio visuals and audio players. Since its inception GRN has impacted some 6000 different ethnic groups using this approach.¹²⁰

Mark Snowden introduced GRN to Bible Storying in 1995 while attending an AD2000 Audio Track meeting in Richmond, Virginia. Alan Starling followed up with GRN, which immediately implemented Bible Storying methodology. Other individuals were also exposed to storying at this three-day training event, including Jim Bowman (more later), Morgan Jackson (Faith Comes by Hearing [FCBH]), and representatives from Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS), which became Vernacular Media Services.

Paul Bramsen, *The Way of Righteousness*, 1998

Heavily influenced by Trevor McIlwain’s materials, Paul Bramsen used and adapted *Firm Foundation* to produce 100 15-minute radio programs first written in 1998 for the Wolof of Senegal, West Africa—a deeply religious people who blend Islam, animism, and maraboutism.

The Way of Righteousness is an English translation of these 15-minute programs, presenting key Bible stories chronologically, searching for the central message of God's

120. See <http://globalrecordings.net/en/>

prophets. Beginning with the Torah of Moses and journeying through the writings of the prophets to discover how people can be made righteous before God, all 100 programs are interconnected, yet each can stand alone. Since its initial publication, it has been translated into over 20 languages.

Frank Schattner, Jonathan Project, OMF, 1999

In 1999, Frank Schattner of OMF International launched a ministry called the Jonathan Project (JP), which has since grown to include other mission agencies. The JP identifies, mobilizes, trains, and coaches global “Jonathans” (1 Samuel 14:6) to facilitate holistic Indigenous Biblical Church Movements (IBCM) among least-reached people groups. IBCMs generate church planting movements through the use of local human and material resources with the goal of worldview and societal transformation.¹²¹ Since many of these groups are non-literate, Jonathans are trained to tell Bible stories chronologically from Genesis through Revelation, then to train the new followers of Christ to do the same (2 Timothy 2:2). The JP integrates orality, Bible storying (to provide an adequate foundation for the gospel), and CPM strategies.

Taikadai (pseudonym) would later build on this oral Comprehensible, Applicable, Reproducible (C.A.R.) approach by connecting it to mass media through daily 30-minute radio broadcasts from Far East Broadcast Company (FEBC) in the Philippines. He is presently investigating the possible use of FM stations as feeding points to existing and new believers.

B. B., Genealogical Storying, 1999

In April of 1999, B. B. (pseudonym) presented a concept paper entitled “Genealogical Storying” at a conference on reaching Middle Eastern nomads with the gospel. The author argued that chronology is a “diagnostic of our modern, western concept of history.”¹²² In that nomadic cultures are based on a genealogical framework rather than a chronological one, he suggested that storyers design a genealogical approach to evangelism.

The author noted that Old Testament genealogies sometimes included accompanying events (see Genesis 10:25; 1 Chronicles 8:13) that provide “a more visual 3D structure to the genealogical record which aids conceptualization and memorization.”¹²³ Since OT authors “use genealogy as a prime means of organizing narrative and linking stories together,”¹²⁴ B.B. challenged storyers to construct a genealogical framework “to provide a basis for relating the narrative historical events.”¹²⁵ Bloodlines linked Bible characters in the past just as it does nomads living in the present, thereby providing a natural foundation for the communication and understanding of the gospel through genealogies.

121. See Schattner, *The Wheel Model: Catalyzing Sustainable Church Multiplication Movements*, 2014.

122. B. B. “Genealogical Storying in A Nomadic Context,” 4.

123. *Ibid.*, 4.

124. *Ibid.*, 4.

125. *Ibid.*, 5.

Dorothy Miller, *Simply the Story*, 2006

Dorothy Miller introduced *Simply the Story* (STS) in 2006. STS is a storytelling approach that teaches trainees how to absorb a Bible story in order to retell it with clarity and accuracy. Her technique teaches how to conduct inductive Bible study of the story by asking questions whose answers unpack its embedded spiritual observations and applications. This approach allows for personal discovery of truth through discussion.

STS can be used for evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, counseling, and family devotions. Fifty-three stories and passages are used in the STS workshops with an additional 158 stories suggested for use in Oral Bible Schools. Certified instructors teach potential storytellers how to prepare and share Bible stories that are personally meaningful to them, then present them to literates and non-literates. Unlike CBT and CBS, STS stresses the supernatural power of a story to address the needs of every culture without an extensive study of a receptor group's worldview as a prerequisite to the presentation of Bible stories.

Oral Bible Schools (OBS), first introduced by Lynn Thigpen, teach a series of 200 Bible stories to students and encourage them to retell them to others. To evaluate the effectiveness of OBS, some of the questions they ask are: Are the treasured doctrines central to orthodox Christians understood by the graduates? Do the graduates evidence personal spiritual growth? With their two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off school schedule, do the students see a measurable increase of spiritual fruit in their lives, homes, ministries, and villages?

These are only a few of the storying ministry models that cropped up over the past few decades, but exponential growth of storying was seen as new partnerships and networks spread the philosophy and methodology as never before.

T4 Global / *Spoken Worldwide*, 2007, 2017

In June of 2007, T4 Global began using technology to help address the needs of oral learners in difficult to reach world areas. Since then, the organization has grown to cover work in 12 countries and over 70 languages. Even though the organization's name has changed to *Spoken Worldwide* in 2017, the focus is the same: "Deliver truth ... where written words can't go."

Spoken employs a specific strategy to accomplish three primary goals of a) empowering leaders, b) shaping people specific messages, and c) fostering holistic transformation. Local leaders discern which topics will have the most lasting impact on the lives of their people—everything from the gospel to disease prevention, clean water management to proper livestock care. This takes the focus off of *Spoken's* staff and the teaching techniques that come natural to many western education models, while creating customized curriculum developed in conjunction with local leaders. This work is performed to establish, understand, and apply the specific worldviews of their people. The use of local wisdom, such as proverbs, combined with Bible wisdom creates powerful 'People-Specific Messages.'

The next emphasis is to utilize the local methods of learning and sharing stories, songs, proverbs, poems, dance, and dramas. The goal is to help develop oral content that is consistent yet personal. It is vital these transformative stories, songs, and dramas can continue being shared. Leaders teach people how to share truth in small discussion groups.

Audio recordings and simple tech, like solar-powered MP3 players, make the messages easy to pass along.

A final key element of Spoken's overall strategy is that they do not employ one-time seminars, preferring to engage in 'Coaching' relationships with their ministry partners. This commitment to walk alongside a national ministry partner while insisting that the partner has the final word on local decisions builds strong relationships and lasting results for the Kingdom. See www.spoken.org

Orality Networks Explode

As understanding of orality leaped forward and its advocates multiplied, orality networks exploded on two parallel tracks. The first track embodied smaller mission organizations and a second comprised of larger ones. Both tracks were interested in integrating three components: (1) orality, (2) unreached peoples, and (3) church planting movements. Both tracks spawned a number of new offshoots that would take root in the countryside and in cities.

Track 1: Bridges Global Training Network, 1998

The track composed of smaller agencies and churches joined went under the umbrella of Bridges Global Training Network. This internationally-based network has spread to some 50 countries within South Asia, Islamic Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Its goal was to start church planting movements among unreached peoples living primarily in rural and, in some cases, urban contexts through systematic oral communication of the Scriptures in the mother tongue.

The Bridges Training Network South Asia (BTNSA) includes partner organizations from India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan that champion the Oral Bible Movement. It has roughly 100 hubs and sub-hubs. The Bridges Training Network Africa (BTNA) includes Senegal, Mali, Burkina, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Somalia, with around 15 hubs and 10 sub-hubs.

To date, they have trained over 60,000 grass roots church planters and from 2012-2015 Bridges ministries planted more than 10,000 oral Bible churches.

Jim and Carla Bowman, Scriptures in Use, 1998

Jim and Carla Bowman, who formerly worked with Phill Butler at InterDev, founded the Bridges Training Network in 1998 through their organization Scriptures in Use (SIU).¹²⁶ They developed a training program for nationals to become Bible storytellers capable of starting church planting movements through three incremental training modules.

Bridges I provided a basic introduction to Scripture storytelling, dramatizations of the parables of Jesus, and Scripture in song. Bridges II added worldview issues, discipleship through storytelling, and leadership development. Bridges III focused the first two disciplines toward a church planting movement context. The Bridges training course series is available in 17 languages.

126. See www.siutraining.org

Since women form the majority of the population within non-reading societies, Carla Bowman developed Bridges for Women. To address their needs, she provided Scripture-based models of good and bad behavior through 120 stories of women in Bible times placed in nine collections. The nine-collection series titles include: The Essentials, Motherhood, Suffering and Sorrow, Comfort, Wisdom, Love, Infertility, Women Who Follow Jesus, and Cunning and Manipulation (negative moral examples). Each story is presented as a journey seen through the eyes of women, such as “Tamar the Widow,” “Jael a Tent Dweller,” and “The Treachery of Jezebel.”

A three-hour video series for grassroots church planters, *The Ancient Path*, was completed by SIU in 2002 and is available in 12 languages. It accompanies the Communication Bridges to Oral Cultures course and takes participants into the field to see real-life storytelling situations and case studies among unreached peoples.

SIU, in partnership with Vision Synergy, co-authored an orality-based training course that gives specific partnership training to newly planted Oral Bible churches in the Bridges Global Training Network. The course challenges storytellers to work toward a more holistic, transformational expression of the church. The course strongly encourages churches to partner to achieve four distinct goals: (1) church planting movements, (2) local economic development, (3) local community development, and (4) social justice. It has been very successful, producing hundreds of locally-funded community-based projects and reaching into communities with a broad transformational message of Christ. The course has spread throughout the South Asia Network with plans to expand to North Africa.

In 2010, Belhaven University and SIU formed a partnership to provide certificates to partner members of the Bridges Global Training Network for achievement at two levels:

- Level 1: Presented to those who have successfully completed Bridges I & II for grass roots church planters.
- Level 2: Presented to those who have successfully completed Bridges I, II & III as Certified Master Trainers.

The SIU/Belhaven partnership is seen as an important first step by church-based, non-formally educated, semi-literate and non-literate oral learners, volunteers, elders, evangelists, bi-vocational church planters, and emerging leaders to attain credibility in the eyes of their community members.

Shortly thereafter, SIU and Freedom to Lead Ministries have entered into a partnership to provide a four-year continuing education model that focuses on leadership development for oral learners. The first of 10 modules was taught in Delhi in February of 2011, and in 2013, Bridges for Neighbors was added to the curricula to reach Muslims. This is built around small storytelling groups that present the stories of the Prophets that all point to Isa as the foretold messiah.¹²⁷

Track 2: Amsterdam 2000, Table 71

A main goal of The Billy Graham Conference on Evangelism held in Amsterdam in 2000 was to develop strategies to reach the world’s many unreached people groups (UPGs). Over

127. For a more complete story of this ministry, see Carla Bowman’s *Building Bridges to Oral Cultures: Journeys Among Forgotten People*.

100 dinner tables filled the room. Those agencies seated at table 71 represented the track for global strategists—Campus Crusade for Christ International (CRU), IMB, Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Transworld Radio (TWR) and Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT). At this landmark Conference they formed a coalition that would extend their outreach focus beyond primary orality (those who cannot read or write) to secondary orality (those who prefer oral and visual means to learn, imagine, and communicate). From that point on the five participants simply referred to themselves as “Table 71,” and they have continued to meet annually since 2000.

Steve Douglass, just installed as Bill Bright’s successor of CCCI, facilitated the discussion on how to complete the task of reaching the unreached. They decided that making new disciples by *addition* was not the best growth strategy, but that they should promote *multiplication* as their growth model.

In 2002, Bob Varney invited Jim Slack and Steve Evans to introduce orality to the group. Steve Douglass responded, “When I got exposed to orality at Table 71, I said, ‘Wow!’ but I was just thinking about *primary* orality.”¹²⁸ It was not long before the Table 71 leaders would see both the need to reach secondary oral learners and the potential of secondary orality methodologies. By 2005, Steve Douglass was telling Bible stories to students attending the University of Central Florida, an urban context, in order to test the effectiveness of these new methods.

A life-changing question began Avery Willis’ journey into orality. Marcus Vegh asked him:

“Avery, how do you make disciples of oral learners?”

“I don’t know,” I replied with a shrug of my shoulders. “People have asked me that question for twenty years. I just say, ‘I’m not working with illiterates. If you are, figure it out.’”

“It’s been twenty years, and no one has done it.” Marcus retorted. “You know about discipleship. Avery, it’s your job. Seventy percent of the unreached people are oral learners.”

Little did I realize that addressing the challenge of discipling oral learners cross-culturally would solve a close-to-home problem I had wrestled with for more than forty years: how to make disciples in America—not just with people who can’t or won’t read, but also with millennials under twenty-five who don’t like to read books.¹²⁹

Vegh’s observation and Willis’ realization speak volumes about the great disconnect at the time between those involved in similar ministries at home and abroad. Though missionaries and missiologists had wrapped their collective arms around the concept of contextualization, they had, over the 20-year history of orality, failed to apply primary orality philosophy and methodology to secondary oral learners in more urban contexts. Willis’ insight to link storytelling to discipleship not only helped solve a major home-front challenge, it also gave legitimacy and new status to the storytelling movement abroad. The ramifications of this conversation would be far reaching and will be described in detail in the next chapter.

128. Willis and Snowden, *Truth that Sticks*, 184.

129. *Ibid.*, 21-22.

Avery Willis, Oral Bible Network, International, 2001

In 2001, Avery Willis and Paul Eshleman of The JFP helped create the Oral Bible Network (OBN) comprised of CCCI, IMB, SIU, and WBT. That same year, Mission to the World and the Presbyterian Church in America began using CBS.

In 2002, Mark Snowden served as project director for “Following Jesus: Making Disciples of Oral Learners.” The seven audio modules included a total of 404 Bible stories (289 unique with no overlap). He contracted with Progressive Vision, led by Marcus Vegh, to produce the modules, most of which were recorded at Maranatha Music in San Clemente, California. The modules were titled:

- Module 1: Making Disciples of Primary Learners (Training literates to work among oral learners)
- Module 2: Choosing to Follow Jesus (Evangelism track)
- Module 3: Living in the Family of Jesus (New believers)
- Module 4: Becoming Like Jesus (Discipleship)
- Module 5: Serving Like Jesus (Church leaders)
- Module 6: Multiplying Spiritual Disciples and Leaders (Pastor training)
- Module 7: On Mission with God (Missionary training)¹³⁰

The ripples of the movement would spread even wider with the creation of several significant initiatives over the next six years.

Luke Partnership, 2001

The Seed Company (a WBT affiliate), The JESUS Film Project, and SIL birthed the Luke Partnership in 2001. Their goal remains to produce effective tools for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting through initial Scripture translation and contributions of mother-tongue speakers trained in linguistics, orthography, and translation techniques.

The Luke Partnership intentionally includes churches and community leaders to help pique interest and provide important internal support to each project. Audio and video translation projects center on The Gospel of Luke and The JESUS Film. Old Testament projects are produced to prepare the way for understanding of the gospel while New Testament projects prepare young believers for further discipleship. The Luke Partnership seeks to leverage its strengths to provide *initial* Scripture portions for cluster groups (groups belonging to language families in same geographical area) within 90 days. Many of the initial translation projects have become full-scale translation projects to complete the NT or the full Bible.¹³¹

130. Those familiar with NTM’s CBT training will recognize many of the key concepts peppered throughout the modules, and built upon.

131. See www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/993?pg=1

StoryRunners, 2003

In December 2003, staff from CCCI and the JESUS Film Project birthed StoryRunners.¹³² Its mission is to take the gospel to every UPG by using Story Bibles and audio visual expressions to start CPMs. StoryRunners provided the infrastructure (support of web sites, development of communications systems, mobilization of churches) and training for two future organizations, Finishing the Task and the OneStory Partnership. StoryRunners later joined forces with a permanent taskforce that emerged from the 2004 Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization—the International Orality Network, which was founded in 2005.

Steve Evans and Ron Green, OneStory, 2004

OneStory, first called Epic Partners International, was the brainchild of Steve Evans of the IMB, and Ron Green of StoryRunners and the JESUS Film Project. It quickly caught on with Table 71 organizations—CCCI, IMB, YWAM, TWR, and WBT. Fifty other groups would partner with them, many of which were inspired by two consultations held by OBN, one in 2002 and another in 2004. Epic Partners International was formed in 2004 and changed its name to OneStory in 2006.

The goal of OneStory is to serve as a catalyst to initiate ministries in more than 5500 unreached peoples by 2020. OneStory “works with mother-tongue speakers to develop and record worldview-sensitive, chronological Bible story sets for each specific group—typically 40 to 60 stories in a two-year period. Mother-tongue speakers spread the stories to others. These story sets form the beginnings of an oral Bible to be told and retold for generations.”¹³³

OneStory hosted the initial training and commissioned the very first teams to Thailand just before the Lausanne 2004 Conference. Since then, they have helped launch storying ministries and church planting teams among 250 different language groups and 400 unreached people groups around the world.

Avery Willis and Bill Sunderland, International Orality Network (ION), 2005

In 2005, those who had worked on *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* during the 2004 Lausanne Forum merged with members of the Oral Bible Network to form the International Orality Network (ION).¹³⁴ ION and LCWE (Lausanne Committee for Word Evangelization) co-published *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* as noted above.

In 2009, The Mission Exchange presented ION the Innovation in Mission Award based on the values of excellence, innovation, partnership, and finishing well. ION earned the coveted award because it combined an innovative approach with breakthrough thinking to produce practical, effective training resources for grass roots workers.

Two key visionaries who helped birth ION were Avery Willis and Bill Sunderland. Sunderland, of Vision Synergy (formerly Interdev), is credited with helping to shape ION in its formative stages.

132. See www.christianvolunteering.org/org/storyrunners.jsp

133. See www.onestory.org/Default.aspx

134. See www.oralbible.com

Under the capable leadership of Samuel Chiang, ION task forces broadened the scope from primary storytelling to include prayer, music and the arts, secondary orality, publications and websites, annual consultations, research, discovery of best practices, field training, orality for women and children, and funding. More recently, ION began to address the role of orality in theological education at four consultations, Wheaton (2012), Hong Kong (2013), Houston (2014), and Oklahoma (2015).

Finishing the Task, 2005

Founded in 2005, Finishing the Task (FTT) is an association comprised of 300-plus denominations, mission agencies, and churches.¹³⁵ FTT's goal is to see indigenously led, reproducing churches planted among every people group in the world with a population over 50,000. They place a high value on avoiding relationships based on dependency in the process.

Avery Willis, Call2All, 2007

Call2All is a partnership of hundreds of top missions agencies, denominations, and organizations around the world. Their ranks number tens of thousands of leaders who strategize and work together to complete the Great Commission in our generation. Call2All formed in 2007 as a "strategy-centered, action-oriented movement" to unite the global Church in order to take it where it does not yet exist.¹³⁶ Avery Willis led the orality training for this series of global events until his death in 2010. His assistant, Rick Breklebaum, has since stepped in as trainer for annual Call2All events.

Concluding Reflections

Outliers and inliers continued to morph the original chronological model. Some substituted long chronologies for more topical, shorter story sets. Worldview studies were initiated and abbreviated. Primary orality and secondary orality were seen as overlapped and interactive rather than totally separate binary distinctives. Titles changed within NTM and the IMB to reflect new emphases. Oral Bible Schools were founded and partnerships flourished. Publications, courses, and artwork proliferated. But possibly of greatest import was the movement's directional swing as it was exported from the countryside to the city center.

Yes, there is more to the story.

135. See www.finishingthetask.com

136. See www.call2all.org

3

City Connections

“Find new ways to spread the word of God to every corner of the world.”

—POPE FRANCIS

THE ROOTS OF CHRONOLOGICAL Bible Teaching and Storying, deep and strong enough to have established thousands of churches in rural areas, were now spreading across rivers, over mountains and through jungles at an amazing rate. City dwellers, we will see, also have a penchant for story, and the power of story would deeply impact them as it had their rural counterparts.¹³⁷

The emphasis on orality in the USA over the past few decades caught many by surprise. After all, orality is something for preliterates, as M. T. Clanchy assumes when he says, “The most difficult initial problem in the history of literacy is appreciating what preceded it.”¹³⁸ The passage of time, however, calls for a revision of Clanchy’s quote. We must not only appreciate what *preceded* orality, but also what has *followed* it!

Orality is “a complex of how oral cultures best receive, process, remember and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths.”

(Madinger, 2010, 204)

It soon became evident to many within the Orality Movement that much of the world had moved beyond print to the verbal and the visual; beyond linear to erratic; to multi-dimensional, to non-sequential, to simultaneous conversations, to images. This

137. Some of the material in this chapter is adapted from Steffen and Terry, “The Sweeping Story of Scripture Taught Through Time,” *Missiology: An International Review* 35 (2007) 315-335.

138. Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 41.

chapter will explore the focus change from primary orality to secondary orality as CBT/CBS continued its unfettered trek from the country to the city.

Urban World Initiatives

The movement continued to spread among various urban populations and social economic levels in the USA and around the globe.

Viv Grigg, Urban Poor, 1975, 2010

Viv Grigg serves as an example of an orality outlier who made the jump to inlier. Grigg began telling virtually memorized Bible stories in broken Tagalog to the urban poor in Manila in 1975.¹³⁹ The stories were translated from English by Filipinos who not only expanded them but as they employed local discourse features, became natural Bible storytellers in process. After hearing of CBT, he felt that the long stylized storytelling process from Genesis to Revelation did not fit the impromptu, bustling nature of slum life. The key to communication of spiritual truth in urban settings, Grigg found, was not chronological storytelling but story-to-story conversations. In 2010, Grigg embraced Bruce Graham's very simplified chronological approach into their training.¹⁴⁰

Jack and Dottie Connor, The Mystery Man, 1984

Jack and Dottie Connors served with NTM among the Tagbanwa on the island of Tara in the Philippines from 1972-1977. When they returned to the US, Jack pursued a Th.M at Dallas Theological Seminary while Dottie served as secretary to the then-president, John F. Walvoord. It was during this time that cancer began to take its toll on Jack's body but that would not stop him from telling God's story of grace chronologically.

Connor's initial outreach was to a group of troubled Plano, Texas youth, 10 of whom had committed suicide over the past year. Jack used the term "Mystery Man" to represent the personification of hope as he told them the message of grace, beginning in the Old Testament. He used this terminology since he believed the "punch line" should not be revealed until the listeners understood their lost condition before God and His redemptive plan of grace.

According to the *U.S. News & World Report*,¹⁴¹ suicides in Plano ceased in May of 1984, the same month that Jack concluded his chronological lessons and several youth believed in the "Mystery Man"—Jesus! Had the story of hope influenced these statistics as the good news spread? God knows nothing of coincidence. Jack Connor went to be with the Lord three months later. Reflecting on those life-changing Bible studies, Marcia Baxter Gortney wrote Dottie: "My best memory is Jack in his PJs, microphone in his hand so that

139. Grigg, *Companion to the Poor*, 1984.

140. See <http://www.urbanleaders.org/transrevival/2Transformational%20Conversations.htm>

141. Feb. 24, 1986.

we could hear him, and all of us sitting on the floor. I truly felt like I was setting at the feet of Jesus. We all did.”¹⁴²

Bill and Bobbie Boggess, Paris, France, 1989

Bill and Bobbie Boggess, TEAM missionaries serving in the suburbs of Paris, found that post-Christian France was in drastic need of a firm foundation for the gospel. They knew it would take some time for the secularized French people to grasp a fresh and true understanding of God, sin, and salvation. But they were committed. Then they discovered McIlwain’s *Building on Firm Foundations* and began teaching through the series. This resulted in 1989 in a new church plant with some 35 attending weekly. Under grass-roofs of the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, and now under tile roofs of chic Paris, the Word of God was spread through the simple, ancient and God-ordained medium of story.

Inter-City Ministry, New York, 1992

The following quote from someone who had read McIlwain’s book and written to him was included in a letter written by Trevor and Fran McIlwain to Dottie Connor dated December 10, 1992:

I was absolutely astounded to discover how a book [*Firm Foundations*] written about reaching the Palawanos, would be so relevant to inner-city ministry here in New York. For years (20 of them) we have wrestled with the question as to why so many drug addicts go back to their old way of life after an initial experience of getting off drugs, and seemingly excited about their new-found relationship with Christ... Your book contains the key to the problem.

A Team, Teaching English in Bangkok, Mid-1990s

In the mid-1990s, the A Team of the Southern Baptist Mission began to use Bible storying in the urban centers of Bangkok, Thailand, under the Bangkok Urban Strategy (BUS). They used Phases 1 and 2 of McIlwain’s *The Chronological Approach to Evangelism and Church Planting* that the team had obtained from the NTM office in Bangkok. The A Team center near Bangkok International Airport attracted students and professionals to their English language evening classes that featured Bible stories during “bonus” English time.

Bill Perry, International University Students, 1992

Bill Perry, Director of Training Materials of InterFACE Ministries, wrote the *Storyteller’s Bible Study for Internationals* in 1992 to reach international university students on American campuses. Perry designed the 12-story study (nine Old Testament and three New Testament lessons) that lays out the storyline of Scripture from creation to Christ for an international audience. Because the book was found to be useful beyond the scope international students visiting the USA, Perry revised and expanded a second edition in 2003 and renamed it the *Storyteller’s Bible Study*.

142. March 26, 2011.

Deaf Outreach, 1997

While sign language is not universal it is heavily based in orality, and as such the Deaf prefer things be told chronologically, leaving out no detail. Since they prefer a more linear trail of thought, they find it difficult to follow circuitous sermons in church, even in those churches with excellent signers.

While still at Southwestern, leadership within Deaf Outreach asked Grant Lovejoy to make a presentation on Bible Storying to their US staff in 1997. After the presentation someone in the crowd commented, “This is it!”

With Lovejoy’s help, a Bible story curriculum of 110 Bible stories was developed. The evangelism track consists of 32 stories in chronological order. The discipleship track consists of 78 stories that repeat the 32 evangelism stories. A Believers Series consists of 33 stories, beginning at Acts 2 and concluding beyond Acts. From this model, some Deaf have learned to tell the story from creation to the Church in ten minutes.

Carol Green, StoryTapestry, 2003

After meeting the Muslim widows of a war-torn Middle Eastern country in 2003, Carol Green found herself reevaluating her own ministry strategies.

Once their husbands died, these women and their children were destined for a life of slavery. And since the government forbade most women from attending school, illiteracy bound them in another form of captivity. And even if the ladies could read, the Bibles Carol had painstakingly hauled with her and the bright yellow copies of the *Four Spiritual Laws* were worthless. They made no sense to the ladies! Their eyes revealed hopelessness, and not without reason. How could she reach these widows with the gospel?

As relationships grew the veils came off, literally and figuratively. Out of this cultural confusion StoryTapestry emerged as a means to empower the women to tell God’s stories of love and hope. If they could listen, she reasoned, they could also learn to tell God’s stories. No reading required. StoryTapestry could turn their hopelessness into hope.

The StoryTapestry manual, written by a number of contributors led by Carol Green, was completed in 2009 and published by StoryRunners. The manual consists of 31 lessons, each with a list of the Scripture references used from the New Living Translation. Unlike many story sets, StoryTapestry begins with a panorama from Creation to Christ, significant to those who process information from whole (big picture) to part (pieces). The manual concludes with a glossary of women in the Bible—mothers, those who suffered, stories of comfort, wisdom, the loved, the barren, negative moral examples, followers—and a 17-session story-training template.¹⁴³

As teaching aids, the manual provides words/phrases to consider, worldview connections, inter-story cohesion, and principles of story crafting. StoryTapestry also often integrates storying with vocational training to deeply impact society and create job sustainability.

Before long a common request surfaced from those in remote people groups and highly resistant countries—Carol, please develop a Bible story series for radio broadcasts that includes discussion points to further explore the meaning of the stories. Trans World

143. See <http://storytapestry.org/> and <http://www.scribd.com/doc/39136146/Story-Tapestry-Manual>

Radio and StoryRunners partnered to develop a series of 52 radio programs utilizing a set of Bible stories for evangelism and discipleship. The project continues to expand with a dozen countries chosen as potential field-test locations.

Persian Oral Bible Project, 2004

The Persian Oral Bible Project (POB) was developed through the cooperative efforts of the IMB, TWR, and FCBH in 2004. Three years in the making, the POB involved research in refugee camps, broadcast writers, translators, recording teams, and serious fundraising to cover expensive airtime necessary to reach wide audiences. The project was the first to build on IMB's "Following Jesus" audio series and integrate "The Radio Bible Project," an initiative established between TWR and FCBH. The POB produced 130 fifteen-minute programs in the vernacular, 65 of which focused on evangelism and discipleship. The programs aired Monday through Friday for six months, and included testimonials from Shi'a Muslim believers that provided first-hand insights into what it means to follow Jesus.

Each program contained a testimonial, the Bible Story, and an excerpt from dramatized audio Scriptures, followed by a series of discussion questions for individual or small group reflection. The stories, reinforced by word-for-word audio Scriptures, could easily be reproduced by Persians who, due to security issues, found it difficult to carry Bibles. The POB also distributed audio CDs of the programs.

The approximately two-dozen believers who helped develop this project remain unnamed for security reasons.¹⁴⁴

3 STORY[®], Youth For Christ, 2006

Another outlier, Youth For Christ (YFC) designed 3 STORY[®] (God's Story, My Story, Their Story) as an "integrative operational system" that seamlessly connects others to the God who seeks to inject his lordship into all of life (see Figure 3.1). 3 STORY[®] is a "relational paradigm" intended to connect our relationship with God to other people in a natural, freeing, nonthreatening way. The model relies on stories more than steps; honesty more than perfecting; the Spirit more than an agenda; lifestyle rather than a tool; authenticity rather than a performance; them more than you; questions more than answers; love more than knowledge; three stories rather than three steps. How long does all this take? As long as it takes.¹⁴⁵



Figure 3.1: 3 STORY[®] Connections¹⁴⁶

144. See www.oraltystrategies.org/media_detail.cfm?ResourceID=327

145. See www.yfc.net/3story/about/

146. This figure is used with permission from YFC.

Jim Putman, Real Life Ministries, 2006

Real Life Ministries was born in 1998 when Jim Putman and his family joined in ministry with two other couples in Post Falls, Idaho. From that very quiet beginning, 8,500 people in the town of 26,000 now gather together for worship. Not only do the small groups produce disciples who can multiply themselves, they provide finances to meet social needs in the surrounding counties on a scale that surpasses government assistance. To date, six other churches were born at home, and released to be on their own. The churches, however, network together to plant new churches at home and abroad.

Avery Willis was influential in the growth of the church during its early years. Through his input the church leadership team became convinced of the power of story and its potential in making disciples. In 2006 they required all pastors and small group leaders to use Bible Storying in disciple making. Their experience compelled Putman to conclude, “Bible storying works here *and* overseas. We discovered that what we had done in our small groups prepared us to minister in Ethiopia.”¹⁴⁷

Since then, Real Life Ministries have expanded its reach into a number of countries, including Burundi, India, Uganda. Their goal is to establish churches primarily through the use evangelism and discipleship storying.¹⁴⁸

Kurt Jarvis, Chronological Bible Storying for Kids, 2008

Assisted by J.O. Terry, Kurt Jarvis began Chronological Bible Storying for Kids (cbs4kids) in 2008. Designed for western four and five year-olds, cbs4kids walks children chronologically through 60 Bible stories cast in five sets of 12 lessons. Each of the four age-graded sets expands the sequence of the first set of 12 story-based lessons and are designed to teach children how to *tell* God’s plan for the world through stories. Numerous resources are available, including two story symbol fabric panels (4’x6’ or 20”x26”) in black print on white cloth.¹⁴⁹

Michael Novelli, Postmodern Youth, 2008

Over a 13-year period of ministry, Michael Novelli had thought he tried everything to help postmodern youth connect to Scripture. A visit with a missionary who was using CBS caused him to change his experiential teaching approach to a learner-centered approach.

Novelli learned to tell Bible stories sequentially, to take time for the creative retelling of the stories, and conclude with in-depth dialogue. His course correction resulted in three books, *Shaped by Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way*, *Enter the Story: 7 Experiences to Unlock the Bible*, and *The Story Teen Curriculum*. These capture the pedagogical change and transformational results among postmodern youth within megachurches like Willow Creek of Deer Creek, Illinois (where he was Executive Director of Student Ministries), and smaller church youth groups.

147. Willis and Snowden, *Truth that Sticks*, 187.

148. See <http://www.rlmchurchtraininganddevelopment.com/international-missions/>

149. See www.cbs4kids.org/

Novelli also founded Echo,¹⁵⁰ an organization that helps people discover the art of “Storying,” a dialogical approach to Bible learning.¹⁵¹

Bill BJORAKER, Ezekiel Network, Jewish Storytelling, 2009

Bill BJORAKER has ministered to highly literate, intellectually astute Jewish people for nearly 30 years. He was convinced that effective Jewish evangelism would only be achieved by means of gladiatorial apologetics. That was until 2007, when he met Larry Dinkins, OMF missionary to Thailand, who offered him a different perspective.

Dinkins saw his own ministry revolutionized by a paradigm shift from highly academic theological teaching to orality-based storytelling. Upon hearing his story, BJORAKER responded, “That’s great Larry, but the people I work with are highly literate. This would not work for me.”

Little did he understand that even in his work among the Jewish intellectual elite storytelling could prove to be a powerful ally. The tradition of storytelling in Judaism has been a key factor in the perseverance of the people and preservation of the culture for thousands of years, and today storytelling is experiencing a resurgence.¹⁵²

For two years BJORAKER used storying in a weekly Jewish Seeker’s Study in the Los Angeles area. Some 20 people attended weekly, one-third of them Jewish. One Jewish man has embraced Yeshua as Messiah and others continue to attend. While not yet embracing the Messiah, they have bonded with the group and continue to participate in the stories. Storytelling, BJORAKER found, provides a context for evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training. He coaches Jewish believers to lead the storying, and they are growing in leadership skills.

As the group storied in Exodus and 2 Samuel, a Jewish believer was assigned to teach the story of David and Goliath. That week he brought his young son wearing oversized shoulder pads to play the role of David donning Saul’s armor. His dad used Aragorn’s sword as he played the Philistine giant. It was humorous and fun, but also included serious discussion on honor and shame, victory, faith, and courage. It closed with prayer for the group as each person faced “Goliaths” in his or her own life.

BJORAKER has held open meetings to date, but plans to invite selected Jewish believers to 30-hour training sessions that will focus on the use of storytelling from the Hebrew Bible to evangelize and disciple other Jews.

Books, Journals, and Networks

As the Storying movement matured, books and journals were published to promote its use and refine its purpose among specific audiences and age groups. I will highlight only a few.

Tom Boomershine, Network of Biblical Storytellers, 1979

Tom Boomershine is another outlier in the movement. He began the Network of Biblical Storytellers (NOBS) in 1979. Their focus was the recitation of New Testament stories with

150. See www.echothestory.com

151. See www.echothestory.com

152. See <http://www.jewishstorytelling.org/>

75 percent word accuracy and 90 percent content accuracy. Boomershine wrote the still well-used *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* in 1988, the same year NOBS went international. NOBS also produces the journal *The Biblical Storyteller*.

Trevor McIlwain, *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ*, 1991

Many NTM missionaries returning to their various countries on home assignment taught CBT in small groups and Sunday Schools, often in urban settings. They soon realized their training and focus bent strongly toward application among animists in rural contexts. A curriculum focused on a western audience was needed.

To meet this demand, Trevor McIlwain, with the tireless efforts of Nancy Everson, published a 50-lesson volume to be taught in a year. *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ* was published in 1991. Within NTM, CBT had now emigrated from the country to the city.

Chronological Bible Teaching for Children, 1993

In 1993, McIlwain, again with Nancy Everson, published a five-volume children's edition of CBT. Designed for western third and fourth graders but useful in other contexts, the 50 lessons provide children an overall understanding of the metanarrative of Scripture.

John Cross, GoodSeed International, 1997

John Cross, a former NTM missionary, launched GoodSeed International as a means to equip believers with tools and training designed to clearly communicate the gospel. The tools use four universal principles of learning¹⁵³ built around the Creation to Christ model. The Gospel of John serves as the framework for choosing the Old Testament foundations on which to build.

Sensitive to age, learning ability, and worldview, GoodSeed produced *The Stranger On the Road to Emmaus* for those influenced by a Christianized worldview. *All that the Prophets have Spoken* followed, an adaptation of *The Stranger On the Road to Emmaus* for a Muslim audience. *By this Name* was a further revision of the original *Stranger* text for those with an Eastern worldview. These three books represent families of materials that serve as the basis for GoodSeed's *Worldview Rethink Curriculum*.

The Lamb, written for children, has been well-received.

GoodSeed equips the person in the pew using a simple "Give, Guide and Train" paradigm, emphasizing accuracy, comprehension, retention, objectivity, and transferability. Not only does GoodSeed maintain a strong emphasis on the Creation to Christ model, it also advocates a heavy use of biblically-based visual aids.

H. B. Dehqan-Tafti, *The Story of God and Man In Persian Verse*, 2002

The first Iranian bishop of the Episcopal Church, the late H. B. Dehqan-Tafti (1920-2008), strived for decades to communicate Christianity to those living within the Iranian culture.

153. GoodSeed's four universal principles include: (1) The Story-Telling Principle, (2) The Mathematical Principle, (3) The Priority Principle, and (4) The Clarity Principle.

One who suffered greatly for his faith—he miraculously escaped an assassination attempt that wounded his wife, and later lost his son who was carjacked and executed in the desert—he manifested a heart of forgiveness.

One of this outlier’s many contributions to the Church by was *The Story of God and Man In Persian Verse*, published in 2002. This lengthy Persian poem (95 pages) that covers God’s story from creation to Christ has been aired on radio and TV shows.

John Walsh, *The Art of Storytelling*, 2003

John Walsh, a professional storyteller, writes curriculum for Christian schools and home school families.¹⁵⁴ Moody Publishers published his book *The Art of Storytelling* in 2003. That same year he studied CBS with Grant Lovejoy and J.O. Terry.

Beginning in 2005, Walsh began publishing a series titled BibleTelling. It includes 36 key stories from the Old Testament (four volumes with nine lessons each), 36 from the Life of Christ, and another 36 from the Book of Acts (including epistles written during the span of the book of Acts and the last two chapters of Revelation). Each lesson provides activity ideas that encourage students to personalize the stories. Walsh calls this “multi-dimensional learning.” He includes an abridged set of 36 stories to fit the time limitations of the academic school year.

In 2005, Walsh began to travel internationally to train missionaries and nationals in the use of BibleTelling. In 2009, The Navigators invited him to partner with them in the development of a story-based discipleship program. Part of that program takes place inside the Louisiana State Penitentiary, infamously and alternately known as Angola Prison or the Alcatraz of the South, where prisoners learn all 108 BibleTelling stories. Walsh personally trained the inmate-instructors, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary offers credit to successful inmates.

Now, Walsh has a complete list of 262 stories he calls *All the Stories of the Bible*, which he has made available on the web (BibleTelling.org) as a free download. These stories are available on his free daily email service called “The Story of the Day.” They are also a part of the BibleTelling app and the website BTStories.com. Various ministries use these stories to teach English as a second language.

Good Soil Evangelism & Discipleship, 2005

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelization (ABWE) saw the need of training their missionaries in chronological Bible teaching and storying so they could be effective in making disciples of people from differing worldviews. Wayne Haston led the new department of the mission’s training division—Good Soil E&D—whose objective was to make the gospel clear so that people will truly understand, genuinely embrace, and cling to it over time.¹⁵⁵

In 2007, the ABWE team produced the booklet *The Story of Hope* comprised of 20 Old Testament and 20 New Testament events. This evangelistic tool was designed primarily for one-on-one or small group evangelism, but it was also instructive for

154. See www.christianstorytelling.com and www.BibleTelling.org

155. See www.GoodSoil.com

believers unfamiliar with the metanarrative of Scripture. Presenters can use the book and its Leader's Guide to share the Bible's Big Story in as little as 15 minutes, or if a person's worldview noise demands, in 15 hours or more. (In 2016, the team produced a Class Facilitator's Guide to teach the same material in an engaging way to larger groups.)

The Way to Joy, the principal first-steps discipleship tool produced by Good Soil in 2005, begins with a 20-event version of the Big Story as well. This helps assure that God's message is seen as an ongoing story since the 20 events are part of the 40 and the 40 are part of the 100 (see *The Roots of Faith* below).

The ABWE team believes that the original version of *The Story of Hope* is sufficiently culturally neutral to be effective among many cultures around the globe. In order to be more culturally appropriate to the major non-Christian religions, however, they produced adaptations of *The Story of Hope* for Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Animistic (tribal) audiences.

Also of note are *LifeStories* and *GrowthStories*, completely oral versions of *The Story of Hope* and *The Way to Joy* respectively. These series were created with Millennials in mind, but can be adapted for oral audiences around the world.

The Roots of Faith—Exploring the Bible from Beginning to End, a study covering 50 Old Testament and 50 New Testament events, was published in 2010. Each event is illustrated with an image. More than a chronological Bible survey, these two courses develop a biblical theology in the participants, dealing with worldview issues as they appear in the Story. Although these volumes are principally for teaching unbelievers and new believers in classroom settings, its accompanying volume, *Reflections from God's Story of Hope* (a beautiful 200-page full-color heirloom book) can be used individually as a read-through-the-Bible guide, or in study groups. In 2016, an audible version, *Reflections, The Audio Experience*, was produced complete with 20 voices, music, and sound effects.

Gil Thomas wrote *Gaining Ground with Good Soil* in 2009. The Good Soil principles (use of worldview, CBT, etc.) rise out of an engaging narrative. It is basically the Good Soil E&D seminar in a book.¹⁵⁶

Leader's Guides, flash card visuals, and PowerPoint presentations are available for each of the above publications.

In 2013, ABWE introduced two new teaching aids, ChronoBible Cards: Genesis-Revelation, and *Hooks for Hanging the Bible's Big Story*. The ChronoBible offers 135 pocket-size cards to review the content and chronology of the metanarrative of Scripture and are used as such throughout *The Roots of Faith* classes. One of 100 key events is depicted on each of the 100 cards of the main set, with the 25 major Bible eras shown on 25 cards, and the *Chronological Bridge to Life* on the final 10.

Hooks are worksheets designed to help participants "hang" the Old Testament storyline (12 hooks representing 12 key eras) and New Testament storyline (13 hooks representing 13 key eras) during a two-hour workshop.

The Good Soil E&D team makes all of their resources available for translation around the globe. At the date of this writing, *The Story of Hope* is in 30 language versions with several more in process.

156. See www.GoodSoil.com/gainingground

Bill Jackson, *Nothingsgonnastopit!*, 2006

Based on the “nothing can hinder” motif (*akōlytōs*) found in Acts, Bill Jackson published *Nothingsgonnastopit!* (NGSI). His book traces the storyline of the Bible making God’s word an exciting, historical story of hope.

Jackson’s journey along the storying path, however, had begun years prior to his book’s publication in 2006. Influenced by Walter Kaiser’s “promise theology”¹⁵⁷ and Dan Fuller’s Unity of the Bible syllabus from Fuller Theological Seminary, Jackson began asking “big picture questions.”¹⁵⁸ While in seminary in 1979 he identified six overarching themes¹⁵⁹ of the Bible describing *what* God is doing in history and *how* he does it.

Jackson first taught his concepts at a Vineyard’s pastor’s conference held in Denver in 1990 after John Wimber asked him to conduct five, half-hour Bible studies on the biblical basis for world missions. So impressed by his teaching, Wimber immediately announced that Jackson would be teaching this seminar in Vineyard churches across the nation. NGSI was launched.

NGSI is also available in Mandarin.¹⁶⁰

Caesar Kalinowski, *Story of God*, 2007-08

Caesar Kalinowski, an elder at the Hilltop Expression of Soma Communities Church in Tacoma, Washington (which he helped launch), is another outlier who was greatly influenced by a missionary practitioner.

While in South Sudan, Kalinowski met John Witte, an IMB missionary who shared the enthusiastic responses to *The Story of God* (35 stories, “The Redemptive Arc”). So convinced was he of the methodology that he challenged Kalinowski to create a story set for westerners.

Months later while Witte was on home assignment, he recounted the *Story of God* from memory in four hours for a group of leaders from Soma. It was not his first exposure to the process, but now Kalinowski was both embarrassed by what he did not know about Scripture and overjoyed with the bigness of God’s word. Witte then trained the group to tell simple Bible stories embedded with powerful dialogue followed by a series of questions for post-Christian American audiences.

Out of this exercise came, among other things, the *Story of God Training: Using Narrative and Dialogue in Making Disciples*, a rework of Witte’s materials. Credit for this document goes to John Witte, Michael Novelli, Grant Lovejoy, J.O. Terry, Avery Willis and the elders of Soma Communities in Tacoma.¹⁶¹ It would become the foundation for ongoing church planting and discipleship at home and abroad. Their storying communities of 10-20 begin with a dialogical story set of 25-35 Bible stories, followed by *The Story Formed Way*. This 10-week session consists of 35-40 major discipleship themes that

157. See Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 2008.

158. Jackson’s three “big picture questions” included: (1) what were the most important events in the biblical chronology? (2) what did they mean? and (3) how did they drive the story forward?” (14). Jackson, *Nothingsgonnastopit!* 2009.

159. Jackson’s six overarching themes of the big picture include: (1) God’s kingdom, (2) God’s Savior, (3) God’s glory, (4) All peoples, (5) obedience of faith, and (6) power of the Holy Spirit, 19. *Ibid.*, 19.

160. See www.nothingsgonnastopit.com/blog

161. See www.gcmcollective.com/mediafiles/story-of-god-training.pdf

emerge from the metanarrative of Scripture previously covered.

Stephen Stringer, *S-T4T*, 2007

In November 2000 Ying and Grace Kai began a new ministry, Training for Trainers (T4T), to reach 20 million people residing in the cities of Asia. T4T is a facilitator model by which expatriates train national believers to win and disciple the lost, thus reproducing new communities of faith and the development of their leadership. T4T trains obedient trainers to train obedient trainers through a process that includes need-oriented Bible studies and life-on-life discipleship (2 Tim. 2:2) that will lead to generations of church planting movements. Basic themes include: (1) assurance of salvation, (2) prayer, (3) devotional life, (4) church, (5) the character and nature of God, and (6) widespread gospel presentation.

Since T4T is primarily a literate model, in its original form it would not be accessible to at least 60 percent of the world. To reach the oral world, IMB missionary Stephen Stringer and a number of others wed oral communication to the T4T evangelism, discipleship, and church planting model. In January of 2007, they re-titled the new methodology Storying T4T (S-T4T), the oral counterpart of T4T. While not classic chronological Bible storying, S-T4T implements Bible storying to convey truth. It demands “intentionality, accountability and immediacy.”¹⁶² In 2008, Stringer would later combine the contributors’ input and become general editor of *S-T4T: Intentional Evangelism Utilizing Stories from God’s Word Resulting in Multiplying House Churches*.

The authors designed S-T4T to be easy for people to use, adapt, and reproduce. The evangelism strategy begins with listening to their story, then telling your story followed by a Bible story. For example, telling the possessed man Bible story (a changed man who went home to tell others), followed by God’s story from creation to Christ. The discipleship core of 20-plus Bible stories covers the basic discipleship path found in T4T. The church formation core takes new believers through the stories of Acts. Subsequent church planting components include story sets from the prophets, more Acts, and the Epistles. Special needs are also addressed.¹⁶³

Each story is crafted to: (1) provide missing background information and episode breaks, (2) address worldview considerations, (3) reinforce T4T principles, (4) maintain inter-story cohesion, and (5) introduce key biblical terms. Three questions follow each story: (1) How are you going to remember this story? (2) Who will you tell the story to? (3) What in the story must be obeyed?¹⁶⁴

Team members have also developed S-T4T story sets in other languages.

Paul DeNeui, *Communicating Christ Through Story and Song*, 2008

Communicating Christ Through Story and Song, edited by Paul DeNeui, is the fifth volume published by Southeast Asian Network (SEANET). This volume originated from a collection of papers presented in Chang Mai, Thailand, in January 2007, and consists of models and case studies for communicating the gospel through oral means in Southeast

162. Springer, *S-T4T*, 10.

163. See <http://storyingt4t.ning.com/>

164. Springer, *S-T4T*, 12.

Asia. While focused on the Buddhist world, the principles found in this book easily transfer to the wider oral world in both urban and rural settings.

Missiology: An International Review Focuses on Orality, 2010

Missiology: An International Review, 38, 2010, dedicated the entire issue to the theme of orality. In this issue, eight writers cover an array of issues related to orality and ministry.

Paul Koehler, Telling God's Stories with Power, 2010

With over a decade of training hundreds of Bible storytellers, Paul Koehler's *Telling God's Story with Power* offers novices and experienced Bible story trainers a treasure trove of insights. Koehler is an expert at training local literate Christian pastors who serve illiterate congregations in Asia. His training has revitalized scores of existing churches and the helped plant hundreds of new Full Gospel Fellowship churches.

In his Oral Bible Project, storytellers learned 101 chronologically-ordered Bible stories from Creation to the Ascension. As they told these stories in the villages (moving from rural to urban, oral to literate) over 200 new churches were planted. Research showed that some stories went out to five successive generations of listeners.

Avery Willis and Mark Snowden, Truth that Sticks, 2010

Facing the reality that over half of the people in US will not or do not prefer to read, Avery Willis and Mark Snowden decided to approach disciple-making efforts from the angle of orality. *Truth that Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* serves as an apologetic primer for the use of oral communication in a postmodern world. This was the first book designed to familiarize American audiences with the concept and trends of Bible Storying. In it the authors turn to first century disciple making efforts to argue for the use of stories, dialogue, drama, and songs as means of bringing present day believers to maturity.

Walk Thru the Bible, Story Thru the Bible, 2011

Walk Thru the Bible published *Story Thru the Bible: An Interactive Way to Connect with God's Word* in 2011. This 336-page volume originally for adults uses 52 Bible stories adaptable for use among any culture or age group. The authors provide summaries, questions, and practical applications as supplemental teaching tools.

Orality Journal, 2012

In 2012, the ION launched the *Orality Journal*. This semi-annual journal aims to “provide a platform for scholarly discourse on the issues of orality, discoveries or innovations in orality, and praxis of effectiveness across multiple domains in society.”¹⁶⁵

165. The issues (and subsequent issues) can be downloaded free at <http://www.oralicity.net/journals>

William Carey International Development Journal Focuses on Orality, 2013

William Carey International Development Journal dedicated the entire issue of Spring 2013, Vol. 2, Issue 2 to articles on “The Importance of Orality in Learning Methods.”

Mission Aviation Fellowship, Storyfire, 2014

StoryFire is a 6-part audio series that trains believers how to tell Bible stories and facilitate lively discussion to promote discovery learning of Bible truths. This simple, easily reproducible tool is useful for evangelism and discipleship purposes, and it enables rapid memorization of Bible stories. Through their personal interaction with God’s Word and in discussion groups, individuals learn at their own pace and practice their new skills within the group.¹⁶⁶

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) field-tested this method for seven years among isolated church leaders around the world before producing *StoryFire* in 2014. It has proven to be an effective tool for a broad range of ministries. The 23 audio lessons cover the basics of how to learn a Bible story quickly, present it accurately, and lead interactive discussions. The course presents four models, each tailored to meet the needs of both oral or literate learners. The series also includes videos of four Bible storytelling and discussion models.

The *StoryFire Leader’s Guide* manual (available for purchase separately) contains two audio CD’s, one video DVD, step-by-step lessons to train a group, extensive story lists, and other resources.

Orality in America, 2016

Mark Snowden edited the eight-chapter volume titled *Orality in America* that details practical ways to use orality in America. This book is a “collaborative effort of the Orality Sphere of Mission America Coalition as part of Love2020.”¹⁶⁷

Mediums Multiply

To meet the needs of the visual-preferenced learners worldwide, several contributed within the movement to expand it beyond the written word.

Blair and Becky Faulk, Storying Scarf, 1999

In 1999, Blair and Becky Faulk designed a scarf printed with 21 pictures used to tell Bible stories chronologically in West Africa. Their goal was to minimize the number of pictures thus expediting the memorization of the stories and evangelism process. The scarves are 22”x44”, with each 4”x5” picture serving as a “mental Bible” for listeners. They come in a variety of colors and can be folded to highlight a specific story, or more loosely to depict a series of stories told by the storer.

166. The audio series download is available for free at <http://www.maf.org/storyfire>

167. Snowden, *Orality in America*, 3.

In 2006, the Faulks self-published *Word in Narrative: A Tool to Effectively and Efficiently Build God's Kingdom* to provide storytellers a practical and proven system to work their way through the S-shaped path of God's story. The international version is formatted in three vertical columns reading from top to bottom, right to left. The formatting is reversed in the western version, the three columns reading downward vertically, left to right. A helpful explanatory version is available in 20 languages.

In 2001, Lifeway, with permission from the Faulks and the help of Dale McCleskey, designed another scarf with a different story set more appropriate for other Muslim audiences.¹⁶⁸ Since 1999, over 43,000 scarves have been shipped. All copyrighted materials are offered for a donation to defray costs.¹⁶⁹

The HOPE, 2002

The HOPE (DVD) is an 80-minute dramatic presentation of God's epic story of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.¹⁷⁰ Produced by Mars Hill Productions, The HOPE targets multiple media-sophisticated audiences for evangelism and discipleship purposes. It has been translated into several languages with cultural adaptations. An on-line study guide is also available.¹⁷¹

M.E. and A.T., Henna, 2006

In October of 2006, M.E. and her teammate A.T. moved to East Africa to work among a Muslim people group. Things changed, however, as God opened doors for them to build relationships with the local Indian population. Though neither had an art background, their time with the community led them to learn to draw in henna from a Hindu henna artist. Made from the dye of a flower, henna is a temporary tattoo drawn on hands and other parts of the body. Women in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East perceive it as a form of beauty.

After a month living among the Indian populace, the teammates felt the Lord leading them to use this art form to illustrate Bible stories. With the help of the artist, they took the next six months to develop a story set. They were able to utilize the drawings/stories at a henna party for a wedding, sharing the stories with several women.

When their ministry term ended in October of 2008, A.T. returned to the United States and M.E. moved to another part of East Africa and joined a team focused on the local South Asian population. After a few months M.E. met another henna artist and decided to study under her with the goal of beginning a study group in her home. As she painted the drawings she simultaneously storied the artwork. During her training the artist invited other women to her apartment to let M.E. practice what she was learning. This provided opportunity for Bible storying at the end of every class!

It was time to improve the original drawings so M.E. emailed A.T, and she agreed. As before, M.E. worked through the drawings and shared the gospel with the women. The ladies loved it and shared the experience with friends and families. One lady opened her home, made a decision for Christ, and started her own henna group. M.E. trained her, and

168. The multicolor scarf and a story set T-shirt are available through www.storyingscarf.com

169. See also www.astoryforall.com

170. See <http://www.thehopeproject.com/>

171. See www.thehopeproject.com

also had henna parties in her home. Subsequently, her friends invited her to their homes to do henna and were also open to the stories. Those who attended the parties would then go out into the community and share with whoever asked them about the drawing on their hand. God was doing something amazing!

M.E. unexpectedly moved to South Asia in March of 2010. She soon had four henna groups started, mostly among Muslim women. One group of Hindu women made decisions to follow Christ after four months and were baptized. M.E. ended her term training believers in another part of South Asia. The goal the Lord gave the these two ladies was well on its way to realization—henna would be used worldwide, even outlasting the team’s time on the field.¹⁷²

Carla Clements, Bible Quilt, 2006

God put the idea of a Bible story quilt on Carla Clements’ heart in 2004. Having decided to depict 25 key Bible stories, she created a quilt of 25 squares. In selecting a story set, Clements wanted stories that pointed to Jesus (Luke 24:27) as THE way to salvation. Therefore, one square showed Noah’s Ark (only one door to safety from the judgment); another, Jacob’s Ladder (only one ladder or way to heaven); then, Joseph (all nations came to him for bread to live); as well as the Passover (the substitutionary sacrifice of an innocent lamb whose blood was applied so the angel of death would pass by).

Clements put much thought into the stories and the layout of the squares. She intentionally placed the Passover square in the *center* of the quilt. She also wanted to incorporate God’s appointed times: Jesus was born during the Feast of Tabernacles and dwelt among us; the Lamb of God was crucified during Passover; he was buried during the Feast of Unleavened Bread; he was raised from the dead and presented as the Firstfruits offering; the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

A friend bought bright colored felt fabric for her and the adventure of the Bible Square project was launched. After she completed a square, Clements gathered young girls and helped each to make her own Bible storying square as she carefully narrated the story. When they gathered next they performed a drama with costumes and props about the previous story, then started on the next story square in the chronological Bible timeline.

In 2005, the squares morphed into something even bigger. Clements persuaded another friend to help her sew the Bible story squares on fabric to make a quilt. They used the same patterns and color schemes that she had used when she designed her felt Bible storying squares. In that each square was a standalone piece, many other women could help by stitching the different squares in their own homes, or gather for a ‘bee’ in one of the ladies’ homes. Sitting and sewing the squares together was fun and provided ample opportunity to discuss each story. Eventually, all the quilted squares were sewn together. Thus, the first Bible storying quilt project was completed in 2006.

Clements entered the quilt in the Dallas Quilt Show in 2007. Although she did not win, the judge was very impressed with their choices of fabric, and the quilters themselves knew that they certainly had the *best content!* Clements stood beside the quilt during the show, pointing to each Bible Storying Square, telling His Story boldly and unhindered!

172. For resources, see www.africastories.org/gospel-art/henna-and-the-gospel/
www.imbresources.org/index.cfm/product/detail/prodID/3210/page/1

Many heard her and later went on line to freely download the quilt patterns and hear God's story again.¹⁷³ Later that year her Bible Storying enterprise became incorporated and officially named Bible Stories of Appointed Times... A Visual Story Bible.¹⁷⁴ Little did she understand that she was laying out a metanarrative on fabric that was woven in the very heart of God.

Ethnodoxology Expands the Orality Movement, 2007

In 2003, a small group of colleagues serving cross-culturally in the arts launched a network they called the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE). From its beginning, ICE associates envisioned orality as a means “to see Christ-followers from every culture express their faith through their own heart music and other arts.”¹⁷⁵

A sense of isolation in their ministries and locations drew these “arts in mission” workers to the community provided by the ICE network. In its first decade ICE grew to over three hundred associates, some of whom launched their own national and regional networks in Latin America, the Philippines, and among the Korean diaspora. Several charter members of ICE (Tom Ferguson, Frank Fortunato, Robin Harris, Roberta King, Paul Neeley, Brian Schrag, among others) were involved in the Orality Movement in its early years, presenting papers on how music and the arts connected with storying and orality.

In 2007, Avery Willis encouraged ICE leaders to launch a Music and Arts Task Force in ION (The International Orality Network). Robin Harris served as the first Task Force coordinator. Foundational meetings were energized by the vision of promoting a global movement in the use of culturally-appropriate arts to make disciples of oral learners. The Task Force was committed to storytelling, praise poetry, song, dance, drama, drawing, sculpting, and other local arts becoming an integrated means of telling The Story. They affirmed that music and arts support other strategies to evangelize, disciple, and empower oral people—but that they were also able to stand on their own as the primary means to communicating The Story.

The influence of the arts in ministry grew steadily with Task Force participants learning and teaching ethnodoxology approaches, and bringing multicultural worship to ION gatherings. Collaboration between the ethnodoxology movement and its orality counterpart also grew, resulting in regular participation in one another's events, in publications, e.g., *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook* in 2013, and in other initiatives.

The arts came to be recognized as one of the seven disciplines within orality,¹⁷⁶ and storytelling, once the primary focus of the Orality Movement, would become only one of many effective forms of communicative art to be employed in the multi-faceted task of discipling oral learners.

The Center for Excellence in World Arts at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas, Texas, offers an MA in World Arts. It also provides several training modules specifically in the storytelling aspect of orality. More broadly, the course prepares students in the realm of cross-cultural oral communication, training them to serve alongside

173. See www.BibleQuilt.org

174. See www.VisualStoryBible.org

175. See www.worldofworship.org

176. Madinger, “Coming to Terms with Orality,” 205.

singers, musicians, actors, dancers, storytellers, and visual artists to research the potential use of the arts in their communities. Using their insights, students work with artists using the local arts to respond to the community's needs in a variety of areas, such as community development, health education, justice issues, language and arts preservation, literacy, Scripture engagement, translation, and worship expressions.

Clyde Taber, Visual Story Network, 2008

In 2006, a number of leaders from OneHope, the JESUS Film Project, Bearing Fruit Communications (“The End of the Sphere”), and the Caleb Group met in Orlando. From that meeting of outliers, the Visual Story Network emerged in 2008 under the capable leadership of Clyde Taber.

The goal of the network was to leverage visual media (films, webisodes, television, viral videos) and story for the gospel. Images tell stories. They desired to move beyond 1,500 years of preaching and 500 years of printing to the 21st century means of *portraying* truth through the language of visual story.

During Christmas 2010, I came across “The Digital Story of Nativity” on YouTube. I enjoyed it so much I forwarded it to a colleague teaching in another college. His response, “Thank you! The Christmas story finally told in my language.” Though no further evidence was needed, it was one more bit of confirmation that we live in a digital world.¹⁷⁷

Promoters of Story Sermons

If pastors are to communicate effectively to a postmodern generation sitting in their pews, classrooms, or in homes, homiletics professors will have a responsible role to play in their efforts. One of the pioneers on this front is Grant Lovejoy, formerly of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who focused on the use of narrative in preaching. He is joined by Don Sunukjian and Kent Edwards of Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, and Vic Anderson of Dallas Theological Seminary. In November of 2007, Anderson presented a first-person, multi-media drama of the Bible story from Genesis to Revelation for a Dallas Theological Seminary chapel.

A Sign Bible for Deaf, 2009

Among the estimated 70 million Deaf scattered around the world, over 130 different sign languages have been identified to date (SIL believes this number could reach 400¹⁷⁸). Recently categorized as an Unreached People Group, the Deaf have few sign portions (language of the eyes) of Scripture. Only one sign New Testament and several Old Testament books exist in sign language. Print Bibles will not provide this oral people group (self-identified or preferred) with the Scripture they need and desire.

Without one complete sign Bible, in 2009, Wycliffe and DOOR International¹⁷⁹ partnered to translate the Bible into sign languages. Their goal, along with Deaf Missions that joined the partnership later, is to provide “portions of Scripture translated and

177. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZrf0PbAGSk&feature=youtube_gdata_player

178. See <http://www.sil.org/sign-languages>

179. See www.doorinternational.com and www.deafmissions.com/?PageID=62

distributed for 75% of the world's deaf by 2025.”¹⁸⁰ Sign Bible apps are now available in multiple sign languages.

Waves of Hope Project, 2011

TransWorld Radio, the JESUS Film Project, and StoryRunners partnered to develop a storying radio project that connects storying, discussion, and small groups with women's radio programming. The radio program includes weekly content for the transmission of 100 radio programs.

Theological Education

One bastion historically resistant to change is our institution of theological education. Unless change is made among these gatekeepers, however, the storying movement will not reach its fullest impact on a global scale (see Appendix A). And those most affected by their recalcitrance will be those who would potentially benefit most by expansion of the movement. Doors of change are being opened but not nearly wide enough, or fast enough!

Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989, 1992

Trevor McIlwain was invited to present his then-developing chronological approach to evangelism and church planting at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) in November 1989 and again in September 1992. The seven class sessions were videotaped and copies made available in the DTS library. Around 60 students, many of whom were already involved in evangelism, attended each weekend seminar. By word of mouth, interest in the sessions grew to the point that many of the students graduated with McIlwain's *Firm Foundations* as part of their library arsenal.

Many of the DTS faculty members had first heard of CBT through an audiotape by George Walker and Bob Kennell, church planters in the early 1980s to the Bisorio tribe of Papua New Guinea (chapter 2). Dottie Connor, a former NTM missionary to the Tagbanawa in the Philippines, had widely circulated the tape and with the interest it sparked, some of faculty were anxious to hear the similar Mouk Salvation Story in 1984 (also audiotape). They later viewed EE-Taow!, a NTM video reenactment of the Mouk story. After watching it, then Chancellor John F. Walvoord commented, “Makes a lot of sense! They know the release [forgiveness of sins]; we don't sense it that much!”

Michael Pocock, then Chair of World Missions and Intercultural Studies department, advocates the use of CBT as the best possibility for achieving worldview change in a traditional people with little or no exposure to Scripture. He estimates that half of the DTS faculty is aware of CBT today. Many students have seen EE-Taow! or one of its follow-up versions.

While at DTS, McIlwain made a trip to speak to a group serving in an inner city ministry called Little Asia. This resulted in many of those workers using CBT in that urban context.

180. See <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/deaf-bible>.

Debbie Topliff, *Painting Scripture*, 2007

The canvas was the next frontier for the storying movement. Remembering her difficulty in understanding the book of Revelation while at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Debbie Topliff set out to bring clarity to the very confusing book with a paintbrush.

Using a single five by seven foot canvas, Topliff began painting a visual story of the entire book in 100 scenes, bringing the story of Revelation to life as she told the story behind each scene. The visual scenes make the sacred written text become verbal. The 45-minute DVD of *Painting Revelation* is available through Amazon¹⁸¹ as is her book, *And the Word Became Color: Exploring the Bible with Paper, Pen, and Paint*.

Topliff has done similar 100-scene paintings to capture the story of Mark and the 25 years of linear history of Acts. Digital images of these are available, as are paintings on durable cloth to carry from one location to another. She and ION are now discussing how her art may be used to tell God's story in various cultural contexts.

ION Challenges Theological Education, 2012-2015

Only a few years ago, teachers in established theological institutions at every level began to recognize their students were having difficulty following their teaching, much less reproducing it. Their oral-digital-social-preference students, who Jonah Sachs identifies as "digitalors," preferred watching over reading, screens over paper, interacting over writing, dialoguing over listening to lectures, and group over individual activities. Recognizing this vast disconnect but lacking the vocabulary or categories to identify or articulate it, much less fix it, an uneasiness began to filter through the more observant of faculty members. Noting also the many Oral Bible Schools (OBS)¹⁸² that were popping up in Asia they wondered if OBSs could help them to identify the pedagogical issues and provide some solutions?

This question led, in June of 2012, to an ION initiated, mini-global, invitation-only consultation on the role of orality in theological education. The Billy Graham Center on the campus of Wheaton College hosted the consultation comprised of 42 academicians and practitioners representing 18 institutions and 14 organizations. Follow-up consultations using the same format were held at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary in June 2013, with 59 academicians and practitioners representing 21 theological institutions and universities, and 24 organizations in attendance. In July 2014, 63 attendees representing 19 nations met at Houston Baptist University, with the 2015 consultation at Oklahoma Baptist University. A book resulted from each of the consultations (see chapter 4).

Keeping Up with the Movement

Bryan Thompson, *story4all*, 2006

With all that is happening in the Orality Movement today it is extremely difficult to keep abreast of the players and their new innovations. But in 2006 Bryan Thompson, founder of Story4all, decided it was important to collect, catalogue and make this widening body of

181. See <http://debbytopliff.com/>

182. The phrase "Oral Bible School" (OBS) was first coined by IMB's Lynn Thigpen for use in Cambodia.

information available. Produced in Waringstown, Northern Ireland, Story4all, is committed to bringing the story of God to all peoples orally, accomplishing this by keeping theoreticians and practitioners up to date with the latest through podcasts, show notes, resources, and links.¹⁸³ Story4All's valuable efforts earned it the Christian New Media Award in 2010.

Concluding Reflections

In the first three chapters of this book I purposed to chronicle the present-day Orality Movement from birth, through its early, uneasy years, and beyond its adolescence into its fifth decade of existence and worldwide expansion. We can look back now at its strong historical base, founded in Scripture and tested (with failures!) on many platforms and in countless contexts. Current practitioners can build upon the solid foundation of that heritage and, with confidence, imagine new and better ways to tell the story by new and exciting ways to story.

That's because the one thing that has characterized the Orality Movement to date is change itself! Changing of titles and branding, age groups, literacy levels, lesson length, audiences, geographical locations (rural to city [which is rare directional flow within movements]), journals, books, courses and concentrations, visuals, worldview studies (deep-level to superficial to none), ethnodoxology (songs, paintings, drama, poetry), Bible translation (from NT to OT)—to list a few. Yes, there is more to the story of how the story will be told in the future.

In the next chapter I will attempt to trace the major morphings that have taken place in the movement over the years, and isolate those on the horizon of this ever-changing, ever-expanding wave we now know as the Orality Movement.

183. See www.story4all.com/index.shtml

4

Movement Morphings

“There’s truths you have to grow into.”

—H. G. WELLS

NOT EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY to live to witness the birth and maturation of a significant movement. Fewer still have the opportunity to participate in, much less influence one. As early observer, practitioner, trainer, advocate and maybe even provocateur since the conception of the present-day Orality Movement, I find myself today perched in the catbird’s seat, able to track the significant morphings within it over the decades.

I will introduce my observations chronologically, though, as is typical with any emerging movement, the unfolding developments will often overlap.¹⁸⁴

Morphings Within A Movement

Movements tend to be messy. While retrospectively viewed as monolithic in nature, in reality they tend to simultaneously morph in multiple, uncontrolled and unimagined directions—often to the consternation of their progenitors. The innovators, however, usually feel that their contributions can widen the movement’s breadth, deepen its depth of understanding, and ensure its ongoing health. As the movement spreads, one can’t expect all those who have invested in it to be in agreement or on board with all its new expressions and directions.

The *American English Dictionary* defines **morph** as “to change gradually in appearance or form.”

Everett Rogers has identified five categories describing adaptors that could apply to those experiencing the ongoing changes as the Orality Movement matures. These

184. Some of this material is adapted from Steffen, “Orality Comes of Age: The Maturation of a Movement.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 31 (2014a) 139-147.

include: (1) Innovators (2.5 percent), (2) Early Adopters (13.5 percent), (3) Early Majority (34 percent), (4) Late Majority (34 percent), (5) Laggards (16 percent). movement.¹⁸⁵

As my reflective observations of the journey will demonstrate, this is true of the dynamic present-day evangelical Orality Movement. Some individuals quickly embraced and brought early changes to the movement, some followed, some resisted, and others still don't care to hear of the changes.

Observation 1: It's More than Systematic Theology

Systematic theology begins with our questions. Biblical theology and narrative theology begin with the biblical author's questions. The Orality Movement recognizes that starting points matter because of the assumptions that drive the different theologies.

Those in the Movement also recognize that the sequence in which the different theologies are introduced matters. Rather than stamping systematic theology as superior and beginning there, they prefer to see its value when it makes summaries birthed from the concrete characters and storied events of Scripture. The biblical author's questions should lead to our questions.

It was biblical theology, God's unfolding story from a human perspective that was the driving force behind McIlwain's Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT). The same could be said of IMB's Chronological Bible Storying (CBS). While at least five schools of thought drive biblical theology,¹⁸⁶

McIlwain relied on the historical events presented in Scripture, called "successive installments" by Walter Kaiser, that framed the story of redemption. Those "installments," or individual stories embedded in concrete events, built the whole—the big story, or metanarrative.

Biblical theology played a significant role in the birth of the Orality Movement, but not to the exclusion of systematic theology. Therefore, it was not a matter of superiority of one theology or another, but the bonding of sequence and summary that led to its spread and effectiveness.

Observation 2: It's More than the New Testament

As readers do not dive into a book at its midpoint, and football fans don't show up at halftime, CBT does not begin the narrative in the Gospel of John.¹⁸⁷ It unfolds the story by beginning in the beginning, the Book of Genesis. This means evangelists and church

“Who says theology has to be ideas and concepts? Who has decided that theology has to be doctrines, axioms, propositions? ... God is not concept; God is story. God is not idea; God is presence. God is not hypothesis; God is experience. God is not principle; God is life. ... For in the beginning were stories, not texts. ... Story is the matrix of theology.”

(Song, 2012, 6-7, 17-18)

185. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 2003.

186. See Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 2012.

187. In 20-20 hindsight the problem is obvious. If one starts evangelism in the first chapter of John there is no Old Testament background in which to inform its interpretation.

planters in remote areas need local-language Scripture from which to teach. To meet this need, Bible translators who had traditionally translated the book of Mark first¹⁸⁸ instead found themselves scrambling for Old Testament commentaries and helps. Influenced by CBT, translators recognized that just as Jesus required a forerunner in John the Baptist, so the New Testament (NT) required its forerunner, the Old Testament (OT).

Though it seems almost pedantic to state today, the New Testament was never intended to introduce Jesus Christ and God's redemptive plan to the world. Too much of the gospel story ends up on the cutting floor. But only a few decades ago, it was standard operating procedure to float the names and concepts surrounding God, Jesus and Satan into a culture in the hope that all the pieces would fall into place and make sense.

CBT, therefore, was instrumental in changing Bible translation culture and focus. Starting translations in the Old Testament not only provided a needed foundation for the big Story, but also foundational terms such as God, Satan, and sin that were required by the Christian worker to clearly communicate that Story in the local language.

Observation 3: It's More than Chronology

As noted in chapter 2, J.O. Terry was instrumental in a number of title changes emanating from McIlwain's CBT. Because of McIlwain's initial influence on the IMB, it adopted the name and methodology of his CBT in its early form. That would soon change.

Terry's attendance of a McIlwain seminar held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1992 initiated those changes. Terry was convinced that McIlwain's strong literate approach would not work among most of the audiences that he had evangelized and discipled. He believed McIlwain's approach was simply too expositional for self-identified oral learners. "Where is the trust in the power of the story to communicate meaning? Could not interactive dialogue following the story answer necessary questions?" Terry left the seminar knowing that CBT within the IMB could *not* remain as it was.

Terry was also concerned with the rigidity of CBT. As he understood it, there was no room in those early days for addition to or subtraction from the "divinely revealed order of teaching" of the 68 Bible stories chosen by McIlwain. Terry asked himself, "Are all people groups and their needs that similar? Would not guidelines¹⁸⁹ rather than a frozen number (68) of stories reach more listeners?"

His experience at the McIlwain seminar resulted in a change in philosophy, methodology, and title within the IMB. From then on, the IMB's adaptation of CBT would be known as "Chronological Bible Storying" (CBS). More changes were to follow.

Terry's extensive storying experience in Asia raised another issue. Not every context afforded the opportunity to story over long periods of time—months in the case of CBT. Some contexts allowed five hours, others only five minutes. In 1994 Terry developed shorter story sets to fit these varying time frames. The sets allowed for a topical approach to address current needs on an immediate basis, or a more chronological one if desired. He called this new adaptation Bible Storying.

188. Translators chose the book of Mark to begin translation because it was in the New Testament, the shortest book, and written in simple Greek. This strategy was translator centric, not host-society centric.

189. Questions such as the following could help develop such guidelines: How often could a group or individual meet with you? How much can they absorb at one setting?

Around the same time Terry began experimenting with what he called “fast tracking,” i.e., storying from creation to Christ (C2C) in various limited timeframes. Again, he wanted to encourage adapting to contexts and time rather than a “one-size-fits all” mindset and approach. Fast tracking, which allowed for dialogue following each storying event, opened up more opportunities for people to hear the gospel.

These intentional changes opened the door to ministry opportunities in a variety of contexts. No longer solely aimed at one-to-group story sessions in a formal setting, CBS in its new forms became a valuable one-on-one storying tool. Storyers were encouraged to flex and adapt stories based on the situation. Conversation was favored over chronology, fluidity over rigidity. And for the first time, it allowed short-termers ministry opportunities formerly available only to career missionaries. Pandora’s box had been opened, and telling the Story would never be the same.

Around 2005, another name change occurred to reflect another significant change to McIlwain’s CBT. Some within NTM’s Bible schools and training institutes were dissatisfied with the methodology’s original title. CBT was to be replaced with Foundational Bible Teaching (FBT) for four reasons:

1. Many who heard the term “chronological” came to view CBT only as an evangelism tool, to the exclusion of its other phases and purposes.
2. The term chronological represented only one aspect of the way the model was taught in Phases 1-3. (See Figure 1.1)
3. Phases 4-7 (See Figure 1.1) were laid in a more logical sequence, tracking the believers’ spiritual growth and development rather than telling Bible stories in historical sequence.
4. The title Foundational Bible Teaching better reflected the entire program premised on providing a strong OT foundation for the gospel (see Figure 4.1).

McIlwain was concerned, however, that dropping the term “chronological” would lead many to interpret FBT as a topical teaching of foundational doctrines rather than Bible stories told chronologically. He preferred, therefore, to reference the program as “Foundational Chronological Bible Teaching” or “Chronological Expository Bible Teaching.”¹⁹⁰ As it turns out, many users today simply refer to it as Foundational Teaching or Firm Foundations (see Table 4.1).

As of 2017, NTM’s (now Ethnos360) Church Development Team, along with others, continue to develop Eternity to Eternity (E2E), a three-cycle tool designed to take people from evangelism through to maturity via a panoramic progression from Genesis to Revelation. Cycle 1 extends McIlwain’s Phase 1 evangelism (Creation to Ascension) to include parts of Acts and Revelation. By extending the storyline they believe it will help listeners to understand salvation in a more complete way—not just from sin, but also from death and Satan, culminating in Jesus’ victorious reign. God’s dwelling with Adam and Eve in the beginning, lost during the Fall, comes full circle in Revelation (21:3a).

Ongoing discipleship is covered in the next two cycles by repeating the same storyline, but adding new stories, and propositional material from the Epistles. Cycles 2 and 3 are designed for new believers and maturing believers respectively. E2E magnifies

190. Personal communication, July 11, 2011.

Jesus' victory on the cross while laying a firm foundation for ongoing discipleship by tying the entire Bible into a panoramic whole.

Fragmented topical teaching has dominated the evangelical world and its mission arm for centuries. McIlwain's CBT helped Christian workers consider the need to grasp and communicate the big picture of Scripture—the metanarrative—over the landscapes of both the Old and New Testaments. E2E continues this thrust. As a result, fragmentation has given way to telling the Sacred Story as it was meant to be told, as one, from eternity past to eternity future.

Observation 4: It's More than Story

“Story” received the greatest attention from most contributors to and advocates of the early Orality Movement. To embed abstract doctrinal concepts and ideas into concrete characters and storied events was so liberating that other genres were often unintentionally overlooked. Scriptures that encouraged the use of orality, such as, “Listen to the village musicians gathered at the watering holes” (Judges 5:11, NLT), or biblical insights into ethnodoxology, would have to wait (see also, Psalms 105:2, VOICE). Story drove and defined everything, serving as the required port of entry for those early practitioners who had been mired in world of linear, abstract propositions and fragmentation.

Even as Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* educated the emerging movement about the foggy distinctives and continuum between primary orality (those who prefer to communicate through verbal and visual means because they cannot read) and secondary orality (literate people who prefer oral and visual means to learn, imagine, and communicate), many applied the concepts of orality primarily to story (antagonist, protagonist, supporting cast, setting, plot, choices, consequences). That, too, would soon change.

Charles Madinger, a key strategist within the Orality Movement, designed a chart to capture the breadth and complexity of orality, helping advance the movement beyond simply story. He found that “storytelling or ‘storying’ uses the principles of orality but is more precisely an application of its principles,”¹⁹¹ concluding that seven disciplines converge to define orality: culture (interpret), literacy (understand), networks (relate), memory (learn), language (receive), media (deliver), and arts (feel) (see Figure 4.1). The discipline of the arts alone could include drama,¹⁹² song,¹⁹³ symbols, visual literacy, testimonies, proverbs, folktales, poems, and so forth. Eyes opened even wider as those within the Movement came to comprehend that the orality umbrella covered much more than simple story telling.

191. Madinger, “Coming to Terms with Orality,” 204.

192. See: <http://www.bibliodrama.com/>

193. Aminta Arrington concluded in her research of the Lisu residing in south-west China that “the Lisu hymns serve as a theological mediator for Lisu Christians, bridging the gap between the text-intensive religion that is Christianity and the oral world of Lisu culture. ... If the Lisu bible is an icon, sacred and revered, and the hymnbook, the second item in this two-book set, is the religious handbook, then singing the written words of the hymns brings the two realms—oral and literate—together. ... In the everyday arena, in the practical living out of what it means to be a Christian for a communal and still largely oral-preference people such as the Lisu, the Lisu Christian hymns are the centrepiece of worship and devotion, of prayer and penitence” (140, 151, 158). Arrington, “Christian Hymns as Theological Mediator,” 2015. In her dissertation, Arrington calls this ritual practice “liturgical literacy.” Arrington, *Hymns of the Everlasting Hills*, 2014.

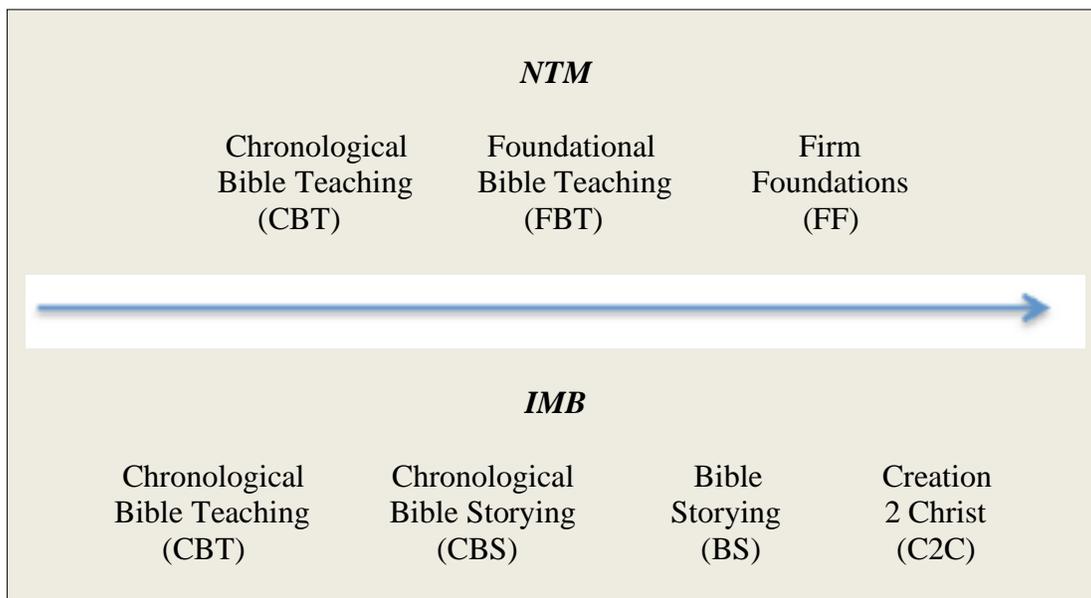


Table 4.1: Title Changes Within the Orality Movement

Following a linear biblical theology, McIlwain’s evangelism (Phase 1) called for storytellers to build one lesson upon another until the 68 lessons were covered. There was no introductory lesson to provide a brief overview or anchor the cosmic drama being fought between the protagonist and an antagonist. An initial lesson early in the series would have helped create an overarching mystery¹⁹⁴ and given direction to the question, “Who is the promised mystery man?” But the strict, sequential presentation of CBT would not allow the answer to be revealed for another 45-50 lessons. Then the narrative would suddenly end with Christ ascending into Heaven. This lack of a true overarching metanarrative was also apparent in the IMB’s CBS, often resulting in a series of unanchored stories that often led to misinterpretation.¹⁹⁵

194. While referencing artists, France Bacon’s accent on mystery applies to Bible storytellers as well, “The goal of the artist is always to deepen the mystery.”
<https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/francisbac132240.html>

195. One wonders how the lack of an Old Testament foundation creates noise in understanding of The Jesus Film. See Steffen, “Don’t show the Jesus film...” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 29 (1993) 272-275.



Figure 4.1: A Holistic Model of Orality¹⁹⁶

Observation 5: It's More than Individual Bible Stories

A growing number within the Orality Movement recognized the affects of this shortcoming on at least two levels: the pedagogical (learning style preferences) and the theological. On the pedagogical level many people from around the world prefer to learn from whole to part to whole,¹⁹⁷ the exact antithesis of the way most westerners learn, which is part-to-

196. Permission to use this image granted by Charles Madinger.

197. For Whole-Part-Whole Learning Theory geared towards western adult learners see Knowles, et al., *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 2015. The authors offer an andragogical learning template for instructional programs and lessons that follows the “rhythm of learning”—identifying the interrelationship of the whole to all the parts. The parts, where westerners tend to focus, are only part of the equation. What adaptation of this “mental scaffolding” could be made to make this template useful in some cross-cultural contexts where self-identified oral learners prefer to learn from whole-part-whole? Does one’s metanarrative (whole) that interprets all events (parts) in life have any implications for such a learning template? Note also field-dependent learners (Witkin & Goodenough, 1981) compose a significant number around the globe. They prefer a more global, holistic, visual perspective. They have an internal need to know the big picture first. They also “prefer less structured learning environments such as discussion or discovery” (Wooldrige, 1995, 52). Field-dependent learners prefer learning by discovery within previously identified soft boundaries.

whole. Jerome Bruner captured the problem this way, “Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message.”¹⁹⁸ When CBT and CBS are taught in this oft-preferred western pedagogical style it introduces a subtle type of noise that makes the Sacred Storybook’s author-intended meanings difficult to understand, thus opening the door to misinterpretation. In the Foreword of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull summarizes the role of education this way:

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity *or* it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.¹⁹⁹

In that pedagogy socializes and transforms audiences, presenting God’s story through a foreign pedagogy opens the door to noise that can easily hijack the intended biblical meaning. Presenting the story in a part-to-whole manner to a whole-to part-to whole audience did just that. Westerners found that teaching a series of Bible stories or story sets did not necessarily weave the individual stories into the metanarrative of Scripture. To illustrate, if each story heard represented a piece of clothing, how would the listeners be expected to hold the many pieces without dropping them? And if they were dropped, they would not necessarily be picked up in the order in which they were handed out.

Metanarrative is “a trans-historical, all-encompassing, culture-specific, informally learned, tenaciously held (T.A.C.I.T.) story of reality that provides a present-tense grid whereby individuals of a culture interpret and interact with all aspects of life.”

(Matthews, 2013, 230)

To remedy the situation we might suggest a linear or circular clothesline on which the clothes could be hung in an orderly fashion. Metaphorically, this illustrates the need for an understanding of the existing metanarrative of the Sacred Storybook. Offering listeners a clothesline provides not only a place to hang the individual stories, but also a means to bring more informed definition to them, that is, different types of clothes representing different segments of the sacred story. Each story finds its fullest meaning in the overall arrangement of the big story. As this whole-to-part-to whole²⁰⁰ is the preferred pedagogy of much of the world’s population, presenting the Sacred Story as a metanarrative can have an incredibly significant impact on listeners on every continent.

On the theological level, the entire metanarrative of Scripture, not just the New Testament story, provides the framework for the gospel story. (Galatians 3:8; Psalms 96:2; 106:7-47; Isaiah 40:9; 52:7; 61:1) As the gospel story drives the entire metanarrative from

198. Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, 63.

199. Shaull, “Foreword,” 34.

200. In *Holism*, Jerry Fodor and Ernest Lepore make these observations in regard to holism and fragmentation: (1) the whole is greater than the parts; (2) the whole determines the nature of the parts; (3) the parts cannot be understood in isolation from the whole; and (4) the parts are dynamically interrelated or interdependent. Fodor, Jerry and Ernest Lepore, *Holism: A Shopper’s Guide*, 1992.

creation to consummation, both Testaments guard the gospel against either detrimental abbreviations or “cultural and doctrinal biases.”²⁰¹ D.A. Carson concludes:

Without this big story, the accounts of Jesus will not make any sense—and Paul knows it. . . . Without the big story, without the metanarrative, the little story or the little expression becomes either incoherent or positively misleading. Paul understands the point.²⁰²

The metanarrative that traverses the landscape of Scripture from Alpha to Omega and reveals God’s autobiography sets the linear course from start to finish while the individual Bible stories spiral around it. As it advances, it offers choices and consequences through human and spiritual characters, at times backtracking to a previously telegraphed conclusion or vague mystery. The “big story,” then, becomes the rival metanarrative that challenges worldview allegiances deeply held by the local culture. A growing number within the Orality Movement would argue that the metanarrative of the Sacred Storybook is central not only for those “where the name of Christ has never been heard” (Romans 15:20, NLT), but also for the post-Christian world in which we live. As such, on every level “metanarrative evangelism” must play an increasingly significant role in our immediate and future global outreach efforts.

Observation 6: It’s More than Country Folk

The Orality Movement has done much more than penetrate remote and distant villages; it has also migrated from country dwellers to city residents (see chapter 3). The tributaries of orality had by now meandered through villages, towns, and cities of all sizes. Along the way it has touched the lives of both primary-secondary oral communicators. And as is true of many journeys, problems have arisen. For example, as noted in chapter 3, when NTM missionaries returned on home assignment, many used CBT in small groups and Sunday Schools, usually in urban environments. Before long it became clear that lessons focused on a North American audience were needed to more effectively speak into their lives.

To meet this demand, McIlwain, along with Nancy Everson (who was burdened to reach the US churches as well as tribal peoples), published a fifty-lesson volume, *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ* to be taught over the course of a year. CBT had officially shifted its focus from the country to the city within NTM.

Building upon the shoulders of NTM, the IMB personnel’s played a major role in the expansion and depth of the Orality Movement both in the country and the city through research, training, conferences, consulting, and curricula. It was the IMB’s focus on lowland Filipinos that almost immediately took them from villages into cities where they slowly but steadily reached oral learners there. Orality had bridged the huge gap that had long existed between the countryside and city. A primary-secondary orality emphasis had now traversed from rural to urban worlds.

201. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 301.

202. Carson, “Athens Revisited,” 395.

Observation 7: It's More than Non-Formal Education

The Orality Movement has moved beyond non-formal seminars, conferences, and Oral Bible Schools to formal courses and concentrations offered for credit through the academy. In 1995, I introduced the course “Narrative as an Educational Philosophy”²⁰³ at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, to help graduate students recapture the power of story in ministry. In 2011, Cook added a graduate concentration of eight courses (24 units)²⁰⁴ on orality for those preparing to serve among self-identified oral learners and/or oral-digital-social-preference learners.

Roberta King introduced the course “Communicating Christ through Oral Performance: Storytelling & Song” at the School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, in 2004. Through the assistance of Avery Willis and Grant Lovejoy, Bob Dawson set up an orality minor at Oklahoma Baptist University in 2007 (the minor includes two courses of CBS, plus a practicum). In the Fall of 2015, they launched an on-line MA in orality. Other Southern Baptist schools offering orality courses include: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Formal education in the field of orality has now partnered with non-formal education thereby giving legitimacy to both. A growing number of dissertations that address various aspects of orality are now available in the Christian academy. And groundbreaking Dissertations written by Jay Moon (*African Proverbs Reveal Christianity in Culture: A Narrative Portrayal of Builsa Proverbs Contextualizing Christianity in Ghana*, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005) and Aminta Arrington (*Hymns of the Everlasting Hills: The Written Word in an Oral Culture in Southwest China*, Biola University, 2014) include a number of chapters written in narrative prose. Expect more future dissertation writers to follow in the footsteps of these pioneers.

Observation 8: It's More than Church Multiplication

Over the past four decades the Orality Movement has also spread beyond its original focus of planting, maturing, and multiplying holistic communities of faith. It has moved into the arts, home schooling, community development, TESOL, and business. As noted, it is used in non-formal education, such as the Oral Bible School, and in courses and concentrations in formal education. In the summer of 2012, Samuel Chiang, then Executive Director of the International Orality Network (ION), launched a related field; theological education in formal as well as non-formal institutions. ION plans to investigate every area in relation to orality in education: curricula, textbooks, facilities, seating arrangements, pedagogy, andragogy, hermeneutics, theological biases, and assessment (see: Appendix A).

In chapter 3 I chronicled the common disconnect between faculty who had been trained to educate through literate means and their oral-digital-social learning preference students. These digitalors/lifeloggers have very different pedagogical preferences than their teachers, a disconnect that results in the delivery of less-than-quality education. One

203. Presently the course is titled “Story in Scripture and Service.”

204. The courses in the orality concentration at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, include: Story in Scripture and Service; Sign, Symbol, and Structure; Traditional Oral Narrative: Analysis and Interpretation; Learning the Story; Telling the Story; Narrative and Song; Scripture-In-Use; Oral Literature.

aspect that must be addressed in consultations is how this ever-widening gap can be narrowed. Could orality play a role in closing the pedagogical divide so that deep spiritual transformation has opportunity to emerge? So that rich worship prevails?

Werner Mischke asks this provocative question:

“Could it be that the days of *colonialism in mission methods* may be largely behind us—while *colonialism in theology* is still an issue?”

(2014, 208)

Four consultations to date have been held to discuss these interrelated issues of theology, education, and orality: Wheaton (2012), Hong Kong (2013), Houston (2014), and Oklahoma (2015). Out of the Wheaton consultation came *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts*, edited by Samuel Chiang and Grant Lovejoy. Using case studies, this “how-to” volume offers practical solutions for school administrators and teachers involved in theological education where primary-secondary orality prevails. The Hong Kong consultation resulted in *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and*

Theological Education (2014), also edited by Chiang and Lovejoy, and *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference* (2015) resulted from the Houston consultation in 2014.

The Orality Movement has moved well beyond traditional holistic church multiplication in missions. One wonders if the slow but eventual intersection of the three story movements outlined in the Introduction (secular, sacred, strategic) has helped deepen this expansion?

Observation 9: It’s More than Innocence/Guilt

Part of the ION 2014 consultation in Houston focused on the role of honor and shame (H/S) in formal and non-formal theological education. While anthropological studies address all sorts of cultural dynamics, what became immediately obvious was the strong and unconscious emphasis that storying placed upon the concept of innocence/guilt (I/G). CBT and CBS both highlighted guilt and all the accompanying legal language that typically dominates a western mindset that first and foremost, “all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory” (Romans 3:23, NIV). From this perspective of the story, God becomes the hero because He restores innocence through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Without analyzing and recognizing their own western worldview perspectives (see Observation 10), messengers have tended to:

- Read and interpret Bible truth through an I/G grid
- Teach the metanarrative of the Sacred Story book, individual books and topics, and even theology, through that same I/G grid
- Evangelize, disciple, resolve conflict, and develop leaders through an I/G grid
- Use I/G-oriented review and application questions
- Teach community development and other social ministries through an I/G grid.

In their earnest desire to communicate the high value westerners place on guilt, innocence and justice (values God more than shares) they somehow managed to overlook a biblical and cultural pearl laying at their feet. Even with the relational language that dominates in Scripture, they missed the strong emphasis given to honor and shame: “Do you dishonor God by breaking the law?” (Romans 2:23, NIV). And culturally, much of the Asian and Middle Eastern world find themselves ashamed rather than guilty! From either perspective, God now becomes the hero of the story because He restores our honor by removing the shadow of our shame.

Houston participants also noted how the US itself is rapidly changing from a predominately I/G culture to a H/S culture as evidenced in the youth culture, gangs, and certain churches.²⁰⁵

Participants also discussed the third value system for communication of the Story, that of power and fear (P/F), where control language dominates: “Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power” (1 Thessalonians 1:5, NIV). God becomes the hero of this story because He eliminates all rival powers and restores Himself as the only power. Those engaged in cultures where control language dominates, such as animists who have intimate, daily interaction with the spirit world, will connect strongly at the P/F level.

“When man broke God’s law, he was in a position of guilt. When man broke God’s relationship, he was in a position of shame. When man broke God’s trust, he was in a position of fear... Salvation has to do with saving us from God’s judgment, restoring our relationship with God, and rebuilding trust and putting power back into the hands of God.”

(Müller, 2000, 169)

As a result of the consultation, participants called for the evaluation of all non-formal and formal theological education in relation to the I/G, H/S, P/F trilogy at every level to gauge the appropriate application for each cultural context. Consequently, westerners within the Orality Movement are becoming more comfortable interpreting and communicating Scripture beyond the original I/G system to include H/S and P/F.

Of note, I and others include hygienic language that focuses on purity and pollution (P/P): “Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:1b, NIV). In this value system God becomes the hero because He alone can and does purify the impure. This will ring true for some First Nations people, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, Hindus, and Muslims.

Observation 10: It’s More than the Storyteller’s Worldview

Some within the Orality Movement began to ask questions related to worldview²⁰⁶ (social principles that guide the way we “lean into life”) studies. Some of the questions included:

205. See Crouch, “The Return of Shame,” *Christianity Today* 59 (2015) 32-41.

206. Some today prefer other terms than worldview, such as “societal frames,” in that the term is no longer vogue in at least American anthropology. For an excellent debate on the topic, see Beine, “The End of Worldview in Anthropology?” SIL International, 2010. [SIL Electronic Working Papers 2010-004]; Moreau, “Paul G. Hiebert’s Legacy of Worldview.” *Trinity Journal* 30 (2009) 223-233; Shaw, Compiler, “Christian Anthropologists Reflect on Worldview,” 2009 (threads of a Fishnet discussion). Unpublished paper. Whatever the term, the process is central: (1) does it lead to deep relationships? (2) does it lead to valid

Is there more than simply telling Bible stories? Should worldview studies be conducted before beginning to tell Bible stories? Would such research improve the selection, development, communication, and lesson application of appropriate story sets? Would it help to understand the local pedagogy? E.g., how universal is chronology? How could other worldview institutions, such as economics, social structure, politics, the arts, and so forth, help minimize noise? How much worldview study is too much? Too little? What don't storytellers know about the host culture that will create noise, resulting in syncretism? What do storytellers need to know that will help minimize syncretism and maximize clarity? What cultural noises disrupt and distract?

Paul Hiebert defines **(cultural) worldview** as the, “fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative presuppositions a group of people make about the nature of things, and which they use to order their lives.”

(2008, 15)

Knowing the answers to these and related questions, and applying them to ministry, will ultimately reduce noise. These questions, however, suggest more initial research is necessary to help ensure the clarity of the message.

From its onset in the 1980s, McIlwain's CBT assumed that the Christian worker had conducted extensive anthropological study and analysis before beginning to teach. Therefore its

practitioners normally have had a solid understanding of the host culture's worldview, and had identified bridges and barriers to Christianity by the time they began evangelism (Phase 1).

This level of understanding is accomplished by the simultaneous study of culture and language (C/LA) through four levels of proficiency. These include: Basic (Novice); Progressing (Intermediate); Capable (Advanced); Proficient (Superior). C/LA's ultimate goal is to form deep relationships that result in a high degree of oral and social proficiency (naturalness) gained through an integrated understanding of culture and language.

The process, while time intensive, has been a proven means to clearer communication of the Story through local worldview grids of people groups worldwide. Around the time CBT was taking root in NTM, the agency began to realize it could not put new wine into old wineskins. With the help of SIL, NTM sought to move away from traditional western storying styles to telling the Sacred Story in the way the locals would tell it. Studies in discourse analysis were introduced in the mid-1980s to ensure that local styles of discourse would be understood and properly applied to narratives, exhortations, explanations, and instructional contexts, thus matching communication intention to expected local forms.

Kevin Pittle, an anthropologist at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University, teaches a course in the orality concentration titled, “Traditional Oral Narrative: Analysis and Interpretation.” His class challenges the assumption that all peoples tell

cultural exegesis? (3) does it bring clarity to cross-cultural communication? Two helpful texts include Naugle Jr., *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, 2002 and Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 2008.

stories the same way. He considers various models²⁰⁷ to analyze local stories so that the storyteller can story in a manner that sounds natural to the hearers. This makes comprehension and retelling of the story natural because coherence and fidelity in relation to the host culture's pedagogy has been honored. Clarity results because noise is minimized.

The IMB introduced worldview studies to their personnel in 1995. While some in leadership pushed to plant more churches, Terry, a media specialist who knew the importance of matching product to potential purchaser, noted their lack of success was, in part, due to the planters' use of imported story sets. He concluded that their personnel needed a grasp of the host's worldview perspective to assist them in story selection and to instill the means for discovering evangelism bridges and barriers. While he felt that storying did not require a lot of extraneous, possibly interesting cultural detail, it did require some of that nature of information in order for the stories to be understood.

In chapter 2, I introduced Terry's creation of the Lome Y.²⁰⁸ He developed the Y to help workers discover the host culture and connect those discoveries to story selection without compromising Truth. The flow of cultural data related to worldview entered one arm of the "Y" while biblical truths entered other arm. Both siphoned through the arms of the "Y" to provide the insights necessary to inform storying and the curricula in the local culture. Theological themes, however, always took precedence over the worldview insights discovered. The "Y" is rarely used today, but in its place the IMB continues to produce other simplified worldview study aids.

At this writing there are some within the IMB who feel that it takes way too long to story through the main 40 to 60 CBS lessons. They also feel that worldview studies of the host cultures take too much time away from church planting efforts. Besides, the effectiveness of CBS was not often evident through the drip, drip, drip of one story after another!

This view raises a number of strategic questions. How do the locals view chronology? What is the appropriate and expected length of a story? Which moral value system(s) do the locals bias—I/G, H/S, P/F, P/P? What attributes do locals assign to characters they consider heroes? Scoundrels? On the macro level, what are the locals' pedagogical preferences? David Garrison answers the last question in this way: "This question presupposes that expatriates are the driving force of what is happening. That is an unfortunate 'old paradigm' misunderstanding."²⁰⁹

What about worldview research? Again, Garrison interestingly gives the same answer to worldview studies as he did to pedagogical studies: "This question presupposes that expatriates are the driving force of what is happening. That is an unfortunate 'old paradigm' misunderstanding."²¹⁰

Jackson Wu would respond differently:

If you want to tell a story to address our listeners' worldview, more is required than

207. In this class students learn to analyze myths, legends, and folktales using Levi-Straussian and Proppian structural approaches, Jungian psychological approaches, Campbellian literary approaches, and so forth.

208. See Terry, "Role of Worldview in Story Selection," *The Journal of Bible Storying* 13 (2015) 1-6.

209. Schattner, *The Wheel Model*, 108.

210. *Ibid.*, 108.

merely exchanging terminology and finding redemptive analogies or “bridges.” Rather, our goal must be to **create a narrative context that evokes emotional and intellectual responses similar to stories or situations common to the local culture.** In other words, in order for gospel stories to subvert the prevailing cultural worldview, the listeners should not feel they enter a “foreign” world when hearing the story.²¹¹

Regardless of who the driving force is, some will say ministering to the worldview of the local people is critical while others will say it is no silver bullet. Would syncretism still have run wild among the Palawano of the Philippines if the first missionary had conducted in-depth cultural research that may have revealed bridges and barriers to personal relationships and the gospel (chapter 1)? Would he have discovered the myth that told of a white person one day arriving in the village with a big black book? “Do whatever he says,” was the admonition of the tale. Why did the Holy Spirit choose *not* to compensate for the unassuming, yet dedicated missionary’s lack of understanding of the host’s culture? “How far does the Holy Spirit go to dissipate the fog that is stirred up by evangelism that fails to make a universal message unique for specific contexts?”²¹²

With all the questions asked, still others are on the lips of those who sincerely prepare themselves and the locals for the fullest understanding of the Sacred Story. How important are worldview and pedagogical studies in helping reduce cultural noise? How important are such studies in relation to earning not just the right to speak, but the right to be heard? Will minimal cultural research produce noise that hijacks Christianity causing it to result in nominalism, legalism or syncretism? Are pedagogical and worldview studies now passé, part of an “old paradigm” that is no longer necessary for 21st century cross-cultural workers? What eternal implications does this have for the gospel? How does the method impact the message?

Anthropologist David Beine notes, “I have watched those promoting oral storying start by valuing cultural worldview studies, but as time has gone on I see less emphasis on this coming from this camp. Perhaps because it takes so long?”

(Personal communication, January 28, 2016)

Further and more basic, have worldview studies received sufficient attention? Using Everett Rogers’ terminology, how many “late majority” and “laggards”²¹³ exist within the Orality Movement? Will a minimal understanding of the host culture’s worldview result in producing various types of noise? How many of these advocates of the Orality Movement have conducted sufficient, in-depth cultural research? How many learn to contextualize the gospel from their research *and* honor the host culture and serve within it? Is worldview research now passé, a pith helmet left over from a former era of missions?

211. Wu, “How Would Jesus Tell It? Crafting Stories from an Honor-Shame Perspective,” 104.

212. Steffen, “Foundational Roles of Symbol and Narrative in the (Re)construction of Reality and Relationships,” 429.

213. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 2003.

No pith helmet will be found in this lofty endeavor that demonstrates incarnational respect for the Creator, the Bible, and the host audience.²¹⁴ Yes, many more worldview researchers are required in the Orality Movement if noise is to be minimized and a clear message communicated. May their numbers increase.

Part Two of the book will make the case for worldview-based storying.

Concluding Reflections

In an evolving movement, not every traveler is in the same place on the path. Some recognize and act upon the above observations, others do not. For example, a selected speaker in an orality session at the Lausanne 2010 in South Africa apologized for using PowerPoint in his presentation, as if story was the only thing that mattered. Many have moved on from fundamental observations, encouraging and incorporating observations like those I introduce above. The Orality Movement is a work in progress, with no end in sight. It must remain a work in progress if the disciple-making process is to improve cross culturally at home and abroad. The legacy of this movement attests to H. G. Wells' adage that "There's truths you have to grow into."²¹⁵

In "The Gospel is More Than a Story: Rethinking Narrative and Testimony," Leslie Leylands Fields identifies what she considers oversteps in the current use of story within the evangelical church:

In pursuit of Story, we've abridged the Bible. We've edited out the non-narrative parts. We've reworded the text. We in the church have been committing such acts of revision comfortably for some time. And for postmodern churches and pastors who are calling for a "new kind of Christianity," this is not enough. Some high-profile pastors are forming a Christianity defined purely by Story. "Story" is a near-exclusive category that rejects traditional formulations of the Christian faith: apologetics, doctrine, systematic theology, propositional truths.²¹⁶

Leylands Fields' quote shows that wide gaps exist in the evangelical Orality Movement, but I trust that my 10 observations detected from the catbird's seat provide her, and you, some comfort that answers are being aggressively sought.

Central to this book is the role of worldview research in relation to the Orality Movement. Part Two of this text assumes that worldview research *is as necessary today as it was in all previous mission eras*. In it, therefore, I will attempt to make the case for Worldview-based Storying as a critical tool in the Christian worker's toolbox as he attempts to minimize noise and raise message clarity.

Yes, there is more to the story.

214. Returning from a trip to gather from orchards with an Ati beggar who slept on the streets of Ilo-Ilo, Philippines, Doug Pennoyer provides a living illustration of incarnation. While awaiting a ride back to the city, his Ati guide said this to the waiting passengers, 'He ate our corn. He slept in our relatives' house. He's not ashamed to be our companion' (43). Pennoyer, "An Answer for the Beggars of Panay." *World Christian* 4 (1985) 41-43.

215. See https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/880695.H_G_Wells

216. Fields, "The Gospel is More than A Story: Rethinking Narrative and Testimony," 41-42.

Part Two:

Making the Case for Worldview-based Storying



Making the Case for Symbol

“The soul never thinks without a picture.”

—ARISTOTLE

WHILE I HAVE SEPARATED symbol, story, and ritual for discussion purposes in the following three chapters, in life they are thoroughly integrated, influencing the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of one’s worldview.²¹⁷ I beg patience for the moment for this artificial division. Symbol should never be considered a separate entity from story or ritual. That is because the level of interaction between the three determines one’s worldview, and the depth of its modification. I will integrate the trio in chapter 8, forming a unified whole in what I call Worldview-based Storying.²¹⁸

In this chapter I will identify the foundational role of symbol, considering what it is and what it does in relation to worldview, concluding with an application to Scripture. But before reflecting on these, I begin with some suspicions surrounding symbol.

217. Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 169.

218. How myth, symbol, and ritual relate has undergone change over the years in the anthropological world, moving from independence to interdependence. For example, Franz Boaz (1858-1942) emphasized the primacy of ritual and secondary explanatory role of myth in the *Reader in Comparative Religion* edited by Lessa William A. and Evon Z. Vogt, (1972) 3-105. In *The Golden Bough*, James Frazer (1854-1941) argued that myth gave ritual meaning. In *Myth*, Robert Segal noted the closing of the gap: “when the two [myth and ritual] do come together, they do not just serve a common function, as Kluckhohn assumes, but reinforce each other. Myth bolsters ritual by giving mere human behaviour a real, not to mention divine, origin... Conversely, ritual bolsters myth by turning a mere story into prescribed behaviour of the most dutiful kind: do this on pain of anxiety, if not punishment. Where for Smith myth serves ritual, for Burkert ritual equally serves myth,” 66. Segal, *Myth*, 2004. Hiebert, et al. seemed to come closer in showing the interdependency of the three through a “systems approach” in *Understanding Folk Religion* (1999) 231-255. See also N.T. Wright’s *The New Testament and the People of God*, (1992) 124 (story, symbol, praxis, questions), and *The Challenge of Jesus*, (1999) 171, 181.

Symbol Seen as Suspect by Some

History, whether cognizant or incognizant, has a way of influencing the present. For some Protestants, symbols are suspect in that images can easily take one's attention away from the Creator to the created. The created (symbol) replaces the Creator (the Actor represented by the symbol) resulting in idolatry (Exodus 20:3ff).²¹⁹ For example, the bronze serpent that Moses placed on a pole in the desert provided healing to all who looked at it. However, a later generation worshipped the same symbol as an idol (Numbers 21:4-9; 2 Kings 18:4). John Calvin summarizes the Reformation view: "Only the word allows us to see 'God in the manner of a mirror.'"²²⁰ Some within Reformed Christianity conclude, "Visual symbolism is regarded as secondary and only to be employed in order to confirm and seal that which had been declared in words."²²¹ Words rule. But are not words also symbols seen through eyes?²²²

For some Christian leaders the need for symbols (and rituals) depicts spiritual immaturity on the part of the worshippers:

Our worship must be less ritualistic. ... Biblically, true spirituality should lead to less religiosity. ... The immature need sight, feelings, holy objects and rituals, but the mature develop a servant lifestyle that depend on minimal ritualistic worship. Developing more elaborate (and entertaining) worship services is truly detrimental to our spiritual health.²²³

Another reason why some suspect the validity of symbols is that they perceive that there is danger of misinterpretation since symbols are ambiguous by nature. They consider symbols too subjective, thereby making an objective interpretation difficult, if not impossible. As examples of ambiguity, they point to all the symbols found in the Apostle John's Revelation, and the multitude of interpretations attached to them. This challenge has divided theologians:

While this symbolic necessity is often expressly asserted by theologians, it is sometimes hidden by those who assert the literal truth of their doctrine and practice

219. Weber observes that "the Heidelberg Catechism spoke categorically to the question of using images for biblical teaching: Question 98: 'May not pictures be tolerated in churches in place of books for unlearned people?' Answer: 'No, for we must not try to be wiser than God who does not want his people to be taught by means of lifeless idols, but through the living preaching of his Word'" (26, 27). Weber, *Experiments with Bible Study*, 1981.

220. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 466.

221. Dillistone, *The Power of Symbols in Religion and Culture*, 51.

222. I've often heard/read—Ong among others—that self-identified oral learners do not prefer to think or learn abstractly; they prefer to learn through their ears rather than their eyes. If this is true, why is it that self-identified oral learners around the world surround themselves with so many symbols—abstract ideas associated with colors, clothes, animal skulls, water, food, feathers, smoke, sounds, smells, etc.? Have reading-preference learners "misread" self-identified oral learners? If there is a continuum, rather than a "great divide" between the two preferences, how does this impact those who are "almost-literate"? See Thigpen's chapter 5 in her dissertation *Connected Learning: A Grounded Theory Study of How Cambodian Adults with Limited Formal Education Learn*, 2016, for a helpful model that challenges the dichotomistic "great divide."

223. Lim, "Biblical Worship Rediscovered," 36.

as divinely given. ... Karl Rahner exemplifies the former view ... that “the whole of theology is incomprehensible if it is not essentially a theology of symbols,” adding that this fact is seldom taken seriously within Christian circles.²²⁴

Symbol brings with it risks and rewards. In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch focuses on the reward side:

Metaphor, symbol, ritual, sign and myth, long maligned by those interested only in “exact” expressions of rationality, are today being rehabilitated; they not only touch the mind and its conceptions, and evoke action with a purpose, but compel the heart.²²⁵

I concur with Clark Pinnock when he concludes that “There are many notes on God’s keyboard which we often neglect to sound, with the result that God’s presence can be hard to access.”²²⁶ Some of the many “notes” will include symbol (and story and ritual).²²⁷ God,

Image: “any word that names a concrete thing or action.”

Symbol: “an image that stands for something in addition to its literal meaning...Symbolism emerges as a shared language in a culture.”

Metaphor & simile: “function much like symbol, and nothing much is lost if these terms are used interchangeably.”

(Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, 1998, xiv)

or Deus Symbolic, symbolizes Himself to humanity to reveal His deity, and humanity symbolizes herself to humanity, as does lower creation to humanity. Symbol has an innate way of unifying and explaining detached worlds. If we under appreciate the significance of symbols in Scripture, we likely will blind ourselves to much of what God intends us to grasp.²²⁸

Walker Percy calls humans “homo symbolificus” (symbol mongers).²²⁹ Walter Fisher labels humans as “homo narrans” (storytelling animals).²³⁰ Rodney Needham brands humans as “homo ceremonial” (ceremonial animals).²³¹

I would concur with their conclusions but take one step back and ask, why do humans have

224. Davies, *Anthropology and Theology*, 182.

225. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 343.

226. Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 116.

227. In *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*, Lee Boleman and Terrence Deal argue that to understand the culture of an organization, four frames require research: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. First published in 1984, the authors note, “of the four major organizational perspectives, the symbolic is the newest, least developed, and least mapped” (223). Boleman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 1984.

228. Roberta Ahmanson, an advocate of contemporary art, believes that, “We now live in a visual age, an emotion-driven age. The church can have no voice if it abandons visual language, one of God’s loudest, most powerful languages,” 47. (quoted in Cockrel, “Dwelling in Light Accessible,” 2016.

229. Percy, *The Message in the Bottle*, 1975.

230. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 1987. Eric Havelock claims that people are natural oral communicators rather than “reading and writing animals.” Havelock, *Origins of Western Literacy*, 1976.

231. Needham, *Exemplars*, 1985.

such propensities? They have the propensity for symbol, story, and ritual because they are made in the image of the God who represents that trilogy.

Symbol finds its origin in the Creator. Not only are we made in the image of God, we are also made in the image of the symbols we have heard, observed, read about, seen, felt, smelled, all of which helped define our understanding of God. God communicates to us through symbols because we are hardwired to build relationships with Him and others through sensory symbols. Certainly we may refer to the trilogy of symbol, story, and ritual as a way to recognize and rehearse to ourselves how God is communicating to His highest creation.

What Symbol Is

First Communion

I grew up attending Apostolic Christian Churches (ACC) in Milford and Bremen, Indiana. These churches are two of the 500-plus in the US adhering to Swiss-German Anabaptists tradition. I anticipated Sundays as I would get to see my grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and friends. The services, however, were usually long and boring—never anything directed to children (they were to be seen, not heard), and some morning services were in German. But the hour plus between the morning and afternoon services more than made up for this downside. There was always lunch consisting of milk and fresh donuts or lunchmeats and cheese. Sundays provided a safe space and time compared to the other days of the week interacting with the English (nonbelievers).

Communion was observed once or twice a year “as the Lord led,” and always during the afternoon service. The upcoming service was announced well in advance so that members had opportunity to ask forgiveness of those they had wronged, and non-members could plan not to attend.

Usually an elder from another ACC church officiated along with four or more local elders. The ACC believed in plurality of elders as depicted by the number of chairs behind the podium where the elders sat while deciding whom the Holy Spirit had appointed to preach an unprepared sermon. The service began with several songs (all stood to sing *a cappella* in four-part harmony) led by someone in the pews with his trusty pitch pipe. Prayer (all knelt) followed, usually led by a member in the pews selected by the presiding elder. No musical instruments accompanied the singing, as for some reason that I never understood, God frowned upon such things. Musical instruments were fine to have in homes, however, or even in the basement of the church!

Scripture reading followed. Parts of the Exodus story and the Last Supper were often read from a huge Bible that graced the massive wooden pulpit centered in the front of the undecorated sanctuary.

Then came the sermon. I remember a visiting preacher painting the picture of the Israelites’ deliverance from slavery from the Egyptians, the Passover lamb, the blood placed on the top and side doorframes, and the power of God in parting the waters for an escape on dry land. The story of Jesus’ Passover meal advanced the story into the New Testament. Before the elements were distributed, however, the speaker made it crystal clear through graceful instructions that communion was for “members only.”

The elements consisted of bread and wine. A song and prayer were offered for each. Volunteers passed the bread from row to row to the men and women setting on opposite

sides of the sanctuary. The wine followed. Prayer concluded the hour-long communion service. Then it was time to return to the present; it was time to again visit with family and friends (at least a half hour) before leaving the church premises to enter a foreign world that could easily ensnare one in its evils.

After I became a “member” of the ACC at the age of 14, I participated in my first communion. Several things stood out. I looked forward to sipping the (real) wine, but I questioned why I had sat at the end of the row drinking from the common cup after all those before me. I wondered if the alcohol in the wine was strong enough to kill all the germs collected on the lip of the cup by the time it reached me. Could I turn the cup in a certain way and drink out of a part no lips had touched? I missed much of the symbolic significance of the wine that day.

I also remember the strong admonition to come to the “communion table” clean. I was told to confess my sins before partaking or face the consequences—“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body” (1 Corinthians 11:29, KJV).

The sermon and songs also elicited my reflection on the substitutionary death of Christ on my behalf. The broken bread symbolizing Jesus’ torn body and the wine representing his blood poured out, and securing the new covenant. Those things hit home. I was humbled, awed with the mystery, and challenged to live for him in the coming days. Worship intertwined with worry as the past encountered the present through this guilt-based message.

Symbol Originates from Anything

Everywhere one looks symbols abound. My computer has an apple on the front panel. Various colored ribbons in different sizes hang on our kennel wall. They were won by our Saint Bernards, verifying various AKC wins in classes that led to championships and grand championships—Best Puppy, or Stud Dog of the Year. Symbols are a universal phenomenon, and they can originate from anything. They may begin as representing names, numbers, directions, even diseases. Their shape might be as staffs, headdresses, art, or architecture. People associate representative meaning to both material and immaterial objects.

American anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines **symbol** as “any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception.”

(1973, 91)

For the Apostolic Christians a “common table” between services signified communion between God and his people, sharing, and solidarity. Then, in the afternoon service, the bread and wine (common cup) represented the body and blood of Jesus and the new covenant. The separation of sexes in the sanctuary depicted proper gender roles. The absence of musical instruments, decorations, and bare walls in the sanctuary signified unencumbered worship of God. The chairs arranged behind the pulpit validated plurality of leadership and the elders’ unified agenda. The elders praying behind the pulpit before deciding whom the Lord had commissioned to give an unprepared sermon demonstrated their reliance on the Holy Spirit. It also implied the people’s trust in a leader constantly studying the Scriptures and listening to the Holy Spirit. Different congregants leading the singing or prayer or serving the noon meal or serving

communion, annunciated the “priesthood of the believers.” The requirement for participating in communion only with confessed sin signified the unity of fellowship. The congregation standing while singing or kneeling while praying signified respect and honor for their King. The prominent location of the pulpit signified the centrality of Scripture.

Symbol may be associated with personages—Buddha, Mohammad, Joseph Smith, Mother Teresa, Jesus Christ. It may be associated with a written text—the Koran, Bhagavad Gita or the Tao Te Ching. It may be associated with animals—a lamb, a dragon, a cow, a bison, a water buffalo, a leopard. It may relate to colors or numbers; it may follow the human lifecycle, the annual agricultural cycle, the church calendar cycle, or in the case of the occasional communion in the ACC, “as the Lord leads.”

Symbol is a communication *form* that serves some *function*, and is defined (*meaning*) within cultural categories that are summarized in the master story (developed in the next chapter). While its original meaning may be rooted in the past, people often blend ancient meaning with present meaning. Symbol is a pictorial conversation, possibly extending for generations, centered on associated relationships defined in social time and space.

Symbol is Expressed on Multiple Societal Levels

People express and experience the significance of symbol on multiple levels, often with overlap (see Figure 5.1). Individuals wearing caps with tassels, gowns, and stoles, all of various designs and colors, celebrate years of hard work as they clutch their diplomas received at graduation. Families hold reunions sporting t-shirts that depict a specific date, location, and some unifying logo.

Communities in the United States celebrate the Fourth of July with flags, franks, fireworks, and parades. On the country level, each September 11 (9/11) one will hear the names of those who tragically lost their lives in the Twin Towers by jihadist terrorists. On the level of countries, the Lausanne Committee calls for mission-minded Christians from around the globe to come together periodically to discuss some aspect of the Great Commission documented through publications and various media. Worldview (coherent social and spiritual principles that guide life) consists of a storehouse of symbols expressed on multiple, overlapping societal levels.

Symbol is Driven by Its Own Logic

Many in the West and some in the East prefer propositional logic. It is necessary to distinguish symbolic logic (a sensory form of reasoning) from other forms of logic if fidelity of meaning is to occur. I will now briefly consider what may happen if someone attempts to understand symbols through propositional logic.

The propositional logic paradigm relies on facts, reason, and the mind as it attempts to discover meaning through identifying various categories and characteristics through depths of delimitations. Users of this form of logic assume that if a strict code of hermeneutical procedures is followed, a single, correct answer will automatically emerge, one absent of any of biases. They assume that orderly, linear thought processes will result in a single, objective, *correct* answer. When used judiciously, many assume that

propositional logic virtually eliminates mistaken or ambiguous meanings.²³² Preciseness and precision are the automatic and assumed results. But even if true, is there value in ambiguity?

The propositional logic paradigm, however, is inadequate when it comes to interpreting symbols. Not only is it inadequate, more importantly, it is inappropriate. When one needs to nail a board to a beam, and has both a screwdriver and a hammer, the obvious tool of choice is the one designed for the job. While propositional logic is an excellent tool for certain analyses, it, like the screwdriver, is the wrong tool for nailing boards; it is the wrong form of logic for interpreting symbol.

In contrast to propositional logic, symbolic logic relies on the mushy integration of values, emotions, and imagination to discern a more holistic meaning. Users discover meaning through connecting sets of relationships. This process is juxtaposed to propositional logic's facts, reason, and the mind that often results in dualisms, such as, "intellect-imagination, reason-emotion." In symbolic logic, connections supersede characteristics. The whole mind is given free rein in the interpretation process that results in a unified whole rather than dualisms. Yes, there is value in ambiguity.²³³

Symbolic logic, like narrative logic,²³⁴ is driven by metaphor, fidelity, and coherence. *Metaphor* serves to "stimulate and provoke" thought that creates mystery that unleashes the imagination as it seeks meaning through an ongoing conversation. *Fidelity* asks if the communicated symbol "rings true" with the values and emotions projected in other recognized cultural symbols. *Coherence* considers how culturally reliable and probable are the arguments made by the symbols introduced. Symbol interpreted through symbolic logic is rarely simple or singular.²³⁵ Maybe that is why both forms of logic (and others?) are necessary for a more total understanding of human reality²³⁶ and God's Reality.

232. Former President of Wheaton College, Presbyterian J. Oliver Buswell (1895-1977) represented the view that methodology could override bias. Here is a paraphrase: "Theology has its own laws, and the theologian merely observes these, confident that their observation will yield doctrinal fidelity to God's truth." Merriam offers a more realistic perspective:

Since understanding is the goal of this research (*i.e. qualitative*), the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data. ... However, the human instrument has shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study. Rather than trying to eliminate these biases or "subjectivities," it is important to identify them and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data. (5)

Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Practice*, 2002.

233. Relating to some of the works by C. S. Lewis, Brian Godawa posits that "God is bigger than rationality, bigger than imagination, and he is Lord of both," (*The The Imagination of God: Art, Creativity and Truth in the Bible*, 2016, 189). Proverbs 24:3 reads, "Guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (NIV).

234. See Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 47.

235. British anthropologist Victor Turner notes that ritual symbols are "multivocal, susceptible of many meanings" (55). Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphor*, 1974.

236. Howells and Negreiros eagerly concede hermeneutic humility when associated with visual culture, "One of the commendable features of the hermeneutic approach to the analysis of visual culture is that it is prepared to admit that its conclusions may be wrong" (289). Howells and Negreiros, *Visual Culture*, 2012.

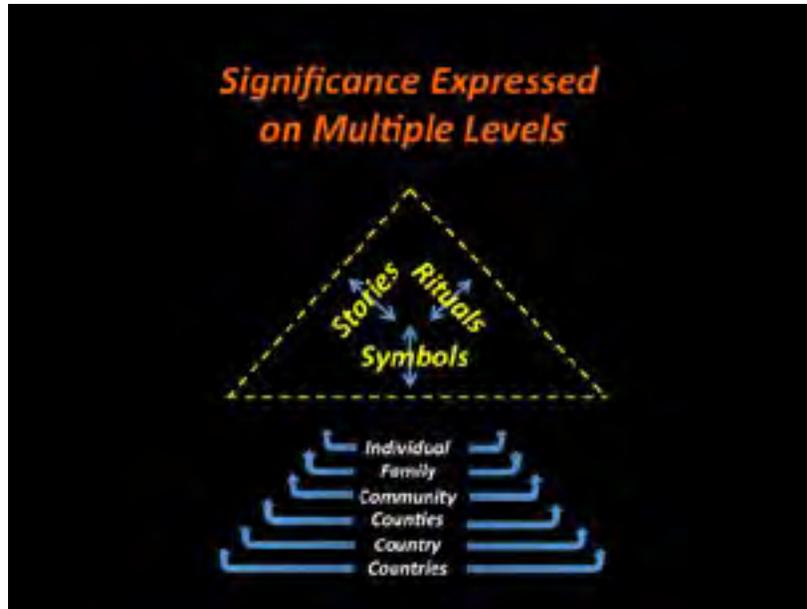


Figure 5.1: Significance Expressed on Multiple Levels

What Symbol Does

Symbol Speaks Metaphorically

Janet Soskice defines metaphor as a “figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another.”²³⁷ While we would expand her definition beyond spoken language, it nevertheless is insightful and instructive. Meaning is associated with something else that is somewhat familiar. Familiar associations and disassociations expand to create new associations. Metaphors find their power in the ability to create new meaning through familiar associations.

How metaphors operate suggests how they create new meaning. Metaphors set boundaries, organize, evoke emotions,²³⁸ point to themselves, point beyond themselves, raise questions, invite dialogue, die, revive, morph, shock, surprise, rely on imagination, have a “surplus of cognition,”²³⁹ transcend reality, suggest meaning without announcing it, have the potential to enlarge understanding. Maybe most importantly, metaphors assume that humans have the innate ability to discover the authors’ intended meaning(s) through extended thinking.

237. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 15.

238. Victor Turner notes that symbols are “a set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions” (42-43). Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 1969.

239. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 88.

“All language (including visual language) about God must, as St. Thomas Aquinas pointed out, necessarily be analogical. The fact is that all language about everything is analogical; we think in a series of metaphors. We can explain nothing in terms of itself, but only in terms of other things.”

(Dorothy Sayers, 1941)

Symbol finds meaning through metaphor. Scott Atran summarizes, “Symbolic analogies provide rich conduit metaphors for linking together diverse phenomena that would otherwise be lost to an uncompromisingly rational mental processor.”²⁴⁰ Discovering metaphorical meaning will call for prolonged mental activity unlike that required in streamlined propositional logic, and by design, will require more time to discover its mysterious meaning. Good symbols purposely delay answers.

As pervasive as metaphors are in daily life the same is true of symbols.

Symbol is the water fish swim in (it is also the fish in the water, see below); it is the air we breathe. Robert McKee’s “*Story is metaphor for life.*”²⁴¹ could just as easily read, “*Symbol is metaphor for life.*” This is because “*sympaphor*” (a blend of symbol and metaphor) suggests how to define life. The habit of symbol is association through metaphor.²⁴²

Symbol Calls for Deep Engagement

Symbol is designed to tease the mind to discover truth, not provide a quick answer. Again, Atran:

Symbolism often aims to draw people ever deeper into unfathomable mysteries by pointedly outraging everyday experience. ... Unlike science, is not to resolve phenomenal paradoxes or increasingly to restrict the scope of interesting conceptual puzzles. Instead, cultural symbolism aims at eternal truth.²⁴³

Eric Wolf concurs, “Symbolic work is never done, achieves no final solution.”²⁴⁴ Symbol magnifies thought.

If true, and I suggest that it is, this implies the need for a specific hermeneutic. If extraction that leads to fragmented parts to isolate a single solution is inappropriate for symbol, another hermeneutic is necessary. This hermeneutic begins with imagination which, rather than narrowing the possibilities, actually expands and broadens them.²⁴⁵ This

240. Atran, “Whither ‘Ethnoscience’?,” 62.

241. McKee, *Story*, 25.

242. In *God the Worker*, Banks identified 16 metaphors of God as worker. Some of these included: God as composer and performer (Deut. 31:19, Jer. 48:31-32, 36), metalworker (Isa. 1:24-26, Mal. 3:2-3), potter (Job 10:8-9; Isa. 31:9, 64:8), garment maker and dresser (Job 10:10-12, 29:14), gardener and orchardist (Ezek. 31:8-9), farmer (Hos. 10:11) and winemaker (Isa 5:7), shepherd and pastoralist (Psalm 23:1-4, 77:20; Micah 2:12-13), tentmaker and camper (Exodus 26; Job 9:8), a builder and architect (Prov. 8:27-31, 24:3; Job 38:4-7; Isa 28:16-17, 54:11-12). Banks, *God the Worker*, 1994.

243. Atran, “Whither ‘Ethnoscience’?,” 62.

244. Wolf, “Facing Power,” 593.

245. Walter Fisher makes this distinction between types of human communication, “Before the advent of philosophy in ancient Greece, all modes of human communication were regarded as *mythos/logos*,

makes reaching a final conclusion more difficult in that it calls for deep and ongoing engagement (see Table 5.1). Symbol, by design, provokes ongoing dialogue.²⁴⁶ This designed dialogue drives addressees to unravel the mystery no matter how long it may take. Mary Catherine Bateson concludes, “A good metaphor continues to instruct.”²⁴⁷

This hermeneutic will also require a different line of questioning. Margaret Parker offers two possibilities, “What do you visualize (or hear or taste) when you read these words? What feelings or memories do they evoke?”²⁴⁸ It could also be asked, which symbols are considered cultural treasures? A different hermeneutic requires a different set of investigative questions and tools.

Symbol Ignites Imagination and Emotion

One reason that it is difficult to reach a single clear conclusion immediately about the meaning of a symbol is that it ignites the imagination. It causes the uncurious to become curious. The uninquiring become inquirers. The unquestioning become questioners. Could the wine be... Or, could it be... Does it really change into... An ignited imagination challenges the assumed, altering “mood and motivation.”

Symbol also ignites emotion. Soldiers die trying to retrieve their desecrated flag. Others burn a flag on the lawn of the White House. Still others wave it with pride and enthusiasm during the hometown parade. Symbol has a way of igniting not only the imagination individually and collectively, but also emotions.²⁴⁹ Symbol is the language of the soul.

form/content, and feeling/reason. No instance of human communication was privileged over another as having a special capacity to convey knowledge, truth, or reality. The pre-Socratics began the ‘technologizing’ of discourse, but it was Plato and especially Aristotle who set the foundations for the view that only philosophical, later technical, discourse could provide wisdom and certainty in the world. Their successors fought intellectual battles over which genre of discourse—philosophy, science, rhetoric, or poetic—had the right to preside over and generate and evaluate ideas, and which genre should be assigned the lesser tasks of supervising the communication of ideas created elsewhere” (192). Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 1987.

246. Jesus’ use of parables to hid or make meaning more difficult to grasp by outsiders required time and thinking to discern their meaning (Mark 4:11). Disciples, however, were privileged to hear their meaning when they gathered privately (Mark 4:33, 34).

247. Bateson, *Peripheral Vision*, 134.

248. Parker, “The Richness of Biblical Metaphor.” <http://collegiateministries.intervarsity.org/leader-tools/richness-biblical-metaphor>

249. In *Forest of Symbols*, Victor Turner distinguishes two poles for dominant ritual symbols, the “ideological pole” and “sensory pole.” He explains, “At the sensory pole are concentrated those *significata* that may be expected arouse desires and feelings; at the ideological pole one finds an arrangement of norms and values that guide and control persons as members of social groups and categories” (28). Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 1967.

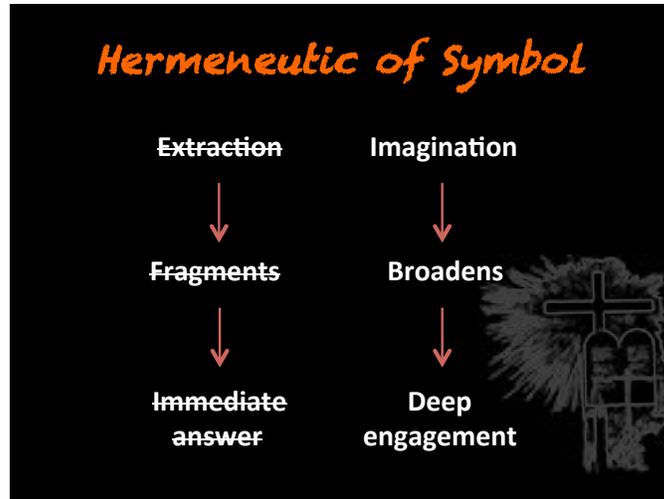


Table 5.1: The Hermeneutic of Symbol²⁵⁰

Symbol Receives Meaning through Cultural Categories

Many western symbols have made their way into the lives of the Japanese. That does not mean, however, that their meanings have transferred. Teresa Watanabe points out what can happen when outside symbols are understood through inside cultural categories:

Even if this Buddhist nation does not quite connect with the Christian roots of St. Patrick and St. Valentine, All Saints and All Souls days or the birth of Jesus, not to worry. Japan's energetic retail industry has capitalized on the nation's elaborate gift-giving customs—and its sense of duty and obligation—to make Western holidays the latest opportunities to buy and sell.

“In Japan, these events have no religious meaning at all,” said Mari Sone, a clerk at the Seibu Department Store in Tokyo's Shibuya district. “We just take the form and use it to sell. Japanese people love forms. Especially, young people worship Western forms as cool.”²⁵¹

While some cultures assign religious meaning to specific symbols, other cultures, in this case the Japanese, assign secular meaning. Symbols (forms) adopted from outside the culture (e.g., Saints, valentines, the color green) are defined (meaning) by the insiders who use them. And they are implemented accordingly (function)—make a profit through gift exchange. While some will say meaning is lost in translation, in reality, meaning finds lifelikeness or “truth” through existing cultural categories.

250. Adapted from Atran, “Whither ‘Ethnoscience’?,” 63, and Davies, *Anthropology and Theology*, 157-158.

251. Watanabe, “Japanese Parade for St. Patrick, Whoever He Was,” 6.

Symbol Can Lose Meaning through Familiarity

One role of symbol is to help people remember meaning over time. An example of this is found in Numbers 15:38-39 where the Israelites were told to make tassels and sew them on the hems of their garments with blue thread. When they saw the tassels they were reminded of God’s commands, and the need to observe them. Interestingly, even God uses symbols to remind Himself of His promises to us. The rainbow serves as a reminder not only to us, but also to God—He will never destroy the world again through a flood (Genesis 9:16, 17).

“Symbols and ceremonies without teaching soon lose their reference to God; teaching without symbols and ceremonies soon lacks relevance to life in the world.”

(Zahniser, 1997, 68)

However, human memory is fragile. We are prone to forget, and familiarity over time can cause the meaning of a symbol to fade or be lost entirely. When this happens, former understanding of a symbol may be totally or partially lost, or the symbol can easily succumb to syncretism; Erich Heller describes this loss of meaning as “empty shells of fragmentary memories, hermit-crabs in a sea of uncertain meaning.”²⁵² Recognizing the human propensity to forget, Scripture is replete with commands to “remember.”

While symbolism is never far from syncretism, what is true for humans, fortunately, is not so for the Source of all symbols. Symbols can thwart syncretism by enhancing truth.

Symbol Preserves the Past

In that the past influences the present, it must be preserved. Symbol helps accomplish this. Notice the intergenerational question in the following quote designed to protect the past through the use of 12 symbolic stones:

Go back into the Jordan riverbed to the covenant chest of the Eternal your God, and each carry a stone upon your shoulder, (twelve stones for the twelve tribes of the Israelites)⁶ so that we may build a memorial *of this day*. Someday when your children ask you, “Why are these stones piled up here?”⁷ you will tell them how the waters of the Jordan parted as the covenant chest of the Eternal One crossed the river, and these stones will fix that memory for the Israelites forever. (Joshua 4:5-7, VOICE)

The Jewish concentration camps during World War II demanded symbols that would remind the world that the atrocities of the Holocaust that murdered millions of innocent victims should never be forgotten so it will not be repeated. Memorials throughout Europe and Israel serve to remind the world of the horrors of history conducted by the Nazis by displaying pictures and/or providing onsite or virtual tours.

Some memorials include the “path of the prisoner” as the victims entered the camp surrounded by barb-wired gates and fences, slept in the barracks three to five in a bed, were

252. Dillistone, *The Power of Symbols in Religion and Culture*, 213.

taken to the dissecting room, were taken to the baths and gassed, were stacked in the body sheds, were taken to furnaces where corpses were turned into ashes after the extraction of gold from their teeth and their hair shaved, and the inactive smoke stacks. Only the smells and sounds are missing.

A sign outside one of the memorials I toured in Israel quoted George Santayana: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Symbols help us revisit the past, both positive and negative occurrences, providing constructive direction for the present and future generations.

Symbol Unites and Divides

In relation to the National Football League (NFL), horseshoes, lightning bolts, arrowheads, Vikings, Titans, broncos, bengals, bears, buffalos, cougars, lions, rams, ravens, eagles, and Seahawks all serve as symbols to unite fans across the country (and the world). At the weekly games fans fill the stadiums sporting colorful jerseys with the number of their favorite player. Sport shops exist to cater to the fans’ needs by selling all kinds of sports paraphernalia. Symbols create community.

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies
proclaim the work of his hands.
² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after
night they reveal knowledge.
³ They have no speech, they use no words; no
sound is heard from them.
⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their
words to the ends of the world.

(Psalms 19:1-4, NIV)

Symbols also have a way of dividing. Those same football symbols that are designed to unite fans, teams, and divisions (American Football Conference (AFC) and National Football Conference (NFC), also divide. Sometimes fights break out between rival fans in the stands or at pre-game tailgate parties in the parking lots. From pre-season games through the Super Bowl climax, rivalries remain

high on all levels thanks in part to symbols. Symbols create divisions.

But divisions do not just stop with the NFL. Some First Nations peoples, and others, take offense with the redskin insignia used by the Washington Redskins. Whether football symbols, the Cross, the Crescent, or communion served in the ACC, symbols unite and divide people.

Symbol Speaks Without Speaking

One of the unique features of symbol is its ability to “pour forth speech” *without* verbally speaking. There is no voice yet sound reverberates and resonates with His creation.

Symbol conveys meaning by displaying, not by telling. Symbol gives actuality to the abstract, making it creditable and catchable. When the author of Hebrews discussed salvation he noted that, “God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit” (2:4, NIV). Pictorial language leads in the symbolic world, using “imagery that is auditory.”

Symbol Advances the Plotline

Something often missed by cross-cultural workers is the role that symbol plays in the development of the plotline of a story. In my story above of growing up in the Apostolic Christian Church at least these symbols drive the story: Sunday service (security), chairs (plurality of leadership), pulpit placement (centrality of Scripture), large Bible (sole direction for life), Passover lamb (innocent substitute), communion (common cup and bread representing Jesus' blood and body, insiders and outsiders), and the common table (sharing and solidarity).

The whole of Scripture is shrouded in symbol. On the macro-level, the individual symbols of the Garden of Eden, the garden of Gethsemane, and the garden city advance and unify the over-arching story of Scripture. The same could be said of the First Adam and the Second Adam, Alpha and Omega, temples, land, Torah, blood, and the covenants. Symbol savvy cross-cultural workers not only recognize, but intentionally utilize and leverage symbol to advance the plotline of a story, including the sacred Story. Wise cross-cultural workers recognize that Scripture cannot be totally understood or communicated apart from symbols. There is more to the story!

Symbol Calms Chaos

A chaotic world demands calmness. Symbol can play that role. During my youth, the AC church in Milford and Bremen, Indiana, provided not only sacred spaces, but also safe spaces.

Whatever the reader's opinion of former President George W. Bush, that iconic moment of his bullhorn speech at Ground Zero on a heap of smoldering rubble gave a shaken nation assurance during uncertain times. Julia Woods is correct when she says:

Humans have the apparently unique capacity to symbolize ideas, experiences, hopes, fears, passions, doubts, dreams, even themselves. Because we think and act symbolically, we can impose order and meaning on our experiences. We can persuade ourselves to new courses of action. We can make sense of our past, adapt to our present, and plan for our future.²⁵³

A confident leader's bullhorn speech during one of the country's darkest days brought the nation some comfort and calmness in a time of great chaos. Symbol can convey calmness in the midst of chaos.

Symbol Distinguishes Status and Role

Graduation provides a great opportunity to observe the public display in the academy of status and role through symbol. Here are a few observations based on the personal attendance of numerous university graduations over 20-plus years.

The faculty dressed in full regalia march in before the new graduates with those having seniority leading the way. The faculty's colorful gowns signify their respective

253. Woods, *Human Communication*, 6.

disciplines and schools of graduation. For most, three dark strips on each sleeve indicate they hold a doctorate.

But before either of these groups marches in, the Board, President, Provost, and Deans have already taken their seats on the platform that look down on faculty, graduates, and family and friends of graduates. The President's gold medallion and four strips on each sleeve distinguish him from other significant figures on the stage. The symbols of colors, strips, seating arrangement, stage height, marching order, and medallions all publicly signify status and role in the highly stratified world of academia.

Symbol Signifies the Significant

There is no cultural symbol that is not embedded in other symbols. The symbols of bread²⁵⁴ and wine used in communion, for example, are embedded with the symbols used in the Passover. The ordinance of communion is deeply embedded in the Passover miracle through symbols. And these have become significant symbols within Christianity.

Another significant symbol in the US is the American flag, also known as Old Glory. Jerry Moore makes these comments about this iconic symbol, and its embeddedness with other US symbols:

The American flag, as a summarizing symbol, brings together “a conglomerate of ideas” (Ortner 1973a:1340) about patriotism, democracy, freedom, and national superiority, then the Horatio Alger “rags-to-riches” story serves as an elaborating symbol, outlining a course of action—energetic, hard work to gain wealth and power and thus climb from one's original status.²⁵⁵

There are symbols and then there are symbols, even if all are embedded in other symbols. Significant symbols, argues Turner, serve as “‘storage bins’ of information ... about cosmologies, values, and cultural axioms, whereby a society's “deep knowledge” is transmitted from one generation to another.”²⁵⁶

At this point I would like to distinguish three storage bins that house different types of symbols. The first storage bin houses common symbols and is small in size, the second storage bin of medium size houses anchor symbols, and the third storage bin, the largest, houses master symbols²⁵⁷ (see Figure 5.2).

Common symbols are snippets of culture that receive some attention by some. For a common symbol to become an anchor symbol it must evidence itself in multiple venues

254. One example of the embedded nature of symbol in Scripture can be found in bread. It begins with unleavened bread during the Passover, manna in the desert, Jesus was born in the “house of bread” (Bethlehem), Jesus' announcement that he is the bread of life, and during the Last Supper bread is communally consumed, and continues today.

255. Moore, *Visions of Culture*, 280.

256. Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphor*, 239.

257. Sherry Ortner notes that the idea of a “key symbol” is not a new concept in anthropological literature: “Since the publication of Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* in 1934, the notion of such key elements has persisted in American anthropology under a variety of rubrics: ‘themes’ (e.g., Opler 1945; Cohen 1948), ‘focal values’ (Albert 1956), ‘dominant values’ (DuBois 1955), ‘integrative concepts’ (DuBois 1936), ‘dominant orientations’ (F. Kluckhohn 1950). ... Schneider (1968) calls them ‘core symbols’ in his study of American kinship; Turner (1967) calls them ‘dominant symbols’ in his study of Ndembu ritual” (1338). Ortner, “On Key Symbols,” 1338-1346.

(expanded below). The bread and the wine serve as anchor symbols in Christianity. Anchor symbols lay the framework for master symbols.

Master symbols, those that help to succinctly summarize some aspect of a community's worldview, image tightly held values (inner meanings that cultivate the soul towards moral good)²⁵⁸ and behaviors over time in multiple venues. They help distinguish one group from another; they provide identity.²⁵⁹ The American flag serves as a master symbol in the US, the star of David for Jews, the Crescent for Muslims, the fish, good shepherd,²⁶⁰ sheep, and the cross for Christians. Master symbols will be found in the master story (chapter 6) and reinforced through master rituals (chapter 7).

How does a symbol become a significant or "dominant"²⁶¹ or "core" or central or, my preference, an anchor symbol within a culture? How did bread and wine become anchor symbols within Christianity?

How do anchor symbols become "key" or master symbols? How did Old Glory (American flag) become a master symbol in the US? Identifying anchor and master symbols will help researchers discover worldview within Bible cultures, the host culture, and maybe most importantly, the researchers' worldview.

Paul Hiebert et al are helpful in answering the above questions when they note that the "multivocal nature of symbols weaves webs of meaning that crisscross a culture and link diverse areas into a single whole."²⁶² Sherry Ortner offers more specific criteria for discovering what she calls "key symbols:"

- (1) Locals tell us X is culturally important.
- (2) Locals seem positively or negatively aroused about X, rather than indifferent to it,
- (3) X comes up in many different contexts. These contexts may be behavioral or systemic: X comes up in many different kinds of actions situation or conversation, or X comes up in many different symbolic domains (myth, ritual, art, formal rhetoric, etc..
- (4) X is culturally elaborated through vocabulary, details, etc..
- (5) Numerous and severe cultural restrictions surround X.²⁶³

258. See Al-Alawadhi, *Oral History of Women Educators in Kuwait*, 2014 for greater depth on this insightful perspective of values.

259. For a foundation work on personal, relational, and collective identity, see Schwartz et al., *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, 2011.

260. See Bailey, *The Good Shepherd*, 2014.

261. Victor Turner defines a dominant symbol as "a unification of disparate significata ... interconnected by virtue of their common possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought. ... Within its framework of meanings, the dominant symbol brings the ethical and jural norms of society into close contact with strong emotional stimuli" (28, 30). Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 1967.

262. Hiebert et al., *Understanding Folk Religion*, 238.

263. Ortner, "On Key Symbols," 1339.

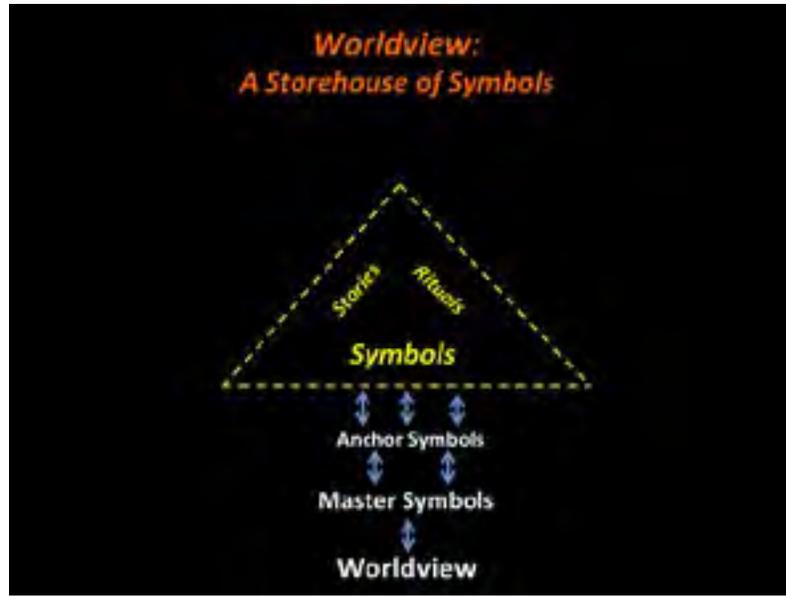


Figure 5.2: Worldview: A Storehouse of Symbols

Common symbols elevate to anchor symbols when they display multiple appearances that crisscross cultural domains in emotive, imaginative, and factual ways. The wider exposure and repetition gives weight and credibility to a specific symbol, eventually canonizing it as an anchor symbol. The evolutionary process for a common symbol to elevate to an anchor symbol often takes some time to become recognized by the general public. Time, repetition, and the successful challenges of rival anchor symbols emerging from within and without the culture validate an anchor symbol.

A master symbol (communion) synthesizes the meaning of multiple anchor symbols (wine, bread) through a single image. A master symbol is anchor symbols on steroids showing up in multiple cultural venues, usually with an extended historical basis. Because a master symbol appears in a number of cultural venues over extended time, it reviews, reflects, and reinforces relationships and how one's worldview is (re)defined. A master symbol serves to constantly challenge rival (anchor or master) symbols originating from within or without the culture. More time and more repetition in multiple venues (than an anchor symbol), along with successful challenges over rival symbols from any storage bin will help validate and legitimize a master symbol.

To illustrate, communion relates to the Passover, the Last Supper, animal sacrifice, blood, death, the communal table, bread, wine, the crown of thorns, the cross, hand scars, and so forth. The ordinance crisscrosses through numerous categories, thereby confirming

“Biblical symbols do not exist in isolation. ... In the Bible, the entire symbolic world is one organized and unified worldview, a worldview that actually takes its rise in the first chapters of Genesis. ... The rest of the Bible simply unpacks their meanings.”

(Jordon, 1988, 16)

its role as an anchor symbol for some and a master symbol for others as it helps define Christianity. Symbols, according to Ben Ollenburer,

Have meaning within a set of symbolic relations, or within a symbol system. This means that symbols have to be interpreted within the “symbolic design” in which they are located. Within such a symbolic design symbols function as part of a “network of relationships.”²⁶⁴

Anchor and master symbols find their validity through symbol systems.

Old Glory, the American flag, can be seen at government offices, military facilities, schools, sporting facilities, churches, places of commerce, police stations, homes, cars (remember the early days after 9/11 [when the Twin Towers were attacked]?), on uniforms. All these multiple voices heard in numerous venues confirm Old Glory’s role as a master symbol that images the master stories that define the United States (see Figure 5.3).

When we resided among the Ifugao in the early 1970s, the sacrificial system (*baki*) wove its way through all of Ifugao life, promising health, wealth, and long life. The master symbol most visible was the skulls of animals (pigs and water buffalo, both anchor symbols) that hung on the walls within and without the houses and rice granaries (anchor symbol) in the fields. The most significant master symbol was the *hagabi* (see Figure 5.4), a large piece of wood cut out of a tree from the jungle only after the completion of four earlier levels of sacrifices that took years to complete. The *hagabi* was carried out of the jungle after the sacrifice of numerous chickens, pigs, and water buffalo. The family prominently displayed it under their house that said (without speaking audibly) to all who passed by that a very wealthy family resided there. This family has reached the fifth and final rung of the Ifugao sacrificial ladder.

Symbol Constructs Worldview

No culture can survive without symbols because one role of symbols is to help (re)define worldview. Without symbols there is no worldview. Culture and worldview evolve from “a process of meaning-making through symbols.”²⁶⁵ Paul Ricoeur succinctly summarizes the role of symbolic systems, they “make and remake reality.”²⁶⁶

Jerome Bruner drills deeper focusing on the role that technological symbol plays in maintaining a worldview intergenerationally:

“Reality” is represented by a symbolism shared by members of a cultural community in which a technical-social way of life is both organized and construed in terms of that symbolism. This symbolic mode is not only shared by a community, but conserved, elaborated, and passed on to succeeding generations who, by virtue of this transmission, continue to maintain the culture’s identity and way of life.²⁶⁷

264. Ollenburer, *Zion, City of the Great King*, 16.

265. Wright, “‘Culture’ in Anthropology and Organizational Studies,” 20.

266. Ricoeur, “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,” 117.

267. Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, 3.

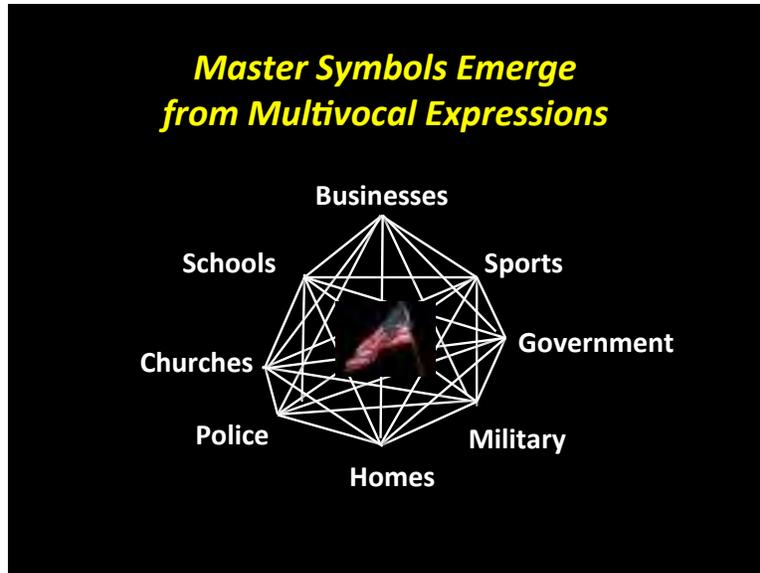


Figure 5.3 Master Symbols Emerge through Multivocal Expression

N. T. Wright observes that “the stories that express the worldview, and the answers which it provides to the questions of identity, environment, evil and eschatology, are expressed ... in cultural *symbols*. These can be both artifacts and events—festivals, family gatherings, and the like.”²⁶⁸

Influenced by Thomas Mann, who argues, “To live symbolically spells true freedom,” F. W. Dillistone wrote *The Power of Symbols in Religion and Culture* “to show how, in every department of human life, symbolic expression is the way to creative freedom.”²⁶⁹ Interestingly, symbols have equal power to imprison²⁷⁰ in every “department of human life.”²⁷¹

"Man does not live by symbols alone, but orders and interprets his reality by his symbols, and even reconstructs it."

(Firth, 1973, 20)

Anchor and master symbols help define, defend, synthesize, imprint, and reconstruct worldview in the social memory thereby creating an identity that distinguishes

268. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 123.

269. Dillistone, *The Power of Symbols in Religion and Culture*, 5.

270. Julia Wood notes, “Humans’ symbolic ability is a mixed blessing. We not only create and use symbols; we also abuse them... We are both the creators and prisoners of our symbol usage” (6). Wood, *Human Communication*, 1982.

271. In *Transforming Culture*, based on Romans 11:30-32, Sherwood Lingenfelter surmises that the culture we learn from others “becomes a prison of disobedience. So entangled, they live a life of conformity to social images that are in conflict with God’s purpose for humanity” (16). Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture*, 1992.

insiders from outsiders.²⁷² Symbol is not just what one sees; it is also what one sees through.



Figure 5.4: The Ifugao *Hagabi* (Photo by Tom Steffen)

Scripture and Symbol

We become the symbols that control us, many of which are incongruent with God's symbols found in Scripture. A change of allegiance will require a change of some symbols. For sure that would include symbols on the anchor and master levels; there will be a "putting off" and a "putting on." Such changes will validate worldview transformation that is required by deep-level discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20). Symbols not only form worldview, they aid in the transformation of it.

Concluding Reflections

Some symbols receive communal authority through repetition in multiple, diverse venues, and are eventually canonized. Through experiential apologetics (the hermeneutic of symbol) rather than evidential apologetics (the hermeneutic of reason), members of a society discern their role significance. Once canonized, they become anchor and master symbols, speaking louder yet without even speaking as they (de/re)construct reality and

272. Wayne Meeks' groundbreaking book, *The First Urban Christians*, astutely notes that "the first few decades after the death of Jesus were apparently a time of extraordinarily rapid emergence of new combinations of symbols and beliefs among Jesus' followers and early posthumous converts; these quickly gave way to the Christian movement a character different from that of any other Jewish sect of the time" (91). Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 2003.

relationships. Anchor and master symbols within the AC church during my youth silently but strongly defined my identity (my place in the symbols) and relationships inside and outside the church.

The role of symbol in defining worldview has often been overlooked, or at least minimized by too many cross-cultural workers. A complex world requires multiple expressions to define it, whether through communion, a flag, or a "*hagabi*."

Symbol seeks to summarize and synthesize complex issues through images that project meaning through silent speech, thereby creating one's individual and corporate identity. Symbol serves as an economical means to magnify and multiply meaning. Yes, there will be ambiguity in understanding. Yes, its meaning will take time to decipher. But that is because "'understanding' is always approximate." Coming to Christ will require resymbolization.

In a world driven by symbol, how symbol savvy are cross-cultural Christian workers? What is the minimal number of anchor and master symbols that should comprise the cross-cultural Christian workers' Symbol Collection? Robert Frost brings a little levity to these serious questions when he quips, "Unless you are educated in metaphor, you are not safe to be let loose in the world."

Yes, there is more to the story; there is also symbol. But symbol demands more than silent speech. Symbol requires spoken speech; symbol screams out for something more. Could part of that "something more" be story?

6

Making the Case for Story

“...scholars now see the story in the study, the tale in the theory, the parable in the principle, and the drama in the life.”

—MARGARETE SANDELOWKI

THIS CHAPTER CONSIDERS THE ROLE of the second frame of the trilogy: story. Like the previous chapter, it will attempt to discover what story is and what it does, concluding with application to Scripture. While there will be some overlap of categories in relation to what symbol is and does, there will also be distinctives. Before developing these themes, I begin with some suspicions that surround story.

Story Seen as Suspect by Some

Story, like symbol, has its detractors and disparagers. For them story is suspect on multiple fronts. In *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry* I identified some of these. For example, some associate story with fiction; it cannot be taken seriously. Others perceive story as entertainment, which therefore cannot be taken as thoughtful or insightful or educational. Still others align story with age—story is for children, certainly not mature adults (1 Corinthians 13:11). Closely related, story is for the unlearned, not the educated. Another one is that only professional storytellers can tell stories. Lastly, story certainly has no connection to theology; it is far too subjective, too messy! This is evident in some corners of the evangelical world where narrative theology remains a virtual unknown. In sum, story in relation to theology is suspect because it is lightweight, subjective, and for the immature.

"We are not very comfy with story, are we? I think it's because we don't feel we can control it."

(Sally Lloyd-Jones, 2016)

In “The Gospel is More Than A Story,” Leslie Fields furthers the discussion on concerns surrounding story by noting that,

When we read the Bible through the lens of any single genre, agenda, or need, distortion will result. ... God gave us stories indeed, but he also gave us proverbs, poetry, law, exhortation, prophesy, lament, riddle, letters, visions, genealogies, and

prayers. Man lives by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. ... It's time, then, to replace the term “narrative theology” with “literary theology” to include all the literary genres God chose to speak through.²⁷³

Fields puts her finger on a number of the weaknesses if the story genre overplays her role. Field's call for “literary theology” does not minimize narrative theology; rather, it enhances its unique role among the other genres. Her perceptive warnings concerning story excesses, which have been limited over the years compared to the long history of proposition dominance in theology,²⁷⁴ in no way diminish the role or power of story in theology.²⁷⁵

Why did Jesus, who Kenneth Bailey pithily calls the “metaphorical theologian,”²⁷⁶ use parabolic stories in some one-third of his teaching? Did Jesus see any connection between story and theology? Can theology be taught through story or only through abstract propositions? N. T. Wright would respond, “Stories are often wrongly regarded as a poor person's substitute for the ‘real thing,’ which is to be discovered either in some abstract truth or in statements about ‘bare facts.’”²⁷⁷ In *Why Narrative?*, editors Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones suggest that story could be “a cure, if not a panacea, to a variety of Enlightenment illnesses: rationalism, monism, decisionism, objectivism, and other ‘isms.’”²⁷⁸ Grant Osborne intensifies the argument, “In every sense biblical narrative is theology seen in living relationships and enacted in story form.”²⁷⁹ Story is the ring that provides a setting for the precious gems of propositions.

Can fiction, such as the Good Samaritan story, actually teach values? Can entertainment films, such as two of the highest grossing, *Titanic* (1997) and *The Lord of the Rings* (2003)²⁸⁰ unify individuals? Divide? Provide identity? Transform character? Produce commitment? Convey worldview? Why do youth and adults (not just children) flock to theaters on the weekends?²⁸¹ Are we really not children at heart in search of a good story?

273. Fields, “The Gospel is More Than A Story,” 43.

274. Paul Wilson notes, “the foot-prints of story are faint and almost disappear while those of doctrine are more clearly defined. Why is it that from the fourth century to the present, narrative has been almost excluded from theology?” (155). Wilson, *Imagination of the Heart*, 1988. Walter Brueggemann would add, “All are children of the Enlightenment. That cultural reality of the last 250 years has brought us enormous gifts. ... Moreover, it has generated dominating models of knowledge which have been thought to be objective rather than dominating” (5-6). Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 1986.

275. Bryan Chapell identifies similar concerns and conclusions in relation to “phony polarizations” in homiletics, “The Bible, though it contains a great deal of narrative, remains rich in propositional content. In fact, the genius of Scripture as it pertains to transferable meaning is that it weds narrative and propositional forms to lock down meanings across time and across individual and cultural differences. ... Narratives provide experiential reference for the meaning of propositions, even as the propositions provide conceptual and linguistic backgrounds for the narratives that give their shapes meaning” (12). Chapell, “When Narrative is Not Enough,” 1996.

276. Bailey, *Finding the Lost*, 28.

277. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 38.

278. Hauerwas and Jones, *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, 1.

279. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 220.

280. See <http://boxofficemojo.com/alltime/world/>

281. In 2013, the US and Canada box office sales were \$10.9 billion with 227.8 million, or 68 percent of the population going to the movies at least once. http://www.mpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/MPAA-Theatrical-Market-Statistics-2013_032514-v2.pdf

Story is the soul of theology, ministry, and life. Without story, theology is soulless. To be storyless is to be soulless. This requires new and balanced exploration so that its strengths are maximized, and its weaknesses minimized.²⁸²

What Story Is

Gospel as Story, Uhhuh

How could they *not* appreciate such propositional, linear logic, I wondered? It makes the gospel so crystal clear, so logical that no one could deny its truth.

As I began to work systematically through New Tribes Mission’s evangelism model—Word, God, Satan, Humanity, Sin, Judgment, Jesus Christ—I soon discovered that the Ifugao of the Philippines were totally unimpressed with such a propositional presentation. They had difficulty understanding it, much less telling others the “good news.” So much for a church planting movement. Shocked and surprised, it was back to the drawing board.

The next time in Manila I purchased some Bible story booklets for children, covered the English captions with Keley-i ones, and began again. I had instant evangelists of both genders and all generations from different geographical areas. Presenting the gospel as a series of Old and New Testament stories rather than a sequence of propositions made the message come alive for the Ifugao. And the Bible stories were easily stored in their minds and shared with others. Only I was shocked and surprised.

Somehow I had missed other pedagogical possibilities and preferences, and that “the gospel was originally a storytelling tradition”;²⁸³ that, “The early Christians were *story-tellers*.”²⁸⁴ For some reason I had missed the fact that the gospel was a good tale to be told, not just taught propositionally through some systematic plan.²⁸⁵

But there was something else I had overlooked. That was revealed on another trip to Manila to publish the first Ifugao evangelism lessons when I met up with Trevor McIlwain upon his return from Australia—Chronological Bible Teaching [presently called Firm Foundations] (Figure 1.1).

Clarifying Terms

Three terms associated with this chapter require definition—common stories,²⁸⁶ anchor stories, and master stories. Metaphorically the human face captures this integrated trilogy. The shadows that highlight the face represent common stories, providing definition and

282. James Murdoch attentively notes, “Storytelling—both fiction and nonfiction, for good and for ill—will continue to define the world. ... In 2016 and beyond, those who wish to create a better world will have to make storytelling the center of their efforts, not an afterthought” (39). Murdoch, “Media.” *TIME* 186 (2015) 39.

283. Boomershine, *Story Journey*, 16.

284. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 372.

285. Scott McKnight summarizes the issue well: “When the plan gets separated from the story, the plan almost always becomes abstract, propositional, logical, rational, and philosophical, and most importantly, de-storified and unbiblical. We separate ourselves from Jesus and turn the Christian faith into a System of salvation” (62). McKnight, *The King Jesus*, 2011.

286. Michael Roemer defines “story” this way: “*Story* derives from the Latin *historia*, which is related to the Greek *histor*, ‘one who knows’” (3). Roemer, *Telling Stories*, 1995.

distinction. But the shadows constantly change as the head moves from side to side, up and down. The wrinkles, given definition by shadows, symbolize anchor stories as they tell the tales of a journey traversed over time; they only deepen unless altered by external factors through force, accident, or choice. The total face, with all its various features, denotes master stories defined by the many wrinkles highlighted by shadows. The echoes of master stories can be heard by discerning ears when lower level stories are told.

“A **narrative** (my emphasis) is not a single story, but a collection of stories, and a collection is systematic because the stories are components that relate to one another with coherent themes, forming a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.”

(Halverson et al., 2011, 1)

Gabriel Fackre’s definition of story used in theological inquiry lends itself well to common stories (shadows), “an account of characters and events in a plot moving over time and space through conflict toward resolution.”²⁸⁷ From his definition, four components emerge that encapsulate a story: (1) characters, (2) plot, (3) conflict, and (4) resolution. The four components play out concretely in “an account ... events ... moving over time and space.”²⁸⁸

For the above to transpire, two parties are necessary—a storyteller and a storylistener/viewer. Story is not only

directional, it is also dialogical,²⁸⁹ consisting of co-tellers and co-listeners/viewers. Stories are exchanged experiences.

Stories have the potential to expand our limitations. As a story is told, the picture found in the storyteller’s mind is transferred (with various levels of success) to the minds of others through a full-bodied experience that embraces the mind, the imagination, the emotions, and volition. Eventually, meaning within common stories becomes taken for granted, converges, and is canonized, scripting an anchor story.²⁹⁰

Anchor stories (the wrinkles), like anchor symbols, surface because they are multivocal, expressing what Durkheim called a “conscience collective” of beliefs and behaviors in multiple contexts. Through imagination, volitional, repetition, and broad application in multiple cultural contexts, they rise to the top (see Figure 5.3). They are significant in that they reflect *depth* (emotional impact), *breadth* (societal influence) and *length* (historical endurance).²⁹¹ Anchor stories lay the framework for master stories.

As meaning converges in a number of anchor stories, a master story²⁹² emerges. A master story (the face) scripts a brief, emic summary that brings comprehensive coherence

287. Fackre, *The Christian Story*, 5.

288. *Ibid.*, 5.

289. Michael Roemer defines “narration” this way: “‘Narration’ derives from the Latin *narrate*, ‘to relate,’ which is in turn rooted in the Greek *gno*, ‘to know.’ To know *is* to connect” (11). Roemer, *Telling Stories*, 1995.

290. An anchor story could also be called a narrative. From this perspective, a collection of stories provides the backdrop for an anchor story. For example, in my multiple attempts to communicate the gospel to the Ifugao a number of stories resulted. From these stories an anchor story emerged—growing up Ifugao produced people who preferred to interact through stories rather than propositions.

291. Mike Matthews, personal communication, August 23, 2016.

292. Some prefer other terms, such as, metanarrative, grand narrative, arch-narrative, “library of scripts,” master narrative. In *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism* Jeffery Halverson, et al., define a master narrative as, “a transhistorical narrative that is deeply embedded in a particular culture. ... They (master

to related anchor stories. This summary story provides a strong basis for some aspect of the worldview that validates individual-collective identity (one's place in the master story) through core beliefs and behaviors that distinguish insiders from outsiders (see Figure 6.1). Master stories succinctly capture and articulate central aspects of one's worldview.

To illustrate, for some First Nations people, one of the scripts (master story) expresses how powerful, greedy whites (anchor symbol) stole their land (anchor symbol) and kept them subjugated, particularly on inhospitable reservations (anchor symbol), their children schooled by religious pedophiles (anchor symbol), resulting in a loss of cultural identity that has led to drunkenness, drugs, and debauchery (anchor symbols).

It should be noted that there will always be competing (rival) master stories within any culture or sub-cultures. This will be especially true of urban settings where multiple cultures and sub-cultures, influenced by global cultures,²⁹³ compete for supremacy.

While master stories (de/re)construct members of society, rival master stories constantly challenge their fundamental existence. A possible rival master story to the First Nations master story offered above could read how God (master symbol) led an oppressed people (anchor symbol) to the promised land (anchor symbol) in America to escape injustice (anchor symbol)—taxation without representation—and gain religious freedom (anchor symbol) from an oppressive government. Master stories normally seem true to her followers because meaning finds its origin within them.

The evolution from a common story to an anchor story to a master story is possible because of the embedded nature of stories. Walter Fisher adroitly observes that, "There is no story that is not embedded in other stories."²⁹⁴ By distinguishing the three types of local stories captured metaphorically in the human face, researchers will be better able to uncover which symbols and stories drive the host culture's worldview, how locals may respond to the three levels (common, anchor and master) of story within Scripture, and which storying patterns are most applicable for locals. More importantly, such research provides opportunity to build rich relationships through the personal interaction thereby earning the cultural right to be heard.

On a more nuanced level, Naomi Quinn advances three ways to connect relationally and analyze collected stories in "search for patterns *across* interviewees and passages."²⁹⁵ First, identify *key words*. Second, isolate and categorize "cultural laden" *metaphors*, and third, discover *lines of reason* that explain a "sequence of statements." Explicit talk analyzed from these three integrated perspectives will serve as a window into the implicit assumptions that will help identify the loadbearing anchor stories that define master stories.

A few things could be added to Quinn's insightful discourse analysis matrix. Collecting not just key words, but also *key phrases*²⁹⁶ would expand and deepen the

narratives) are fundamental ways of understanding how we behave together as human beings" (15, 17). Halverson et al., *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*, 2011.

293. In *Theories of Culture*, Kathryn Tanner captures the fluidity of cultural boundaries and identities due to globalization as, "a hybrid, relational affair, something that lives between as much as within cultures" (57-58). Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 1997.

294. Fisher, "Narrative, Reason, and Community in Memory, Identity, Community," 316.

295. Quinn, "How to Reconstruct Schemas People Share, From What They Say," 43.

296. Suzanne Romaine provides background for collecting such phrases when she notes that "The domains of experience which are important to cultures get grammaticalized into languages" (29). Romaine, *Language in Society*, 2000. In relation to Scripture, Israel's penchant for the five books of the Pentateuch provides the literary structural basis for the development of the Gospel of Matthew. See Smith, "Literary Evidence of a

analysis of her first consideration. A fourth reflection could include *directional changes*, such as flashbacks or flash-forwards. Jane Hill emphasizes, “Interruption of the progress of the main line should be evaluative.”²⁹⁷ A fifth inclusion could be to identify (il)legitimate *associations*. For example, who has power? Maybe most significantly, identify *points of conflict*.²⁹⁸ Which values do they bias over others?

Story is Universal

In the 1960s, a series ran on TV titled *Naked City*. Every episode ended with, “There are eight million stories in the Naked City. This... has been one of them.” The assumption was that every person in that city had a story to tell. Stay tuned for the next thrilling episode because we have a long ways to go.

Can you name a scientific theory²⁹⁹ (Darwinism or global warming), theological theory (dispensationalism or covenant theology), anthropological theory³⁰⁰ (functionalism or structuralism), or brand (Chick-fil-A³⁰¹ or Starbucks) that story does not drive? Name a society or major religion (including secularism) that does not use story to educate her youth, convert potential followers, or indoctrinate her members. In relation to religion, Susan Shaw strikingly observes:

Sanskrit scriptures make numerous references to the practice of storytelling. The Tripitaka, part of the Buddhist scriptures, contains a number of dialogues, lives of saints and sages, fables, and other types of tales. And while Taoism and Confucianism do not have the same wealth of story material, their proponents too use story to propagate belief.³⁰²

Story, like symbol, is universal because all humans are made in the image of the greatest Storyteller of all, Deus Narran. Elie Wiesel goes so far as to say that, “God made man because he loves stories.”³⁰³ Terrence Tilley adds, “God became man because he loves to

Fivefold Structure in the Gospel of Matthew” *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997) 540-551. Not only do the actions of characters on specific cultural stages advance the storyline, likewise does the structure. Each has a significant role to play for the author and the audience.

297. Hill, “Finding Culture in Narrative,” 176.

298. Richard Nisbett posits that Asians, who generally grow up learning verbs that connect objects with actions, concentrate more on *connections*. This socialization contrasts with westerners who generally grow up learning nouns that focus on categories, leading them to concentrate on *contradictions*. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think*, 2004.

299. Kerry Daley notes that, “our theories in the interpretive tradition are in essence ‘stories’” (355). Daly, “Re-placing Theory in Ethnography.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 3 (1997) 343-365.

300. Anthropology, as any discipline, has its dumpsite for challenged theories. The first anthropological missiologists, such as Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster, Paul Hiebert, Charles Kraft, Marvin Mayers, Lyman Reed, and Alan Tippett, were influenced strongly by the theory of structural functionalism (Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, 142-143). Today, the limits of this explanatory theory of cultural change and human behavior are more widely recognized and challenged by competing stories, such as conflict theory, cultural materialism (maximizing local resources), or social biology (survival).

301. One of the drop down menus on the official website for Chick-fil-A is “What’s Your Story?” Customers are encouraged to submit their stories about their visit. Tips for sharing a story are provided. See <http://www.chick-fil-a.com/Story>.

302. Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education*, 39.

303. Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest*, xii.

share stories.”³⁰⁴ Story is universal in praxis because of her storied Source.

Story is Verbal and Visible

How is story expressed? This question raises the breadth of the diversity of story expression. Table 6.1 identifies five categorical expressions of story—oral, written, acted, wisdom, identification. The categories are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather begin a conversation of the diversity of story. Multiple expressions of story exist verbally and visibly within different genres, all of which multiplies her power potential.

Story is Earthy

I will never forget the Budweiser commercial that aired during one Super Bowl, in which a young Clydesdale rescued his puppy buddy from the new owners who had come to pick her up. Incidentally, that commercial beat out all other commercials aired during that Super Bowl. Why? Because it told a powerful story that featured beloved characters to the audience—an adorable puppy and a majestic horse; it rang true to viewers; it was earthy; it created a heart-wrenching experience.

Gabriel Fackre captures the earthy nature of story in relation to how God communicates to us:

Narrative speaks in the idiom of the earth. Reality meets us in the concretions of time, place, and people, not in analytical discourse or mystical rumination ... Would a historical God speak to us in any other way than through history first and then in the “history-like” accounts of biblical narrative, the extraordinary in the ordinary?³⁰⁵

304. Tilly, *Story Theology*, 73.

305. Fackre, “Narrative Theology, 345-346.

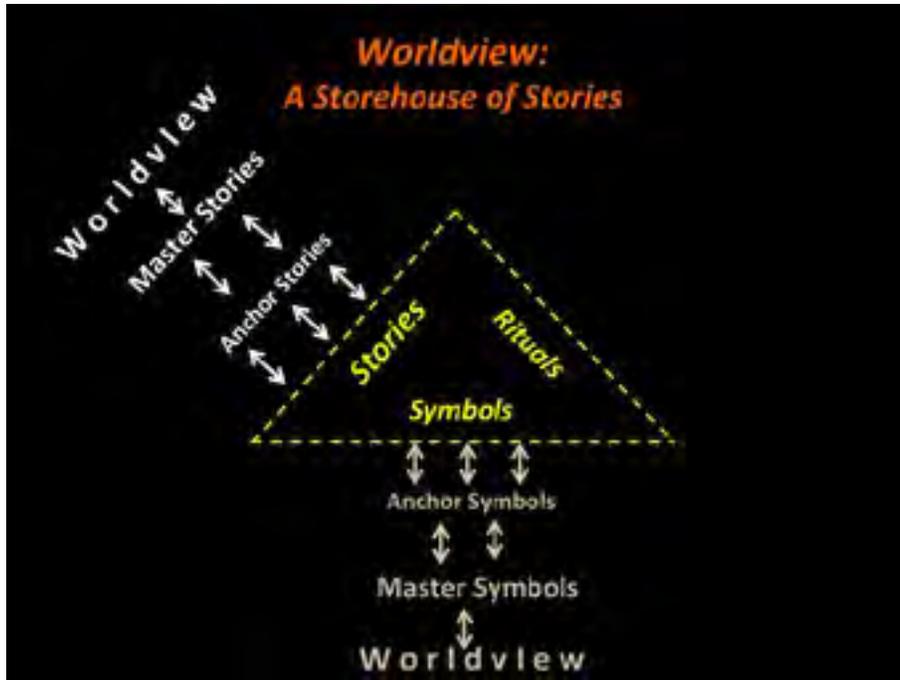


Figure 6.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Stories

Story that speaks loudly and with clarity does so because it is heard/viewed as earthy. Or as Kevin Bradt says conversely, “Story does not traffic in abstractions.”³⁰⁶ The Ifugao would agree—keep the gospel away from abstractions. Keep it earthy. Tell it as a story. Give the gospel a home.

Oral	Written	Acted	Wisdom	Identification
Storytelling	History	Drama	Parable	Myth
Gossip	Biography	Song	Proverb	Legends
Conversation	Novels	Ballad	Poetry	Folktales
Public oration	Prose	Film	Riddles	Art
Short stories	Video / DVD	Opera	Fables	

Table 6.1: Types of Story Expression

306. Bradt, *Story as a Way of Knowing*, 102.

Story is Culturally Interpreted

Story, like symbol, is culturally captive. To illustrate, if asked what is the main point of the story of Joseph, cultural variations would no doubt emerge. Some westerners may claim that Joseph did not fall into sexual sin with Potiphar's wife. Some Africans may point out that Joseph never forgot his family. Some Estonians and Lithuanians may agree, but add that he looked out for his nation. A Thai may claim that the client (Joseph) remained loyal to his patron, Potiphar. Other Thai may note the theme was suffering. Nepalese Hindus, on the other hand, may note that forgiveness superseded revenge. Other Hindus may believe that Joseph must have been a very wicked person in a former life to have all this evil explode upon him.

“Story is the language of the heart.”

(Eldredge, 2004, 5)

In Don Richardson's *Peace Child*, Judas replaced Jesus as the hero of the story, a Super Sawi. Harold Netland tells of a Japanese local story that recreated Jesus' story:

A fascinating example of local adaptation of Jesus to the Japanese context is the story of Jesus' tomb in northern Japan. The local legend has it that after growing up in Galilee, before beginning his public ministry, Jesus came to Japan. He returned to Galilee at age 33 and began preaching a heavenly kingdom—the kingdom of which he spoke being Japan. When he ran into trouble with the Jewish leaders, Jesus left Galilee and returned to the town of Shingo, near beautiful Lake Towada. Jesus' brother Isukiri was crucified in Jesus' place on the cross. Jesus lived in northern Japan until his death at age 106. Locals can show you the grave where he was supposedly buried. [John Koedyker, “Another Jesus”]

Somehow a distortion of the gospel story long ago became embedded in local narratives in a remote mountain area far removed from known centers of Christianity. The origin of the legend remains a mystery, although most believe it probably is a confused remnant of influences from Roman Catholic presence in Japan in the 16th and 17th centuries.³⁰⁷

Another area where culture often plays an unassuming role in interpreting Scripture is the binary value systems of innocence/guilt, honor/shame, power/fear, and purity/pollution. While all four value systems are present in any society, only one or two will dominate. Stories heard, seen, or read, will be interpreted through the preferred value system(s) of the host culture.

Many from the West view Scripture through the eyes of innocence/guilt where legal language shows, e.g., “all have sinned and fall short of God's glory” (Romans 3:23, NIV). Many from the East will view Scripture from the values of honor/shame where relational language surfaces, e.g.: “do you dishonor God by breaking the law?” (Romans 2:23, NIV). They (and others) may also view it through the lens of purity/pollution where hygienic language is involved, e.g.: “Who can say, “I have cleaned my heart”?” or who can proclaim,

307. Netland, “Globalization and the Pluralistic Jesus,” 9.

“I am purified from my sin’?” (Proverbs 20:9, VOICE). Animists from around the world will perceive it primarily from a power/fear perspective where control language dominates: “Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power” (1 Thessalonians 1:5, NIV).

Jesus’ role in the gospel will be perceived differently depending on which value system(s) the listener/viewer follows. For innocence/guilt, Jesus becomes the substitute. For honor/shame, Jesus becomes the mediator. For power/fear, Jesus becomes the liberator.³⁰⁸ For purity/pollution, Jesus becomes the purifier.

Worldview influences how one interprets stories, including Bible stories. We not only read Bible stories, and are read by them, we also read our values into them.³⁰⁹ But does every hermeneutic lead to Truth? When do cultural eyes blind readers/listeners to author-intended meaning? Are there unlimited acceptable interpretations?

Story Has Its Own Logic

Fresh back from the Philippines on home assignment and working on my doctorate I decided to attend a Talbot chapel on the Biola University campus. The speaker, a Talbot professor, made a statement that remains forever etched in my memory: “Our God is a rational, linear, logical, propositional Being; therefore he can only be known by this type of thinking.”

“Story... is not afraid of the discovery of the unexpected and unthinkable or the simultaneous existence of variations, anomalies, disparities, contradictions, or multiple alternative views. Story, unlike science, knows that the expectation of a ‘singular solution’ or ‘grand unified theory’ is finally naïve.”

(Bradt, 1997, 106)

My first thought was, how ethnocentric can one get! He had certainly never met the Ifugao. If his statement was true, the Ifugao would have a very difficult time building a relationship with this strange, cold, foreign Being, as the above evangelism case study demonstrated.

Interestingly, I believed just like the professor only a few years prior. And then I met the Ifugao who taught me that there was more than one form of logic (propositional) from which to process life. Like symbol, story requires

its own form of logic (narrative) if fidelity to meaning is to be safeguarded.

308. See the www.honorshame.com blog and the January-February, 2015 issue of *Mission Frontiers* that focuses entirely on “The Power of Honor.”

309. Our values also influence which theologies are considered important. No one interprets Scripture with complete accuracy. Dean Fleming notes, “All theology is *contextual* theology. ... All theologizing is done from a particular location and perspective whether we are conscious of it or not” (298). Fleming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 2005. Paul Hiebert adds, “A critical realist epistemology differentiates between revelation and theology. The former is God-given truth; the latter is human understanding of that truth and cannot be equated fully with it. Human knowledge is always partial and schematic, and does not correspond one-to-one with reality. Our theology is our understanding of Scripture in our contexts. It may be true, but it is always partial and perspectival. It seeks to answer the questions we raise” (29). Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 2009. See also *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* (2012) written Richards and O’Brien.

For those unfamiliar with narrative logic, story seems messy, full of ambiguity, subjective, borderless, inconsistent, tentative, contradictory, complex, unfinished, unresolved, open to multiple meanings. That is often because researchers rely on propositional logic to interpret story in search of a single definitive answer (which may carry some Enlightenment baggage).

Narrative logic, however, works differently and has different goals. Donald Polkinghorne posits that “narrative research does not produce conclusions of certainty, the ideal of formal science with its closed systems of mathematics and formal logic.”³¹⁰ Polkinghorne’s position makes narrative logic suspect for some. But should it?

Jerome Bruner helps clarify some distinctions between the two forms of logic that people generally rely on to process life:

A good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds. Both can be used as a means for convincing another. Yet what they convince *of* is fundamentally different: *arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof. The other establishes not truth but verisimilitude* (my emphasis).³¹¹

Walter Fisher adds, “the [narrative] paradigm is a ground for resolving the dualisms of modernism: fact-value, intellect-imagination, reason-emotion, and so on. Stories are enactments of the whole mind in concert with itself.”³¹² He defines narrative logic as:

A philosophy of reason, value, and action. Narrative rationality is its logic. The essential components of this logic are the following. Human communication is tested against the principles of probability (coherence) and fidelity (truthfulness and reliability).³¹³

Fisher further notes that the two forms of logic, propositional and narrative, have not always been dichotomized:

Before the advent of philosophy in ancient Greece, all modes of human communication were regarded as *mythos/logos, form/content, and feeling/reason*. No instance of human communication was privileged over another as having a special capacity to convey knowledge, truth, or reality.³¹⁴

While both forms of logic are essential to grasp the totality of life, using the right tool for the job is as necessary for story as it is for symbol (chapter 5). Wise is the person who becomes equally proficient in both forms of logic, and knows which tool to use when.

In *Story as a Way of Knowing*, Kevin Bradt theorizes that God’s profuse and purposeful use of story in Scripture makes Him a great risk taker in that it opens

310. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, 175.

311. Bruner, *Actual Minds*, 11.

312. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 68.

313. *Ibid.*, 47.

314. *Ibid.*, 192.

interpretation up to multiple meanings. But is this true? Or, does God understand something about the universal nature of the story genre that some of us are just now slowly discovering?

It could be asked, is ambiguity all that bad? Or, does such cloudiness demonstrate the complexity of conversation?³¹⁵ Why does it take scores of images in Scripture to define “church?”³¹⁶ Logic surrounding story is designed to suggest more than make irrefutable statements;³¹⁷ it demands discussion and debate that may result in different destinations. God is not opposed to ambiguous communication; rather, he often encourages it!³¹⁸ In story, experiential apologetics often trumps evidential apologetics. And that is both its strength and weakness. Changing minds often begins with emotional impact (heart) rather than cognitive impact (mind). Ambiguity increases debate.

Narrative logic, however, does not grant license for any random interpretation of a story as some postmoderns may posit. Authors of told, written, or viewed stories use repetition of terms, phrases, metaphors, themes, questions, directional changes, choices highlighted, reactions to choices, associations, and a host of other oral and literary markers to establish interpretational boundaries. Even an introductory lesson in a story series or set often provides a brief summary to help establish boundaries for direction and meaning, as does an introduction to a single story. As the late linguist Kenneth Pike was fond of saying, “Truth is pattern within pattern.” Flannery O’Connor would add, “The whole story is the meaning.”³¹⁹

315. For those who argue that proposition logic leads to less ambiguity in relation to hermeneutics, why is it that there are so many “biblical” interpretations of how Scripture is laid out—multiple variations of dispensationalism versus covenant theology? Referring to narrative passages and figurative language in Scripture, Kevin Vanhoozer concludes that interpretation results not in succinct propositions but rather a “surplus of cognition” because reality is not “exhaustively specifiable” (54). Welcome to narrative logic, which is just as legitimate as propositional logic, just different. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 2005. See also Camery-Hoggatt, “God in the Plot.” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 35 (2006) 451-469.

316. In his classic *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, Paul Minear discovered 96 images that define the church in the New Testament. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, 1960.

317. Christian Smith draws this conclusion: “Neither the empiricist’s tested knowledge nor the rationalist’s self-evident truths describe the ground on which ordinary people go about making sense of their experiences. . . . These are matters that need a story” (130). Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, 2003. Not everything in life can be quantified. See Smith, “Singing the Story into Our Bones,” *Reformed Worship* 108 (2013) 20-22.

318. Richard Hansen argues in *Paradox Lost: Rediscovering the Mystery of God*, that it is in God’s mysteries that we “encounter him most closely.” Rather than trying to justify paradoxes, he prefers to show how they are part and parcel of the landscape of the life of a Christian: “The paradoxes we encounter in the wilder regions of life and Scripture need not stifle our faith. In fact, paradox can stimulate our faith, especially stimulate the spiritual imagination that helps our faith grow” (164). Mystery reveals itself through paradox. Both bring a new enlightenment. Hansen, *Paradox Lost*, 2016.

Through a series of questions, Glenn Paauw notes how the Bible itself offers multiperspectives of teaching and events: “Why are there two presentations of Israel’s history? Why within one of those histories is the giving of the Mosaic law presented twice, with variations? Why are there three disparate presentations of Israel’s wisdom, from the solid certainties of Proverbs to the serious questionings of Ecclesiastes and Job? Why was it necessary to present his life and ministry of Jesus from four unique perspectives? Paul was not always on exactly the same page as the other early Christian leaders Peter and James, yet our cannon includes writings by all of them” (182-183). Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves*, 2016.

319. Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, eds. *Mystery and Manners*, 73. The “whole” would include all associated aspects of story [people, place, plot, etc.], symbols, and rituals.

One of the strongest patterns sought within Bible stories will be: does God emerge as the hero of the story?³²⁰ Narrative logic sounds messy to those unfamiliar with how her authors construct stories to establish interpretational boundaries. Narrative logic is not a free for all. Rather, it is governed creativity with “ruled spontaneity.” Thomas Boomershine captures it well when he says that while “...the listeners are invited to play. The playground does have boundaries.”³²¹ Meaning is found in the story, and the stories embedded within her.

Our God is more than a rational, linear, logical, propositional Being who requires propositional logic to know him. He can, and should, also be experienced through narrative logic that unites rather than fragments, that prefers mystery³²² over the mundane, imagination³²³ over rationalization, characters over categories, relationships over intellectual exercises, events over explanations, bounded answers rather than a single answer. While both forms of logic are valid, each reaches its destination through very dissimilar means all the while providing a more comprehensive picture of the Creator behind all forms of legitimate logic. Albert Einstein points out what happens when we bifurcate the two forms of logic: “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”³²⁴ It is time to give both the honor they deserve.

What Story Does

Story Speaks Metaphorically

Two of the most respected giants in the screenwriting industry concur—metaphor drives story. Christopher Vogler writes, “The mythological approach to story boils down to using metaphors or comparisons to get across your feelings about life.”³²⁵ Robert McKee says it more succinctly: “*Story is metaphor for life.*”³²⁶

Vogler provides the reason for the power of metaphor to pull us into a story:

320. Charles Koller believes that “the Bible was not given to reveal the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to reveal the hand of God in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not as a revelation of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, but as a revelation of the *Savior* of Mary and Martha and Lazarus” (51). Koller, *Sermons Preached Without Notes*, 1964. Fokkelman expands, “The main questions of narratology remain the first to be addressed: who is the hero, what is his quest, what does he want to achieve, and how have his action and pursuit been shaped as a plot? How are the various themes distributed along the linear axis of the story?” (192). Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 1999.

321. Boomershine, *Story Journey*, 52.

322. Flannery O’Connor notes the duality of mystery and dogma, concluding, “Dogma is the guardian of mystery. The doctrines are spiritually significant in ways that we cannot fathom” (365). Fitzgerald, ed., *The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O’Connor*, 1988.

323. I concur with Kevin Vanhoozer’s charge that “it is striking to suggest that both propositionalist theologians and their critics suffer from a low view of the imagination, but such is indeed the case” (280). Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 2005. C. S. Lewis offers a higher perspective, positing that, “reason is the natural organ of truth, but imagination is the organ of meaning” (265). Lewis and Hooper, ed., *C. S. Lewis*, 2013.

324. <http://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/09/18/intuitive-mind/>

325. Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 82.

326. McKee, *Story*, 25.

Every good story reflects the total human story, the universal human condition of being born into this world, growing, learning, struggling to become an individual, and dying. Stories can be read as metaphors for the general human situation, which characters who embody universal, archetypal qualities, comprehensive to the group as well as the individual.³²⁷

We would do well to recognize, or if necessary rehabilitate, our understanding of the role of metaphor in story. Metaphor, or “disorienting dilemmas,” has the power to “lodge truth in the imagination”³²⁸ because it connects our lives with the lives of the character(s) (and symbols) in a story. Susan Shaw succinctly summarizes, “The truths of stories are made not by logical persuasion, but by experiential engagement. Stories do not convince by argument; they surprise by identification.”³²⁹ That identification could include assistance, abuse, resilience, betrayal, fallenness, forgiveness, shame, love, hope, transitions. When the role of metaphor in story is minimized, so is imagination and mystery.

“Narraphors are the lingua franca
of the Christian faith.”

(Sweet, 2014, 4)

Donald Messner deepens Shaw’s thought: “New metaphors have the power to create new realities.”³³⁰ New metaphors, such as Jesus as substitute, mediator, victor, or purifier, can help make an allegiance change more meaningful and natural. Like symbol, the habit of story is association through metaphor.

Story Ignites Imagination and Emotion

Darla, my wife, called me in to watch what was going on at the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. A plane had just hit one of the Twin Towers. Questions flooded my mind. An errant pilot? A disgruntled pilot? A suicide? A private plane? A commercial plane? As I watched the smoke billowing into and darkening a bright-blue morning sky a second plane, a commercial plane, hit the second tower exploding into a bellowing ball of fire. Some of my questions were answered. We were at war! But with whom?

Later that momentous morning as I walked outside there was *not one* airplane in the sky. And we lived close to the flight path to one of the busiest airports in the world, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Was LAX the next target? It was eerie, surreal, unsettling. Life as we once knew had forever changed.

The carnage that left 2,996 innocents dead and \$10 billion worth of destruction wreaked by 19 al-Qaeda jihadists brought a flood of emotions—*anger* as I watched people jump to their deaths and the towers fall, and heard the last phone calls made to loved ones, *sorrow* for children and spouses who would never have a parent or partner open the front door again, *anxiety* trying to anticipate where the terrorists might strike next, *pride* for our first responders, Mayor Giuliani, and the countless heroic acts of brave citizens.

327. Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 24.

328. Sweet, *Post-modern Pilgrims*, 89.

329. Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education*, 61.

330. Messner, *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, 171.

The 9/11 story, like other stories, elicits emotions and activates the imagination. As the “parade of images” unfolds in one’s mind, the ordinary is made unordinary, the distant is given immediacy, the familiar unfamiliar, captivating and challenging the listener/viewer.

Story Creates Mystery

God’s highest creation has a penchant for mystery. We live for surprises. What’s next? Whodunit? When? Where? How? Why? How will it end? Does a story ever end? Can it remain static? Annie Dillard accurately announced, “We wake, if ever we wake at all, to mystery.”³³¹ Humans love suspense, surprise, and struggle. This leads to plot.

Bruner believes that “what drives the story, what makes it worth telling, is trouble – some misfit between agent, acts, goals, settings, and means.”³³² Plot³³³ is driven by difficult choices made by characters³³⁴ within a story. The problematic choices³³⁵ that the characters must make create necessary conflict that requires time to resolve. The choices deliberated, along with the delay to make those decisions, only heightens the imagination and mystery. Good stories purposely delay answers.

“**Plot** (my emphasis) is a sequence of actions, often explicitly connected in terms of cause and effect, leading from an initial situation, through complication, to some sense of resolution or ‘revelation.’”

(Gunn and Fewell, 1993, 2)

Mystery serves as the catalyst for conflict. Mystery feeds on conflict. Good stories are built around purposely delayed, powerful plots (arguments) that require mysterious resolution over time. Mystery creates an unfinished and unresolved conversation, possibly for generations.

Why mystery? What role does mystery play in story? Bradt would respond this way: “Mystery invites inquiry rather than definition, erotic participation rather than geometric proof, relationship rather than reason, pursuit rather than purchase.”³³⁶ Story raises one’s curiosity through mystery. Mystery serves as the catalyst for conflict, imagination, delayed resolution, and unfinished conversation. See Appendix D for an expansion of what makes a good story.

331. Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 4.

332. Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, 94.

333. Michael Roemer defines “plot” this way, “*Plot* derives from the Anglo-Saxon *plot*, ‘a spot of ground.’ ... We still use the word in its spatial meaning. ... Synonyms for plot—‘plan,’ ‘scheme,’ and ‘design’ originate in words with a spatial connotation. So do *theme* and *thesis*, which serve as the structuring principle. ... The original meaning of plot ... suggests that it is perceived synchronously, like a plan or design. ... The plot, which *we* see or know and the figures don’t, exists in place before they discover it in time, and gives absolute expression to the fact that the story is over before it begins. They merely discover what already is” (40). Roemer, *Telling stories*, 1995.

334. Henry James (1843-1916) ties character to plot: “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?” (437). Auchard, ed., *The Portable Henry James*, 2004.

335. Michael Roemer notes, “In story, all action is unmistakably a *reaction*: it originates not in the doer but in something within or beyond him over which he has no control” (7). Roemer, *Telling stories*, 1995.

336. Bradt, *Story as a Way of Knowing*, x.

Mystery also relates to the “God-shaped vacuum” within each of us. Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley sagely note that “our search for meaning is a search for an appropriate narrative for life.”³³⁷ The gospel is a story driven by mystery that can fill God-shaped vacuums.

Story Requires Response

Story is never meant to be neutral. The “abiding restlessness” within story inherently provokes reaction. Listeners/viewers are expected to respond.³³⁸ Sometimes story offers hope, sometimes a smear job, sometimes defiance. That is why despots (Herod, Saddam, Castro, Chavez) cannot permit the entrance of even a single rival story and will do whatever is necessary to stamp it out. That is why when one’s reputation is smeared through a scandalous story an immediate response is required. Not to respond with a rival story, especially in today’s social media age, is to signal agreement and/or invite continual criticism. That is why the gospel offers good news. Story requires reaction, and sooner is often better.

Story Gives Voice to Symbol

We saw in chapter 5 that symbol speaks, but silently. It requires a voice. Story becomes the voice for non-vocal symbol by articulating its meaning; story answers symbol’s need to move beyond wordless speech to spoken speech.

In all the possibilities noted in Figure 6.2, story plays a prominent role. In the first where the meaning of the symbol remains unchanged, the story that defines it remains unchanged, reinforcing meaning. If the meaning of the symbol is modified, a modified story results. If meaning is syncretized, a new (rival) story replaces the old story. Story gives voice to symbol in its present state, whichever that may be.

Story Diffuses Tension

When tension arises between two parties, head-on confrontation (evidential apologetics) often only exacerbates the situation, especially in cultures that rely on a third party to mediate conflict. Story has a way of softly diffusing the tension in such contexts in that it assumes the role of mediator (experiential apologetics). Those experiencing conflict search to discover how the characters in the story worked through a similar situation.³³⁹

337. Anderson and Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, 27.

338. Mechal Beth Dinkler correctly concludes, “Stories are sites of contestation and negotiation, functioning within the discursive practices of communities to shape both the communities themselves and the individuals within them” (290). Dinkler, “Telling Transformation.” *Word & Deed* 31 (2011) 287-296.

339. Michael Roemer defines “situation” this way: “No story begins at the beginning. There is always a given, something the figures did *not* make. ‘Situation’ derives from *situ*, ‘a site.’ The site, place, or scene—from *skena*, ‘a covered place’—exists before the figures appear in it. . . . The situation, whether it be existential or entertaining, creates the figures for us. We understand and identify with them because we can see ourselves in their place” (12, 13). Roemer, *Telling Stories*, 1995.

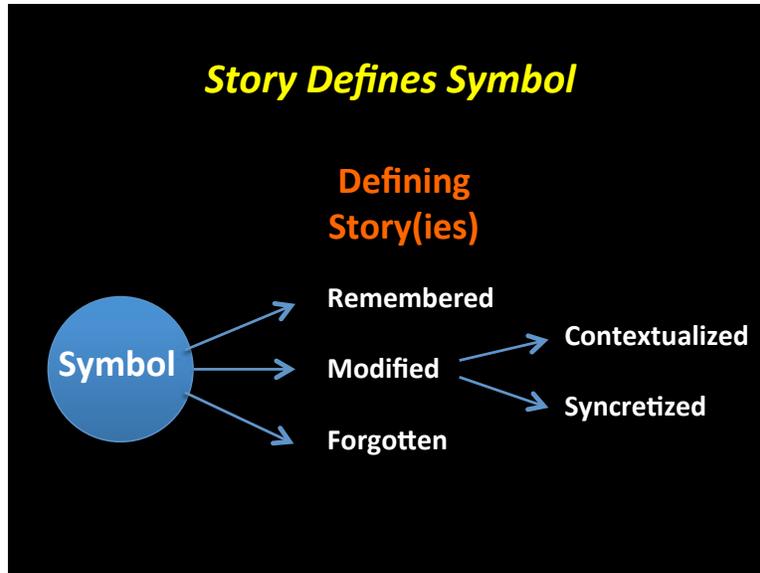


Figure 6.2: Story Defines Symbol

As a character’s behavior crystalizes by how he/she/it responded to circumstances (from crisis to comedy) and contexts (from geographical to institutional) they visualize themselves in the story. They associate their vulnerability with that of a character; there is identity. “We become insiders even as we remain observers.”³⁴⁰ There is a way forward. N.T. Wright wisely summarizes it this way:

Stories are, actually, peculiarly good at modifying or subverting other stories and their worldviews. Where head-on attack would certainly fail, the parable hides the wisdom of the serpent behind the innocence of the dove, gaining entrance and favour which can then be used to change assumptions which the hearer would otherwise keep hidden away for safety.³⁴¹

Stories sneak into our conscious. This is one reason why the gospel presented in story format can come across as soft power, liberating the listener/reader who discovers him/herself in the story. For many, story serves as a third-party mediator to resolve conflict in a culturally appropriate way.

Story Constructs Worldview

What provides the foundation for deep-level assumptions about life? What serves as the underpinnings of one’s identity? What separates one’s reality from that of another’s? What constructs one’s worldview? Language? Economics? Social structure? Ritual? Symbol?

340. Ibid., 27.

341. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 40.

Story? Scholars from multiple disciplines have offered all of the above as answers, and more.

“Submerged stories are authoritative because narrative has its own logic: if every human being has a worldview, we can also say that every human being is located in some story. To be human is to be storied. ... Story is the *lingua franca* of incarnate significance.”

(Smith, 2013, 21-22)

One answer that has received significant attention in the literature is story. Citing an anonymous patient, psychologist Henry Murray penned long ago that “the soul of a people is mirrored in their legends.”³⁴² Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre concluded, “I can only answer the question, ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question, ‘Of what story do I find myself a part?’”³⁴³

Psychologist and education theorist Bruner proposed, “It is only in the narrative mode that one can construct an identity and find a place in one’s culture.”³⁴⁴ Theologian N. T. Wright posited that “worldviews

provide the stories through which human beings view reality. Narrative is the most characteristic expression of worldview, going deeper than the isolated observation or fragmented remark.”³⁴⁵ Philosopher Paul Ricoeur offered a more nuanced reflection:

To state the identity of an individual or a community is to answer the question, “Who did this?” “Who is the agent, the author?” ... The answer has to be narrative. To answer the question “Who?” ... is to tell the story of life. ... The story of life continues to be refigured by all the truthful or fictive stories a subject tells about himself or herself. An examined life is, in large part, one purged, one clarified by the cathartic effects of the narratives, be they historical or fictional, conveyed by our culture. ... Individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history. ... Subjects recognize themselves in the stories they tell about themselves. ... Is there ... any experience that is not already the fruit of narrative activity?³⁴⁶

Besides scholars, life experience bears out that story, through a cast of colorful characters and events, and plays a significant role in the construction of one’s worldview. Story helps conceptualize experience, interpret reality, provide identity, and offer a community of insiders. It does this at least in part because story serves both as a mirror (reflects back) and as a window (see through).³⁴⁷ Since story is limited socially and environmentally (desert, jungle, arctic, ghetto, suburbia, city, country), she creates boundaried interpretational grids. Meaning is not just found in the message, it is also found in the listener/viewer; they comingle. Story also imprisons because perceptions are culturally bound and privileged. Story is propaganda because it has an agenda. Story is not just what

342. Murray, *Explorations in Personality*, 728.

343. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.

344. Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, 42.

345. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 123.

346. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 246-247, 248.

347. I believe it was Rubem Alves who wrote that, “Stories are not windows; they are mirrors.”

one hears or sees; it is also what one hears and sees through. Worldview (de/re)construction finds one of its massive roots buried deep in story.

Story Reconstructs Worldview

Stories magically transport listeners/readers beyond the familiar to the unfamiliar. Sometimes exposure to the unfamiliar proposes attractive lifeworld alternatives that beg exploration. These tantalizing new stories do this in part by offering alternative symbols, identities, and communities of shared values; they offer an alternative worldview through lived precedent. Anderson and Foley incisively note:

Part of the power of narrative is that it enables us to make deep human connections that transcend unfamiliarity in locale and experience. Stories transport us to times and places we do not know. Through narrative, we become spiritual travelers undaunted by time, distance, or new landscapes. It is as if stories have mystical power to invite us, willingly or unwillingly, to enter unknown worlds.³⁴⁸

Stories form impressions on the soul.

Story not only has the power to construct worldview, it also has the power to reconstruct it. N. T. Wright captures it this way: “Stories provide a vital framework for experiencing the world. They also provide a means by which views of the world may be challenged ... Stories are actually peculiarly good at modifying or subverting other stories and their worldviews.”³⁴⁹ Story reconstruction begins with story deconstruction.

In that most stories have rival stories, life is never settled. Rival and reinforcing stories continually vie for supremacy, demanding life-changing choices on a daily basis. Slack and Terry summarize, “Stories are the last frontier in a fight between worldviews.”³⁵⁰ Story is not only driven by conflict (plot), it creates conflict by generating rival stories. By design, rival stories detract, discount, dismantle, and destroy accepted stories. No story, no matter how strong, is sacrosanct.

“Stories are, actually, peculiarly good at modifying or subverting other stories and their worldviews.”

(Wright, 1992, 40)

Steven Evans points out the need for cross-cultural workers to grasp the role that story plays in constructing worldview. If they miss or minimize this, it will be difficult to appreciate the role that story plays in (de/re)constructing worldview. Evans convincingly contends, “It is not until the role of story in worldview and culture is firmly grasped that one can fully comprehend the necessity of story in worldview change and life and cultural transformation.”³⁵¹ Story not only constructs worldview, it deconstructs and reconstructs it as well. And there will be a price tag associated with each story swap, some higher, some lower.

348. Anderson and Foley, *Mighty Stories*, 4.

349. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 39-40.

350. Slack and Terry, *Chronological Bible Storying*, 34.

351. Evans, “You Think in Lines, We think in Circles,” 192.

Karin Barber focuses on text investigation to reflect on worldview. She defines “text” as “utterance (oral or written³⁵²) that is woven together in order to attract attention and to outlast the moment.”³⁵³ Barber elaborates:

What, then, does it mean to understand a text? And what can we understand *from* texts—about social relations, ideas and values in the cultures that produce them? ... Texts are social facts. Texts are used to do things: they are forms of action. ... Texts are commentaries upon, and interpretations of, social facts. They are part of social reality but they also take up an attitude to social reality. They may criticize social forms or confirm and consolidate them: in both cases, they are reflexive. They are part of the apparatus by which human communities take stock of their own creations. Textual traditions can be seen as a community’s ethnography of itself.³⁵⁴

Analyzing oral or written texts (or stories) begins by collecting them. This behooves cross-cultural workers to become story collectors, story analyzers, and story smiths *before* becoming storytellers.³⁵⁵ What is the minimal number of texts that should comprise the cross-cultural workers’ Story Collection? Do they include texts garnered from both genders, different generations, and distinctive geographical locations? Once collected it is time to discern insider actions, attitudes, and relationships. Collected and analyzed texts that define a community are the beginning of communication clarity because it goes to the heart of a culture—worldview.

“The Holy Spirit’s literary genre of choice is story.”

(Peterson, 1997, 3)

Scripture and Story

The Ifugao had me thinking and asking theological and pedagogical questions I had never before considered, much less asked. One of those questions surrounded the literary composition of Scripture. Recognizing that multiple genres exist within Scripture, but if boiled down to just three—narrative, poetry, propositional—what percentage of the Bible would each constitute?

At first, I shot too high, giving 75 percent to narrative. That left 15 percent for poetry, and 10 percent for propositional-type literature found in the Epistles.³⁵⁶ I have since

352. Barber notes, “A text is a tissue of words. The term comes from the Latin *texere*, meaning literally to weave, join together, plait or braid; and therefore, to construct, fabricate, build or compose (Greetham 1999: 26). That is what this book is about: the universal human work of weaving or fabricating with words. People put words together to make a mark, to leave a trace. They do this orally as well as in writing. Though many people think of ‘text’ as referring exclusively to written words, writing is not what confers textuality. Rather, what does is the quality of being joined together and given a recognizable existence as a form” (1). Barber, *Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics*, 2007.

353. *Ibid.*, 2.

354. *Ibid.*, 2-4.

355. See Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, (2005), 175-189.

356. *Ibid.*, 36.

revised my numbers to 55-65 percent narrative, 25-35 percent poetry, and 10 percent for propositional.³⁵⁷

Another question raised was how did I perceive the Bible?³⁵⁸ A Sacred Private Devotional? A Sacred Encyclopedia? A Sacred Self-Help Book? A Sacred Moral Manual? A Sacred Rule Book? (That fit well in my youth during Apostolic Christian Church days.) A Sacred Textbook? (That worked well during my formal Bible studies and beyond.) But all of these resulted in a very fragmented understanding of Scripture.³⁵⁹

The Ifugao taught me that there was another way to perceive Scripture—as a Sacred Storybook. This perspective not only incorporated all of the story components noted above, but more importantly it provided an earthy eventline in which to ground abstract concepts in “successive installments” in a developing story driven by a sacred mystery. All genres within Scripture find their roots, and hence meaning, in story.

The Sacred Storybook has a beginning, a middle, and a glorious ending through which the Father-King honorably restores a series of broken relationships culminating in a new creation, all initiated in eternity past. More than 550 individual stories featuring a cast of approximately 3,000 characters³⁶⁰ morph into one big overarching story, a metanarrative that cries out for the Father-King’s rightful honor and our committed allegiance to bless the nations as co-laborers. Each individual Bible story integrates the imagination, emotion,³⁶¹ facts, and volition, making it a riveting read of a dramatic drama.

Michael Goheen provides a cogent reason for every cross-cultural Christian worker to grasp the unified nature of the sweep of Scripture: “If the story of the Bible is fragmented into bits (historical-critical, devotional, homiletic, systematic-theological, moral) it can easily be domesticated by the reigning story of culture.”³⁶² A grasp of the sweep of Scripture (the metanarrative) will not only provide a home for all the individual stories, it also challenges domesticated cultural stories.

Such domestication would also be true for the gospel when defined only from a New Testament perspective. Gabriel Fackre perceptively challenges a familiar western evangelical shortcoming—an abbreviated gospel. “Yes, the Jesus stories are the heart of the matter, but not without their context, the ‘overarching’ canonical Story from creation to consummation of which it is the Centre.”³⁶³ McIlwain would concur.

A full understanding of the gospel will find its roots in the Old Testament, not just in the last third of the Sacred Storybook. That is because the gospel is a story embedded in

357. Steffen, “Pedagogical Conversions,” 150.

358. *Ibid.*, 149-150.

359. Some of content in this section originated in Tom Steffen, “Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol,” *Missiology: An International Review* 38, (2010) 141-159. For a great read on this topic, see Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves*, 2016.

360. In *The Biographical Bible* [eBible], David Stephan identified 3,237 Bible characters. Of the 3,237, 1,443 do not have unique names (e.g., there are 6 Marys, 14 Josephs, 31 Zechariahs) while 1,794 have unique names. <https://www.wordsearchbible.com/products/28596>

361. Paul Hiebert purports that “affective knowledge is a different kind of knowledge and cannot be reduced to cognitive knowledge. ... In the Christian worldview, feelings are as important as truth in our understanding of God, ourselves, and our relationships to one another. Comparatively little theological reflection has been accorded to the affective dimension. Much more is needed” (291). Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 2008.

362. Goheen, “The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story in the 21st Century,” 9.

363. Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 166.

other stories, as noted above. Pauline theology in general, or the gospel in particular, cannot be properly understood without the storied events of the community of faith (Acts), Jesus' story, Israel's story, the story of a world gone astray, and the story of a perfect creation.³⁶⁴ The gospel finds itself embedded in possibly a thousand stories (concrete events) that comprise the Old and New Testaments—the Sacred Storybook. Cross-cultural Christian workers who comprehend this insight will provide ample events to listeners from both Testaments to help define the gospel.³⁶⁵

Another area for possible domestication is shortchanging the individual roles of members of the Trinity. Minimizing or neglecting any section of Scripture will promote an incomplete and inadequate understanding of the Trinity. To illustrate, much of western evangelism begins with Jesus in the NT. Yet the awe of God,³⁶⁶ which is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10), is underscored through the role of the Father's interactions with people peppered throughout the OT.

The powerful role of the Holy Spirit is not just found in Acts where he is the dominant character, but in the creation story as well. Genesis provides our first glimpse of the role of the Holy Spirit as he establishes order out of chaos.

Within the bookends of the NT—the Gospels and Revelation—two very different pictures of Jesus emerge. The first bookend presents him as a loving, humble human who experienced birth, death, resurrection, and ascension. Evangelism from this perspective presents Jesus as a lovable lamb.

The last bookend, Revelation, reveals Jesus as a warrior-king ready to set things right through deadly and decisive warfare. Evangelism from this perspective presents Jesus as a righteous judge setting things right.

Who is the real Jesus? A lamb? A lion? A Lion-Lamb? One bookend without the other depreciates the total personage and message of Jesus Christ. One of the major benefits

“I have been taught how to outline and analyze Scripture, but I have not been taught how to capture the drama of story and communicate truth through it.”

(Seminary student)

364. Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, 91.

365. This could also be true of symbols or images. Referencing the shared narrative of salvation that begins in the Old Testament and climaxes in the New Testament, Brenda Colijn contends, “This story of redemption is refracted through the Christ event like light through a prism. Each image expresses an aspect of redemption as seen through Christ. We need the whole spectrum in order to fully see the light. Put another way, the images are ‘building blocks’ of the ‘master story’ of redemption. If we want to understand that story, we have to put the blocks together. Thus once we have understood each image on its own, we should attempt to see the images in light of one another and in the context of the whole picture” (38-39). Colijn, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament*, 2010.

366. When applying for tenure at Biola University, then President Clyde Cook asked me during an interview, “What is biggest problem in the US church today?” My response went something like this: “I think the main problem with the US church today is the lack of the awe of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. And the reason for the lack of the awe of God is that we are people of the New Testament. If you want to capture the awe of God, the Old Testament is the place where this is developed in depth. Sadly, we are people of the New Testament.”

for teaching the sweep of the Sacred Storybook is the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive and correct picture of the members of the Trinity.

The big picture sweep (Level 1) provides a context from which individual (or clusters of) stories (Level 2) can emerge. The individual stories highlight human, spiritual, and animal characters (Level 3) that tie back to the big picture. N. T. Wright suggests how every Bible story is embedded in other Bible stories:

When the early church told stories about Jesus these stories were not...mere random selections of anecdotes. They were not without a sense of an overall story into which they might fit, or of a narrative shape to which such smaller stories would conform. ... The apostle's (Paul) most emphatically "theological" statements and arguments are in fact expressions of the essentially Jewish story now redrawn around them. ... So, too his repeated use of the Old Testament is designed not as mere proof-texts, but, in part at least, to suggest new ways of reading well-known stories, and to suggest that they find a more natural climax in the Jesus-story.³⁶⁷

True meaning will be discovered not just linearly, but also circularly.

While story plays a prominent role in the Sacred Storybook, the Enlightenment has been successful in denarratizing it, particularly in the West. This deficit will require certain cross-cultural Christian workers to learn how to restory, renarrate, redrama, recharacter, remystify "dull doctrine."

If such a paradigm change results, abstract theological concepts will be anchored within concrete characters and events (see Appendixes A, B, and C). This more earthy approach will help make it possible for present-century listeners/viewers to co-create and co-discover meaning at the same time that the featured first-century characters did in the story. The mystery interspersed between Alpha and Omega requires and deserves discovery. Wise cross-cultural Christian workers recognize that Scripture cannot be totally understood or communicated apart from stories.

Concluding Reflections

Story is much more than an art form, diversion, entertainment, illustration, or literary genre; it is a way to structure thought. It is a way of knowing. All knowing (meaning) finds its origin in one's master stories. Story plays a pivotal role in the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of worldview that defines identity, communal and national values, and social roles. Story not only is authored; it also authors. Coming to Christ will require restoryation (restoration).

Created through conflict, and driven by rival stories, the earthy, metaphorically, participatory, reactionary nature of story impacts all areas of our lives as it searches for resolution to an unfinished conversation. The search is mysterious, because according to historian and social philosopher Hannah Arendt, "Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it."³⁶⁸ By design, story (or "textual traditions") keeps the collective conversation ongoing.

The Enlightenment's role in denarratizing, deeventizing Scripture does not

367. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 404.

368. www.quotationspage.com/quote/4861.html

minimize the dominant and pivotal role that story plays in Scripture. Leland Ryken offers reasons why this may be so: “The stories of the Bible combine the two tendencies of narrative that have most appealed to the human race and that we tend to think of as opposites—reason and imagination, fact and mystery.”³⁶⁹ Ryken continues:

Why does the Bible contain so many stories? Is it possible that stories reveal some truths and experiences in a way that no other literary form does—and if so, what are they? What is the differences in our picture of God, when we read stories in which God acts, as compared with theological statements about the nature of God? What does the Bible communicate through our imagination that it does not communicate through our reason? If the Bible uses the imagination as one way of communicating truth, should we not show an identical confidence in the power of the imagination to convey religious truth? If so, would a good startpoint be to respect the story quality of the Bible in our exposition of it?³⁷⁰

The Enlightenment (a rival story) was also instrumental in socializing many in how to bifurcate reason from imagination, fact from mystery, and propositional logic from narrative logic. While we may bifurcate the experiential from the propositional, as I was prone to do with the Ifugao in relation to evangelism, the Bible refuses to do so. Both are needed; both are necessary. Both paint a larger picture of God and promise a more comprehensive understanding of the Sacred Storybook.

God was *not* a gambler when he chose to make story the predominate genre of the Sacred Storybook. Even so, it often remains a challenge to discover author-intended meaning in that it requires that “the interpreter must learn to work through the story and state the meaning in terms of the story. . . . It means entering into the world of the story.”³⁷¹ The story—and embedded stories linearly and circularly—define the story. God knew what he was doing in making story the predominant genre of the Sacred Storybook, whether through the metaphorical shadows of common stories, the wrinkles of anchor stories, or the facial features of master stories.

Yes, while there is more to the story, there *is* story. But story, like symbol, requires something more.

369. Ryken, *Works of Delight*, 39.

370. Ryken, “The Bible: God’s Story-book,” 38.

371. Stegnerm, *Narrative Theology in Early Jewish Christianity*, 4.

Making the Case for Ritual

“In ritual, the world lived and the world as imagined...
turn out to be the same world.”

—CLIFFORD GEERTZ

THIS CHAPTER DEVELOPS THE THIRD FRAME of the trilogy: ritual.³⁷² As in the previous chapters on symbol and story, I will attempt to identify the role of ritual—what it is, and what it does, and again conclude with application to Scripture. Before developing these themes, I will first identify some suspicions that surround ritual.

Ritual Seen as Suspect by Some

For some, ritual reminds them of archaic customs that must be endured or avoided at all costs. Ritual brings back memories of boredom, eccentric times of officiation, dark and dingy secular or sacred locations, taboos, offensive smells, elaborate paraphernalia, long homilies, embarrassing moments, eerie music, all led by patronizing people wearing “unique” uniforms tailored in various styles and colors.³⁷³ People of faith may complain

372. Because of strong overlap between ceremony and ritual it is difficult to distinguish the two. Ceremony seems to refer to special celebrative events (baby dedications, weddings, promotions) that require public attendance for special formal occasions (sacred or secular) to create community. Ceremony seems to be a larger, yet narrower category that incorporates ritual. Ritual, on the other hand, may or may not include the public or focus on a specific public ceremony; it can also be sacred or secular, but unlike ceremony, be individual. Both can be repetitive. There can be ritual without ceremony, but not ceremony without ritual. Therefore, in this chapter I have chosen to focus on the broader range of ritual, but not to the exclusion of ceremony. As Zan Benham (2001) correctly concludes, “Life is ceremony... life is ritual... life is a dance between the two.” http://dwij.org/forum/cerritomni/r1_zan_benham.html Benham, “On Ceremony and Ritual,” 2001.

373. Frank Viola argues that in the New Testament church, “neither the sermon nor ‘the preacher’ was the center of attention. Instead, congregational participation was the divine rule. The meeting was nonliturgical, nonritualistic, and nonsacral. Nothing was perfunctory. Everything came out of the living presence of Christ” (53). Viola, *Reimagining Church*, 2008.

about the secularization of their spiritual rituals or how ritual has become routine, destroying authentic worship.³⁷⁴ Others may view religious rituals as a means to manipulate a distant God for such things as personal power, health, gaining a spouse, or winning a lotto ticket.

While most readers have observed or experienced the above, they may also have experienced ritual that ended with just the opposite experiences. They left satisfied, refreshed, reminded, reinforced, reenergized, repurposed, reformed to continue life's journey with boldness into a fuzzy future. For some, ritual has *not* lost its currency.

Why does God's highest creation have such a propensity for ritual even while some practices repulse attendees? Why are human beings "ritual animals"? Ritual, like symbol and story, finds its source and strength in the Creator, Deus Ritualis. We are ritual-rehearsing animals because we are made in the image of our Creator, the source of ritual. That is why when people eliminate a ritual they eventually construct a substitute to fill the created vacuum. No individual is ritual-less.

What Ritual Is

Easter Morning

We could hardly sleep, waiting to get up in the cold darkness of a Spring morning to drive to "The Cabin" for the Sunrise Service. Mother had packed our Easter clothes, and a basket full of food for Easter dinner. We arrived just at sunrise. While adults greeted each other and carried food into the cabin my sister was off to pick wildflowers, and I went down by the stream to look for fish and fling stones with family and friends. We played outside until called into the warm cabin for the Sunrise Service.

When entering the warm cabin, a rustic kitchen overflowed with the sisters reheating and arranging the food caught one's eye. A huge fireplace with a roaring fire graced another wall. All the kids were shoed to the loft, which was mostly one big bed. If fast, we claimed the bed, placed heads in hands, and watched the busyness below. The service seemed to take forever as breakfast smells permeated the cabin. We waited and waited for one of the brothers to offer the last prayer so we could finally eat breakfast. After the parents cleaned up, we changed into our Easter finery to meet other family and friends in Sunday School at church a few miles away.

All the Sunday School age groups met together before heading to their respective classes. With hushed voice one of the teachers told us they had something they wanted to show us. Elmer Hartter, one of the elders, had visited the Holy Land and brought back a nail *just like the one used to crucify Jesus*. Every child got to hold it and imagine the horror of pain that Jesus suffered for us. It was then off to our classes for the traditional Easter story presented through flannel graph, and preparation for our role in the annual Easter program after lunch during the afternoon service.

374. Julie Durbin's research of Ukrainian Simple churches discovered some paranoia in relation to "ritual," which was often referenced in a negative or cautionary way. Note this interviewee's response in relation to communion: "It's not a weird ceremony or ritual. ... We do it all simply, not ritualistically" (220). Durbin, *Reframing Worship in Ukrainian Simple Churches*, 2016.

Ritual is Metaphor for Life

As mentioned earlier, McKee claims that “*story is metaphor for life.*”³⁷⁵ I wrote in chapter 5 that the same could be said of symbol. Here I will again tweak his quote slightly to read, *ritual is metaphor for life.*

Metaphor consists of two connected, yet distinct entities. The spark that arcs between the two in the mind of the leader/participant/observer at the ritual provides connective power. Whether language, actions, music, dance, smoke, smell, water, paraphernalia, dress, or a host of other things used within a ritual, metaphor brings them to life because it reveals life through recognized, interconnected images. While seemingly simple on the surface, metaphor requires unfathomable depth of discernment to discover its mercury-like meaning. Metaphor is an economical way to convey the deep depths of a topic. Metaphor is the message.³⁷⁶

Ritual not only includes symbol; it is symbol, the language of the soul. Ritual not only includes story; it is story, also the language of the soul. This is because “rituaphor” (a blend of ritual and metaphor) suggests how to visualize the language of theater. Ritual visualizes the invisible. The habit of ritual is association through metaphor.³⁷⁷

To not practice ritual is to not distinguish the levels of significance of symbols and stories that define one’s worldview and relationships. Rituaphor distinguishes the ordinary from the extraordinary in life.

Ritual is Performance

Some of the earlier concepts that served as pre-runners to envisioning ritual as performance (some prefer theater) would include Geertz’s “cultural performances” of social actors on the stage of life and Turner’s “social drama.” Ritual as performance moves beyond the cognitive to the drama of everyday life, to the emotional side³⁷⁸ of a fluid culture, to the atmosphere, to the environment, to symbolic time, to the sensuous, to the artistic, to the doing (speech acts) in specific time. Even the location of the performance can heighten the senses.

375. McKee, *Story*, 25.

376. See Benedict M. Guevin, “The Moral Imagination and the Shaping of the Parables” (70). Guevin, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 17 (1989) 63-79.

377. Tandin Dorji, a researcher, consultant, and trainer at the Institute of Management Studies, Timphu, makes this astute observation: “If ritual is an alternative way of expressing traditional stories, it will be useful to explore further and uncover the interrelatedness of story modalities within traditional communities. Studying the content of traditional songs would reveal additional layers and channels of storytelling. If stories are usually told to entertain and instruct, rituals and songs may be other forms of narrating devised by the wise elders to feed different needs of the spirit” (74). Dorji, *Journal of Bhutan Studies* 20 (2009) 64-75.

378. Theologian John Drane’s challenge is interesting: “We must listen to the pedagogical theorists (who) emphasize the importance of learning that engages all the senses” (137). Drane, *After McDonaldization*, 2008.

“**Metaphor** (my emphasis) is a necessary ‘vehicle of discovery’ for all new understanding...in an ironic way, metaphor is actually superior to so-called literal descriptions because such in fact mirrors the indirectness of all our knowledge of the world.”

(Flanders, 2011, 217)

“Jesus was not a bread dispenser or a wine pourer; neither was he a story giver or impartor of rituals. He was a dinner companion, a story partner, and a ritual friend. He did not demand that his table associates forget their lives or ignore their world in order to dine with him. He didn’t overlook their lives or world in that dinning, either. Rather, he savored each life and celebrated them all as the liturgy of the world. Ritual and care were one; story and symbol were united; God and people were coauthors.”

(Anderson and Foley, 2001, 159)

Theater requires at least six components: writer(s), script, director, actors, stage, and audience. A stage (developed below) provides the setting for the performance. The director’s job is to make sure that the actors realistically play their respective roles according to a sometime fluid script (often internalized rather than memorized). The audience arrives to the staging area in varied states of mind—from those overwhelmed with current events of the day to the exuberant to the passive.³⁷⁹

If the script is well-written, the performance carefully choreographed, and pleasingly orchestrated, the audience will most likely be drawn in through the “suggestive charm” of the symbolized-story (event), identifying with one or more of the actors. They will attempt to anticipate

what will happen next to the characters as the mystery unfolds (from verbally warning them to cheering them on to booing them to...). From “collective vocalization” to “collective gesticulation” (shaking a clenched fist, pointing a finger, burying the face into the hands, shaking the head in disgust, making the sign of the cross, clapping, giving thumbs up, giving the middle finger)³⁸⁰ attendees vicariously move beyond being outside observers separated from the stage to becoming co-performers with the actors on the stage. Good theater breaks down the separations between stage, script, actors, and observers; it weds them into an interactive community creating “co-participants/co-creators.” Ritual performance follows a similar path as theater.³⁸¹

379. Sherwood Lingenfelter hypothesizes that “the mere performance of ritual often sustains the social purpose for which it was originally created, even when the symbolic importance and meaning has been lost” (166). Lingenfelter, *Agents of Transformation*, 1996.

380. In *The Oral Style*, first published in 1925, French anthropologist Marcel Jousse (2016) may have been the first “to single out oral composition as a specific create activity, qualitatively distinct from writing ... the ‘verbo-moteur’—relies on the rhythms incorporated in bodily movement and gestures and the powers of memory.” (Gronas, *Cognitive Poetics and Cultural Memory*, no page number) He did this through identifying the foundational laws of orality (rhythm-mimicry, bilateralism, formulism) rooted in our bodies (posture, gesticulation, proximity, inflection, etc.). It became known as the “Jousse bomb.” Jousse, *The Oral Style*, 2016. Edgard Sienart (1990) summarizes: “These three anthropological laws underpin the oral style, which is thus profoundly rooted in the body, hence its great efficacy from the mnemotechnical point of view for in it the movement of body and voice contribute to the shaping of thought in a memorable form.” (97) Sienart, “The Oral Style and the Anthropology of Gesture.” (97) In *Silent Messages*, Albert Mehrabian’s (1981) research concluded that non-verb cues were actually superior to spoken or written words. Mehrabian, *Silent Messages*, 1981. The above research concludes that nonverbal cues, such as space, gesticulation, posture, emotions, inflections, are distinct from, yet intricately and specifically tied to, speech and script through memory and practice.

381. Note how Richard Schechner integrates ritual and theatre, “The entire binary ‘efficacy/ritual—entertainment/theatre’ is performance: performance includes the impulse to be serious and to entertain; to collect meanings and to pass the time; to display symbolic behavior that actualizes ‘there and then’ and to

In ritual performance, actors follow a (un)fixed script³⁸² using language, laughter, food, tears, dress, colors, candles, smoke, incense, drugs, possession, séances, gestures, money, music, silence, noise, water, symbols, and a host of other avenues to emote meaning (see Table 7.1). These emotive producing actions (in contrast to rational thinking) have a way of drawing in the sometime unsuspecting attendees. Ritual performance can be so powerful that even the reluctant lower their guard and eventually succumb to its influence. Richard Schechner reasons that “in prehistoric ritual theater, as in contemporary ritual, the doing is a manifestation more than a communication.”³⁸³ Catherine Bell expands:

“Ritual for us is certainly ordered, patterned, and shared behavior, but, more than that, it is an imaginative and interpretive act through which we express and create meaning in our lives.”

(Anderson and Foley, 1988, 26)

The power of performance lies in great part in the effect of the heightened multisensory experience it affords: one is not being told or shown something so much as one is led to experience something. And according to the anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, in ritual-like behavior “not only is seeing believing, doing is believing.”³⁸⁴

Ritual performance expresses symbol and story even as it displays symbols and tells stories.³⁸⁵ The symphonic nature of ritual offers an expressway to the subconscious. Hiebert summarizes it this way:

Living rituals ... speak of the transcendent—of our deepest beliefs, feelings, and values—which cannot be reduced to words. They point to mystery, root myths and metaphors, and fundamental allegiances, and express our deepest emotions and moral order.³⁸⁶

exist only ‘here and now’; to be oneself and to play at being others; to be in a trance and to be conscious; to get results and to fool around; to focus the action on and for a select group sharing a hermetic language, and to broadcast to the largest possible audiences of strangers who buy a ticket” (480). Schechner, “From Ritual to Theatre and Back.” *Educational Theatre Journal* 26 (1974) 455-481.

382. Catherine Bell considers ritual as, “situational and strategic...never simply or solely a matter of routine, habit, or ‘the dead weight of tradition’” (92). Bell, *Ritual*, 1997.

383. Schechner, “From Ritual to Theatre and Back,” 69.

384. Bell, *Ritual*, 160.

385. Some of these stories (and symbols) could be found in the proverbs associated with the ritual. A proverb could be defined as memorable earthy truths discovered through life experience, wrapped in culturally recognizable symbols and stories, and conveyed through pithy statements that intentionally foster ongoing discussion and debate about some aspect of life. Amin Sweeney tells us the significance of such proverbs: “Such utterances are not merely used to underline a point: they *are* the point. The individual *thinks* in these formulas” (97). Wise researchers will ask, What proverbs are affiliated with which rituals? Sweeney, *A Full Hearing*, 1987.

386. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 322.

Changing minds often begins with emotional impact (heart)³⁸⁷ rather than cognitive impact. Ritual finds its power through aesthetic expression.

Ritual performance rarely, if ever, results in a single meaning no matter how strong the intent of the officiator(s). Whether reluctant or enthusiastic attendees, mature or immature, young or old, male or female, each arrives at the event with a perceived script laden with systems of symbols, stories, and rituals from his or her past and present reality. This can easily result in multiple interpretations of the same ritual performance.

Ritual performance encourages personal-collective transformation through physical and emotional elements, often underestimated and overlooked by researchers more focused on cognitive interpretations. Such emotional elements, however, open the door to contradictions, as noted above. And that is why Bell believes that such contradictions more realistically encapsulate cultural realities when she contends that “performance theorists have tended to depict culture not as a fully articulated formal system or a set of symbolic codes, but as a changing, processual, dramatic, and indeterminate entity.”³⁸⁸ Cultural change encouraged through emotional elements creates contradiction (“social tension”) even as it seeks to maintain cultural continuity (“social unity”).

Performative ritual acknowledges and encourages audience involvement and interpretation as the script unfolds. Bell summarizes:

Ritual dramatizes the real situation, and it is through this dramatization that ritual does what it alone does. ... Ritual as a performative medium for social change emphasizes human creativity and physicality: ritual does not mold people; people fashion rituals that mold their world.³⁸⁹

The nature of performative ritual makes it a living, dynamic event. For some, loyalty to the ritual will outweigh dedication to doctrine. Not so for others. Either way, the audience’s participatory role in fashioning an understanding of the ritual results in also fashioning them.

Schema (“story grammar”) divides the script into recognizable episodes or chunks. In *Drama, Field, and Metaphor*, Turner identifies four stages: (1) breach, (2) crisis, (3) redressive action, and (4) reintegration.³⁹⁰ In *Culture in Mind*, Bradd Shore identifies three: (1) the journey, (2) opposites in balance, and (3) hero myth.³⁹¹ Dell Hymes posits that most schemas can be isolated in sequences of two and four, and three internal relations may obtain. Sequences of threes tend to give an implicit rhythm of onset, ongoing, outcome.³⁹² Local patterns, asserts Hymes, serve as “arcs of arousing and realizing expectation.”³⁹³ Local schema does the same for ritual; it arouses expectations even as it realizes them.

387. See

https://www.academia.edu/2269581/Employee_emotions_during_organizational_change_Towards_a_new_research_agenda

388. Bell, *Ritual*, 74.

389. *Ibid.*, 40, 73.

390. Turner, *Field, and Metaphor*, 1974.

391. Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 1998.

392. Hymes, “Ethnopoetics, Oral-formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts,” 332.

393. *Ibid.*, 331.

Fixed	<i>Element</i>	Unfixed
	--- <i>Officiators</i> ---	
	--- <i>Dress designations</i> ---	
	--- <i>Attendees</i> ---	
	--- <i>Time</i> ---	
	--- <i>Space</i> ---	
	--- <i>Sacred</i> ---	
	--- <i>Secular</i> ---	
	--- <i>Preparation</i> ---	
	--- <i>Individual</i> ---	
	--- <i>Group</i> ---	
	--- <i>Symbols</i> ---	
	--- <i>Stories</i> ---	
	--- <i>Texts</i> ---	
	--- <i>Language</i> ---	
	--- <i>Sounds</i> ---	
	--- <i>Gestures</i> ---	
	--- <i>Posture</i> ---	
	--- <i>Movements</i> ---	
	--- <i>Music</i> ---	
	--- <i>Chanting</i> ---	
	--- <i>Prayers</i> ---	
	--- <i>Paraphernalia</i> ---	
	??	

Check [✓] appropriate side

Table 7.1: Ritual: (Un)fixed “way of acting”

Ritual Requires a Place

Gregory Bateson believes that “without context, words and actions have no meaning at all.”³⁹⁴ While possibly a slight overstatement,³⁹⁵ Bateson’s assumption has implications for ritual. Ritual requires a context, a space, a place.

What is the context, space, or place that ritual requires? Is it strictly geographical?

394. Bateson, *Mind and Nature*, 15.

395. Meaning will be present because hearers/observers will fill the “words and actions” with *their* familiar.

Claudia Ruitenberg offers a wider possibility:

But “place” means much more—and much more unstably—than the natural environment alone. Each place has a history, often a contested history, of the people who inhabited it in past times. Each place has an aesthetics (sic), offers a sensory environment of sound, movement and image that is open to multiple interpretations. And each (inhabited) place has a spatial configuration through which power and other socio-politico-cultural mechanisms are at play.³⁹⁶

Harvey Cox adds, “Our links to yesterday and tomorrow depend also on the aesthetic, emotional, and symbolic aspects of human life—on saga, play, and celebration. Without festival and fantasy, man would not really be a historical being at all.”³⁹⁷ Ritual requires spatial space that goes beyond geography to include the emotive historical, environmental, and social associations. Some will designate such a place as “sacred space.” Place (the stage) adds an emotional component, positively or negatively, to the definition of ritual.

“In ritual, it is impossible to separate *what* happens from *where* it happens ... Ritual space is set off from normal space in a number of different ways including time, location, architecture, symbols, smells, tastes, sounds, and people.”

(Schirch, 2005, 67, 69)

Ritual Requires an Audience

Every ritual has at least one observer. Ritual that one conducts before retiring for the night may be observed by only one person. Royal weddings, such as that of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011, or funerals for assassinated leaders, such as President Kennedy’s in 1963, or the opening rituals of the Olympics, were viewed by a global audience of millions through the means of television (which can be replayed countless times). Whether an audience of one or one million, ritual is observed, thereby providing opportunity to make a social statement.

What Ritual Does

Ritual Evolves Out of Tradition

There is something within humanity that yearns to reach back into the past and preserve significant aspects of it over generations. Ties to the past portrayed and pronounced through rituals have a way of providing comfort and security in a chaotic present. Ritual ties the past to the present, and the present to the past for

“Rituals are by nature local and adaptable even though they are, ideally, timeless and changeless.”

(Jensen, 2011, 4)

396. Ruitenberg, “Deconstructing the Experience of the Local,” 215.

397. Cox, *The Feast of Fools*, 13.

practitioners and participants; it gives strength, courage, and hope to enter an untraveled future by remembering the tested traditions of the past.³⁹⁸

Ritual Addresses Needs on Multiple Levels

Ritual addresses various perceived needs on multiple levels: individual, family, community, county, country, countries (see Figure 7.1). Such rituals on the various levels draw attention to the events (serves as a window) while challenging the practitioners and participants to reflect on personal-collective actions, relationships, and attitudes (serves as a mirror). Whatever the level, much of ritual is designed to elicit commitment and/or transformation that goes beyond the moment.

Ritual Covers all of Time

One way that ritual and theater may differ is in the use of time. Theater normally posts in advance the times and dates of an event allowing people to make appropriate preparations. Ritual may or may not follow such scriptedness. Ritual may be much more spontaneous, serendipitous, responding to the moment.

A number of different calendars compose human life. For those involved in farming, an *agriculture calendar* outlines the year's work cycle with prescribed rituals along the way. The religious world (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, and so forth) does the same with a *religious calendar* that identifies key events ritualized throughout the year. A *commemorative calendar* not necessarily tied to prescribed times or places addresses rituals associated with such things as pre-births, births, circumcision, child dedications, adulthood, marriage, house dedications, graduations, military promotions, ordinations, death, rebirth.³⁹⁹ And then there is the *crisis calendar* in which events happen with little or no warning—hurricanes, tsunamis, fires, loss of finances, sickness, injury, vehicular accidents, murder. While not posted on an annual calendar, such crisis events may require spontaneous rituals. Whether scheduled or spontaneous, ritual covers all the calendric cycles.

Ritual Signifies the Significant

Roy Rappaport persuasively reasons that ritual is “*the basic social act.*”⁴⁰⁰ Turner identifies such social acts as “prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to belief in mystical beings or powers.”⁴⁰¹ Turner goes on to define the role of symbol as the “basic building-blocks, the ‘molecules,’ of ritual.”⁴⁰² To discern the meaning of these basic building blocks, however, we would add

398. J.O. Terry, in an email to me, observed this about ritual in his broad storying experience: “One other thought is the need for ritual and not just knowledge ... People were hungry for ritual because many who were coming out of animism knew the importance of ritual in worship, healing, and meeting certain perceived need. There was also an interest in the ritual of the people in the Bible stories.”

399. Anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep termed these as a “rite of passage.” Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 1960.

400. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 138.

401. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 19.

402. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 14.

story. Symbol defined through story helps position ritual as “*the* basic social act.” Symbol defined through story gives ritual its significance.

As with symbol and story, I have identified three levels for ritual: common, anchor, and master (see: Figure 7.1). The three types of ritual can be likened to a framed picture. A nail and wire refer to common rituals. Hidden behind the picture and therefore often invisible to the observer, their role is to help present the picture. Their fundamental purpose is to assist in the display of the picture. Common rituals tend to be more casual yet can still be driven by formal procedures. The picture frame serves as anchor rituals. The frame maker designs the size and color to focus attention to, and enhance the picture; its purpose is to direct one’s eyes to the picture, not itself. The picture is the artist’s masterpiece enhanced by the picture frame and its placement in a prominent place; it summarizes his or her intentions by integrating multiple aspects of life. It brings back memories—some good, some bad, offers new ways of thinking, and demonstrates (ir)relevancy, evoking ongoing discussion.

Common rituals (nails and wire) refer to those that do not receive much attention by the larger community but still play some role in society. These more informal rituals could consist of what a professional baseball player does each time before taking the field or what a troop of girl scouts does before setting off on an annual canoe trip or exercises one does every morning when he/she arises.

Anchor rituals (picture frames) refer to those social acts that are multi-referential, connecting a number of significant aspects of culture. The annual early morning trip to “The Cabin” during my youth serves as anchor ritual by connecting the extended family, the spiritual family, the celebrative meal, and the Easter Service held later at church. Anchor rituals lay the framework for master rituals.

Master rituals (pictures) are more significant still, providing comprehensiveness, constancy, challenge, correction, and consistency over time; they summarize, synthesize, and are often scheduled. The annual Easter service in the Apostolic Christian Church (ACC) that included the youth program during the second service serves as a master ritual. It included what comprised the anchor ritual mentioned above yet surpasses it, e.g., by being a national holiday that tied other religious holidays together. Master rituals summarize and convey significant aspects of the host culture’s worldview. Society, in this case the ACC, did everything possible to protect the significance of those basic social acts. On the flip side of the coin, others will attempt to degrade or destroy it. Master rituals provide a “totalization” absent in anchor rituals; they cast a wider net that captures the significant in one drag—family, ancestors, community, authority, nation, deities, other rituals, among others.

It should be noted that ritual, like symbol and story, is embedded in other rituals. This will be particularly true for anchor and master rituals where the interconnections tend to be more discernable than those of common rituals. The embedded nature of ritual will be particularly evident in the various calendars identified above—agricultural, religious, commemorative, crisis. Ritual by its very nature requires embeddedness in other rituals, all defined through incorporated systems of symbols and stories.

Ritual Can Lose Meaning

Ritual can lose its vibrancy over time. Life eventually moves beyond the anchor symbols and stories previously associated with the ritual. Those responsible for overseeing the ritual

have remained loyal to trusted tradition, resisting the temptation to reform, or worse yet, compromise traditional teachings.⁴⁰³ Relevant reciprocity between symbol, story, and ritual has ended, producing a meaningless activity that can leave observers walking away empty. All ritual has the potential to regress into ruts that result in the loss of immediacy and relevancy. Every ritual has a relevancy shelf life.

The loss of a ritual should not assume that there will be no replacement; such loss produces a vacuum that demands and requires some kind of replacement. These ritual vacuums tend to be refilled with more contemporary rituals, or in some cases, rituals from the distant past, as among some First Nations people.

Ritual Produces Different Reactions

Ritual produces different reactions to different people. Some attendees perceive ritual as the repetitive reenactment of formalized symbols and stories designed to recall, reexamine, reexperience, reinvigorate, renew, reevaluate, reinforce, reinvent, and rehearse existing reality. Other ritual attendees, however, do not arrive with such a positive disposition. They perceive ritual as the repetitive reenactment of stale symbols and stories that demand reexamination, renovation, and/or replacement so that an altered, more contemporary picture of reality results. Some will experience a combination of both—social control and social change. Ritual runs the spectrum from revival to ruts. Privately and/or publicly, people always negotiate rituals.

Ritual Constructs Worldview

In a previous chapter I asked, what provides the foundation for deep-level assumptions about life? What serves as the underpinnings of one's identity? What separates one's reality from that of another's? What constructs one's worldview? The answer found to these questions in chapter 5 was symbol. In chapter 6 it was story. In this chapter it is ritual.

“Personality is shaped
at the forge of ritual.”

(Turner, 1967, 143)

Ritual addresses all areas of life—Who are we? Why do we exist? What's our destination? For dualists, it may be the spiritual or the material world. For monists, it will include the whole of life, as there may not even be language to describe the bifurcation between the sacred and the secular. Ritual constructs worldview.

Monica Wilson connects ritual to value systems that provide the foundation to worldview:

Rituals reveal values at their deepest levels. ... men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it

403. Frank Viola and George Barna provide an organic church perspective, “The Lord’s Supper, when separated from its proper context of a full meal, turns into a strange, pagan-like rite. The Supper has become an empty ritual officiated by a clergyman, rather than a shared-life experience enjoyed by the church. It has become a morbid religious exercise, rather than a joyous festival—a stale individualistic ceremony, rather than a meaningful corporate event” (197). Viola & Barna, *Pagan Christianity*, 2008.

is the values of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies.⁴⁰⁴

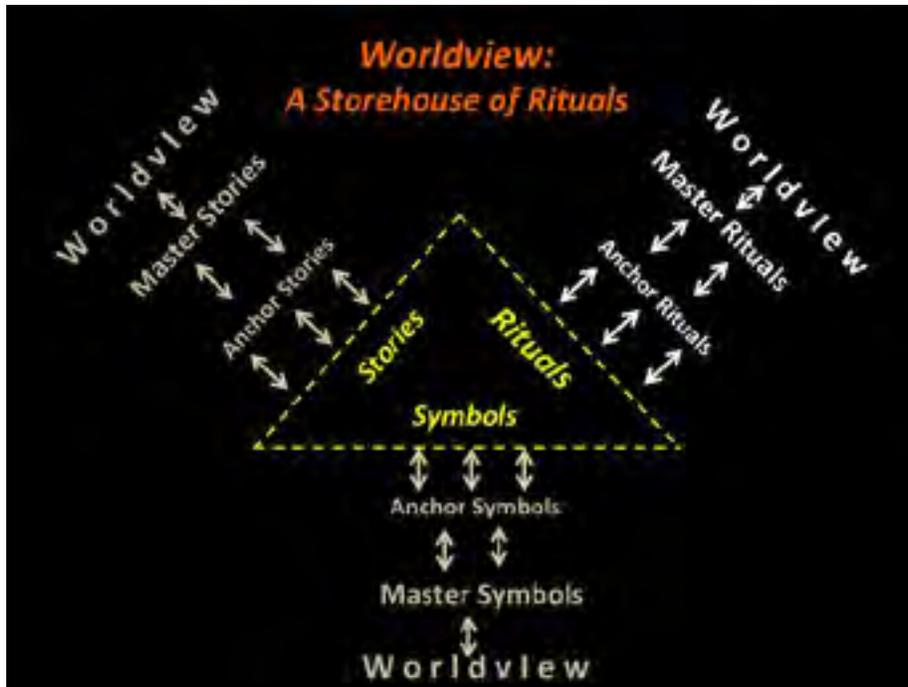


Figure 7.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Rituals

One way that value systems are caught is through socialization brought about in part through the practice of ritual. Bell notes, “Effective socialization attempts to transform what is ordained and permitted—that is, the ‘rules’—into what is taken for granted or even desired, a sense of right order in which one feels at home.”⁴⁰⁵ Anderson and Foley expand, “Rituals not only construct reality and make meaning; they help us fashion the world as a habitable and hospitable place.”⁴⁰⁶ Ritual socializes a community into what is considered distinctive from outsiders yet familiar to insiders.⁴⁰⁷

David Kertzer defines ritual as “action wrapped in a web of symbolism.”⁴⁰⁸ We would add that a system of stories also surrounds and interprets the “web of symbolism” in rituals, giving them meaning. Ritual, like symbol and story, never stands on its own. Ritual rehearses privately and publicly a system of symbols and stories that influence one’s

404. Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism,” 241.

405. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 152.

406. Anderson and Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, 20.

407. In *World of the Spirits*, David Burnett asserts that “for those who actually participate in them, rituals may have more significance than social function and symbolic meaning” (105). Burnett, *World of the Spirits*, 2000.

408. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, 9.

beliefs and behaviors. Ritual serves as a mirror of the community's reality that constructs worldview through anchor symbols and stories. Ritual not only mirrors reality, it creates reality.⁴⁰⁹

Ritual Reconstructs Worldview

Worldview is a storehouse of symbol and story systems that are rehearsed, reinforced, and reviewed through ritual. Ritual paints a micro picture of reality, it institutionalizes and legitimizes meaning and identity (from individual to international), and it summarizes and synthesizes some aspect of worldview. Ritual is powerful because it serves as "a basic way by which we construct reality and make meaning."⁴¹⁰ Through a system of symbols and stories, ritual socializes community members into specific worldviews that are often considered superior to those of other communities, and even sub-cultures within them.⁴¹¹

But not all ritual results in a worldview that is congruent with Christianity. Changing allegiance to Christ will require some ritual changes as well. It should come as no surprise that if ritual has the power to construct one's worldview, it also has the power to reconstruct it. But how does this happen? Paul Hiebert offers two possibilities in answering the question of how one can transform worldviews:

Normal change occurs when changes on the level of conscious beliefs and practices over time infiltrate and bring about change at the worldview level. Paradigm or worldview shifts take place when there is a radical reorganization in the internal configurations of the worldview itself to reduce the tensions between surface culture and the worldview.⁴¹²

Whether a slow or swift change takes place at the worldview level, ritual transformation must be part of the conversion process. Former systems of symbols and stories rehearsed through rituals that reconstructed worldview must be reviewed. In Colossians 3, Paul calls this a "putting on" and a "putting off." What can stay? What must be modified? What must go? Unchallenged and unchanged rituals can easily legitimize legalism, nurture nominalism, and/or spur syncretism.⁴¹³ Revamped ritual by those personally involved offers genuine opportunity for personal-collective renewal; it provides a means to a new identity. Wherever individual or communal ritual exists in society, Christianity must offer valid substitutes if it wishes to remain relevant.

409. David Klemm claims that "ritual reenactment of myth ensures the public social status of the myth and enables the internalization of meaning. Because of public ritual, myths are not just stories, but are scripts of performance. We learn through ritual performance that myth guides human action in the world" (6). Klemm, *Hermeneutical Inquiry*, Vol. 1, 1986.

410. Anderson and Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, 21.

411. Paul Hiebert notes this about ethnocentrism: "People everywhere seem to look on their own culture as most suitable or best and on that of others as less civilized. This becomes the source of 'ethnocentrism,' the tendency of people to judge other cultures by the values and assumptions of their own culture. Of course by one's own culture's criteria, all other cultures appear inferior" (38). Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1983.

412. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*. 319.

413. In *The Church and Cultures*, Louis Luzbetak observes, "Syncretism is an evident sign that the missionaries have not succeeded in filling felt-needs" (181). Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 1970.

“Without living rituals, we have no appropriate ways to affirm our deepest beliefs, feelings, and morals, which lead to new lives in a new community and in the world.”

(Hiebert, 2008, 324)

Not only must existing rituals be reviewed and revamped, new rituals that recognize a different worldview must be created. Some of the new rituals could include, baptism, communion, children dedications, holidays, weddings, house dedications, funerals, and so forth. What new system of symbols and stories rehearsed through ritual will be created to demonstrate that an allegiance change has taken place? How will these be expressed through performance verbally? Visually? Musically? Through the arts? Where (stage) will they be

conducted? When will they be officiated? Scheduled? Who will officiate? What are the goals of the ritual emotionally? Cognitively? New ritual cannot only subvert former ritual, it can provide comfort in the midst of change and chaos in that it provides a substitutive personal-communal identity. When humans construct ritual, that same ritual reconstructs them.

Ritual Requires Discovery

Hiebert correctly argues, “We need to rediscover the importance of appropriate rituals to help structure and express our worldviews.”⁴¹⁴ From a personal perspective, Monica Wilson adds, “I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies.”⁴¹⁵ Discovering worldview will be enhanced when “appropriate” rituals (anchor and master) can be identified, defined and appropriated through critical contextualization.

Research conducted to discover rituals that significantly impact worldview requires strategic questions.⁴¹⁶ In that all ritual is not created equal in relation to worldview (re)construction, I will now raise some strategic questions to assist researchers in the discovery of the significance of a specific ritual. As stated above, some rituals will emerge as common rituals (a nail and wire), others as anchor rituals (the picture frame), and a few will register as master rituals (the full picture). When the numbers are taken in total for Figures 7.2-7.8 (two categories for each figure, 10 being highest for each category), rituals considered significant within a community should rise to the top of the research.⁴¹⁷

“The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing: we know this countless ways.”

(Blaise Pascal)

Discovering the intensity level of a ritual will help the researcher to be able to

414. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 324.

415. Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism,” 241.

416. Parker Palmer astutely notes in *The Courage to Teach* that “a conversation is only as good as the questions it entertains” (3-4). Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 1998.

417. As the researcher interviews various individuals, s/he will place a dot (or two different marks when needed) on the various graphs at the appropriate place. The cumulative concentration of marks will help the researcher identify the significance of the ritual in relation to the (re)construction worldview.

identify its significance appropriately (see Figure 7.2). A strategic question could include, what intensity level does the participant assign to the ritual?

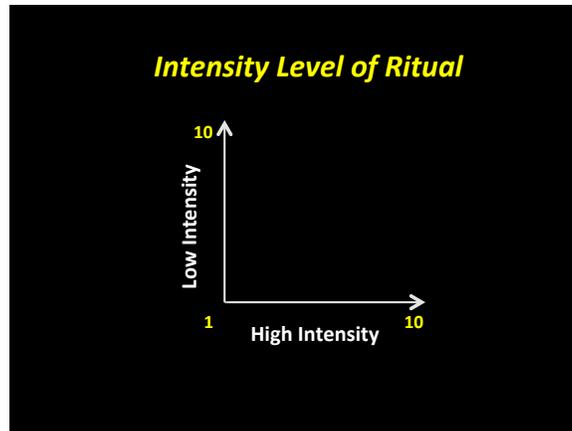


Figure 7.2: Ritual Intensity

Questions pertaining to the systemic level of ritual (Figure 7.3) seek to discover repetition and overlap of the ritual to other rituals. Strategic questions could include (1) how often is this ritual conducted? and (2) what other rituals are embedded in this ritual?

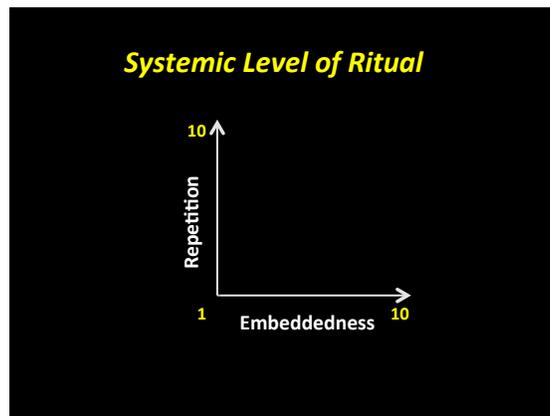


Figure 7.3: Systemic Level of Ritual

Mary Douglas claims in her grid/group system⁴¹⁸ that the more closed the group, the stronger and more highly organized the ritual. Identity (status and role) will be found predominately in the group and ritual tradition. She also claims that where little emphasis is given to grid or group the less organized and weak the ritual. Identity (status and role) will be found predominately in the person and ritual innovation.⁴¹⁹ Figure 7.4 seeks answers to the questions pertaining to ritual participants. Strategic questions could include (1) to what level does the ritual focus on the individual? and (2) to what level does the ritual focus on the group?

Some envision life as holistic—no bifurcation between the secular and the sacred. Others have no problem bifurcating the two. Strategic questions surrounding ritual focus (see Figure 7.5) could include (1) how strongly does the ritual emphasize the sacred? and (2) how strongly does the ritual emphasize the sacred?

Every ritual has at least one person orchestrating it. Some administrators have been professionally trained for the role. Others rely on personally honed skill sets. Strategic questions in relation to administration (see Figure 7.6) could include (1) to what level is the ritual administrated by a professional?, and (2) to what level is the ritual administrated by a nonprofessional?

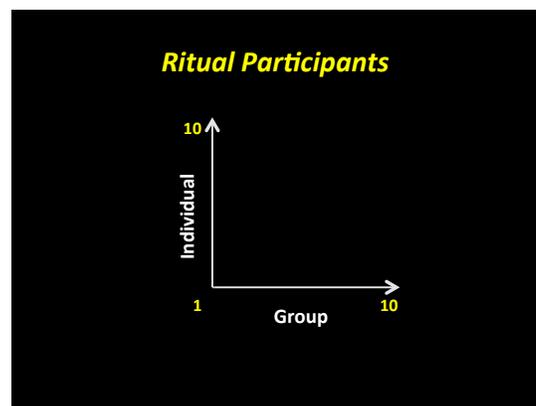


Figure 7.4: Ritual Participants

Each ritual has its own individual flow. Spontaneity drives the flow for some. A designated script dominates others. Strategic questions in relation to the flow of a ritual

418. In *Transforming Culture*, based on Mary Douglas' work, Sherwood Lingenfelter defines "grid" as "a 'dimension of individuation' in which a social environment pressures individuals to conforming behavior through elaborated status and role distinctions (hierarchy) and social rules (high grid), or to nonconforming behavior where individuals must exhibit unique value and autonomy (low grid). Group refers to a 'dimension of social incorporation' in which a social environment emphasizes insider/outsider relationships, placing high value on collective support for the survival of the group (high group), or rejects communal commitments in favor of individualistic activities (low group)" (25). Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture*, 1992.

419. Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 32-33.

(see: Figure 7.7) could include (1) to what level is the ritual spontaneous?, and (2) to what level is the ritual textually (oral or written) scripted?

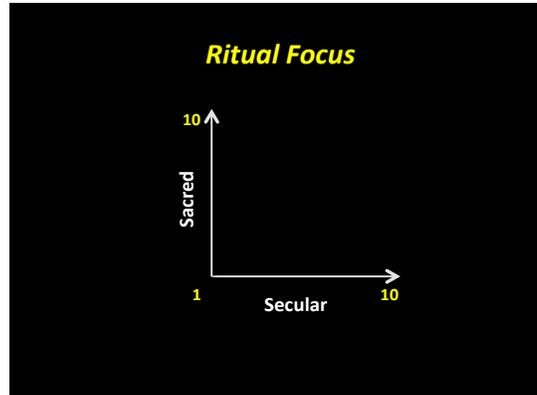


Figure 7.5: Ritual Focus

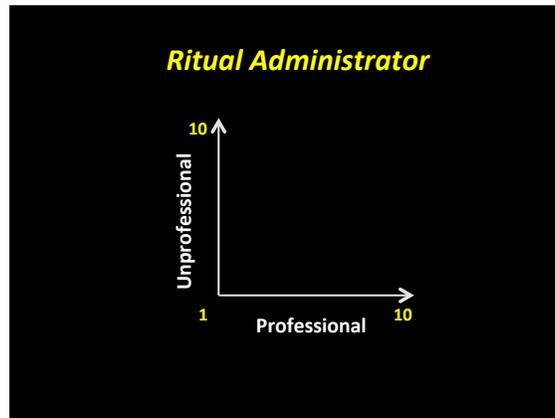


Figure 7.6: Ritual Administrator

The life of a ritual is never static. Some remain relevant for generations, even centuries. Others become irrelevant in a very short time. Community members determine their shelf life. Strategic questions related to ritual relevancy (see: Figure 7.8) could include: (1) to what level is the ritual perceived as relevant?, and (2) to what level is the ritual perceived as irrelevant?

The impact of ritual on an individual is usually determined through negotiated internalization of ideology communicated by officiators through symbol and story systems in specific time and space. Strategic questions can help the researcher discover the

significance of various rituals upon an individual or group. When taken collectively, the answers to the strategic questions asked in Figures 7.2-7.8 will help the researcher discover the level of significance of a specific ritual in relation to the (re)construction of worldview.

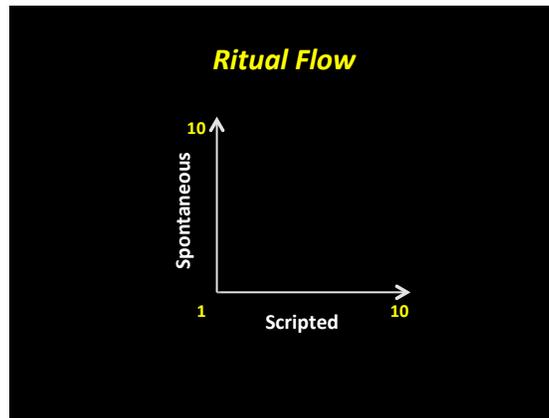


Figure 7.7: Ritual Flow

Scripture and Ritual

Christianity has a long and rich heritage that surrounds the use of ritual. From the Old Testament through the New Testament, ritual reigns. It does so because the Creator knows that humans tend to have short memories. They require constant reminding about honoring Him and His superior ways. One of the major roles of ritual is to do just that—remind people of the Significant and the significant. Note the patriarch Moses' emphasis on remembrance:

12 ¹⁴ This will be a day for you to always remember. I want you and all generations after you to commemorate this day with a festival to Me. Celebrate this feast as a perpetual ordinance, *a permanent part of your life together*. ...

13 ³ Remember this day, the day when you departed from Egypt and left behind lives of slavery. ... 20 ⁸ *You and your family are to remember the Sabbath Day; set it apart, and keep it holy.* (Exodus 12:14; 13:3; 20:8, VOICE)

Israel's religious rituals initiated by Yahweh have their ties to significant historical events in Scripture. And He designated these rituals to be perpetuated over generations. Moses continues:

12 ¹⁷ Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread because it commemorates the day that I led your forces out of Egypt. Honor and celebrate this day throughout all your generations as a perpetual ordinance, *a permanent part of your life together*. ...

²⁵ Even after you arrive in the land the Eternal has promised you—*the land flowing*

with milk and honey—you must keep *these instructions and perform* this ritual. ²⁶ When your children ask you, “What does this ritual mean to you?” ²⁷ you will answer them, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the Eternal, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites *when we were slaves* in Egypt. And although He struck the Egyptians, He spared *our lives and our houses.*” (Exodus 12:17, 25-27; 13:3; 20:8, VOICE)

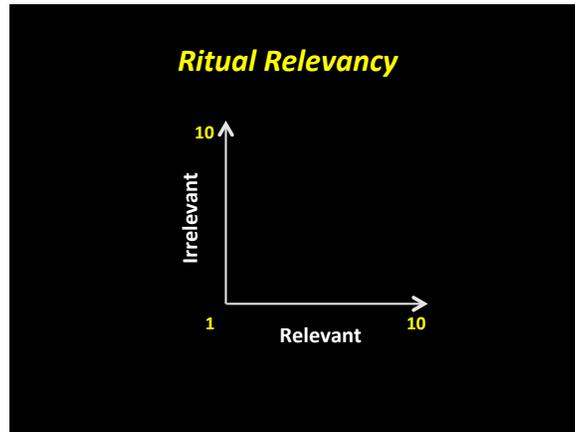


Figure 7.8: Ritual Relevancy

The New Testament perpetuated OT tradition related to ritual, but with some modifications. What instituted many of those changes was Jesus’ long prophesied resurrection. This monumental event demanded rituals to commemorate it forever. First century followers “of the way” met weekly on the first day of week to do just that. Sunday replaced Saturday as a time to worship the Risen One. Today, the resurrection ritual is celebrated 52 times a year as churches open their doors every Sunday. Easter Sunday provides that special day to honor the Resurrected One, which was especially highlighted for our family when making an annual trip to “The Cabin” for the Sunrise Service.

Another ritual change that took place during first-century Christianity was the replacement of the Passover ritual by the sacrament of communion. Something new was added; something old remained. Jesus’ blood and body replaced that of lambs. Because of the resurrection He now became the Substitute, the Mediator, the Victor, the Cleansing One. To celebrate His new roles, Jesus instituted the communion ritual for his followers. Paul promoted generational remembrance of the communion ritual when he wrote:

²⁴ “This is My body, *broken* for you. Keep doing this so that you *and all who come after* will have a vivid reminder of Me.”...²⁵ “This cup is the new covenant, *executed* in My blood. Keep doing this; and whenever you drink it, you *and all who come after* will have a vivid reminder of Me.” ²⁶ Every time you taste this bread and every time you place the cup *to your mouths* and drink, you are declaring the Lord’s death, *which is the ultimate expression of His faithfulness and love*, until He comes again. (1 Corinthians 11:24-26, VOICE)

Christianity is a total way of life. Therefore, whenever and wherever ritual occurs (see Figure 7.1), to remain relevant, Christianity must provide ritual substitutes that fall within the boundaries of Scripture. Without such, legalism, nominalism, syncretism, or some combination, is sure to surface. Cultural voids do not remain unfilled. This behooves cross-cultural Christian workers to begin to collect and categorize indigenous rituals. What is the minimal number of anchor and master rituals that should comprise the researchers' Ritual Collection? Relevant Christian ritual replacements that take a high view of Scripture will provide Christ-followers the opportunity to make Christianity a total way of life. Wise cross-cultural Christian workers recognize that Scripture cannot be totally understood, communicated, or remembered apart from not just symbols and stories, but also rituals.

Concluding Reflections

Ritual recalls, reenacts, reexamines, reactivates, reinvigorates, repulses, reinvents, redirects, renews, relives, reevaluates, renovates, replaces, and rejuvenates cultural values, behavior, and relationships. Designed to outlive the moment, ritual mysteriously draws attention to itself (window) while causing the participants to reflect (mirror) on actions, relationships, and attitudes. Good ritual purposely delays answers. Sometimes successful, sometimes not, ritual is designed to elicit continuity, commitment, community, and transformation through co-participation.

Ritual is repetitive reenactments designed to reinforce specific realities and relationships. The habit of ritual is remembrance through metaphor. This is because one of rituals major functions is to communicate individual and communal truth, however defined locally. Ritual synthesizes into an integrative whole the beliefs and behaviors, thoughts and actions, the visible and the invisible, symbol and story, tradition and transformation. No culture can exist for long without ritual; that includes Christianity. Coming to Christ will require rereitualization.

Not all ritual is created equal. There are common, anchor, and master rituals. Discovering the latter two will provide the researcher pertinent insights into the locals' worldview. Wise cross-cultural Christian workers will seek to become ritual savvy because individuals and communities cannot be truly understood apart from a good grasp of the rituals they bias. Nor will they know which rituals will require substitutes so that Christianity can become a total way of life, thereby mitigating against legalism, nominalism, and/or syncretism. The researcher's Ritual Collection should begin immediately, and on all levels.

Ritual knowledge must go beyond that of the host culture. The significant role that ritual has in Scripture demands an in-depth grasp. Scripture cannot be totally understood without a thorough knowledge of the role of ritual in both Testaments. The same would be true of one's own rituals. How well does the researcher know not just *their* rituals, but those of *Scripture*, and possibly the hardest to discern, *one's own*?

Yes, there is more to the story; there is also ritual. But should not all three frames—symbol, story, and ritual—be perceived and practiced as an integrative whole that aids in the (re)construction of one's identity and worldview? Is ritual itself not composed of a system of symbols even as it rehearses symbols? Is ritual itself not composed of a system of stories even as it broadcasts stories? Is ritual itself not composed of a system of rituals even as it performs rituals?

MAKING THE CASE FOR RITUAL

Reality and relationships are symbolized, storied, and reviewed through ritual. It is time to integrate the three systems through an analysis of the Ifugao marriage process; it is time to make the case for Worldview-based Storying.



Making the Case for Worldview-based Storying

“A rope made of three strands is not quickly broken.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:12, VOICE

PART ONE OF THIS BOOK concluded that to enhance the Orality Movement more in-depth cultural research focused on worldview was necessary. Background blindness related to the connection between worldview and self-identified oral learners or oral-aural-visual-digital-social preference learners should have no place among cross-cultural Christian workers as this tends to maximize communication noise, making the message and messenger sound foreign.

To help reduce communication noise, chapters 5-7 attempted to make the case for the role of symbol, story, and ritual in discovering worldview. This chapter will endeavor to integrate the triad by providing a simple (but not simplistic) research tool to aid in the discovery process illustrated through the analysis of the Ifugao marriage process.

Capturing the Right Picture

Before one can deconstruct another’s worldview for the purposes of clear communication and transformation (not perfection), one must have a deep grasp of it. Missiology as a discipline is instructive in that it is comprised of four integrated components: mission history, the social sciences, theology, and strategy.⁴²⁰ Good missiology does not begin with strategy, e.g., how will we construct the Bible story curricula? Rather, it begins with insights discovered from mission history (because He is Lord over history in spite of the human factor), the social sciences (e.g., anthropology, education, sociology, psychology,

420. See Steffen, “Missiology’s Journey for Acceptance in the Educational World” in *Missiology: An International Review* 31 (2003) 131-153.

other disciplines), and theology (*our* interpretation of the Sacred Text). These three components should drive the fourth—strategy.

Such an integrated approach will help prevent cross-cultural Christian workers from reinventing the wheel or advocating curricula that suffers theologically (fails to take advantage of acceptable cultural currents or counter the unacceptable) or anthropologically (fails to listen to the perspectives and preferences of local voices). The scene-setting chapters of 1-3 captured this backdrop, demonstrating among others the inconsistent use of respectable research in the Orality Movement in the discovery and application of local worldviews. Strategic strategy that helps

“Being missional is one thing; being missiologically astute is quite another. ... Just telling Bible stories does not guarantee Bible meaning.”

(Steffen, 2011, 89, 138)

define, deconstruct, and reconstruct worldview in a transformative way that honors the Eternal One should be derived from, and driven by serious, integrative research of mission history, the social sciences, and theology.

As my friend Tim Brown would say, “Communication is a game you are playing on someone else’s field.” Respectable missiological research will be place-based because space speaks loudly, and has meaning even beyond geography, e.g., sometimes it speaks symbolically (Canaan is the Promised Land for Israelites; Germany is the Promised Land for Roma refugees). Claudia Ruitenberg rightly recognizes that “each place has a history, often a contested history, of the people who inhabited it in past times.”⁴²¹ Space speaks spontaneously.

Sire defines **philosophical worldview** as “a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live in and move and have our being.”

(2009, 20)

The history (collective memory)⁴²² of space influences worldview, possibly more so for those who have resided somewhere for a long time or for refugees on the move in search of a better home.⁴²³ Those

421. Ruitenberg, “Deconstructing the Experience of the Local,” 215.

422. J. K. Olick defines collective memory this way: “Collective memory really refers to a wide variety of mnemonic products and practices, often quite different from historical studies, surveys, etc.; the latter (practices) include reminiscence, recall, representation, commemoration, celebration, regret, renunciation, disavowal, denial, rationalisation, excuse, acknowledgement, and many other one another. The former (products) include stories, rituals, books, statues, presentations, speeches, images, pictures, records...To focus on collective memory as a variety of products and practices is, thus, to reframe the antagonism between individualist and collectivist approaches to memory more productively as a matter of moments in a dynamic process” (6). Olick, “Products, Processes, and Practices.” 2006.

423. Radko Kratsov, a Roma leader with Youth For A Mission, concluded, “Over the years, the Roma were refugees many times, which changed their worldview.” While some Roma refugees perceived themselves as victims, other Roma Christians saw the steady stream of refugees from Syria and Iraq as an opportunity “to serve instead of seeking to receive” (23). Wachsmuth, “Refugees on the Roma Road,” *Christianity Today* 60 (2016) 22-24.

who have moved into an area bring their own “space” history which then becomes mixed with the new space history, sometimes supporting former presuppositions, sometimes challenging them, sometimes introducing new ones. Hybrid cultures can emerge bringing challenge to less fluid cultures.

Cross-cultural Christian workers who assume that all people have learned or interpreted storehouses of symbols, stories, and rituals from the same space perspective minimize God’s creative abilities, thereby maximizing the possibility of communication noise. Where one has lived, and/or presently lives, impacts the daily “context of life, work, and play.” These swirling crosscurrents help to define the local and global (glocal) worldview presuppositions that undergird them. Identifying these fluid glocal presuppositions will help maximize clarity in communication by distinguishing the various worldviews present.

Capturing the Big Picture

There is no one specific way to discover worldview, but there are more constructive ones. Therefore I want to take advantage of the accuracies and additions that various theoreticians have offered over time. Rather than jettison an old theory and replace it with a new one, which is all too common, I prefer to include the strengths of former relevant theories as each raises its own set of distinct and discerning research questions (derived from the word “quest”). I want to move away from competitive individual theories to a theory that offers a more integrative perspective.

I would concur with Catherine Bell when she asserts that “few [theoretical] approaches are really autonomous. ... theories are always reacting, or often overreacting, to other theories.”⁴²⁴ It’s time to change this to our advantage.

“If the reason for studying worldviews is the recognition that life is complex, multi-layered, and driven by often hidden energies, the method for such study must be appropriate to that quest.”

(Wright, 2013, 26)

In this book I want to include, but move beyond Durkheim’s functionalism that defines culture as a closed, unified system of relationships within a mostly stable homogenous entity, a “conscience collective,” to also include one that is constantly challenged and chaotic. I want to move beyond structural analysis to also incorporate social dimensions. I want to move beyond Turner’s “social drama” so that it not only reflects reality but also creates it. I want to move beyond making society a god by also including the individual so that influence becomes bi-directional. I want to move ritual beyond what it means to also include what it does. I want to broaden cultural research beyond the institution of religion to also include how it is linked to all other aspects of life (worldview), such as history, power structures, economics, political aspects, work, and play.⁴²⁵ I want to move beyond corraling cognitive facts of the participants to also include the more ambiguous emotional response elements.

424. Bell, *Ritual*, 88-89.

425. Probably the majority of people in the world make no bifurcation between religion and all other aspects of life. For them there is no—as Paul Hiebert called it—“flaw of the excluded middle.”

Truth has many oppositional roots; the baby should not be thrown out with the bath water. In relation to this discussion, theories do not necessarily have to end up on the trash pile of time. That is why in the analysis of the triad of symbol, story, and ritual I have borrowed freely from the giants of the past and interwoven my own experience-based insights. My ultimate goal is to use these theoretical insights to help minimize noise so that the message of the Eternal One rings with cultural clarity, even as it challenges existing presuppositions, beliefs, and behaviors.⁴²⁶

It should also be noted that worldview will have variations from person to person, from male to female, from generation to generation, from different geographical areas—rural, urban, suburbia. A Chinese adage captures it well: “There are different styles within ten villages, and there are different customs within ten miles.” James Olthuis sagely concludes that “the basic tenets of a worldview are not agreed to but argued from.”⁴²⁷ Researchers should expect collective cultural memory to vary from context to context as it is always under assault in this globalized world from within and without.

I recognize that there are many other aspects of culture that could be added to the investigation of anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals. I have chosen to limit it to three as a “pragmatic compromise between completeness and simplicity,”⁴²⁸ not because other aspects of culture are unimportant. Because of the integrated nature of culture, many, if not most, of the other key elements of culture *will* eventually emerge from the analysis of this triad, making an adequate understanding of cultural worldview possible.⁴²⁹ I would rather have a few key cultural elements be investigated thoroughly than the task loom so large that an overwhelmed researcher gives up and does little, or worse yet, conducts no research at all.

426. Paul Hiebert would call this critical contextualization. Hiebert, “Critical Contextualization,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (1987) 104-112.

427. Olthuis, “On Worldviews,” 82.

428. Bell, *Ritual*, 94.

429. While beyond the scope of this book, the picture of the worldview that eventually emerges from the master symbols, master stories, and master rituals could then be summarized in a metanarrative. Christian Smith summarizes the Christian metanarrative (which he calls a master story) as:

A personal, loving, holy God created the heavens and earth for his own glory, making humans in his very image, and establishing a relationship of care and friendship with humanity. Tragically, however, humans in pride have chosen to rebel against and reject God, the source of all life and happiness, thus plunging the world into all manner of evil, death, and spiritual blindness. But the love and grace of God is more powerful and determined than the sin of humanity, so through Israel God continued his covenant relationship to redeem the world from its sin. Rather than allowing creation to reap death and utter destruction as the full and just consequence of sin, God himself became human and freely took upon himself those evil consequences. Through the underserved crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God conquered death, set aright the broken relationship, and opened a way for the redemption of creation. God now calls all people to respond through his Spirit to this divine love and grace by repenting from sin and walking in a new life of friendship with and obedience to God in the church and in the world. Those who persist in their denial of God’s love will finally get exactly what they want, the end of which is death. But those who embrace God will enjoy and worship him together as his people forever in a new heaven and earth (69).

Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, 2003.

Analyzing the Big Picture

Symbol, story, and ritual give voice to the significant in life. So much so that we figuratively become the symbols, stories, and rituals that surround and saturate us. We interpret them and they interpret us. This triad continually constructs and cements our worldview; it also has the power to deconstruct it, and transform it in ways that honor the Eternal One. Table 8.1 summarizes the journey we have taken thus far in Part Two of the book to discover worldview. The journey investigated the source, language, result, habit, level, and metaphor in relation to symbol, story, and ritual.

I agree with Clifford Geertz that meaning can be “elusive, vague, fluctuating and convoluted.”⁴³⁰ I also agree that meaning is “capable of being discovered through systematic empirical investigation.”⁴³¹ Our goal is to discover an adequate understanding of the host culture’s worldview in order to minimize communication noise, *not* to know every detail about it.

The Worldview-based Storying (WVS) tool offered in this chapter is not intended to provide comprehensive cultural knowledge from each investigated conversation. Rather, through developing relationships over time it will convey rich, often complex, clues that must be collected, compared, and categorized into an integrative construct. WVS will help cross-cultural Christian workers to break out of assumed mental maps to more appropriate, organic, local ones. What is the worldview that is crafted by the many pieces of the triad? How many significant different worldviews are present? What are the common threads between them?

WVS will help researchers discover an adequate worldview description through identifying the interaction between the loadbearing symbophors, naraphors and rituaphors. It will promote the discovery of more than one worldview. Enjoy the journey of building new relationships. Enjoy noise reduction. Enjoy communication clarity. Enjoy true transformation that honors the Eternal One.

Collective memory results from a communal process. Strauss summarizes: “The cultural standing of some idea is its acceptability in an opinion community.”⁴³² Strauss’ statement implies that ideas go through a social process as they vie for cultural viability and sustainability. Some reach the canonical stage of a cultural community while others evaporate like the morning mist. She then identifies a continuum for assessing cultural standing, recognizing that adjustment may be needed for various cultural contexts. These include: “Controversial Opinion—Debatable Opinion—Common Opinion—Taken-for-granted.”⁴³³ From the ideas that become “Taken for granted,” anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals can be isolated and their levels identified (see Figure 8.1).

Respectable cultural research that investigates the overlap of multivocal expressions found within the triad will: (1) move beyond minutia, to (2) specific themes (unifying and opposing⁴³⁴), to (3) undergirding presuppositions. This process will lead to

430. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*. 362.

431. *Ibid.*, 362.

432. Strauss, “Analyzing Discourse for Cultural Complexity,” 232.

433. *Ibid.*, 232.

434. See: Opler, “Morris E. Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture.” *American Journal of Sociology* 51 (1945) 198-206.

an adequately defined (not a complete one) local worldview(s) that can lead the way to constructive communication.

Discovering Worldview

	Symbol	Story	Ritual
Source	Deus Symbolic	Deus Narran	Deus Ritualis
Language	Soul	Soul	Theater
Result	Symbol-making animal	Story-telling animal	Ritual-rehearsing animal
Habit	Symbaphor	Narraphor	Rituaphor
Level	Common, anchor, master	Common, anchor, master	Common, anchor, master
Metaphor	Small, medium, large storage bins	Shadows, wrinkles, face	Nail & wire, frame, picture

Table 8.1: Discovering Worldview

The ultimate goal of the research is to follow up specific themes and undergirding presuppositions with worldview-based strategies of action that engage all the senses so that clearer communication can result. For this to transpire, wise researchers begin by becoming “a good listener in a decidedly one-sided conversation.”⁴³⁵ Good communicators are good listeners.

435. Quinn, “How to Reconstruct Schemas People Share, From What They Say,” 41.

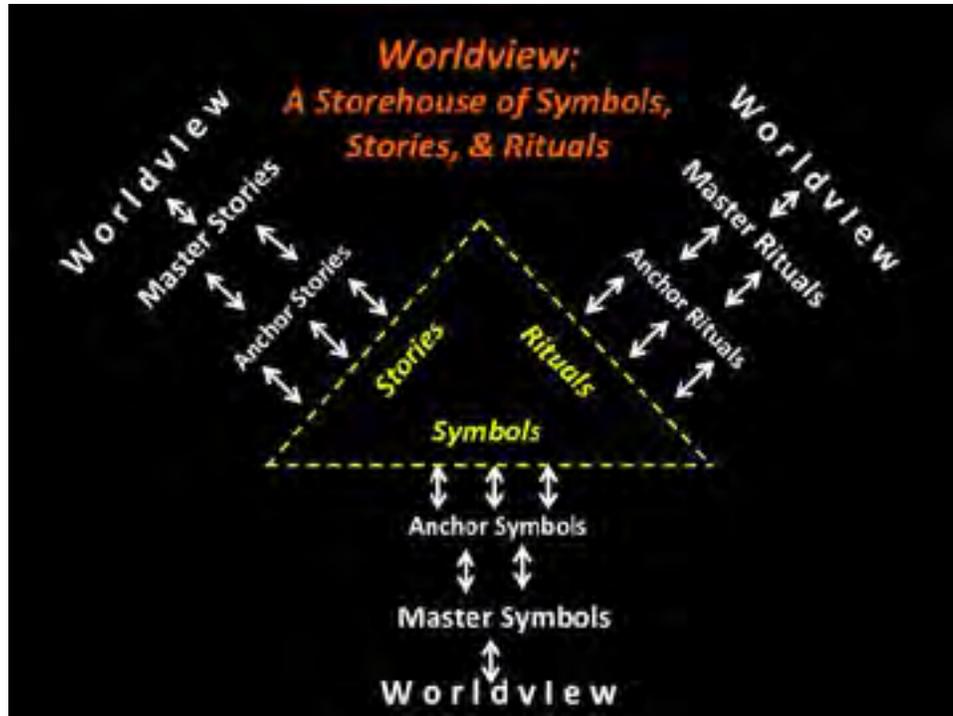


Figure 8.1: Worldview: A Storehouse of Symbols, Stories and Rituals

Where should listening begin so that the undergirding presuppositions of the worldview(s) of the host culture can be discovered? Table 8.2 identifies eight (bottom to top) steps to accomplish this. I will now attempt to apply them to the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao⁴³⁶ marriage process as traditionally practiced when we resided among this gracious, hospitable tribe from 1972-1979.

In chapter 5, I introduced the Ifugao *hagabi* (Figure 5.4) that signified the final and highest tier (*pappeg ni binaknang*) of the sacrificial wealth system (*baki*) that a family could attain. This achievement, they believed, assured them of health, long life, and wealth over generations. I now want to step back and investigate the role that marriage had in this wealth-building process.

436. The Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao, numbering around 3200 in the 1970s, made their home in the Kiangnan municipality of Ifugao Province (formerly Mountain Province), Central Luzon, Philippines. They resided on the southwestern border of Ifugao Province. The Antipolo Ifugao speak the Keley-i Kallahan dialect while the Amduntug Ifugao speak Yattuka, both of which are included in Kallahan, a subfamily of Ifugao, a branch of the Malayopolynesian languages” (76). McFarland, *A Linguistic Atlas of the Philippines*, 1980.

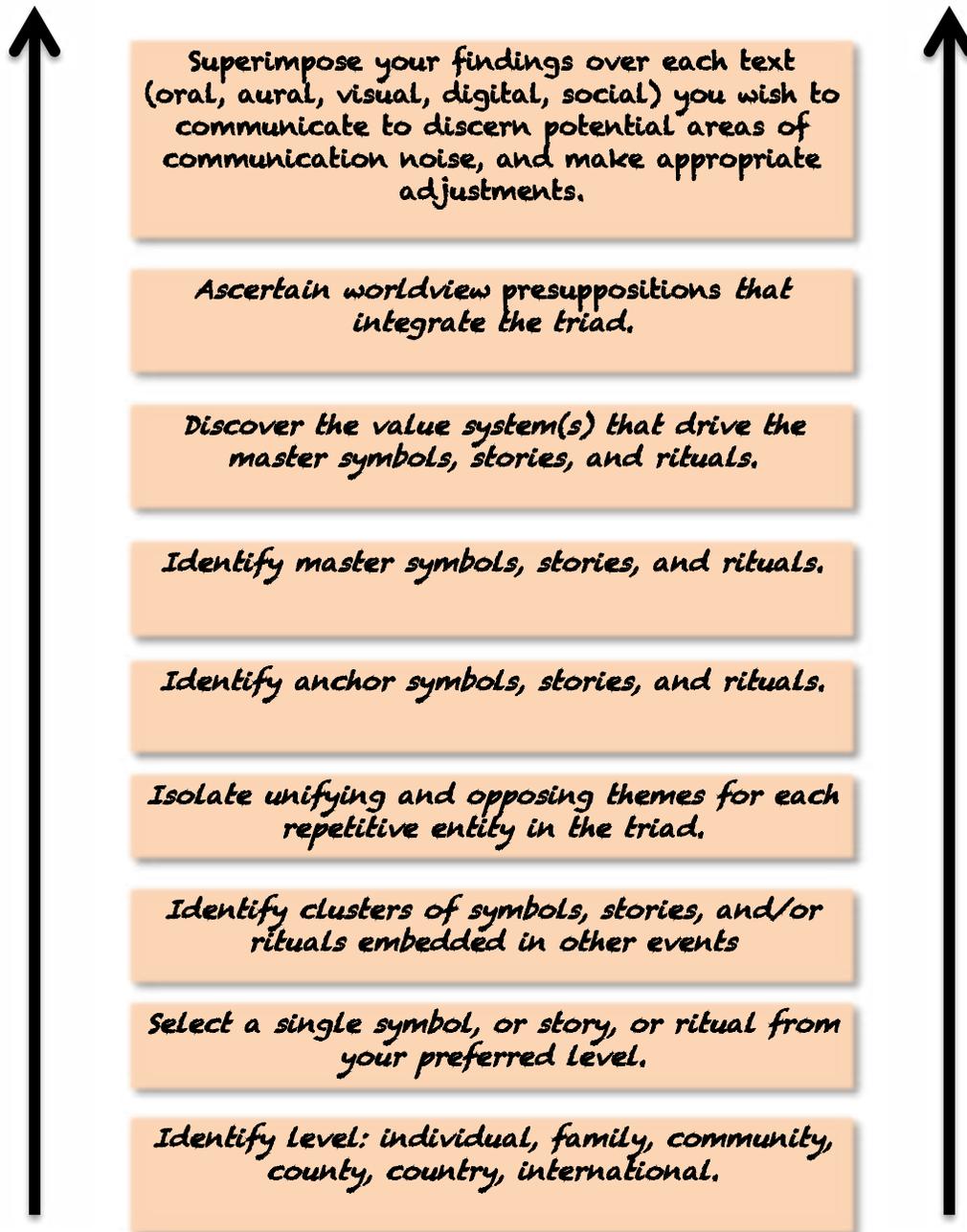


Table 8.2: Steps to Worldview Discovery

Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao Marriage

Through numerous “decidedly one-sided conversation[s]” over time and conducted in the Keley-I dialect I soon discovered from lots of listening that the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao marriage was much more than a 25-minute ceremony customary in the US. William Scott accurately noted, “A wedding among Igorots⁴³⁷ is a lifelong series of fertility rites and prestige feasts performed either after successful parenthood and prosperity or to induce such results where they are wanting.”⁴³⁸ For the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao living in the 1970s, four ritual ceremonies—*simbal*, *uy-uy*, *baddang*, *ittuldug*—conducted over a number of years, incrementally advanced the marriage process designed ultimately to create wealth (*baknang*) for the couple/extended family.

Arranged Marriages

Before the 1970s, marriage alliances often began at an early age. Parents believed they were responsible to select a mate for their children that would enhance the family economically through the acquisition of animals and land, all of which increased their prestige in society. The Ifugao did not base traditional marriage (*mengahwa*) on love or promises, either to God (*Meknengen*),⁴³⁹ to the ancestors (*a-ammed*), or to each other. Rather, they viewed marriage as an economic alliance that could be dissolved at any time due to the occurrence of certain omens or the actions of either spouse.

If two families desired a future alliance they met together to discuss possibilities. If both agreed, the parents of the male provided a pig for sacrifice. If the bile sac (*apguh*) looked bad the families immediately called it off. If it looked good, the respective parents considered the future alliance initiated (much like an engagement ring for Americans).

When the promised children reached marriageable age either party could suspend the alliance if so desired. Their parents usually consented as they normally placed the child's desires above their own. The girl's parents, however, became responsible to replace the pig offered years ago by the boy's parents. The young adults were then free to establish another alliance. While this custom had virtually ceased during the time of my research,⁴⁴⁰ the desire for a prestigious alliance that benefited both parties economically remained.

Stage 1: *Simbal* (Dowry) Ceremony

The *simbal* (dowry) ceremony initiated the marriage process. It began with a male searching for a mate. Once a suitable partner was found his parents gave him permission to approach the family head of the girl. He did this by sending or accompanying a go-between (*mangkalun*). Should the girl and her parents consent to his proposal the selected

437. “Igorot” is a general term that incorporates around 10 tribes that reside mostly in the mountains of central Luzon, Philippines. They have related languages, are often involved in weaving, metal work, wet rice production and practice animism that entails animal sacrifices. The Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao fall under the classification of “Igorot.”

438. Scott, *On the Cordillera*, 268.

439. *Apu Dios*, which is more consistent with other terms for God used in the Philippines, has since replaced the more localized term, *Meknengan*.

440. Some of the parents I interviewed could recall being promised to others when they were young.

shaman (*mabaki*) (often chosen on their ability to heal and find lost objects) sacrificed a small pig to check the bile sac. If it looked bad, the families called off the *simbal*. But if it looked good, the parents set a date for the first major step in marriage, the *simbal*.

The two parties also established the number of animals to be sacrificed by the shamans at the upcoming *simbal*. Should the groom come from a wealthy family, custom (*elaw*) dictated that a minimum of five to six pigs and one water buffalo be sacrificed; should he come from the lower class, three or four pigs sufficed. Just as the Ifugao considered the number of pigs and water buffalo important, so they considered the size of the animals offered. The larger the animal, the more prestigious, and greater the spiritual reward.

In that the Ifugao considered the *simbal* a public sanctioned ceremony, the entire village became involved in the occasion by gathering firewood, pounding rice, cooking, playing the gongs, calling the ancestors and other related activities. Not only did the local village members participate, but also members of other villages included in the same agricultural district, i.e., those villages that cooperated in work and religious rituals (*baki*) related to wealth (*keleng*) or crisis (*keneng*).

The families of the bride and groom invited family members and friends to the *simbal* through predominately verbal messages (some written). Unless one enjoyed high social status he or she must have an invitation to attend. Even the ancestors and spirits living in the sky world (*kabunyan*) received an invitation through the shamans as the animals were being sacrificed. While the Ifugao had great respect and even fear of the ancestors and spirits, they also believed that they could placate them through qualified animal sacrifices mediated through shamans, and observing certain taboos. The living, the deceased, and the spirits all received invitations to not only attend, but to participate as well in the *simbal*.

Central to the *simbal* ceremony was communal eating and drinking. Those living on earth and those living in the sky world both demonstrated support and solidarity for all involved in the *simbal* through the communal partaking of food and drink. Those living in the spirit world partook by receiving the spirits of the food and drink. For either party not to participate, rejection resulted, ruining the relationship.

During one part of the *simbal* the young couple sat on the floor of a parent's home to listen to the elders advise (*tugun*) them. To help ensure the transfer of traditional values, the elders advised them to take care of each other's physical needs and reiterated the cultural values that the couple should teach their future children. One of the main values given was respect and care for family members, especially the elderly.

Once the couple completed the *simbal*, they gained exclusive sexual rights to each other. If the couple had engaged in *presimbal* sex, it was considered taboo (*pi-yew*) for them to eat the sacrificed meat during the *simbal* ceremony. Most considered *presimbal* sex as bad behavior (*lewah*) rather than a mistake/sin (*liwat*).

The lands brought into the marriage alliance remained the exclusive property of the party who previously owned them. Neither party had the right to sell lands belonging to the other. While the couple jointly worked the rice fields (*payew*) or other lands, they considered ownership an extended family matter for each gender.

Given that the young couple usually did not have their house built by then, they often resided with one of the parents. While the couple frequently stayed in the wife's home (matrilocal), pragmatism reigned. The location of the rice terraces the couple would soon

inherit (*beltan*) from one or both of their parents, or present rice terraces, determined to a great extent with which parents the couple would reside. The couple normally stayed with one of the parents until the completion of the second stage of marriage, the *uy-uy*.

Stage 2: *Uy-uy* (Wealth) Ceremony

The couple usually set the date for the *uy-uy* wealth ceremony sometime after the birth of their first child and before the arrival of a second. This prestigious status-changing event publically displayed the couple's (and extended family members on both sides) wealth through a lengthy public ceremony. Just as with the *simbal*, an invitation, verbal or written, was necessary for all those who would attend the *uy-uy*. As in the *simbal*, all members of villages associated with the couple's agricultural district were expected to participate.

It began with several men playing gongs as they walked through the villages inviting (*awit*) the residents to the upcoming event. That evening the selected shamans sacrificed pigs (supplied by the parents and couple) as visitors celebrated the event by going house-to-house to drink rice wine (*helyat*). Drunkenness was not uncommon.

The next morning the shamans performed the “coming out” (*ehep*) sacrifice.⁴⁴¹ This ceremony conveyed to all that the couple's “coming out,” i.e., moving out of their parent's house into their own home, granted them a new status as adults within the society. Two days later the families distributed the sacrificed meat (no refrigerators).

The couple then traveled around to the villages to receive gifts of money, rice, and animals (*pamba-ba-wey*) from family and friends. On the eighth day the shamans sacrificed another pig. The couple then traveled again to not only receive more gifts but publically express their new status of wealth attained through the *uy-uy* ceremony, *and* as mature members of society. At that time, the expression *meappil ida law*, “now they separate” (from their parent's residence to their own) was fulfilled. Formerly, the Ifugao couple wore a different style of loincloth (*binuhlan*) and skirt (*ginalit*) to depict their new status in society (see Figures 8.2 and 8.3).

Stage 3: *Baddang* (Help/Assist) Ceremony

The Ifugao called the third ceremony of the marriage process *baddang* (help/assist). This event normally took place during the first rice harvest following the *uy-uy* ceremony. Relatives, friends, and members of the agricultural district again gathered to help/assist the couple harvest their *first* rice crop from the rice terraces just inherited from one of their parents. For the benefit of the couple the selected shamans sacrificed several pigs and numerous chickens to invoke the blessings of the rice god, *Bagel*, other spirits (*ag meang-ang*) and the ancestors (*a-ammed*). As in the two previous marriage ceremonies, the shamans checked the bile sacs of the animals to assure worthy sacrifices had been offered to the ancestors (predominately) and spirits.

As the Ifugao harvested rice, the harvesters sang the *hudhud* (stories of folk heroes). One of the older ladies usually sang the stanzas of the ballad while other harvesters joined in the chorus. While the Ifugao considered the *baddang* ceremony celebratory, they also recognized it as a public acknowledgment of the transfer of ownership of rice terraces from

441. The Ifugao used the same word *ehep* (to come out) for a sacrifice performed when the mother brought her newborn out of the house for the first time to introduce him or her to the community.

the parents to the child. The land transfer signified that the young couple had now become responsible in part for the care for their parents; it also most likely signified that the recipient was the oldest child in the family.

Stage 4: *Ittuldug* [Throw the Rice Bundles into the Granary] Ceremony

The final ceremony in the marriage process (*huyya pappeg ni kaman-ahwan tuu*) is the *ittuldug*, storing [throwing] the rice bundles into the granary (*alang*).⁴⁴² This event followed shortly after the *baddang* ceremony at the couple's newly acquired granary, usually without the presence of the public. The selected shaman(s) again performed a sacrifice to placate the spirit world, particularly ancestors, to secure spiritual blessings for the couple. Once the shaman(s) completed the ritual, and the bundles of rice were allowed to dry, the couple stored them in the granary.

Some believed that the bundles of rice miraculously increased numerically when stored in the granary, so they counted them before storing them. Others believed the sacrifices insured against future sickness or other calamities striking the family, thereby negating the need for numerous sacrifices that could quickly deplete the year's supply of rice. This was relevant to the welfare of the family because they planted and harvested only once a year as custom prescribed. Again the shaman(s) checked the bile sacs for positive or negative indicators concerning the couple's future welfare.

The couple continued to meet the physical needs of their parents from whom they had inherited the rice terraces. While the parents still continued to help work the fields and perform other forms of labor as long as health permitted, the parents now expected the couple to care for them. The couple must now reciprocate for the many years of care previously provided to them by caring parents.

Analysis of Ifugao Marriage

The Ifugao viewed reality, including marriage, through the storehouses of integrated symbols, stories, and rituals. This triad (re)constructed their individual and collective memory that contained consistencies and inconsistencies. It identified anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals of significance that established the soft boundaries of their worldview. In this section I will work through the Steps to Worldview Discovery (Table 8.2) from bottom to top to analyze Ifugao marriage. The answers to the questions below originated from: (1) listening to their stories and analyzing them for word/phrase repetition, metaphors, questions, sequence, conflicts, choices, (2) discussing the meaning of key symbols discovered within the stories and ceremonies, and (3) being an invited guest on numerous occasions to all four ritual ceremonies of the marriage process. I begin with

⁴⁴² The unpublished KallahanKeleyi Lexical Database compiled by Dick and Lou Hohulin notes that, "Granaries are approximately the same size and patterning as houses; built off the ground on posts; wooden plank walling and thatched roofs; many granaries do have metal roofing. Frequently, ceremonies having to do with planting or harvesting are held at granaries. Other things may be stored in the granaries such as bananas" (12). Hohulin and Hohulin, "KallahanKeleyi Lexical Database," (Unpublished document).



Figure 8.2: Couple Displays Symbols of Wealth (Photos by Tom Steffen)



Figure 8.3 *Uy-uy* Ceremonial Dance (Photo by Tom Steffen)

the ‘*simbal*’ ceremony that soon showed me its embedded nature, and hence its interconnectedness, to other related ceremonies.

Simbal (Dowry)

Step 1: Identify the level of your selection: individual, family, community, county, country, international.

The *simbal* ceremony centered on the community. The Ifugao defined community in this setting as the agricultural district in which they resided that comprised all the villages that worked and socialized together.

Step 2: Select a single repetitive symbol, story, or ritual from your preferred level of investigation.

Chickens, pigs and water buffalo used in the sacrifices signified the level of the family’s wealth (from poor to wealthy) that they expected to multiply (through their animals proliferating) because the ancestors and spirits would be pleased with the number, size, and quality of the animal spirits offered them. They would eventually display the skulls of the pigs and water buffalos on the sides of houses for all those who passed by to notice the symbols of the family’s wealth and prestige.

Step 3: Identify clusters of related symbols, stories, and/or rituals embedded in other related events.

Clusters of symbols, stories, and rituals that crisscrossed the marriage process were evident in at least these areas: animal sacrifices, public presence, selected shamans, collective eating and drinking, the changing roles of parents and the marriageable child, granary(ies), reciprocity.

All four ritual ceremonies related to marriage required animal sacrifices; all of which were associated with wealth. While the second ceremony required the most animals, the requirement of animals for sacrifice was embedded in all four ceremonies, just as it was embedded in the *hagabi* ceremony. Of great concern throughout all the ceremonies was what the bile sac conveyed to the shamans. Professional religious practitioners decided to proceed or call it off. I also heard from discussions that the ancestors, not the spirits, received the majority of the sacrifices in that they were most concerned for the family’s future.

The public representing the agricultural district of the couple was present during at least three of the four ceremonies. But it was important that more than humans were present. The shamans called the ancestors to participate in each ceremony. Participants in all the marriage ceremonies included the living, the ancestors and the spirits. For any of them not to participate, especially the ancestors, signaled bad fortune in the future for the couple/extended family.

Participants drank the community’s rice wine and consumed some of the family’s sacrificed meat. Some took meat home. Among those were the shamans who had participated in the ceremony, as this became part of their payment. Public participation by the living, the ancestors, and the spirits lent legitimacy to the marriage.

The changing roles of parents and the child being married were evident through all four ceremonies. Formerly, the parents choose their child's mate. That changed to the child making the choice. Formerly the parents took care of the child; now the child became responsible to care for aging parents. Formerly, the parents owned the rice fields; now the child owned them.

Inheriting rice fields usually included a granary as the Ifugao stored most of the harvested rice in the rice fields. Inheriting two granaries signified significant wealth in that the ultimate goal for the male was to build two granaries in his lifetime. For some, a granary symbolized nurture.

Reciprocity played out in at least three venues during the *simbal*. First, the groom usually looked to his parents to supply the required pigs and water buffalo. The parents normally supplied the animals but expected loyalty and reciprocity in return. Secondly, attendees who received a portion of the sacrificed meat were expected to eventually repay it through invitations to their own sacrifices. Lastly, the ancestors offered health, long life, and wealth in exchange for the spirits of the animals offered them.

Step 4: Isolate unifying and opposing themes of each repetitive entity in the triad.

- ✓ Wealth and prestige was the goal when seeking a marriage partner.
Not all alliances resulted in wealth and prestige.
- ✓ The living feared the ancestors and the spirits.
The living believed that they had the power to placate the ancestors and spirits.
- ✓ Animals offered to the ancestors would cause the owner's animals to multiply.
Ancestors sometimes refused certain animals offered to them resulting in no multiplication of the owner's animals.
- ✓ Parents were to care for their children.
Not all parents cared for their children appropriately.
- ✓ Children were to care for their elderly parents.
Not all children cared for their elderly parents appropriately.
- ✓ Public participation secured legitimacy.
Refusal to participate signaled disrespect.
- ✓ Ancestor participation secured health, long life, and wealth.
Ancestor refusal to accept the spirits of animals signified disruption in life and possible death.
- ✓ Reciprocity resulted in wealth.
Stinginess resulted in poverty.

Step 5: Identify anchor symbols, stories, and rituals.

Anchor symbols:

- ✓ Chickens, pigs, and water buffalos, in ascending order, signified a means to demonstrate wealth to others, and assured that the family's wealth would increase.

The marriage ceremonies were designed to ensure the wealth of the couple and their future generations through the offering of acceptable animal sacrifices to the ancestors and spirits.

- ✓ Ownership of granaries signified that the owners had reached a certain status within society. If one could build two in his lifetime, status increased because it signified an abundance of rice provided by an appeased “*Bagel*” (rice god).
- ✓ The designs on the loincloths and skirts formerly depicted levels of status in society reached through the sacrificial system. During the 1970s, anyone could wear any design whether male or female.

Anchor stories:

- ✓ Parents permitted their sons to choose a mate. While they preferred that the choice resulted in an alliance that increased their status in society, they honored their son’s choice if it did not. Parents primarily sided with the will of the child.
- ✓ Everyone expected to receive something in return for anything offered. There were no free gifts. Children expected their parents to care for them in early life; parents expected their children to care for them when elderly. Ancestors expected to receive the spirits of worthy sacrificed animals; the contributor expected the ancestors to provide health, long life and wealth. Those who provided rice wine and sacrificed meat to attendees during ceremonies expected to be eventually repaid in kind. Many kept written records to ensure appropriate outcomes because considerable time could pass before an invitation was issued.

Anchor rituals:

- ✓ The *simbal* offered choice to the male child to choose a mate, even if the alliance did not result in increased wealth for the family. During the public ceremony the couple received “advice” that hopefully would keep Ifugao values intact for another generation. They also received sexual rights. There was a sense of pragmatism as to where they would reside until their home was built. Matrilocalism gave way to the proximity of fields they would shortly inherit. Public participation by the living and the ancestors ensured a bright economic future for the couple.
- ✓ The most elaborate marriage ceremony was the second, the *uy-uy*. Here the couple/extended family displayed their wealth publically at the ceremony and as the couple traveled from village to village to receive gifts. Dressed in their finery (*gamgam*), including a headpiece and jewelry for lady and a shell belt and a metal U-shaped headpiece for the man (cut from an American warplane that crashed during World War II; see Figures 8.2 and 8.3), the couple was presented to society as full adults in that they had “come out” of their parent’s home to enter their own new home.
- ✓ The *baddang* ceremony usually followed during the next rice harvest. Here again the public gathered, this time to help/assist the couple harvest their rice in the new fields just inherited from one of the parents. They celebrated while harvesting the rice by drinking rice wine and singing a song about folk heroes. They also recognized that this event signified an official transfer of land from the parents to

the child. The couple now had their own home, possibly a child or two, and rice fields that may have included one or two granaries.

- ✓ The final ceremony in the marriage process was the *ittuldug*. Often without public participation, the shamans conducted sacrifices to ensure the future blessings of the couple by making sure the harvested rice would last until the following harvest. That was because tradition taught that only one planting a year was sanctioned. With new ownership of the fields came new responsibilities. Reciprocity demanded that the couple now become responsible for the care of their aging parents.

Step 6: Identify the master symbols, stories, and rituals.

Master symbols:

- ✓ The new home that the couple constructed and moved into, along with the inherited fields signified to society the couple's status into adulthood.
- ✓ The skulls of sacrificed pigs and water buffalo that would eventually decorate the outside of the new home signified generational wealth.
- ✓ The granary(ies) that stored their rice from newly inherited fields signified generational wealth and possibly nurture.

Master stories:

- ✓ The marriage process required role changes for both parents and son. Parents cared for the son, sometimes submitting to his will when it came to choosing a wife. Even so, the child required the economic assistance to complete the various sacrifices. The parents provided the animals but expected loyalty in return. By the end of second ceremony, the *uy-uy*, society recognized the couple as full adults as they moved out of the parent's house into their own. The third ceremony, *baddang*, brought another role change. The couple, now with their own home, possible children, and inherited fields and granaries, became responsible to care for the parents. Marriage was a generational affair that required continual role changes for both parent and child, all of which was given legitimacy through the role of shamans.
- ✓ The marriage process required time and wealth, but promised to result in economic gain (prestige) for the family through the acquisition of lands, granaries, and animals. It included four ceremonies spread out over several years. Each ceremony required a good number of expensive, healthy animals to be sacrificed to the ancestors and spirits. How the ancestors, and to a lesser extent the spirits, responded to the sacrifices (their spirits) determined the future wealth and prestige of the couple. If the couple's animals offered through the shamans placated the ancestors and spirits, they were assured health, long life, and wealth. If not, ...
- ✓ The marriage process required reciprocity on multiple levels. The son, who received care from his parents, became responsible to care for his aging parents. The invited participants who drank the wine of the villagers and consumed the sacrificed meat were required to repay the family by inviting them to their sacrifices. Most importantly, and involved in all four ceremonies, were the ancestors. The shaman called them to come down to receive the spirits of the sacrificed animals.

If they did, the couple could expect economic prosperity and growing prestige. Wealth required sacrifices and sacrifices required wealth.

- ✓ The marriage process moved a child into adulthood in a public way. The son required the parent's permission to seek a mate but made his own choice. During the *uy-uy* ceremony the couple left their parent's house to enter their own home. During the *baddang* ceremony the couple harvested rice for the first time from the fields inherited from one of the parents. The evolution from child to adult took place in the village square so that all knew when the couple reached full adulthood.

Master rituals:

- ✓ The *simbal* ceremony set the dowry price and initiated the marriage process.
- ✓ The *uy-uy* ceremony provided the couple/extended family an opportunity to publically display their wealth even as the couple moved out of the house of one of their parents into their own.
- ✓ The *baddang* ceremony continued to define the couple's move into adulthood through the inheritance of the parent's field.
- ✓ The *ittuldug* ceremony completed the marriage process by storing the bundles of rice from inherited fields after the sacrifices. The couple now became responsible to care for their elderly parents.

Step 7: Determine the value system(s) that drive the master symbols, stories, and rituals.

At least some combination of four binary value systems drive cultures around the world: guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, and pollution/purity (see chapter 6). For the Ifugao, two dominated: fear/power and shame/honor. The Ifugao greatly feared the spirits and the ancestors yet they also felt that they had the power to manipulate and control them, *if* they made the appropriate offerings and followed certain codes of conduct.

Following slightly behind fear/power was shame/honor. The ultimate goal of the sacrificial system was wealth, health, and long life that brought social prestige to the extended family. On the flip side, the family was shamed when the invited guests refused to attend, when food and drink were insufficient, or when the ancestors rejected the animal sacrifices offered them.

Step 8: Ascertain worldview presuppositions that integrate the triad.

- ✓ The sacrificial system led to health, long life, and wealth, thereby enhancing prestige.
- ✓ The ancestors and spirits were to be feared.
- ✓ People gained wealth and prestige through placating the ancestors and spirits.
- ✓ Marriage provided a means to move up the social economic ladder.
- ✓ Marriage provided an elongated process that led to adulthood.
- ✓ Parents usually permitted children to do what they want.
- ✓ Parents were required to care for their children.
- ✓ Children were required to care for their elderly parents.

- ✓ There were no free gifts on earth or from the spirit world; everything was considered reciprocal. Maintained relationships required reciprocity.
- ✓ Public participation in the marriage process provided legitimacy.
- ✓ Shamans served as required mediators between people and the spirit world often based on past achievements to manipulate the ancestors and spirits.
- ✓ Participation of shamans and villagers in the marriage process provided legitimacy.
- ✓ The wealthy were required to contribute more than the poor.
- ✓ Communal drinking and eating in the village square enhanced social solidarity.
- ✓ Socialization took place through participation, helping to secure generational continuity.

Step 9: Superimpose your findings over each text (oral or written) you wish to communicate to discern potential areas of communication noise, and make appropriate adjustments.

The Bible is full of blood sacrifices that would resonate with the Ifugao. From the coverings God provided Adam and Eve after the Fall, to Cain and Abel’s contrasting sacrifices, to Noah’s offering after the flood, to the variety of sacrifices offered during Tabernacle and Temple times, to the sacrifice of all sacrifices, Jesus, the theme of blood sacrifice in Scripture is dominant as it crisscrosses the landscape of Scripture.

While the theme of sacrifice will serve as a great communication bridge for the Ifugao, it will also present a number of communication barriers. The Ifugao will tend to interpret the sacrifices in the Bible from their traditional sacrificial system (*baki*)—as a means to gain health, long life, and wealth through mediator priests, all of which produce prestige. While there is a fear of the ancestors and spirits, there is also a presumed ability to manipulate them for personal-collective gain through specific offerings and actions. That idea could be transferred to Lord God (*Apu Dios*) as well.

To assume such reinterpretation of the sacrifices highlighted in Scripture will not happen is to be naïve of the power of worldview to drive our lives.⁴⁴³ Harper Lee adroitly points out in *To Kill a Mockingbird* that “people generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for.”⁴⁴⁴ This raises a thought-provoking question: “How far does the Holy Spirit go to dissipate the fog that is stirred up by evangelism that fails to make a universal message unique for specific contexts?”⁴⁴⁵ Sadly, less than some may think.

The “good news” assumes that there is “bad news.” Maximizing communication clarity will require in part the deconstruction of the Ifugao worldview. Some of the deconstruction of symbols, stories, and rituals would include:

- ✓ Redefining sin (*liwat*). Sin is more than making a mistake; it is dishonoring Lord God (*Apu Dios*) that results in present and eternal isolation from our Creator;

443. In his dissertation, David Hunt seems to reach this unlikely conclusion when he states, “Once the gospel is understood and accepted by the insider, the communication is of an indigenous form” (120). Hunt, *A Revolution in Church Multiplication in East Africa*, 2009.

444. Lee, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, 178.

445. Steffen, “Flawed Evangelism and Church Planting,” 429.

- ✓ Learning the fear of God;
- ✓ Recognizing God’s power over all creation, including the ancestors and spirits;
- ✓ Recognizing the inability to individually or collectively restore our lost honor before God;
- ✓ Recognizing the need for the Mediator who can make an eternal difference we are incapable of negotiating;
- ✓ Recognizing that Jesus’ sacrifice removed sin (not sickness), securing eternal life for all who follow Him;
- ✓ Recognizing that Jesus is concerned not only about this life on earth, but an eternal one as well.

Maximizing communication clarity will also require the reconstruction of the Ifugao worldview. Reconstruction requires individual and collective substitutes that honor *Apu Dios* while addressing all related areas of the marriage process. Wherever there was significant ritual that resulted in anchor or master symbols and stories, Christianity must respond with substitutes that honor the Eternal One.⁴⁴⁶ The transformation of faith-followers requires resymbolizing, restorying, and reritualizing that rewrites the anchor and master stories, and hence the worldview script.⁴⁴⁷

The Gospel is a multi-dimensional mystery that addresses all areas of life, including the Ifugao marriage process. Possible Scripture-informed substitutes⁴⁴⁸ that exhibit God’s power, demand obedience and an allegiance change, and offer honor could include: (1) an engagement ceremony, (2) a harvest ceremony, (3) baby, house, and granary dedications (see Appendix E), (4) Christian advice for the couple, and (5) a celebration of new roles for seniors.

In that the Ifugao learn best through participation and observation, traditional scripts (*elaw tayo*) will most naturally be challenged and replaced through vicariously observing the lives of Bible characters (as well as others outside the Bible context) as they make critical choices in the midst of life’s most complex moments that surround symbols, stories, and rituals. They will mentally ponder the consequences of the characters’ consequential choices, connecting them to conceivable personal-collective consequences. For some, identity with the character(s) will follow, making personal/family/communal worldview transformation possible, all enhanced through a preferred pedagogical preference.

Concluding Reflections

446. In *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* I proposed that “biblical functional substitutes present visual and mental images that attest to the eternal God who revealed himself in history” (186). They proclaim, from the author of Hebrews’ perspective, that Christ’s way is *better*. Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, 1997.

447. Andy Crouch (2008) argues, “*The only way to change culture is to create more of it*” (p. 67). The new culture replaces the old where appropriate. Crouch, *Culture Making*, 2008.

448. In *Introduction to Missiology*, Alan Tippett claims that failure to address cultural voids will leave room “for the ‘wrong thing.’” Why? Because “the ‘right thing’ is denied” (201). Tippett, *Introduction to Missiology*, 1987.

Relationships secured through research and continued through periodic returns is central to local worldview transformation. There is no better way to influence others for Christ than by observing and discussing a peoples' lived experience with them in *their* space and in *their* language. Incarnational research not only informs the researcher how to reduce communication noise, it also entices the locals to consider a worldview transformation that can result in a new communal identity. This results not just through clearer communication, but also through ever-deepening friendships.

Something happens in cultural understanding when the researcher, whether professional, semi-professional or amateur, discovers the interconnectedness between symbol (visual), story (verbal), and ritual (acted). Each element of the triad dances together, crisscrossing and connecting categories of local⁴⁴⁹ convenience as they attempt to serve as a collective "chain of memory" in an ever changing context.

Storehouses of symbols, stories, and rituals vie for supremacy. Opposing and unifying themes clash for control. Eventually, anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals embedded in others ascend to local significance through "repetition and reverence." The soft, fluid boundaries of worldview emerge through observation and participation.

Through incarnational research⁴⁵⁰ I discovered that life for the Ifugao in relation to the marriage process was a collision of interconnected symbaphors, narraphors, and rituaphors that resulted in ambiguity even as it provided predictability; it painted a worldview in the midst of cultural drift that projected wealth and prestige for the couple/extended family mediated through shamans who believed they could placate the feared ancestors and spirits. Is this last summary statement representative of the metanarrative⁴⁵¹ that encapsulates the Ifugao's worldview at that time? Further research would be necessary to confirm this conclusion. But it does provide a substantial start point for reducing noise when communicating the gospel, influencing discipleship, worship music and finances, critically implementing Scripture-based substitutes for all areas of marriage (and other significant aspects of life), developing contextual curricula, among others.

The Steps to Discovering Worldview (Table 8.2) can help researchers discover insider think and practice through sequential questioning that drills deep below the cultural surface.⁴⁵² The tool gives license for ambiguity even as it paints "plausible accounts" of

449. Leonard Sweet perceptively notes that "for anything to be real it must be local" (192). Sweet, *So Beautiful*, 2009. That does not negate global influence on a local contexts that creates fluid glocal cultures.

450. This type of enquiry is based on qualitative research, defined by Denzin & Lincoln (2003) as:

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (3)

Denzin & Lincoln, eds. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, 2003.

451. See definition in Introduction.

452. One helpful approach to qualitative research is grounded theory described by Creswell (2007) this way:

The intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a process (or action or interaction, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Participants

reality.⁴⁵³ It identifies a script that when rehearsed differently by someone else within the community, dissidence results. It may also create sub-cultures with their own variant worldviews. Discovering the anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals, and the value presuppositions assigned them, will lead the researcher to the worldview and sub-cultures (worldviews) that establish the identity of the members within a specific community. Each discovery utilized in verbal and visual ministries will help minimize communication noise.

Because of the embedded nature of symbols, stories, and rituals, investigating just one aspect of a culture, such as Ifugao marriage, will lead the researcher to numerous integrated cultural systems that begin to put the pieces of the worldview puzzle together. For example, material culture (houses, village square, granaries, rice fields, rice bundles, rice wine), economics (multiplication of animals [chickens, pigs, water buffalo], reciprocity, communal meals, wealth, inheritance, health), social structure (family, advising, adulthood, inheritance, inclusion, exclusion, patron, client, shamans), religion (shamans, fear, manipulation, skulls, ancestors, spirits [rice god *Bagel*], *Apu Dios*), arts (wealth level designs on skirts, loincloths). When these insights are incorporated into ministry through Worldview-based Storying, communication will be enhanced for self-identified oral audiences and oral-aural-visual-digital-social preference audiences.

When a ritual—defined and elaborated through symbol and story—comes to conclusion and attendees head home, that’s not the end; it continues to live on as it reconstructs worldviews through reflection, discussion, and sometimes the arts. May the “Making the Case for...” chapters in Part 2 do the same for readers. May the conversations continue because there is much more to the story.⁴⁵⁴

in the study would all have experienced the process, and the development of the theory might help explain practice or provide a framework for further research...Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) (63).

Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 2007.

453. Researchers search for “the complexity of views rather than narrow the meaning into a few categories or ideas” (20). Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 2007.

454. See Stuart Yoakum, *The Spoken Word: God, Scripture, and Orality in Missions* (2014) 209ff; 212ff.

Envisioning the Future

“Life must be lived forward, but it can only be understood backwards.”

—SØREN KIERKEGAAD

THE MODERN-DAY ORALITY MOVEMENT is a living, ever-evolving entity as documented in chapter 4. This is her strength. And this must remain the movement’s *modus operandi* because the minute she stops evolving is the minute she begins to die. A movement can advance intelligently into the future when it is cognizant of the lessons learned from the past. Movement drivers keep their eyes on the road ahead while continuing to check the rearview mirrors. They look back *before* they move forward.

Part Two of this book, based on a look in the rearview mirror, challenged those within the movement to consider deepening their understanding of the host society’s worldview(s) to minimize communication noise, thereby bringing clarity as to how God’s story is heard, seen, experienced, and communicated. This can be accomplished through investigating the interrelationship of symbol, story, and ritual to ascertain the anchor and master symbols, stories, and rituals that will lead the researcher to an adequate understanding of the local worldview(s). Worldview is *formed, discovered, and*

“Vulnerability is our most accurate measurement of courage.”

Brené Brown

transformed through anchor and master symbols and stories rehearsed through rituals. Worldview transformation within Christianity that results in worshippers and workers requires the renovation and reorientation of the existing symbols, stories, and rituals. The currently held integrated trilogy must be desymbolized, destoried, and deritualized in order for it to be resymbolized, restoried, and riritualized. Worldview transformation within Christianity exchanges and/or modifies local scripts for The Script.

The required time investment for the researcher to learn the “lived in experience” of those within the host culture by asking germane questions (quantitative research) can result in the formation of deep relationships. This is because “asking creates

relationships.”⁴⁵⁵ Good research builds solid friendships that benefit both parties long-term. What is on your “To-ask List”?

Asking fog-cutting questions designates the researchers as learners even as it negates guessing, thereby making a clearer message possible—like a memorable chat you can’t wait to tell someone else. And those who receive the message hear it from friends. In this closing chapter that bridges history (Part One) with ongoing practice (Part Two), I will suggest 14 possible research areas that could advance the movement so that it does not become a fleeting moment in time, so that Truth is given adequate opportunity to truly transform her listeners⁴⁵⁶ over generations and across cultures.

“If you ask profound questions, you get profound answers; if you ask shallow questions you get shallow answers; and if you ask no questions, you get no answers at all.”

(Bobb Biehl)

Possible Points to Ponder

1. Identify the theories that undergird the Orality Movement

New movements tend to be consumed with voicing and practicing its values just to scratch out a place in society and survive. Theorists along with their theories tend to receive little attention. There is just no time at this point in the journey. Theory is often considered a luxury, even if it does drive the movement unconsciously and unwittingly.⁴⁵⁷

“The person who controls the definition of a problem controls its solution.”

Old adage

As a movement matures, some within it begin to move beyond the applied side to consciously reflect on the theories that drive practice and investigate outcomes. This has begun in the Orality Movement. For example, Walter Ong’s

classic *Orality and Literacy* has been a textbook that has received significant attention within (and without) the movement. More recently, his theories have been challenged.⁴⁵⁸ This is healthy for the movement, but must extend far beyond Ong’s positive contributions.

455. Andrew Sobel, “Nine Ways Power Questions Help Us Build Better Business Relationships.” <https://www.latintrends.com/nine-ways-power-questions-help-us-build-better-business-relationships/> I believe it is the founder of 4 Gateways Coaching, Tom Daly, who says, “Listen until you disappear.”

A helpful book on this topic is Stephen Covey’s *The Speed of Trust*, 2006. In it he quotes Edward Marshall: “Speed happens when people ... truly trust each other” (3).

456. For an American perspective where approximately half of the population prefers to learn through oral means, see Willis, Jr. and Snowden, *Truth That Sticks*, 2010.

457. For an overview and critique of 20th and 21st century mission theories, see Steffen, “Theories Drive Our Ministries Whether We Know Them or Not.” *Reformed Life Theology and Mission*, 1 (2011) 191-239.

458. See Finnegan, *The Oral and Beyond*, 2007; De Vries, “Local Oral-Written Interfaces and the Nature, Transmission, Performance, and Translation of Biblical Texts,” 2012; Thigpen, *Connected Learning*, 2016.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary to know the theories that drive orality?
- Who within the Orality Movement could advance the movement's theoretical foundations?
- Which theses and dissertations address the strengths and weaknesses of various theories related to orality?
- Who could simplify orality theories so that practitioners from around the world could utilize them intentionally and intelligently?
- What other theories, such as metaphor analysis⁴⁵⁹ or visual literacy,⁴⁶⁰ or performance criticism,⁴⁶¹ or collective memory, should be investigated?
- What other theories from (un)related disciplines should be included?
- What nonreligious texts and dissertations should be on individual and class reading lists?
- How will the Orality Movement connect theory to practice without alienating either side?

2. Conduct research that reveals accurate results

Movements that conduct research on what they say they do will be positioned to update supporters and participants more accurately, and make informed mid-course corrections. Maturing movements advance beyond the anecdotal to structured research that provides not just expatriate perceptions, but *local* reflections as well. Insights gained should be published for the benefit of all through multiple venues, such as books, journals, blogs, and vlogs, e.g., HonorShame.com.

Stuart Yoakum promotes the extension of current research and application:

The use of orality research in ministry should not stop at evangelism and missions but include the entire spectrum of practical ministry including preaching, education (including higher education), and pastoral counseling. Indeed, orality could be a bridge for more interdisciplinary work between biblical and systematic theology, between homiletics and biblical studies, and between the so-called “classical disciplines” and the “applied” seminary courses.⁴⁶²

459. Pioneers in metaphor analysis, Blechman, et al, theorized that “because these types of metaphors are often ‘unmarked’ or unconscious, they reveal what people take for granted about how the world works, or more important, how it should work. We theorized that we could gain indirect access to worldviews by analyzing the metaphors used in everyday language. This theory is built on the assumption that metaphors function as mental templates, helping people to structure and give meaning to their interaction with the world” (5). Blechman et al., “Finding Meaning in A Complex Environmental Policy Dialog: Research Into Worldviews in the Northern Forest Lands Council Dialogue, 1990-94,” Fairfax, VA: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (1998) 1-40.

460. See Barnes, *An Introduction to Visual Communication*, 2011.

461. See <http://www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org/>. See also <http://www.nidainstitute.org/> as they continue research in the area of oral criticism begun by SNTS (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulIfpF-YcoM>

462. Yoakum, *The Spoken Word*, 224.

Research within the Orality Movement will be time-consuming and expensive. Hopefully, it will be comprehensive and will dig deep so that rich research results.⁴⁶³ This is Christian stewardship at its best and certainly worthy of the expansion and depth of the global Kingdom.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is necessary to conduct deep research?
- What areas demand research?
- What should be the role of qualitative research? Quantitative? Which mirrors orality most?
- What test instruments should be designed?
- Who within the movement could spearhead a global research program?
- What relevant research could short-termers be taught to conduct?
- Which Christian and secular schools offer research courses related to orality?
- Which universities and seminaries promote theses and dissertations on orality or related topics?
- Where should research results be published for all to benefit?
- What new orality theories has present research generated?

3. Discover what the Catholics and Orthodox can contribute to the conversation

Evangelicals are not the only ones who have explored the orality world. Roman Catholics have used and researched oral methodologies for centuries. Four prominent contemporary examples would include Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger*, Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy* addressed above, Vincent Donovan’s *Christianity Rediscovered* (noted in chapter 1), and the prolific Jerome Neyrey of Notre Dame.

The Orthodox also have a long history in the use of stories, symbols, and rituals that should not go uninvestigated. Paul Meyerndorff offers this example: “What Russians had was liturgy, in which they saw Christ coming to them through word, image, and sacrament. ... Liturgy was the source for their knowledge of God and the full expression of their faith.”⁴⁶⁴ Since all truth belongs to God, how could the Orality Movement mine these rich religious heritages for gold nuggets?

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary to know the contribution of other religions in relation to orality?
- Who among the Catholics have contributed to understanding orality?
- Who among the Orthodox have contributed to understanding orality?

463. For a comprehensive 12-step tool to discover a community’s worldview so that syncretism is minimized, see Strauss, *Introducing Story-Strategic Methods: Twelve Steps toward Effective Engagement*, 2017.

464. Meyerndorff, “Reflections on Russian Liturgy,” 23.

- What can the Catholics and Orthodox teach evangelicals about the use of stories, symbols, and rituals?

4. Revamp theological education

Theological education was *not* born in a vacuum. The West developed theologies based off of the questions that concerned and consumed her, many surrounding the discipline of science.⁴⁶⁵ The East answered her own questions as evidenced by these titles: Yongbock’s *Minjung Theology*, Koyama’s *Water Buffalo Theology*, Kitamori’s *Pain of God Theology*, Chan’s *Grassroots Asian Theology*. Out of Africa came *Africa Bible Commentary* edited by Adeyemo. Orlando Costas summarizes, adding a Latin perspective:

“If Christianity is de-Westernized, Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America will be able to defend themselves when accused of being agents of Westernization and puppets in the hands of foreigners whose intention is the destruction of local cultures and religions.”

(Tiéno, 2006, 42)

Third World theology is not so much a new theology as a new method for doing theology. Western theology is notorious for its abstractness without any reference to concrete problems. ... Latin American theology emerges out of a complex socioecclesiastical context that can only be understood and appreciated in the light of the continental history of poverty and oppression, colonialism and imperialism.⁴⁶⁶

Jaimol Jacob, a student at Hindustan Bible Institute, wrote this on her final exam for a course on honor and shame taught by Werner Mischke:

Most of the missionaries who came to India in the past tried to teach people based on Western cultural values. This made a deep wound and separation in the society between East and West. Christians and Bible are considered completely foreign. We [Christians] are also following the same tradition and never looked at the Bible with our own cultural thinking. ... So the effective contextualization of the gospel became a failure and India is still largely unreached.⁴⁶⁷

Theologies originate from the questions asked. Culture, context, and circumstances influence such questions. Gaps and blind spots therefore result for *all* theologies around

465. Bernard Ramm’s (1954) influence on today’s hermeneutics remains, particularly through his *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Two quotes, with tacit influence from the Enlightenment, point to the emphasis given to systematics and aristolean deduction. Ramm posits that “training in logic and science forms excellent background for exegesis” (153). This leads naturally to his second posit: “Systematic teaching of Scripture is the Scriptures final intention” (155). For a helpful discussion on what led up to, what happened within, and what emerged from the Enlightenment, see Act 1/Scene II in Michael Matthew’s (2017) *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality*.

466. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 122, 124.

467. Jacob, “The Bible—So Close to the Culture of India?” 2015. <http://www.wernerischke.org>

the world. As Millard Erickson eloquently stated at an Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, “It is one thing to have absolute Truth, it is quite another to understand it absolutely.” That is why we must become aware of our own theological blind spots without forgetting that “the greatest Story analyst of all is the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁶⁸ *Good theologians are good missiologists, and good missiologists are good theologians.*

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary that theological education be revamped?
- Why is it necessary to know why they ask the questions they do?
- What gaps will the host culture experience from internalizing the West’s theology? The East’s theology? The South’s theology?
- What could Oral Bible Schools teach western seminaries about curricula and qualifications for graduation?
- What can Performance Criticism⁴⁶⁹ teach us about how Scripture was compiled? Communicated?⁴⁷⁰ Defined?
- How can the West reevent her abstract, homeless theological categories?
- How are the characters, symbols, and rituals mentioned in the Epistles embedded in other Bible stories? How to they help define the theme of the document?
- How should the West’s theological categories be expanded? (See: Appendix A)
- How should the non-narrative sections of Scripture be taught to the Oral Majority?
- What percentage does each binary value system (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) have in Scripture?
- Which binary value systems (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) drive our review questions?
- Which value system(s) (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) drive our theology? The host’s theology? Your culture? The host culture? (See Appendixes A, F).
- How relevant are your theological questions for your students? Congregants?
- How do the pedagogical preferences of the “Net Gen” and Millennial generations differ from those of many of their older professors?

5. Discover what narrative theology can contribute

Of all the theologies common to North American evangelicals—biblical, historical, natural, systematic, and narrative—narrative (or postliberal) theology, which has close ties to orality, may be the least understood. Gabriel Fackre defines narrative theology as “discourse about God in the setting of story.”⁴⁷¹ Should narrative theology receive much more attention by those within the academe and the Orality Movement? I have answered this question in the affirmative because of the present imbalance within western theology:

468. Steffen, *Reconnecting God’s Story to Ministry*, 67.

469. See <http://www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org/>

470. Someone once quipped, “Would you study scores of music without listening to it?” Fixated on the text, there is an oral aspect to hermeneutics that Bible scholars tend to overlook to the detriment of all.

471. Fackre, “Narrative Theology, 343.

I've noticed that while Christian workers may be well-versed in systematic theology, fewer are familiar with biblical theology, and even fewer yet with narrative theology. Since the Bible is a Sacred Storybook, a Sacred Drama, with narrative as the predominant genre of choice by the Holy Spirit (approximately 55% of Scripture), I fully expect new observations in narrative theology to impact the Orality Movement in the next decade.⁴⁷²

According to Hannes Wiher, the Enlightenment thought patterns have been returned to sender:

The analytic, conceptual, guilt-oriented thought patterns of the Enlightenment made the narrative disappear, and their failure made it reappear again. The development of narrative theology has to do with the rediscovery of shame orientation in theology. ... The synthetic, holistic, concrete and relational features make narrative theology a shame-oriented approach.⁴⁷³

It is time for some to move beyond preferred theological perspectives and learn to appreciate what other types of theologies, specifically narrative theology, can contribute to understanding and communication.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary that narrative theology be understood as well as systematic theology?
- What percentage of the Bible is presented through the narrative genre?
- What connection does narrative theology have with orality?
- What is the metanarrative of Scripture in a few sentences? How does one's understanding of the metanarrative influence his or her interpretation of all other parts of the Sacred Storybook?
- Which symbols within Scripture define His story?
- Which rituals within Scripture review and define Bible stories and symbols?
- Which binary value system(s) (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) dominates the Sacred Storybook in relation to how people are motivated to act?
- How does narrative theology lay a foundation for other theologies, such as systematic theology?
- How would the introduction of narrative theology into theological training/educational churches and institutions facilitate Bible comprehension for emerging self-identified oral-learner-leaders? For oral-digital-learner-leaders?

“Stories allow people to participate in other people’s lives, and to see the world from another’s perspective. Stories make it possible to experience different ways of being human.”

(Short, 2010, 361)

472. Steffen, “Tracking the Orality Movement,” 146.

473. Wiher, *Shame and Guilt*, 333-334.

- How could a study of “literary theology” broaden and deepen an understanding of narrative theology?

6. Investigate why and how character theology could better communicate doctrines

By character theology I mean utilizing some of the more than 2900 human characters⁴⁷⁴ in the Bible, including groups, such as the Pharisees or Sadducees, along with those associated with the spirit world, such as the Holy Spirit, Satan, angels and demons, to teach abstract doctrines, morals, and ethics. Character theology relies on earthy, concrete characters to frame abstract truths and concepts, thereby giving ideas a home. It does so even as it retains God as the center of the story, and the individual story’s place within the broader sweep of Scripture. Wise teachers working among the Oral Majority progress from the concrete character to the abstract concept, and then return to the concrete character.

“For many publishers and preachers and ordinary people, the Bible is largely a manual of propositions. The colorful personalities pushing their way out of its pages are seen as secondary—if that. But any attempt to turn this incredible chronicle into a theological dissertation destroys the very essence of its message. We learn how to live and how to die by putting ourselves into the narrative. Indeed, we recognize these characters by looking in the mirror.”

(Tucker, 2013, 2)

For the majority of the world who prefer experiential apologetics over evidential apologetics, character theology will connect much more clearly.⁴⁷⁵ For example, rather than teach the abstract doctrine of justification by faith, let the earthy lives of Abraham and David define this abstract doctrine (Romans 4).⁴⁷⁶ All theology can be discovered and defined through the symbols, stories, and rituals found in the lived-lives of Bible characters as they make consequential choices in the midst of confusing and contradictory circumstances. Dogma without spiritual and human characters defining it is on the fast track to coldness. Bringing Bible characters off the bookshelf will heat up the conversation.

474. Flannery O’Connor offers this role for characters that parallels the role of anchor characters: “Any character in a serious novel is supposed to carry a burden of meaning larger than himself” (167). Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, eds., *Mystery and Manners*, 1970.

475. Grant Osborne posits that “the interplay of opponents and the interaction between major and minor characters are the clearest possible guidelines to the meaning of the passage. The unity and lines of causality within the drama sequence of the story first draw the reader into the narrative world and then help the reader to relive its point and understand its purpose. In this way theology may be better served by narrative material than by didactic. We not only learn the truth but see it enacted in living relationships” (208). Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 2006.

476. Referencing Lukan characters, Darr makes this observation: “Like all narrative elements, *character is cumulative*. ... Because character is cumulative, it is essential that we be cognizant at all times of the degree to which a character or a character group has been constructed at each point along the text continuum. Too often, interpreters of Lukan character have failed to take sequence and accumulation seriously. A common tendency is to pull together discrete data from all parts of Luke’s narrative with little, if any, regard for its linear accretion. As a result of this oversight, Lukan characters have often been distorted” (42-43). Darr, *On Character Building*, 1992.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary that character theology be added to the other theologies?
- How does God define *His* character through the symbols, stories, and rituals described in the lives of various human and spiritual characters found in the Sacred Storybook?
- Which earthy Bible characters could illuminate abstract doctrines through the symbols, stories, and rituals rehearsed in their lives? Ethical behavior? Unethical behavior?
- Which symbol(s) and ritual(s) expressed within the life of a Bible character help reevent a specific abstract doctrine? Value? Leadership or followership principle?
- Which binary set of characters (e.g., Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot, Ananias and Sapphira, Lois and Eunice) teach which doctrines? Honorable successes? Shameful failures?
- How could character theology enhance and express other types of theologies (e.g., systematic, biblical)?
- How could character theology be used to teach values, leadership, teamwork? followership, health, missions in primary-secondary oral contexts?
- Which Bible characters relate well to pre-faith postmodern children? Youth? Adults? Post-faith, postmodern children? Youth? Adults?
- Which Bible characters define different levels of spiritual maturity?
- How could character theology be tied to the metanarrative of Scripture? To Chronological Bible Storying or Foundational Bible Teaching?
- “Will character theology take the world by surprise in the Fourth Era of missions just as CBS did in the Third Era?”⁴⁷⁷
- Who could spearhead a consortium to define and debate abstract doctrines through concrete Bible characters?

7. Develop the role of oral hermeneutics for primary-secondary oral learners

Larry Caldwell’s experience teaching hermeneutics to Filipinos is not that uncommon to other western teachers who serve in cross-cultural contexts. His frustration is evident in this reflection:

I diligently taught my students the “proper” methods of Bible interpretation and they just as diligently wrote down and memorized everything I said. I taught them the finer point of Bible interpretation, from initial exegesis to sermon preparation. Several of my students did surprisingly well in class. Most struggled. And then, on the weekends, I would accompany them to their rural church field education assignments and listen to them preach in their churches. Here was my chance to observe them putting into practice what they had so painstakingly learned in my

477. Steffen, *The Facilitator Era*, 149.

classroom. Or so I thought. In stark contrast to the exegetically correct and logically constructed three point sermons they had prepared in class, what I heard were sermons full of allegories and folksy illustrations, with a story-line that seemed to run circles around a loosely constructed main point. They were exegeting the Bible in ways that would earn them a failing grade in the classroom. I was one disconcerted hermeneutics professor.⁴⁷⁸

Caldwell's propositional-logic preference resulted in noise to those who preferred narrative logic.⁴⁷⁹ The Filipinos had a deeper appreciation than their professor for that which repetitively, in rhythmic fashion, connected with the big picture, emotions, imagination, and characters; it offered communal interaction, consensus, and immediate application. A Living Text required a living response. The great divide between propositional logic and narrative logic negated this possibility for his students.

Reflecting on possible roles character theology could have in oral hermeneutics may be instructive. What if the role of the major characters included in a Bible book or letter were investigated to discover the author's theme of the document? For example, the dominant character in Acts is the Holy Spirit mentioned over 50 times. Satan is mentioned only several times. More than 95 other characters are recorded. How does the dominant character work through the event-laden lives of select individuals and groups to communicate Luke's purpose—the expansion of Christianity? Character theology calls for an oral hermeneutic to unravel the record through real characters rather than through an abstract textual framework.⁴⁸⁰

In relation to application questions of a lesson for self-identified oral learners and/or oral-digital-social preference learners, some questions hit the target more centered than others (see: Appendix C). This led me to ask some questions about questions:

Do the questions asked direct the listeners to respond with abstract concepts? Or, do they challenge the listeners to focus on concrete characters that lead to abstract concepts? Do they illicit answers from an I/G [Innocence/Guilt] perspective? An H/S [Honor/Shame] perspective? A P/F [Power/Fear] perspective?⁴⁸¹

I concluded that:

Effective review and application questions used for communal assessment among oral-preference learners will evidence strong emotional connections with the characters and symbols mentioned in the text. One would also expect to see their

478. Caldwell, "Toward the New Discipline of Ethnohermeneutics," 29.

479. For an insightful discussion on narrative logic, see Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 1987.

480. What if Hays is correct when he concludes that "if we learn from them [Gospel writers] how to read, we will approach the reading of Scripture with a heightened awareness of *story, metaphor, prefiguration, allusion, echo, reversal, and irony*. To read Scripture well, we must bid farewell to plodding literalism and rationalism in order to embrace *a complex poetic sensibility*. The Gospel writers are trying to teach us to become more interesting people—by teaching us to be more interesting readers" (105). Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 2014.

481. Steffen, "Minimizing Crosscultural Evangelism Noise," 423.

emotional connections move beyond the characters and symbols to the Author, resulting in a deepening love. In sum, the type of questions asked may be more important than the answers given.⁴⁸²

A literate or textual-based hermeneutic tends to lead to questions that focus on abstract concepts⁴⁸³ rather than concrete characters.⁴⁸⁴

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary that oral hermeneutics be understood as well textual hermeneutics?
- What percentage of the East and West rely on oral theology?
- How does literary-based hermeneutics differ from oral-based hermeneutics?⁴⁸⁵
- What contribution to exegesis did the ‘literary’ aspect add to the ‘grammatical-historical’? What else could still be missing?
- What can the hermeneutics associated with ‘visual culture’⁴⁸⁶ teach us about interpreting/reading the visual world of those we serve? Reading the visual world of Scripture?
- How could narrative logic enhance propositional logic? How could propositional logic enhance narrative logic? Why should we become proficient practitioners of both?
- How could character theology (rather than textual analysis) be used to discover the theme of each book or letter of the Bible?
- How could application questions that project from *their* value system(s) (e.g. shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) enhance comprehension and conversation?
- How could application questions that focus on characters rather than concepts help create stronger faith-followers of Christ?

482. Ibid., 424.

483. Vanhoozer correctly point out that “concepts have contexts,” (90). Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 2005.

484. For a book that takes seriously the narrative nature of hermeneutics see Matthews. *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality*, 2017.

485. Jennifer Jagerson (2016) makes this summary observation about the comprehensiveness of the review questions associated with Simply the Story (STS):

The STS questions seem to be particularly robust hermeneutically for interpreting the literary aspects of the biblical narratives because of the way they focus on the unfolding plot and attend closely to the actions and choices of the characters (Jagerson, 2013; Miller, 2014; Osborne, 2006; Sternberg, 1987; Ryken, 1992). This allows for a deep identification with the characters and their circumstances that is both cognitively and affectively powerful. This is necessary for attaining a deeper understanding of the author’s intent as well as provoking rich and meaningful transformation in the reader (Osborne, 2006; Ryken, 1992; Sternberg, 1987). The method also draws the learner’s attention to the background of the story, allowing for consideration of the historical and theological context (Miller, 2014). Finally, the method makes a clear distinction between *interpretation* of the meaning of the biblical stories and making *application* for the significance of the meaning to today (29-30).

Jagerson, *Transformation Through Narrative*, 2016.

486. See Howells and Negreiros. *Visual Culture*, 2012.

- How could application questions that call for group implementation rather than individual implementation help foster the communal-spiritual maturation process?
- What role should experiential apologetics (in contrast to evidential apologetics) play in evangelism in the host country's rural areas? In the host country's cities (where many from the rural areas have moved, and many other urbanites prefer oral/digital means of communicating)?
- What role should symbol, story, and ritual have in defining the gospel?

8. Investigate the role of purity/pollution in relation to the other value systems

Ever since Eugene Nida identified the three reactions to sin as fear-based, shame-based, and guilt-based in *Customs and Cultures*,⁴⁸⁷ most recent missional authors have followed suit. The trilogy, with slight variations, dominates the past and present literature. But could there be a fourth value system? Or even more?

Werner Mischke addresses purity/pollution (P/P) in *The Global Gospel*⁴⁸⁸ as one of the sub-dynamics of the honor/shame value system as does Georges.⁴⁸⁹ When considering its dominance in both the Old and New Testaments, and various cultures around the world, I wonder if P/P represents a fourth value system? I believe it does. It seems one would expect to find this value system in those religions tied to Abraham—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religions, such as Hinduism, Shintoism, and aspects of animism among First Nations tribes. Trauma victims, e.g., those sold into sexual trafficking or slavery, could also be included.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is necessary to know all the values systems that comprise Scripture?
- What role does purity/pollution (clean/unclean) have in Scripture?
- How does purity/pollution relate to honor/shame?
- Which (sub)cultures around the world are driven by integrated value systems that include purity/pollution?
- How could the purity/pollution value system influence the presentation of the gospel? Discipleship? Community development? Human trafficking?

9. Determine the local's pedagogical preferences

One aspect of worldview is how people learn, or pedagogy. Often taken for granted that all people learn the same way that we do, many cross-cultural workers give little attention to pedagogy. The problem is that *all* people have preferred ways of learning—preferred pedagogies. And they often differ from those of expatriates. How, where, when, length, who can teach whom, gestures, facial expressions, volume, silence, dress, numbers, colors,

487. Nida, *Customs and Cultures*, 150.

488. Mischke, *The Global Gospel*, 172-178.

489. Georges, "From Shame to Honor," 298.

jokes, illustrations, genres, flashbacks,⁴⁹⁰ flash-forwards, paraphilia, value systems, introductions, conclusions, and a host of other things are designed to make the message not only understandable, but also reproducible. Reproducible messages have the power to create maturing, memorable movements rather than movement moments. Pedagogy plays a significant role in such maturing movements.⁴⁹¹

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary to know pedagogical preferences?
- How do locals teach children? Teens? 20-somethings? Middle-agers? Seniors?
- Which societies demand that the relationship of the teacher be established prior to speaking?
- Who can teach whom?
- How do they use questions? Where is the safe space to ask or answer such questions?
- Which value system(s) (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power, pollution/purity) drive(s) their teaching?
- How do members of the host culture tell stories?
- What is the average length of *their* religious stories?
- Which audiences prefer to hear the big picture (metanarrative) presented before the individual parts? Which prefer the opposite?
- What expectations do teachers have of students? Students have of teachers?
- What expectations do teachers have of listeners to apply what was taught?
- What is considered plagiarism? Why?
- What role should andragogy⁴⁹² (methods to teach adults) have for adult learners?
- What is the role of communal assignments? Testing?
- How could textbooks written in story format enhance the Orality Movement?
- What is the role of film?

10. Determine the cultural relevance of the curricula employed

When the Ifugao and I began to develop the first evangelism story set, we had no access to other such curricula other than McIlwain's copious, but incomplete notes. Today, a smorgasbord of samples abound. Some are simply suitcase curricula (transferred without contextualization) driven by western values, such as guilt/innocence, sprinkled with western illustrations, alliterations, art, and layout. These could be identified as *global—one-for-all*. Others are highly contextualized for specific audiences. These could be identified as *local—one-for-each*. Still others are more generic, designed for mixed audiences that comprise a "multi-faceted cultural mosaic" commonly found in urban environments. These could be identified as *glocal—one-for-some*. Transferred curricula

490. Start points do not always matter. The beginning is the beginning, whether at the cross or creation or consummation. One can always backtrack into chronology.

491. The Ifugao taught me much about their pedagogical preferences that were quite different from mine. I documented some of these in Steffen "Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol," 2010.

492. For theory that walks, see Merriam & Bierema, *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*, 2013.

should have no part in the storyteller's story sets. Why? Because "Comprehended stories are contextualized stories."⁴⁹³ Contextualized curricula can make the Bible a better-taught story.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it that few cross-cultural storytellers want to take the time to create context-specific (local) or glocal curricula?
- Why do many storytellers prefer to buy into existing *programs* rather than specific *people*?
- How will the ready availability of a plethora of story sets impact worldview research?
- How do different time orientation preferences (e.g., linear, events, circular) impact a chronological presentation of the Bible?
- What other start points, besides Genesis, could make the curriculum more culturally relevant? How could such start points be tied to the metanarrative of Scripture?
- Who could compile a collection of different start stories for specific contexts?
- How does the West's zest for speed and efficiency impact the number of stories included within an evangelism story set? How could this compromise sufficient foundation laid for the gospel? How could this compromise adequate sort out time required for predominately collective communities? For families to make communal decisions?
- What role should the metanarrative of Scripture have in the development of a Bible story set?
- How well does your evangelism and follow-up connect as a continuous discipleship story?
- How are colors understood in the host culture? Numbers?
- How is religious literature laid out?

11. Connect ION's contributions to local churches globally

When Avery Willis discovered what IMB was doing abroad in relation to the power of story in discipleship, discipleship within the US Southern Baptist churches was revolutionized (chapter 2). But that took 20 years to happen! ION has done an exceptional job of enhancing the ministries of those who serve abroad. She should also continue to develop her agenda to intentionally enhance ministries among local churches in the West, including narrative preaching. More books like *Orality in America* edited by Mark Snowden and released by the Mission America Coalition in 2016 are needed. More consultations in major Western cities where oral preference reigns, such as, New York, Los Angeles, Vancouver, are needed.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is orality required in the West just as it is in the rest of the world?

493. Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, 188.

- What can be done to increase communication between personnel ministering abroad with those ministering on the home front?
- Who could promote and propel connections between ION and local churches in the West? In the East? In the South?
- How could ION's grasp of secondary orality impact ministries within local churches?
- Why do sermons need to change if preachers want to remain relevant? How should they change?

12. Develop ways the digital world could complement the Orality Movement

Every major communication invention has resulted in titanic changes within the global community. For example, the Gutenberg press (1440) fanned the flames of the Reformation through the publication of articles and books. Jumping to the 20th century, the first commercial mobile phone with a half-hour battery life, called the “brick,” debuted in 1983, canceling the need for landlines that tied the caller to a specific geographic location.

As the “brick” evolved, the computer was added, bringing unprecedented changes at lightning speed. The powerful, sleek new handheld instrument made it possible to surf the worldwide web. So much for linear research as the researcher jumped from one unrelated link to another, often assigning equal value to each. Communication was now possible globally and instantaneously, whether by talking or sending pictures, videos, or data. News streamed live from across the globe 24/7/365. Decentralization minimized the digital divide, thereby making it possible for amateurs anywhere to contribute on any topic (Wikipedia), conduct business, or chat with family and friends on the cheap. *Anyone* could become an author, movie producer, photographer, or newscaster.

“Our metaphors create the content of our culture. Our media are our metaphors. ... As a culture moves from orality to writing to printing to televising, its ideas of truth move with it.”

(Postman, 2005, 16)

“The Facebook” was born in 2004 and changed to Facebook in 2005. The “like” button was added in 2009. Today, one out of every five people on earth use this social media. Facebook (and other social media) unwittingly guided participants towards a honor/shame⁴⁹⁴ value system and narcissism: What are people (the “imaginary audience”) saying about my last post? How many “likes” did I receive? Did I go viral? How many

followers do I have? How many “defriended me? Who? Is it time for some “social combat” to declare victory? Narcissism focused the spotlight more on personal interests than intimate relationships. As thumb muscles grew weary through electronic addiction, social media detox camps were established.

Twitter, born in 2006, taught participants to consolidate a single idea in only 140 characters, before doubling in 2017. GPS made Thomas Guides (anyone remember them?) obsolete, and more recently, MapQuest (along with our ability to find places on our own).

494. Andy Crouch prefers “fame/shame” (38) for US citizens. Crouch, “The Return of Shame,” 2015.

Cisco forecasts that by 2019 the number of mobile devices globally will hit 11.5 billion!⁴⁹⁵ The Internet World Stats claims that global users numbered 3,366,261,156 in November of 2015.⁴⁹⁶ “By the end of 2014, an estimated 3 billion people were online. By the end of the decade, Google envisages 5 billion people on the Internet. This is not just another form of mass media, it is the first universal medium.”⁴⁹⁷ Within a decade ear devices will be available to translate multiple foreign languages (including sign) into one’s own language at the speed of sound. People will be able to speak all the major languages of the world with their *own* voice, leveling the playing field where English was lingua franca at a gathering. Pentecost will replace Babel.

Social media is not going away anytime soon! Exponential increase in change will continue thereby challenging how things get done, with whom they get done, how much can get done, its accurateness, and the speed at which all of this occurs.

Shane Hipps observes, “Our culture has a shrinking preference—and even aptitude—for reading books, especially complex ones. If the Bible is anything, it is complex, so it should not surprise us to see a growing biblical illiteracy in the electronic age.”⁴⁹⁸ What is true of our culture will be true of cultures around the globe. Rather than being blindsided by inevitability, the Orality Movement has the opportunity to plan ahead for the coming digital revolution—all in real-time, and effectively utilize it to communicate God’s story with clarity and accuracy. Can we start storying short for mobile snackers and later offer full-course meals (longer story sets) to sit-down diners?

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why is it necessary for oral ministry to keep up with digital world?
- How will tweeters be influenced to abbreviate the gospel too much, leaving a faulty foundation for the good news?
- How could tweeters aid in the discovery of the metanarrative of Scripture? Each book and letter of the Bible?
- How will the habit of jumping from one link to another impede an understanding of the Bible as an ongoing story having a beginning, middle, and end?
- How will a shrinking attention span (now around 8 seconds) influence the length of a single story? A story set?
- How will the digital world influence the classroom and the social economic levels of her participants?
- How well will the ability to have one’s message automatically translated into any major language of the world with his or her own voice address the cultural components associated with language?
- What new apps will be required for the multiple tasks of holistic ministries?

495. http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/white_paper_c11-520862.html

496. <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

497. Mirzoeff. *How to See the World*, 4.

498. Hipps, *Flickering Pixels*, 146. Prager University videos are five minutes long. Netflix now offers 15 minute stand-up comedy shows.

- How has the digital world influenced those living in the oral world in the countryside? What are the communicational implications for outreach? Missions? Training? Education? Business (micro and macro)?⁴⁹⁹
- What will a digital tract look like? A digital story set? How will such productions aid in long-term memory?
- How will honor/shame influence the construction of the message in a digital world?
- How will the gospel be designed so that when it goes viral it will come across not as an equal to the sea of other suggestive stories, but as superior to all?
- What role will the amateurs and semi-professionals have in evangelism and follow-up? Various types of curriculum construction?
- How could the “link approach” used in web browsing enhance worldview investigation through symbol, story, and ritual?
- How could interest groups guide team formations to investigate various aspects of culture? Conduct evangelism? Discipleship? Holistic ministries? Train or educate at home or abroad?
- How could those “online all the timers” be encouraged to move towards more sincere relationships?
- How could the Orality Movement make the inexpensive digital world friction free so that God’s story comes across in culturally recognizable forms without compromising the message?
- Who within the movement could organize a consultation on the impact of the digital world on orality?

13. Learn to use oral methods to train locals participating in Missions 2.0

Missions 2.0 is now predominately practiced by those originating from the Majority World, many of whom are self-identified as oral-preference. Those (westerners and easterners) who figure out how to train oral-preference locals (the oral majority) participating in holistic missions through concrete oral-based models will make a crucial and significant contribution to the modern-day missions movement.

The day of transferring western (Missions 1.0) architecture, art, music, models of culture and language acquisition (abstract vs. concrete), Bible translation methods (textual vs. oral), evangelism (propositions vs. story), discipleship (propositions vs. story), hermeneutics (textual vs. oral), theology (systematic vs. characters), spirituality (individual vs. communal), TESOL (textual vs. oral), business (books and principles vs. case studies and practice), counseling, medical, community development, and so forth, must end. Abstract scientific-based models and western pedagogy dominated by propositional logic in contrast to narrative logic (both often unpremeditated types of modern-day colonialism)

499. For a proven Pakistani business model that has raised the GNP more than the aid she receives, see Iqbal Quadir’s Ted Talk where he convincingly argues that through the proliferation of mobile phones productivity increases on multiple levels. He expresses the idea this way: “connectivity is productivity.” See http://www.ted.com/talks/iqbal_quadir_says_mobiles_fight_poverty Quadir’s model will require a paradigm shift for those from the West who prefer giving monetary aid. C. K. Prahalad offers this insight that could help make such a paradigm shift possible: “If we stop thinking of the poor as victims or as a burden and start recognizing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers, a whole new world of opportunity will open up” (1). Prahalad, *Bottom of the Pyramid*, 2006.

must end. We of the West (and some from the East) not only *can* learn how to do this, we *must* learn do this! Kingdom stewardship demands it. Our listeners/viewers, and theirs', will deeply appreciate it.

Questions requiring follow-up:

- Why should those training self-identified oral-preference people learn how to use oral-based models?
- How do oral-based training models differ from most western-based training models?
- How can existing western curricula be changed to benefit self-identified oral-preference communicators?

14. Others

What is *not* included in this list that should be? Why? Why not? What else is needed so that sense-making stories, symbols, and rituals result?

Concluding Reflections

The ministry motto of a training center in Argentina reads, “While I serve, I learn.” Michelangelo, one of the greatest artists of all time, refused to believe that he had arrived. His hunger for lifetime improvement is evident when he disclosed late in life, “I am still learning.”⁵⁰⁰ Psychiatrist Carl Jung once quipped, “Hurry is not *of* the Devil; it *is* the Devil.”

May those within the Orality Movement reject the Devil’s counterfeit “hurry culture” that leads to weakened and faulty foundations, and therefore illegitimate transformation. Rather, may they wholeheartedly emulate the Argentinian training center motto and Michelangelo by serving others as *perpetual hungry learners*. If they do, the movement will mature, multiply, and mutate rather than become a brief moment in time. Shortcut enticements will be refused. Incarnational immersion will dominate thereby building rich relationships. Leading with pertinent questions related to local symbols, stories, and rituals will evidence a learner attitude—tell me more. I want to earn the right to listen. I refuse to make blanket conclusions. I refuse to say this is the one and only model God has blessed. Missiological astuteness will multiply through respectable research. Theory and practice will walk knowledgably together. Digital dominance will be harnessed for expansion of the Kingdom. Worldview understanding will increase. Worldview-based Storying will drive God’s story home. Training will be improved.

“I have been guilty of not focusing on connecting with my students in the ways they needed. In the past, I believed the key was telling stories; when in fact the key was more than that—it was connecting, connecting in every area of life.”

(Thigpen, 2016, 178, 179)

500. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/michelange127540.html>

All of the above, and others, can take place because noise will be minimized (not eliminated), and a clearer message will prevail. And the ultimate goal can be reached! More people than ever will be given opportunity for an authentic worldview transformation because Truth was heard, seen, experienced, embraced, practiced, and discussed generationally, thereby providing a firm foundation for her followers' faith and the Orality Movement. The integrative roles of symbol, story, and ritual will do much more than transfix her observers; it will transform them, their families, their communities, and their nations for Christ.

Through paradoxes, parallels, patterns, and predictions, the mysterious plot laid out by the Author and authors winds and weaves its way through the Sacred Storybook in search of a conclusion. It begs for an ending that unites broken relationships. It begs for an ending that weds God's story with the stories of his highest creation. Centered in Christ, this story, along with the symbols and rituals that perpetuated her over generations and ethnicities, has the power to reorient and reorganize our language and lives.

I conclude with something I wrote in *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*: "While an effective ministry cannot be built and perpetuated solely on storytelling, it cannot be done effectively without it."⁵⁰¹ Yes, there is more to the story, and even to orality!

501. Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, 23.

Bibliography

- Adam, Peter. *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Expository Preaching*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Addison, Steve. *Movements that Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Adeyemo, Tokunboh, ed.. *Africa Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Al-Alawadhi, F.. *Oral History of Women Educators in Kuwait: A Comparative Model of Care Ethics between Noddings and Al-Ghazali*. Retrieved from Pro Quest Digital Dissertations, 2018. (<https://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1609202182.html?FMT=ABS>)
- Anderson, Herbert and Edward Foley. *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Arendt, Hannah. www.quotationspage.com/quote/4861.html
- Aristotle. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/aristotle148503.html>
- Armstrong, Hayward. "Discover How Worldview Shapes Our Lives." In *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying*, edited by Hayward Armstrong, 32-35. Rockville, VA: International Centre for Excellence in Leadership, 2003.
- Arnold, Clinton E.. "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (2004) 39-54.
- Arrington, Aminta. "Christian Hymns as Theological Mediator: The Lisu of South-west China and Their Music." *Studies in World Christianity* 21 (2015) 140-160.
- _____. *Hymns of the Everlasting Hills: The Written Word in an Oral Culture in Southwest China* (Doctoral dissertation), 2014. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (UMI No. 3666130).
- Atran, Scott. "Whither 'Ethnoscience'?" In *Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism*, edited by Pascal Boyer, 48-70. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Auchard, John, ed.. *The Portable Henry James*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2004.
- Augustine, Saint Aurelius, Bishop of Hippo. "De Catechizandis Rudibus (On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed)." London: Methuen cited in Clinton E. Arnold, "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (1912) 47.
- Bacon, Francis. <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/francisbac132240.html>
- Bailey, Kenneth E.. *Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15*. St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.
- _____. *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- Banks, Robert. *God the Worker: Journeys into the Mind, Heart and Imagination of God*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1994.
- Barber, Karin. *Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Barnes, Susan B.. *An Introduction to Visual Communication: From Cave Art to Second Life*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2011.
- Bartholomew, Craig G. and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York, NY: E. P. Dutton, 1979.
- Bateson, Mary Catherine. *Peripheral Vision: Learning Along the Way*, New York, NY: Harper/Collins Publishers, 1994.
- Bauckham, Richard. "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story." In *The Art of Reading Scripture*, edited by Ellen F. Davis and Richard. B. Hays, 38-53. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
- B. B.. "Genealogical Storying in A Nomadic Context." Unpublished paper, 1999.
- Beine, David. "The End of Worldview in Anthropology?" SIL International (SIL Electronic Working Papers 2010-004), 2010.

- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- _____. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Belting, Hans. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Images Before the Era of Art*, translated by Edmund Jephcott. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Benham, Zan. "On Ceremony and Ritual," 2001. http://dwij.org/forum/cerritomni/r1_zan_benham.html
- Blechman, R., Crocker J., Docherty, J., and Garon, S.. "Finding Meaning in A Complex Environmental Policy Dialog: Research Into Worldviews in the Northern Forest Lands Council Dialogue, 1990-94." Fairfax, VA: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, (1998) 1-40. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282348632_Finding_Meaning_in_a_Complex_Environment_Policy_Dialogue_Research_into_Worldview_in_the_Northern_Forest_Lands_Council_Dialogue_1990-04
- Bochner, Arthur P.. *Coming to Narrative: A Personal History of Paradigm Change in the Human Sciences (Writing Lives)*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2014.
- Bohannon, Paul. *How Culture Works*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1994.
- Boleman, Lee and Terrence Deal. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1984.
- Boomershine, Thomas E.. *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991.
- Bosch, David J.. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991/2011.
- Bradt, Kevin M.. *Story as a Way of Knowing*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1997.
- Bramsen, Paul D.. *The Way of Righteousness: Good News for Muslims*. Wall Township, NJ: CMML Inc., 1998.
- Brown, Brené. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/556598-maybe-stories-are-just-data-with-a-soul>
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986.
- Bruner, Jerome S.. *Acts of Meaning: Four Lectures on Mind and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- _____. *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- _____. *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Burnett, David. *World of the Spirits: A Christian Perspective on Traditional and Folk Religions*. Oxford, England: Monarch Books, 2000.
- Caldwell, Larry J.. "Toward the New Discipline of Ethnohermeneutics," *Journal of Asian Mission* 1 (1999) 21-43.
- Camery-Hoggatt, Jerry. "God in the Plot: Storytelling and the Many-Sided Truth of the Christian Faith." *Christian Scholar's Review* 35 (2006) 451-469.
- Carson, D. A.. "Athens Revisited." In *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* edited by D. A. Carson, 384-398. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
- Chan, Samuel. *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.
- Chapell, Bryan. "When Narrative is Not Enough. *Presbyterian: Covenant Seminary Review* 22 (1996) 3-16.
- Chiang, Samuel E. and Grant Lovejoy, eds.. *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference*. Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2015.
- _____. *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts*. Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2013.
- _____. *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*. Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2014.
- Christian History Institute. "Christian History." Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1949.
- Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update 2014-2019 White Paper. http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/white_paper_c11-520862.html
- Clanchy, M. T.. *Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1993.
- Cockrel, Lisa Ann. "Dwelling in Light Accessible." *Christianity Today*, 60 (2016), 39-47.
- Colijn, Brenda B.. *Images of Salvation in the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2010.
- Costas, Orlando E.. *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cox, Harvey. *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Craddock, Fred. "Preaching as Storytelling (8 thirty minute lectures)." Bell Tower Productions; remastered in 2004 edition, 2004.
- Creswell, John W.. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007.
- Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers, Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.
- _____. "The Return of Shame." *Christianity Today* 59 (2015) 32-41.
- Daly, Kerry. "Re-placing Theory in Ethnography: A Postmodern View." *Qualitative Inquiry* 3 (1997) 343-365.
- Darr, John A.. *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation)*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
- Davies, Douglas J.. *Anthropology and Theology*. New York, NY: Berg, 2002.
- Denzin, Norman K. & Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds.. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.
- deSilva, David A.. *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2009.
- De Vries, Lourens J.. "Local Oral-Written Interfaces and the Nature, Transmission, Performance, and Translation of Biblical Texts." In *Translating Scripture for Sound and Performance: New Directions in Biblical Studies*, edited by James A. Maxey and Ernst R. Wendland, 68-98. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012.
- Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education*. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1966.
- Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974.
- Dillistone, Frederick William. *The Power of Symbols in Religion and Culture*. New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986.
- Dinkler, Mechal Beth. "Telling Transformation: How We Redeem Narratives and Narratives Redeem Us." *Word & Deed* 31 (2011) 287-296.
- Donavan, Vincent J.. *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Dorji, Tandin. "Ritualizing Story: A Way to Heal Malady." *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, 20 (2009), 64-75.
- Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1973.
- _____. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Drane, John. *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Drummond, Richard Henry. "Missiologial Lessons—From Events New and Old." *Missiology: An International Review* 22 (1994) 19-42.
- Durbin, Julie Irene. *Reframing Worship in Ukrainian Simple Churches*. PhD. dissertation. Biola University, La Mirada, CA, 2016.
- Eldredge, John. *Epic: The Story God is Telling*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2004.
- Elliott, Jane. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2005.
- Evans, A. Steven. "You Think in Lines, We think in Circles: Oral Communication Implications in the Training of Indigenous Leaders." In *Developing Indigenous leaders: Lessons in Mission from Buddhist Asia* edited by Paul H. De Neui, 21-37. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2013.
- Fackre, Gabriel J.. "Narrative Theology: An Overview." *Interpretation* 37 (1983) 340-353.
- _____. *The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrines*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984.
- _____. *The Doctrine of Revelation: A Narrative Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997.
- _____. *Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975.
- Fields, Leslie Leylands. "The Gospel is More than A Story: Rethinking Narrative and Testimony." *Christianity Today* 56 (2012) 38-43.

- Finnegan, Ruth. *The Oral and Beyond: Doing Things with Words in Africa*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Firth, Raymond. *Symbols: Public and Private*. Sydney, NSW: George Allen & London, Unwin, 1973.
- Fisher, Walter R.. *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Values, and Action*. Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina, 1987.
- _____. "Narrative, Reason, and Community in Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative." In *The Human Sciences* edited by Hinchman, Lewis P. and Snadra K. Hinchman 307-327. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Fitzgerald, Sally, ed.. *The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.
- Fitzgerald, Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, eds.. *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.
- Flanders, Christopher L.. *About Face: Rethinking Face for 21st Century Mission*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011.
- Flemming, Dean. *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Fodor, Jerry and Ernest Lepore. *Holism: A Shopper's Guide*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992.
- Fokkelman, J. P.. *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Foley, John Miles. *Oral-formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1985.
- Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002.
- Frei, Hans W.. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in 18th and 19th Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Culture*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973.
- Georges, Jason. "From Shame to Honor: A Theological Reading of Romans for Honor-Shame Contexts." *Missiology: An International Review* 38 (2010) 295-307.
- Godawa, Brian. *The The Imagination of God: Art, Creativity and Truth in the Bible*. Los Angeles, CA: Embedded Pictures Publishing, 2016.
- Goheen, Michael W.. "The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story in the 21st Century." Public lecture presented at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., 2006, November 2.
- Goody, Jack. "Against Ritual." In *Secular Ritual* edited by Moore, Sally F. and Barbara G. Myerhoff, 25-35. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1977.
- Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.
- Grigg, Viv. *Companion to the Poor*. Sydney, NSW: Albatross Books, 1984.
- Gronas, Mikhail. *Cognitive Poetics and Cultural Memory: Russian Literary Mnemonics*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Guevin, B. M.. "The Moral Imagination and the Shaping Power of the Parables." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 17 (1989) 63-79.
- Gunn, David M. and Danna Noland Fewell. *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1993.
- Halverson, Jeffrey, H. L. Goodall, Jr., and Steven R. Corman. *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*. New York, NY: Palgrave Machmillan, 2011.
- Hansen, Richard P.. *Paradox Lost: Rediscovering the Mystery of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.
- Happe, Peter. *English Mystery Plays: A Selection*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1975.
- Hauerwas, Stanley and L. Gregory Jones, eds.. *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.
- Havelock, Eric Alfred. *Origins of Western Literacy*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for the Study of Education, 1976.
- _____. *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
- _____. *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hesselgrave, David. *Scripture and Strategy: The Use of the Bible in Postmodern Church and Mission*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994.
- Hiebert, Paul G.. "Critical Contextualization." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (1987) 104-112.
- _____. *Cultural Anthropology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983.
- _____. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 2009.
- _____. *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Hiebert, Paul G., Daniel Shaw and Tite Tiénou. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.
- Hill, Jane H.. "Finding Culture in Narrative." In *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods* edited by Naomi Quinn, 157-202. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Hipps, Shane. *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Hohulin, Dick. "Hymnology and Culture." Unpublished paper, n.d.
- Hohulin, Dick and Lou Hohulin. "KallahanKeleyi Lexical Database." Unpublished document, n.d.
- Howells, Richard and Joaquim Negreiros. *Visual Culture*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012.
- Hunt, David F.. *A Revolution in Church Multiplication in East Africa: Transformational Leaders Develop a Self-sustainable Model of Rapid Church Multiplication*. DMin. dissertation. Bakke Graduate University, 2009.
- Hymes, Dell. "Ethnopoetics, Oral-formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts." *Oral Tradition*. 9 (1994) 330-370.
- Ingram, George and Mary Ingram. *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters*. Revision Committee: Lucknow, Madras: India, 1997.
- Internet World Stats. "Internet Users in the World by Regions November 2015." <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>
- Jackson, Bill. *Nothingsgonnastopit! The Storyline of the Bible*. Moreno Valley, CA: Radical Middle Ministries, 2009.
- Jacob, Jaimol in Mischke, Werner. "The Bible—So Close to the Culture of India?" <http://www.wernermischke.org>
- Jageron, Jennifer. *Transformation Through Narrative: Exploring the Power of Sacred Stories Among Oral Learners in Ethiopia*. PhD. dissertation. Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, 2016.
- Jensen, Richard A.. *Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination in Preaching*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1981.
- _____. *Thinking in Story: Preaching in a Post-literate Age*. Lima, OH: CSS Publishing Company, 1993.
- Jensen, Robin. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual and Theological Dimensions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Jewel, Dawn Herzog. "Winning the Oral Majority." *Christianity Today* 50 (2006) 56-58.
- Jordon, James B.. *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1988.
- Jousse, Marcel. *The Oral Style: Routledge Library Editions Folklore* (E. Sienaert & R. Whitaker, Trans.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2016.
- Kaiser, Jr., Walter C.. *The Promise-plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Kelber, Werner H.. *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Kertzer, David I.. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Kitamori, Kazoh. *Theology of the Pain of God: The First Original Theology from Japan*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005.
- Klem, Herbert V.. *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1982.
- Klemm, David. *Hermeneutical Inquiry*, Vol. 1. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986.
- Klink, Edward W. III and Darian R, Lockett. *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Knowles, Malcolm, Elwood Holton III, and Richard Swanson. *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.
- Koller, Charles W.. *Sermons Preached Without Notes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1964.

- Koyama, Kosuke. *Water Buffalo Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Larson, David L.. *Telling the Old, Old Story: The Art of Narrative Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995.
- Lausanne Issue Group. *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. New York, NY: Elim Printing, 2005.
- Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. New York, NY: McIntosh and Otis, Inc., 1988.
- Lessa, William A. and Evon Z. Vogt, eds.. *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson & Co., 1972.
- Lewis, C. S. and Walter Hooper, ed. *C. S. Lewis: Selected Literary Essays*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Lim, David S.. "Biblical Worship Rediscovered: A Theology for Communicating Basic Christianity." In *Communicating Christ through Story and Song: Orality in Buddhist Contexts* edited by Paul H. De Neui, 27-59. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008.
- Lingenfelter, Sherwood G.. *Agents of Transformation: A Guide for Effective Cross-cultural Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.
- _____. *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Lloyd-Jones, Sally. "Q+A: The Story Behind the Jesus Storybook Bible." Friday 05, 2016. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2016/january/qa-story-behind-jesus-storybook-bible.html>
- Loewen, Jacob A.. "Bible stories: Message and Matrix." *Practical Anthropology* 11 (1964) 49-54. Reprinted in *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective* edited by Jacob A. Loewen, 370-376. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975.
- Longenecker, Bruce W. ed.. *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Luzbetak, Louis J.. *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious worker*. Techny, IL: Divine Word Publications, 1970.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- Madinger, Charles. "Coming to Terms with Orality: A Holistic Model." *Missiology: An International Review* 38 (2010) 201-213.
- Mathews, AP.. *Preaching that Speaks to Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Matthews, Michael Vern. *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality*. Victoria, BC: Tellwell, 2017.
- _____. *Is There a Reader in this Text? The Place of Metanarrative in the Problem of Meaning*. PhD. dissertation. Canterbury Christ Church University and Trinity Theological Seminary, 2013.
- McClendon, James W.. *Biography as Theology: How Life-Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974.
- McCroskey, J.. *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication 9e*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2005.
- McFarland, Curtis D.. *A Linguistic Atlas of the Philippines: Studies of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa*. Monograph Series No. 15, 1980.
- McGavran, Donald A.. *The Satnami Story: The Thrilling Drama of Religious Change*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1990.
- McIlwain, Trevor. *Building on Firm Foundations: Guidelines for Evangelism and Teaching Believers*, Vol. 1. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1987.
- _____. *Building on Firm Foundations: Guidelines for Evangelism and Teaching Believers*, Vol. 1. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 2005.
- _____. *Notes on the Chronological Approach to Evangelism & Church Planting*. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1981.
- _____. *The Chronological Approach to Evangelism and Church Planting*. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985.
- McIlwain, Trevor with Ruth Brendle. *The Chronological Approach to Evangelism and Church Planting*. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1981.
- McKee, Robert. *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins, 1997.
- McKnight, Scott. *The King Jesus: The Original Good News Revised*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2011.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Meeks, Wayne A.. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Mehrabian, Albert. *Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publication Co.
- Merriam, Sharan B. & Associates. *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Merriam, Sharan B. & Laura L. Bierema. *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013.
- Messner, Donald E.. *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Meyendorff, Paul. "Reflections on Russian Liturgy: A Retrospect on the Occasion of the Millennium." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 33 (1989) 21-34.
- Miller, Calvin. *Spirit, Word, and Story: A Philosophy of Marketplace Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989.
- Minear, Paul Sevier. *Images of the Church in the New Testament*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2016.
- Mischke, Werner. *The Global Gospel. Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*. Scottsdale, AR: Mission ONE, 2015.
- Moon, Jay. *African Proverbs Reveal Christianity in Culture: A Narrative Portrayal of Builsa Proverbs Contextualizing Christianity in Ghana*, PhD. dissertation. Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005.
- Moore, Jerry D.. *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009.
- Moreau, Scott. "Paul Hiebert's Legacy of Worldview." *Trinity Journal* 30 (2009) 223-233.
- Müller, Roland. *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2000.
- Murdoch, James R.. "Media." *TIME*, 186 (2015) 39.
- Murray, Henry. *Explorations in Personality: A Clinical and Experiential Study of Fifty Men of College Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Naugle Jr. David K.. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.
- Needham, Rodney. *Exemplars*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985.
- Netland, Harold. "Globalization and the Pluralistic Jesus." Unpublished paper presented at the EMS/IFMA conference in Orlando, Florida on September 25, 2003.
- Nichols, Marie Leona Hobbs. *The Mantle of Elias; the Story of Fathers Blanchet and Demers*. Portland, OR: Binforde & Mort, 1941.
- Nida, Eugene. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.
- Nisbett, Richard E.. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 2004.
- Nunan, David, & Choi, Julie. "Shifting Sands: The Evolving Story of 'Voice.' in Qualitative Research." In *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 2 edited by Eli Hinkel, 222-236. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- O'Connell, John. "Cultural Noise." In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management*, Vol. 6 edited by Jeanne McNett et al., 85. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.
- Olick, Jeffrey K.. "Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-reificatory Approach to Collective Memory." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006) 5-14.
- Ollenburer, Ben C.. *Zion, City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987.
- Olthuis, James H.. "On Worldviews." In *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science* edited by Sander Griffioen, Paul A. Marshall, and Richard J. Mouw, 26-139. University Press of America, 1989.
- Ong, Walter J.. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen, 1982.
- _____. *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Opler, Morris E.. "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture." *American Journal of Sociology* 51 (1945) 198-206.
- Ortner, Sherry B.. "On Key Symbols." *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973) 1338-1346.

- Osborne, Grant R.. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Paaauw, Glenn R.. *Saving the Bible from Ourselves: Learning to Read & Live the Bible Well*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016.
- Palmer, Parker J.. *The Courage to Teach: Guide for Reflection and Renewal*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Parker, Margaret. "The Richness of Biblical Metaphor." n.d.
<http://collegiateministries.intervarsity.org/leader-tools/richness-biblical-metaphor>
- Patterson, George and Richard Scoggins. *Church Multiplication Guide*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1993.
- Pennoyer, F. Douglas. "An Answer for the Beggars of Panay." *World Christian* 4 (1985) 41-43.
- Percy, Walker. *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One has to Do with the Other*. New York, NY: Picador, 1975.
- Peterson, Eugene H.. *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians*. New York City, NY: Harper Collins, 1997.
- Pinnock, Clark H.. *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 1996.
- Polkinghorne, Donald E.. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988.
- Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Prahalad, C. K.. *Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing, 2006.
- Pratt Jr., Richard L.. *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1990.
- Priest, Doug. *Slippery Paths in the Darkness: Papers on Syncretism, 1965-1988*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2014.
- Quick, Catherine. "Annotated Bibliography, 1986-1990." *Oral Tradition Journal* 12 (1997) 366-484.
- Quinn, Naomi. "How to Reconstruct Schemas People Share, From What They Say." In *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods* edited by Naomi Quinn, 35-82. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Ramm, Bernard. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1954.
- Rappaport, Roy A.. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Richards, E. Randolph and Brandon J. O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
- Richardson, Don. *Peace Child: An Unforgettable Story of Primitive Jungle Treachery in the 20 Century*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books. Fourth Edition, 2005.
- Ricoeur, Paul. "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality." In *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination* edited by Mario J. Valdes, 123-141. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- _____. *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Roemer, Michael. *Telling Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidation of Traditional Narrative*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995.
- Rogers, Everett M.. *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York, NY: Free Press of Glenoco, 2003.
- Romaine, Suzanne. *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: University Press, 2000.
- Ruitenbergh, Claudia. "Deconstructing the Experience of the Local: Toward a Radical Pedagogy of Place." In *Philosophy of Education* edited by K. Howe, 212-220. Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 2005.
- Ryken, Leland. "The Bible: God's Story-book." *Christianity Today* 23 (1979) 34-38.
- _____. *Works of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1987.
- Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, eds.. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sailhammer, John H.. *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.
- Sandelowski, Margarete. "Telling Stories: Narrative Approaches in Qualitative Research." *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 23 (1991) 161-166.
- Sayers, Dorothy L.. *The Mind of the Maker*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1941.
<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/dlsayers/mindofmaker/mind.02.htm>
- Schattner, Frank. *The Wheel Model: Catalyzing Sustainable Church Multiplication Movements*. Rocklin, CA: William Jessup University, 2014.
- Schechner, Richard. "From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure/process of the Efficacy-entertainment Dyad." *Educational Theatre Journal* 26 (1974) 455-481.
- Schirch, Lisa. *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005.
- Schultze, Dell G. and Rachel Sue Schultze. *God and Man*. Mandaluyong, Metro Manila: Republic of the Philippines, 1984.
- Schwartz, Seth J., Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignotes, eds.. *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* [2 Volumes]. Springer, NY: Springer, 2011.
- Scott, William Henry. *On the Cordillera: A Look at the Peoples and Cultures of the Mountain Province*. Manila, Philippines : MCS Enterprises, 1966.
- Segal, Robert A.. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Shaull, Richard. "Foreward." In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. New York, NY: Continuum, 2005.
- Shaw, R. Daniel, Compiler. "Christian Anthropologists Reflect on Worldview." Unpublished paper, 2009.
- Shaw, Susan M.. *Storytelling in Religious Education*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1999.
- Shore, Bradd. *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Short, Sharon Warkentin. *Children's Responses to Bible Stories: A Case Study of an Elementary Sunday School Program*. PhD. dissertation. Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, 2010.
- Sienart, Edgard Richard. "The Oral Style and the Anthropology of Gesture," *Oral Traditions* 5 (1990) 91-106.
- Sire, James W.. *The Universe Next Day*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Slack, James B. and J.O. Terry. *Chronological Bible Storying: A Methodology for Presenting the Gospel to Oral Communication*. Unpublished document, 1997.
- Smith, Christian. *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003.
- Smith, Christopher R.. "Literary Evidence of a Fivefold Structure in the Gospel of Matthew." *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997) 540-551.
- Smith, James K. A.. "Singing the Story into Our Bones." *Reformed Worship* 108 (2013) 20-22.
- Snowden, Mark, ed.. *Orality in America*. Palm Desert, CA: Mission America Coalition, 2016.
- Sobel, Andrew. "Nine Ways Power Questions Help Us Build Better Business Relationships." <https://www.latintrends.com/nine-ways-power-questions-help-us-build-better-business-relationships/>
- Sobol, Joseph. "Oracy in the New Millennium." *Journal of Bhutan Studies* 20 (2009) 109-124.
- Song, C. S.. *In the Beginning Were Stories, Not Texts*. Cambridge: England, James Clark & Co., 2011.
- Soskice, Janet. *Metaphor and Religious Language*. Oxford: England, Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Steffen, Tom. "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 1." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994) 86-97.
- _____. "A Narrative Approach to Communicating the Bible, Part 2." *Christian Education Journal* 24 (1994a) 98-109.
- _____. "Congregational Character: From Stories to Story." *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 11 (2000) 17-31.
- _____. "Don't Show the Jesus Film..." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 29 (1993) 272-275.
- _____. "Flawed Evangelism and Church Planting." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998a) 428-435.
- _____. "Foundational Roles of Symbol and Narrative in the (Re)construction of Reality and Relationships." *Missiology: An International Review* 26 (1998) 477-494.
- _____. "Minimizing Crosscultural Evangelism Noise." *Missiology: An International Review* 43 (2015) 413-428.

- _____. "Missiology's Journey for Acceptance in the Educational World." *Missiology: An International Review* 31 (2003) 131-153.
- _____. "Orality Comes of Age: The Maturation of a Movement." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 31 (2014a) 139-147.
- _____. *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers*. Rev. ed. La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1997.
- _____. "Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol." *Missiology: An International Review* 38 (2010) 141-159.
- _____. *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad*. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media/Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- _____. *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- _____. "Theories Drive Our Ministries Whether We Know Them or Not." *Reformed Life Theology and Mission* 1 (2011a) 191-239.
- _____. "Tracking the Orality Movement." *Global Missiology* 4 (2013) 21-24. <http://www.lausanne.org/docs/LGA/Lausanne-Global-Analysis-2014-03.pdf>
- _____. "Tracking the Orality Movement: Some Implications for 21st Century Missions." *Lausanne Global Analysis* 3 (2014) 21-24. <http://www.lausanne.org/docs/LGA/Lausanne-Global-Analysis-2014-03.pdf>
- Steffen, Tom and JO Terry. "The Sweeping Story of Scripture Taught Through Time." *Missiology: An International Review* 35 (2007) 315-335.
- Steffen, Tom and Lois McKinney-Douglas. *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Stegner, William Richard. *Narrative Theology in Early Jewish Christianity*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.
- Steimle, Edmund A., Morris J. Niedenthal and Charles L. Rice. *Preaching the Story*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Stephan, David G.. *The Biographical Bible*. Austin, TX: WORDsearch Corp., 2013.
- Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Strauss, Claudia. "Analyzing Discourse for Cultural Complexity." In *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods* edited by Naomi Quinn, 203-242. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Strauss, Robert. *Introducing Story-Strategic Methods: Twelve Steps Toward Effective Engagement*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017.
- Stringer, Stephen, ed.. *S-T4T: Intentional Evangelism Utilizing Stories from God's Word Resulting in Multiplying House Churches*. Monument, CO: WigTake Resources, LLC., 2008.
- Sweeney, Amin. *A Full Hearing: Orality and Literacy in the Malay World*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.
- Sweet, Leonard. *From Tablet to Table: Where Community is Found and Identity is Formed*. Colorado Springs, CO: NAVPRESS, 2014.
- _____. *Post-modern Pilgrims. First Century Passion for the 21st Century World*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.
- _____. *So Beautiful: Design for Life and the Church*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Temple, William. *Readings in St. John's Gospel*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers, 1952.
- Terry, J.O.. *Basic Bible Storying*. Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2008.
- _____. "Role of Worldview in Story Selection." *The Journal of Bible Storying* 13 (2005) 1-6.
- Thigpen, L. Lynn. *Connected Learning: A Grounded Theory Study of How Cambodian Adults with Limited Formal Education Learn*. PhD. dissertation. Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, 2016.
- Thomas, Gil. *Gaining Ground with Good Soil*. Harrison, PA: ABWE, Inc., 2009.
- Thompson, John B., editor and translator. *Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Tiénou, Tite. "Christianity Theology in an Era of World Christianity." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* edited by Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 37-51. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Tilley, Terrance W.. *Story Theology*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1985.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Tippett, Alan R.. *Solomon Island Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1967.
- _____. *Introduction to Missiology*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987.
- Tolmie, D. F.. *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*. San Francisco, CA: International Scholars Publications, 1999.
- Topliff, Debby B.. *And the Word Became Color: Exploring the Bible with Paper, Pen, and Paint*. Saugatuck, MI: Firefly Life, 2015.
- Tucker, Ruth A.. *The Biographical Bible: Exploring the Biblical Narrative from Adam and Eve to John of Patmos*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013.
- Tuggy, Leonard A. and Ralph E. Tolivar. *Seeing the Church in the Philippines*. Manila, Philippines: O.M.F. Publishers, 1972.
- Turner, Victor W.. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphor: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- _____. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- _____. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. Chicago, IL: Aldine, 1969.
- _____. "Symbols in African Ritual." In *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings* edited by J. L. Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer and D. M. Schneider, 183-194. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1977.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J.. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
- Verderber, Kathleen S., Verderber, Rudolph F., and Deanna D. Sellnow. *Communicate!* (14 edition). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014.
- Vicedom, George F.. *Church and People in New Guinea*. London, England: Lutterworth, 1961.
- _____. "An Example of Group Conversion." *Practical Anthropology* 9 (1962) 123-128.
- Viola, Frank. *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008.
- Viola, Frank and George Barna. *Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008.
- Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions. Third edition, 2007.
- Wachsmuth, Melody J.. "Refugees on the Roma Road." *Christianity Today* 60 (2016) 22-24.
- Watanabe, Teresa. "Japanese Parade for St. Patrick, Whoever He Was."
Los Angeles Times. http://articles.latimes.com/1993-03-16/news/wr-378_1_cultural-faux-pas
- Weber, Hans-Rudi. *Communicating the Gospel to Illiterates*. London, England: SCM Press, 1957.
- _____. *Experiments with Bible Study*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1981.
- Wiesel, Elie. *The Gates of the Forest*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966.
- Wiher, Hannes. *Shame and Guilt: A Key to Cross-cultural Ministry*. Lektorat & Satz: Hans-Christian Beese Umschlaggestaltung und Gesamtherstellung: BoD Beese Druck, Friedensallee 76, 22765 Hamberg: Germany, 2003.
- Willis, Jr., Avery T. and Mark Snowden. *Truth that Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Wilson, Monica. "Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism." *American Anthropologists* 56 (1954) 228-241.
- Wilson, Paul Scott. *Imagination of the Heart: New Understandings in Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988.
- Witherington, III, Ben. *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.
- Witkin, H.A., & D.R. Goodenough. 1981. Cognitive Styles: Essence and Origins, Field Dependence and Field Independence. *Psychological Issues* 14 (51) Whole issue.
- Wolf, Eric R.. "Facing Power." *American Anthropologist* 92 (1990) 586-596.
- Wood, Julia T.. *Human Communication: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.
- Wooldridge, B.. 1995. Increasing the Effectiveness of University/College Instruction: Integrating the Results of Learning Style Research into Course Design and Delivery in R. R. Sims and S. J. Sims (Eds.) *The Importance of Learning Styles: Understanding the Implications for Learning, Course Design, and Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 49-67.

- Wright, N.T.. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- _____. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.
- _____. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God. Book 1*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Wright, Suzan. "'Culture' in Anthropology and Organizational Studies." In *Anthropology of Organizations* edited by Suzan Wright, 1-31. New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.
- Wu, Jackson. "How Would Jesus Tell It? Crafting Stories from an Honor-Shame Perspective." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 51 (2015) 104-109.
- Yoakum, Stuart Trevor. *The Spoken Word: God, Scripture, and Orality in Missions*. DMin. Dissertation. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.
- Youngbock, Kim. *Minjung Theology: People as the Subject of History*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984.
- Zahniser, A.H. Mathias. *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples Across Cultures*. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1997.

Appendix A

Rethinking Theological Education⁵⁰²

WHAT IF ONE COULD redesign theological education from scratch? How could this impact 21st century faculty? Students? People in the pews? Facilities? Seating arrangements? Textbooks? Curricula? Technology? Tests? On-line courses? Assignments? Theses? Dissertations? Following are a few questions to jumpstart the dialogue.

What if missiology replaced philosophy as theology's symbiotic partner? What if teachers viewed Scripture as a Sacred Storybook or Sacred Drama rather than a Sacred Textbook? What if the first course a student takes highlights the mountaintops as it sweeps across Genesis to Revelation, tying it all together in a unified story? What if a capstone course required a review of the same? What if all Bible teachers showed where their classes fit into the metanarrative of Scripture?

What if theological education was driven by stories, symbols, and rituals rather than abstract concepts? What if it was driven by concrete characters rather than philosophical ideas? What if character studies preceded concept studies? What if propositions were personified? What if it promoted discovery learning through problem solving rather than listening to the lecture to pass the next exam? What if it was driven from whole-to-part rather than part-to-(sometimes) whole?

What if the teacher told part of his or her life story before overviewing the course syllabus? What if seating was semicircular making conversing convenient? What if mystery was given equal status with mastery? What if andragogy drove teaching in the classroom? What if case studies and simulation exercises became more dominate in the classroom? What if communal learning drove on-line courses? What if learning objectives were open to more than the teacher's goals?

What if all faculty were provided a seminar on primary and secondary ("residual") orality? All students? What if the class sat in a circle in a home? What if technology was used in the classroom to provide immediate depth to discussion and encourage interaction? What if students initiated it? What if meaning took precedence over words? What if courses were taught in spiral fashion so that repetition provides review as new and deeper materials are added? What if a digital schematic accompanied it for the faculty? For the students? What if geographical maps were used or created to teach books of the Bible? What if biographies were considered textbooks? What if biographies were required reading/viewing of Bible and other significant characters? What if faculty devised a grading matrix that equally rewarded orality and digital technology?

502. This appendix is adapted from a paper entitled "Story in Life, Ministry, and Academics" that I presented at a Faculty Luncheon at Biola University on April 9, 2014.

What if the imagination, emotions, and volition were given equal weight with the cognitive? What if narrative logic was given equal status with propositional logic? What if theories were taught as stories and through stories? What if theories required demonstrated practice and servanthood? What if the grading matrix included storytelling abilities before groups? Abilities to use metaphors and images to create a theater of the mind?

What if hermeneutics gave the same amount of time to narrative theology as it does to biblical theology and systematic theology? What if symbol was allowed to use its own form of logic for interpretation? What if experiential apologetics were given the same weight as evidential apologetics? What if the creeds were taught through storied events? What if Greek was taught through song? What if the Epistles were taught through story and symbol? Reviewed through song? What if students were required to develop the theme of a book of the Bible by analyzing the cast of spiritual and human characters mentioned within it? What if homiletics replaced three-point sermons with Bible stories, symbols, and rituals? What if some courses addressed the needs of many of the students sitting in the classroom, such as caste, ancestor veneration, polygamy? What if evangelism was based on Bible stories rather than propositions and plans? What if spiritual formation practices were based on Bible and post-Bible character studies? Hidden curriculum (unintended learning) of symbols and rituals? What if the arts included ethnodoxology? What if chapels expressed the same? What if theological education was driven by *missio Dei*?

What if syllabuses were written in story with bullet points? What if PowerPoint was big on images but brief on words? What if some required assignments could be fulfilled through the production of videos or dance or pieces of art or composed songs or proverbs or poems or Prezi presentations? What if book reviews were written or told as stories? What if dissertation research was based as strongly on story collection (qualitative research) as it is on gathering statistics (quantitative research)? What if assigned papers were required to be written in story? What if textbooks were written in story? What if theses and dissertations were written in story format?

What if exams were given to groups with all receiving the same grade earned? What if the number of oral exams were equal to the number of written exams? What if comprehensives were given through case studies to discern the integration of theory and practice? What if honor/shame values received the same attention as guilt-innocence in classroom dialogue? In grading? In the Sacred Storybook?

What if graduation depended on accurately telling a minimum of 35 Bible stories, along with the doctrines they teach? Depended on telling five books of the Bible from memory? Depended on one's ability to tell 15 Bible proverbs and 10 Psalms? Depended on one's ability to identify Bible characters that followed (or failed to follow) the Ten Commandments? That define the Covenants? The Great Commandment? The Beatitudes? The Great Commission? Depended on knowing the stories of the key players who made the genealogies in the Gospels? Depended on one's ability to identify the Bible characters that convey the major doctrines of the Bible? Convey ethical and unethical behavior? Convey exemplary and cautionary models of leadership and followership? Depended on relating spiritual power issues with the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:5)?

What if graduation depended on one's ability to tweet the metanarrative of the Sacred Storybook? Tweet the gospel? Tweet the theme of each of the 66 books of the Bible? Depended on one's ability to dramatize the metanarrative from Genesis to Revelation in 30 minutes? Depended on one's ability to tell the stories of the 11 characters

and two symbols mentioned in Acts 7? The 19 characters who made the honor role of faith along with the 10 symbols mentioned in Hebrews 11? Of the approximately 550 stories in the Sacred Storybook, what is the minimal number that should comprise a Biola graduate's "Story Collection"?⁵⁰³ What is the minimal number of Bible symbols a Biola graduate's "Symbol Collection" should contain?

Would such revisions in theological education help produce thick or thin theology for a 21st century audience? Would memorable theology that translates into transformational practice result? Would lifelong learners result? After all, "Education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process."⁵⁰⁴ Let the dialogue begin because it will do no good to stay where we presently find most faculty and students involved in theological education.

503. Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, 101.

504. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 38.

Appendix B

The Earthiness of Story⁵⁰⁵

IF THE PREDOMINANT GENRE of the Sacred Storybook is narrative, evangelicals must give narrative theology its due. It is time to restore, renarrate, redrama, recharacter theology laundered of the earthy so that abstract concepts can be placed within concrete events. Why? Because “narrative speaks in the idiom of the earth.”⁵⁰⁶ Because “storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it.”⁵⁰⁷ Because “dull dogma” will give way to demanding drama. Because “we not only learn truth but see it enacted in living relationship.”⁵⁰⁸ Because “theology must be at least biography”⁵⁰⁹ in that convictions must be lived out in life. Because “spirituality is not less than cognitive, it is more than cognitive.”⁵¹⁰ Because “the trues of stories are made, not by logical persuasion, but by experiential engagement. Stories do not convince by argument; they surprise by identification.”⁵¹¹ Because “Paul’s writings are less a collection of doctrinal studies than a series of theological conversations between the apostle and his diverse audiences within their life circumstances.”⁵¹² Because the Bible did not come to humanity in a book of concepts and categories. Because clarity without characters takes one down the fast track to empty coldness. Because not to do so is to make systematic theology the West’s ethnotheology, thereby limiting God to a rational being. *Logos* is an event!

“Maybe stories are just data
with a soul.”

(Brené Brown)

505. This is excerpted from a paper entitled Story in Life, Ministry, and Academics that I presented at a Faculty Luncheon at Biola University on April 9, 2014.

506. Fackre, “Narrative Theology,” 345.

507. Arendt, www.quotationspage.com/quote/4861.html

508. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 208.

509. McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 37.

510. Mathews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 95.

511. Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education*, 61.

512. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 105.

Appendix C

Some Questions About Questions⁵¹³

I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS about the use of questions. In reviewing the discovery learning questions used for review and application in the above metanarrative models, a number of questions came to mind. Do the questions asked direct the listeners to respond with abstract concepts? Or, do they challenge the listeners to focus on concrete characters that lead to abstract concepts? Do they elicit answers from a G/I perspective? A H/S perspective? A F/P perspective? A PP perspectives? Questions create categories.

Following is a list of possible concrete, character-based questions that address GI, HS, FP, PP. Caution—I am not suggesting that they all be used in one story. Some can serve as follow-up questions. Rather, which type of question will raise the least noise in your context?

1. Who was your favorite character in the story? Least favorite? Why?
2. Who made wise choices? Unwise choices? What were the consequences?
3. What other choices could [character's name] have made?
4. Who was shamed in the story? Honored? Why?
5. How did those in the story demonstrate confidence in the spirit world? Fear?
6. Which character(s) trusted the spiritual world for power? Why?
7. Who broke God's commands? How did God react?
8. Whose actions made him/her unclean? Clean? Why?
9. How did God react to [character's name] actions? Why?
10. Which character represents preferred behavior? Least preferred behavior? Why?
11. What do these characters teach us about God? Other spirits?
12. Who changed the most in the story? How? Why?
13. Which character would you prefer to be? Least prefer to be? Why?
14. Who is the honored hero of the story? The detested villain? Why?
15. What proverb/metaphor could be associated with [character's name]?
16. Who in the story should you (individual/peers/family) model? Why? How?

Be prepared to hear different answers from different segments of the host society—genders, generations, and those representing different geographical areas. For collective societies (part of the HS frame), multi-individual decisions to follow Christ will raise less noise than asking for individual decisions.

513. This appendix is adapted from Steffen, Minimizing Crosscultural Evangelism Noise. *Missiology: An International Review* 43 (2015) 423-424.

The astute reader will notice the absence of “why” questions. “Cause and effect” questions were purposely avoided to help minimize noise. Values and worldview assumptions will still surface through the characters idealized or scorned in the above questions. This suggests the need for an analysis of how the locals use questions.⁹

The Chinese Intellectual model ends with a series of questions, “Will you humble yourselves before him? Will you trust in Jesus as your Savior? Will you give him your allegiance to Him as King? What do you say?” The Folk Buddhist model offers a prayer to pray after asking, “Would you like to honor the Father and commit your life to following him?” T4T asks, “Do you want to go through Jesus to return to God’s side? Yes or no,” before asking to believe and confess Jesus. The North African Muslim model’s final question is, “Would you like to learn more about him?”

What is not obvious in these questions (because of the English language) is if “you” refers to an individual or a group. Those from collective societies will prefer to make a group (however defined within the culture) response. Less noise. More companionship to face inevitable persecution.

Not all questions are created equal. Effective review and application questions used for communal assessment among oral-preferenced learners will evidence strong emotional connections with the characters and symbols mentioned in the text. One would also expect to see their emotional connections move beyond the characters and symbols to the Author, resulting in a deepening love. In sum, the type of questions asked may be more important than the answers given.

Appendix D

What Makes A Good Story?

What Makes a Good Story?

Tom Steffen

unorderly schema	Structure	orderly schema ☐
unrealistic predicaments	Plot	life-like predicaments ☐
unfelt/unclear/unrealistic	Conflict	felt/clear/realistic ☐
unsuspenseful	Mystery	suspenseful ☐
untimely	Pace	timely ☐
unreal/unpredictable	Characters	realistic/predictable ☐
unaroused	Emotions	aroused ☐
undesirable/boring	Aesthetic	desirable/fascinating ☐
one-sided	Integrative	holistic ☐
monologue	Interactive	dialogue ☐
unsatisfactory	Resolution	satisfactory ☐

Appendix E

Substitute Songs for the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao

We Dedicate/Give This New-Born-Child to God *I-eng-eng Min Apu Dios eya Akki Ungnga*⁵¹⁴

1. Jesus Christ, our Lord
Jesus Kristo e Apu
you look at their/our house.
ang-ang mu eya baley da/mi.
There-is a new born child here
Wada akki unngadya
which you have given to them/us.
Hi-gam nalpuan tu (huyyan uungnga).
2. If he sins against you
Hedin manliwat hi-gatu
and forsakes the way
et liwanen tu tugun mu
which his parents taught him,
ni intugun idan ammed tu,
you cause it to be restored to him.
manibangad mu ahan hi-gatun hi-gam.
3. it is necessary that the nature
Mahapul niya ingkatuu tu
of this-one-here will be made new
ey meiddagyum ni ingkatuum (e Apu Dios)
before you accept him.
Et maibilang ni hi-gam.
4. If he follows you
Hedin hi-gam u-unuden tu
his way will be good.
Mankayyagud pambalanan tu.
And you will help him
Et baddangam hi-gatu
if he has hardship.
Hedin neligatan.

514. Source: Hohulin, "Hymnology and culture." Unpublished paper.
Translators: Duyugen Pugong and Dagami Pugong-Tayaban.

Chorus

You are the one who protects
Hi-gam hu man eddug (or *menang-ang*)
 this new born child.
Eyan akki ungnga.
 We desire that he will follow you
 in all that he does.
Hi-gam kuma unnuden tud emin ni pehding tu.

Jesus Helps in Our Work***Baddangan Deitsun Jesus di Ingunu Tayu***

1. The women remove-the-grass-by-hand from the field
Yadda bii man gebbut di payew
 and they also bolo-clean-it.
et pawaan da.
 When the bolo-work is finished
Hedin negibbuh pawa
 they next remove-the-grass-and-heap it.
Manlenga law .
2. When they remove-the-grass-and-heap-it-work is finished
Hedin negibbuh (or *neigikda*) *langa*
 we share-work in spading.
Itu-nud law gaud.
 (There is) all our ability for this
Kabaelan min pehding huyya
 because of you, Lord Jesus.
Gapuh ni hi-gam e Jesus.
3. When the field has-been-spaded
Hedin neigikda (negibbuh) gaud
 now (we) bring-down the seeds,
e-pahen law ihhepnak,
 three days pass
hedin nelabah tellun aggew
 before we sow the seed bed.
Manhepnak law.
4. Jesus is the-one-who-makes-it-sprout.
Hi Jesus manpetmel ni inhepnak.
 The men scrape-the-field-level-with-shovels.
Yadda laki mengiddah .
 The women remove-and-shake-the-plants.
Yadda bii manwahwah.
 The others transplant-it.
Yadda edum memgay (manbebgay).
5. We're always working-working
Eg me-puh hu ngunu mi
 As if it had not end.
Endi siked tu.

Again our-work-is-to-remove-the-grass-among-the-rice
Kami mewan law manwe-al
before we scrape-the-terraces.
Et han kami mangidah (mankiddah).

6. It-is-almost now harvest time,
Kamangeddengi law anni,
good is what you have given.
Kayyagud hu limmun Apu Dios
There is now our food again
Wada mewan kennen mi
because of your care for people.
Tep ya mukapemaptek ni tuum.

Chorus

You are the one who protects/cares for us,
Hi-gam kamengippaptek ni hi-gami,
We are not worried now.
Elleg kami law umtakut.
You are the only one we honor/praise,
hi-gam ni ebuh mikadeyyawa,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.
E Apu Jesus.

Appendix F

Four Value Frames of the Gospel

GOSPEL FRAMES	Guilt/ INNO- CENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLUTION/ PURITY
LANG- UAGE	Moral Law	Moral code	Moral custom	Moral values
NAMES FOR GOD	Just One Righteous Judge	King Jealous- Lover Patron	Victor Deliver Lord	Cleanser Pure One
NAMES FOR SATAN	Liar Accuser	Challenger Debater	Adversary Prowling Lion	Dirty One
GOD'S ISSUE	Justice challenge d	Lost face	Power usurped	Holiness polluted
PEOPLE'S ISSUE	Broke God's law	Dishonored Patron	Usurped God's power	Polluted community code
SIN	Broken Law	Broken relationshi p	Challenged power	Polluted community code
RESULTS	Separation from a holy God	Estrange- ment Humiliation Identity Loss	Controlled Possessed	Contamin- ation
COSTS	Punish- ment	Abandon- ment	Domination	Separation
ARENA	Private- Public	Public- Private	Public- Private	Public- Private
PLAYERS	Self-Society	Society-self	Society-self	Society-self stoned him to death.
FOCUS	Internal behavior	Public action	Internal emotion	Internal action

Appendix F Continued

GOSPEL FRAMES	Guilt/ INNO-CENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLUTION/ PURITY
EMOTION	Regret	Unworthy	Powerless	Dirty
OUTCOME	Restitution	Relationship	Control	Acceptance
ACTION	Confess Correct Fix Apologize	Beat self Hide Retaliate Suicide	Appease Manipulate Placate	Appease Manipulate Placate
INTER-VENER	Substitute	Mediator	Victor	Purifier
RESULT	Forgiveness Pardon Obedience	Loyalty Inclusion Reaffirmation	Freedom Peace	Purified Spotless Innocent

Table F.1: Four Value Frames of the Gospel

This book is dedicated to the present global generation of Bible storytellers. It will challenge you to learn from the rich history of the Orality Movement, do your cultural homework related to the integration of symbol, story and ritual, and tell the greatest story ever told with cultural and pedagogical clarity so that individual, communal, and national transformation can result, creating generations of like-minded Bible storytellers.

"If you want your communication to move from window to mirror, from telling a story to the story telling you, then pick up this book pronto."

—LEONARD SWEET, best selling author, professor (Drew, George Fox, Tabor), and founder of preachthestory.com

"A worthy read and study for both the novice storyteller and those experienced."

—J.O. TERRY, Bible Storying Consultant/Trainer

"Valuable tools and insights to enable Scripture-based worldview transformation among oral learners."

—DAVID SWARR, Int'l Orality Network President/CEO

"Steffen convincingly argues that 'symbol, story, and worldview' are paramount in making the Good News known."

—ROBERTA KING, associate professor of Communication and Ethnomusicology, Fuller Theological Seminar

"Steffen gives us a book that lives up to its title. He also simplifies a swath of research."

—JACKSON WU, author of *One Gospel for All Nations* and *Saving God's Face*

"Fills the gap in so many storying movements: the local context and worldview of the audiences."

—AMINTA ARRINGTON, assistant professor of Intercultural Studies, John Brown University

"Thoroughly researched and practically illustrated with walk-me-through-how-to-do-this kind of help."

—GEORGE WALKER, Trainer for New Tribes Mission Cross-Cultural Training Center

Steffen provides both a historical and anthropological basis for storytelling that truly transforms cultures.

—W. JAY MOON, professor of Church Planting and Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary

Steffen has been perhaps the definitive historian of the Orality movement, tracking its growth and branches, its key figures and seminal moments.

—WILLIAM BJORAKER, professor of Judeo-Christian Studies and Contemporary Western Culture, William Carey International University

"Solid food for those engaged in fostering an whole new paradigm shift in mission theory and practice."

—DOUG HAYWARD, professor of intercultural Studies, Biola University

"An essential read for anyone engaged in literacy-based ministries to relationally-based audiences."

—DAVID BEINE, professor of Intercultural Studies, Moody Bible Institute-Spokane

"A must read for cross-cultural workers and pastors due to the oral majority in the world."

—HANSUNG KIM, associate professor, Department of English and Global Studies, ACTS

Tom Steffen is emeritus professor of intercultural studies at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University. He specializes in church multiplication, orality, honor and shame, and business as mission. His family spent 15 years in the Philippines with New Tribes Mission (now ETHNOS360) before coming to Biola. Some of his books include *Passing the Baton*, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, *Great Commission Companies* (with Steve Rundle), *Encountering Missionary Life and Work* (with Lois McKinney Douglas), *The Facilitative Era*.

