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Article

Integration Through Narrative

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Cafferky explores narrative in the context of cultural anthropology, education, business, and religion. Several values of narrative for the university business school classroom emerge, and Cafferky suggests how instructors can use stories for faith, life, and learning integration.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to test the proposition that narrative contains an inherent power for integration of faith, life, and learning of business principles. This is done by a process of reviewing assertions from selected disciplines with the revealed will of God in Scripture. To accomplish this, the paper explores narrative in the context of cultural anthropology, education, business, and religion. From these fields, several parallels can be seen, and several values of narrative for the university business school classroom emerge. The concluding thoughts suggest how instructors can use stories for faith, life, and learning integration.

Introduction

On a flight from Seattle to Baltimore, I heard two

businessmen talking about investments. The younger man in the blue double-breasted suit said, "I don't know how they value their stock. It's a mystery to me."

The older man in the pinstripes said, "You have to do a lot of praying and believe the story." There is more in the wise reply than an answer to the younger man's implied question.

Story is the capsule in which a company's compelling promises are carried to consumers. When consumers believe the story, they are not just receiving a corporate communication. Story helps them *know* what is being offered even before they experience the product. As they come to belief based on what they know, on all but the physical dimension they make the purchase. The actual physical exchange that comes later is merely a symbol of what already has occurred in the

consumer's mind and heart. It was a story that brought them to this place of readiness for transaction. But, story has value exceeding this, for story has the power to integrate.

The process of integrating faith, life, and learning¹ is a lifelong process akin to that of sanctification. As with sanctification, integration appears to require a complex process of Spirit-guided human maturity on all fronts of existence: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social. One might argue that integration and sanctification are directly related and even perhaps part of the same process.

As we seek ever more effective means by which integration can be enhanced in the context of the college business school experience, let us look to the broad themes from life's experience. Within these broad themes common to many cultures and eras we find powerful elements, time-tested by a variety of Christian experiences. One of these broad elements that connects with all of life is narrative. Such is the topic of this paper.

Christian scholars desire to bring everything into submission under the will of God. We have received the admonition to “test

everything; hold on to the good” (I Thessalonians 5:21).² Daunting is the task to enter the gates of study on a proposition as complicated as the one considered in this paper. Monumental, as it encompasses a vast horizon of knowledge, the task of testing everything against the standard of God's revealed will demands more than the space of one article to address it completely.³

This task humbles me. To this end I will be indebted to readers who respond with comments on what is presented here. In many ways this paper is my attempt to submit my thinking to those of my academic elders who have been in this field much longer.⁴

Narrative: A Power for Integration

This paper seeks to test the proposition that narrative contains an inherent power for integrating faith, life, and learning of business principles. As a powerful force for integration, narrative is a fruitful teaching aid for the college business school teacher. The power of narrative⁵ to integrate faith, life, and learning is inherent in the medium. Narrative's power for integration also comes from how humans were created and from the role that humans have given narrative

in culture. Also, narrative's power for integration comes, in part, from the fact that narrative carries the meaning of facts and concepts in the context of real people's lives. Further, narrative is powerful for both storyteller and listener alike. That is, telling narrative in teaching ministry is as much a part of integration as hearing narrative.

For purposes of this paper, I use the term narrative as the broad encompassing term that includes many forms, including story, metaphor, parable (extended metaphor), and poetry.

Disciplines such as law, psychology, religion, theology, cultural anthropology, medicine, organizational development, education, and several others have seen a growth of interest in studying the role of narrative in the last decade. These disciplines offer propositions that shape the thesis presented here. In this paper I have selected four disciplines in which I see the common thread. *Cultural anthropology* offers a focus on life in general and the value of story. *Education* brings the point of view of narrative's value in teaching and learning. The world of *business* offers fresh insights into the value of narrative. *Religion*, because of its

connections with Scripture and the Christian faith experience, offers a corresponding and perhaps deeper insight into narrative's value for integration. Collectively these four disciplines seem to be saying that narrative contains an inherent power for integration. It is this that I desire to test in this paper.

The Narrative of Culture

That narrative is an integrative force in culture follows from three important foundational concepts. First, human beings, created in the image of God, are integrated beings. Our mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual dimensions are inseparable. Second, all elements of culture are integrated, including the role and function of narrative. Narrative, an integral part of the larger culture and all subcultures, is ubiquitous as one of the most common means of communication within a culture and across cultures. Third, narrative carries the core beliefs, behaviors (and their meaning), and aspirations from one generation to another and from one culture to another. It is one of the ways we transmit culture ("learned behavior"). It is but a small logical step from these three building blocks to say

that narrative helps individual humans and the larger culture of which they are a part to establish or maintain integration.

Karl Rahner points out that in their work cultural anthropologists say something about humans “as a whole.”⁶ This belief in the inherent wholeness of the human species is an important assumption underlying the evidence anthropology puts forward regarding the role of narrative in world cultures. I find consistency between this assumption and Christian teaching on anthropology, and based on this consistency I am willing to pursue the findings of anthropology in this matter.

Herman Hoeksema proposes there is an inherent wholeness of the human being when he says:

*By the one act of God [in creating humans] his physical and psychical or spiritual parts are so closely connected and so delicately intertwined that he is one personal, intellectual and volitional, rational and moral creature.*⁷

Annette Simmons says, “It seems that storytelling and story understanding is at the core of intelligence.”⁸ Stories combine all

the essential elements of existence: rational thought, emotional awareness or insight, social relations, experience of the senses, physical action, and spiritual meaning.

If humans are integrated and whole beings, it follows that the narratives humans share with each other either flow from or lead to integration. One might even say that it is because of this close interconnection between narratives and the rest of life that humans select certain narratives to tell.

Cultural anthropologist William Haviland agrees with others when he asserts that all aspects of a culture function “as an interrelated whole.” This wholeness of life’s existence anthropologists call “integration.”⁹ Anthropologists will generally agree that integration may not be perfect and may not be complete; however, enough integration occurs that all the relevant elements of the culture mesh nicely together with little conflict. Missiologist Louis Luzbetak agrees. Cultures, he says, “are peculiarly integrated wholes.”¹⁰

If this belief is true, one can say that when a particular culture uses a well-known or widely accepted story to represent core

beliefs, the story itself and the process of telling and retelling the story is integrated with other cultural elements. In fact, the story and storytelling both become part of the core of the culture either experienced or aspired to.

It is consistent then that narrative plays a dominant role in the integrated culture of which it is an element. Narrative contains much of the symbols, memories, and information that the culture's members continually remind themselves of regarding ultimate concerns. If narrative is part of an integrated whole culture, it follows that any individual within that culture who either tells or hears a story does so only in a meaningful way when that story aids in the process of maintaining integration. Catherine Wallace's take on this is that stories "mediate" between the conceptual structures in culture and individual experience.¹¹

Paul Heibert, a Christian cultural anthropologist, says that myths¹² "condense a great deal of information and wisdom into a compact form, which is easily remembered for transmission from generation to generations."¹³ Heibert says that because religious stories are based on "visionary and intuitive insights

into the mysteries of the universe, they must be understood as philosophies garbed in symbolic and poetic literature." He agrees with the anthropologist Malinowski that religious stories are "charters for belief and form an integral part of culture."¹⁴ We may not agree with Malinowski that stories are merely the means to legitimize religious institutions. However, his point on the integration of story with culture is a valuable contribution to the propositions offered here.

Pannenberg asserts that "it is the tension between the claims of the mythical and religious tradition, on the one side, and the changing life experience of individuals and community, on the other, that provides the [cultural anthropology] field in which the lifestyle of a culture is formed and renewed."¹⁵ This not only suggests the close connection between narrative and lifestyle change. It implies that both religion and narrative play an active role in the cultural change process. How can this be unless narrative is interconnected, yea, inseparable from culture? Further, how can this be unless narrative has an inherent connection with the individuals in the culture who change? I conclude that it is

narrative that carries in itself the seeds of change, because in the narrative, life is integrated with faith, learning, and the changing life experiences. Yes, it is narrative that sparks change.

... narrative plays a dominant role in the integrated culture of which it is an element.

We have good reason to go beyond the connecting points of these assertions. Stories contain the explicit and implicit elements of the ideal culture comprised of beliefs, illustrations of prized moral actions, and the goals to which all who espouse these beliefs aspire. One might even conclude as I do that stories contain in microcosm form the most important elements of the ideal culture to which members of the culture aspire to attain or emulate in their own lives.

Annette Simmons says, "As a storyteller you borrow a story's power to connect people to what is important and to help them make sense of their world.¹⁶ ... Story is uniquely equipped to touch you and help you touch others in this place that cannot be understood, explained, or reduced to a flow chart. This is the place where you can't prove it is true or important but you just know it is."¹⁷ I think Simmons is referring to the integrating power of story.

In this way, stories carry an inherent power to help an individual integrate learned beliefs, behaviors, and

aspirations. If narrative is a force for integration in the larger

culture, one might reasonably conclude that, in the context of education, narrative serves in the same way. To this body of literature I now turn.

The Narrative of Learning

After reviewing the literature on pedagogical methods for college teaching, one can hardly say that stories, by themselves, are a defined teaching method. However, stories have an acceptable role in the context of all standard teaching methods.

While the context of his comments is education in the work setting, John Adams' opinion is valuable for the college environment, too.

Education requires an emotional bond between educator and student, a connection that requires more than bullet charts and animated graphics. Educating isn't training or improving skills or distributing information. To educate people

*you must touch them ... Stories will.*¹⁸

Stories, as long as they carry a well-defined point that is consistent with the content of the lecture or discussion, aid students in building abstract concepts by giving concrete examples.¹⁹ Stories carry with them the power to assist students in relating the content of the lecture with other things that they know. “Metaphors, examples, and demonstrations” are the elements of the bridge that connects what is in the students’ minds and the “structures in the subject matter.”²⁰

Stories motivate students in that they require active listening rather than passive.²¹ One can easily make the point that stories carry the meaning of the content, and “meanings tend to be recalled more easily than exact words.”²² Lowman, in summarizing the current theories about learner behavior says, “Students will learn and remember information better if they have many cognitive associations with it.”²³ Students, he says, “learn images as well as words, and images are more easily remembered especially if the images are vivid and emotionally tinged.”²⁴

Annette Simmons comments that

*Story allows you to reintroduce complexity over tidy “skill-set modules” so that the skills you teach also teach people to think about why and how they might use a new skill ... There are no clear distinctions. Story often simultaneously demonstrates values as it demonstrates skills.*²⁵

Her comments on values is pertinent to this discussion:

*Values are meaningless without stories to bring them to life and engage us on a personal level. And personal stories are the best way to engage people at a personal level.*²⁶

Further, personal stories, if not carried to excess, can humanize both the lecturer and the material being presented.²⁷ Simmons says, “If you demonstrate who you are, rather than tell me who you are, it is much more believable. A story lets you demonstrate who you are.”²⁸ Personal stories that highlight the instructor’s role outside the classroom help to “create the sense of authenticity.”²⁹ This authenticity is another connecting point for students

from the concrete to the abstract. Perhaps this is why Eble admonishes college instructors to “seek hard and unrelentingly for precise examples and illustrations.”³⁰ Though examples and illustrations may or may not take the form of a story, many stories offer excellent, precise examples of the points the instructor wishes to communicate.

Stories help link what the student already knows or understands with new concepts and new information. Westwater and Wolfe assert that stories and other student involvement classroom activities do just this.³¹

Lowman suggests, as do others, that a story is an excellent way to capture the imagination of young people.³² Yet he takes the concept of story’s role in the classroom one step farther. He asserts that “superb lecturers share many qualities with storytellers.”³³ These star lecturers build a sense of expectancy at the beginning of the lecture. They structure their lectures so that curiosity is nurtured, tension built, and suspense fed. After pulling the students along throughout the lecture, they present the best points at the end.

Richard Stone points out that people turn to stories as an antidote for information overload.

He sees story as the means by which people can make changes in their lives.³⁴

Cultural sensitivity to how stories are understood by various types of students can aid the teacher in using narrative in the classroom wisely. Ruby Payne observes that students from a background of poverty display an inability to tell stories chronologically.³⁵ This understanding will help the teacher implement an Incarnation-style of ministry — teach by starting where the students are and lead them along in lectures and discussions toward the concepts and values that are important to Christians.

The common thread in these authors’ understanding of current educational theory is the principle akin to that of integration, whereby through narrative, students are presented with many cognitive associations with the content of the material being presented. Stories offer this kind of pedagogical power.³⁶

From the literature on pedagogical methods and theory surveyed to date, one can safely conclude that within educational circles narrative is seen as containing a power for integrating abstract concepts with the concrete that students understand.

The Narrative of Business

Since the beginning of recorded history, narrative has been an integral element in the context of commerce. Some of the earliest narratives are the biblical stories in the book of Genesis regarding the Tower of Babel,³⁷ the travels and dealings of Abraham,³⁸ and the experiences of Joseph,³⁹ to name a few. Indeed, many of the narratives in the

Bible demonstrate integration of faith and life in the context of participating in local, national, and even international economic affairs. Such integration is illustrated by the following story.

An executive team at a hospital had been through some difficult decisions. The CEO had the responsibility of challenging them to pursue with him the unenviable task of downsizing the organization because of a decline in business and the resulting cash flow crisis. While the final decision was ultimately the board's regarding layoffs, the administrative team had taken a lot of criticism during the days following the decision and implementation.

One particular Tuesday morning, the CEO decided to

bring to the team some framed photographs that his wife had purchased for his office — photographs of a lighthouse being pummeled by a crashing wave. In the series of photos, the wave is captured as it progressively breaks upon the lighthouse first at the foundation, then the lower

... narrative has been an integral element in the context of commerce.

levels of the lighthouse tower. In the third photo, the wave is exploding at

the very top of the lighthouse where the windows and lenses are positioned — the very point at which the purpose of the structure exists, the focal point of the threat. A fourth photo captured the lighthouse attendant standing nonchalantly at the doorway of his lighthouse as a massive wave crashed around him.

Before the executives came into the conference room, the CEO faced the photos against the wall. To start the meeting he went to the white board and asked the team to list some of the greatest challenges they had faced the previous six months. Next to each item he drew a wave, relating the group of items to a series of waves smashing against the organization and, in particular, the executive team.

Then he revealed the photographs. The symbolism portrayed in each photo was gravid. He walked around the room holding the photos at close range, asking each team member to tell what he or she saw in the pictures. Amid the gasps, oohs, and ahs, each had something brief to say. Most of the comments were centered on the theme of courage. It was as if they were looking in a mirror and suddenly seeing the significance of their own lives at work.

The CEO had not planned on taking this any further, as he simply had wanted the photos to create a time of introspection. But when he saw the deep responses of their hearts as they looked at the photos, he decided to take the process further. He shared with them that, like the lighthouse under the pressure of a huge wave, each one of them had been withstanding a huge amount of pressure. He mentioned each team member by name and shared something specific about the courage that person had demonstrated. For example, one person had displayed courage by challenging the CEO with penetrating questions during their debates on how and where in the company the layoffs should occur. The CEO celebrated this

courage by telling the group that this is the very thing the hospital needed to make the organization strong. Another person had displayed courage by reporting some very unwelcome but necessary financial information to the board on an important compliance issue. The CEO celebrated the courage needed to maintain integrity, one of the foundations of a quality organization. Another team member had displayed courage in dealing with a hostile group of employees. The courage to remain calm under fire began showing itself as rank and file employees began to model this behavior.

As the CEO went around the table, telling stories of the courage each had displayed, each person, in turn, opened up and began sharing his or her feelings. They had been experiencing loneliness and fear mixed with gratitude for the strength they had been receiving from other team members during these difficult times. They had their own stories to tell about themselves or about others. They celebrated their subordinates. They celebrated and affirmed each other. Each shared positive feelings about the CEO's leadership during the difficult

times they had shared. The stories that washed around the room left every eye wet from the tears that flowed freely.

The group talked about where courage comes from and how they could build it up in each other with more courage. At this point the conversation was laden with spirituality. Even though this was a secular organization, several times open references to belief in God and the experience of personal faith naturally flowed into the discussion. Privately, the CEO celebrated the integration taking place as the executive team soaked up the meaning so obvious in their common experience.

That lighthouse introduction to the weekly meeting took 70 minutes. While it totally trashed the agenda for the morning, it had a much deeper, long-lasting effect than the CEO could ever have created from a well-planned agenda or a tightly-run meeting.

More than one senior leader came to the CEO in private in the days following expressing gratitude for helping them to open up, for celebrating their courage, and for allowing this kind of sharing to take place at work. Collectively their responses to the CEO became a treasured

affirmation that he took with him into every difficult situation.

Stories are ubiquitous in business environment. In my own experience, stories are one of the most powerful forms of marketing. Stories fly through the word-of-mouth marketing channels as the primary vehicles by which consumers tell their buying experiences to each other. These word-of-mouth morsels are easily remembered and easily transmitted to others. Consumers tell stories before, during, and after their marketplace exchanges. Sales professionals use stories to convince customers of the benefits they promise. When a salesperson does a demonstration, he or she is essentially telling a story of what the product can do for the customer. Before and after photographs are essentially telling a story that sparks the consumer's imagination. For intangible products, stories fulfill the role of demonstration for the consumer.⁴⁰ Corporate marketing is often based on one or more solid stories that are used to build the company's reputation and stock value.⁴¹

Two leaders in business theory have contributed to the study of narrative in business. Chester Barnard, in his contributions to management

thought regarding the informal organization, opened the field for considering the cultural model of organizations. Within the context of the informal organization he saw the value of folklore coming from the fields of sociology, anthropology, and social psychology. For Barnard, the informal organization carried as much power for getting things done as the formal organization, and the wise executive will be involved with this side of the enterprise on a regular basis.⁴² Though he has not explored at length the role of narrative in organizations, Edgar Schein has legitimized the cultural study of business organizations.⁴³ Schein borrows heavily from cultural anthropology for his views on organizational theory. He asserts that through stories an organization communicates its ideology and basic assumptions that need to be emulated if the organization is to perform effectively.

Sandelands and Boudens researched the role of story for employees in the work setting. They report that stories represent and amplify the feelings people have regarding their experiences at work. Stories also help the group of employees learn about who they are and where they

belong in the organization. Stories become symbols of group life. Narratives remind them of the feelings they had during defining moments at work. For newcomers, stories are a “map of the workplace,” showing them what they can expect to experience for themselves. Stories told at work tell a form of “the truth,” even if the details are not quite right.⁴⁴ Sandelands and Boudens see stories as a form of art, “a kind of living form that objectifies feeling.” As such, stories share with other arts four basic features of form: boundaries, dynamic tension, growth (movement), and possibility. These four features are the elements of life and feeling — art being the language of life.⁴⁵

Deal and Kennedy reveal the power of narrative in organizations. In their book on corporate cultures, they identify the various types of people important in the informal communication networks. Of these, storytellers rank high in importance as a management resource for corporate leadership.⁴⁶

Several authors, such as Conrad, Mumby, and others, have identified the role of narrative in establishing and sharing power in

organizations.⁴⁷ Fairholm and others see story's role "in the continual process of establishing and maintaining what is legitimate and what is unacceptable in an organization." These business "myths" protect people from uncertainty.⁴⁸ They are used to justify anything from opinions to policy. Fairholm says,

*People use myths [in the context of work life] to explain and express ideas and to maintain solidarity and cohesion ... on occasion to mediate contradictions and to provide narrative to anchor the present in the past or to bridge past and present.*⁴⁹

He goes on to say that stories convey information, morals, and values vividly. They make things easy to remember and reinforce commitment to the company's program. Perhaps the most important contribution that stories make is that they "codify collective meaning."⁵⁰ I see in this assertion the close connection between narrative and spirituality, intertwining the social, physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Several contributors to the dialogue regarding narrative in business see the close connections

between narratives and belief systems. Narratives communicate the aspirations and fears of organizational members. Stories represent the unity of those who embrace them.⁵¹ Gudykunst, Stewart, and Ting-Toomey depend on the symbolic role of narrative in their work. They see myth as a symbolic narrative that represents the unity of those who embrace it. Myths are also systems of beliefs. These narratives communicate the aspirations and fears of organizational members.⁵²

Martin, Feldman, Hatch, and Sitkin find seven major story types that are common to many organizations. Stories serve employees' desire for uniqueness. Stories also are a means of expressing concerns of issues such as equality, control, and security. The most common story type they found answers the basic question, "How will the organization respond to obstacles?"⁵³ Perhaps it is these deep-seated concerns and the vulnerability that employees feel within an organization that creates such fertile ground for narrative to work its mysterious power. When employees are in their most vulnerable position, narrative seems to be a welcome rallying point. Martin and Powers

demonstrate in one of the few empirical studies regarding narrative that stories are a powerful means to obtain commitment.⁵⁴

The issue of narrative in the context of business complexity is taken up by Lewin and Regine.⁵⁵ They see narrative as the means by which individuals can “capture the intangible, nonmeasurable, temporal reality that is often overlooked” in analytical thinking. They quote Jerome Bruner’s speculation that “we seem to have no other way of describing ‘lived time’ save in the form of narrative.” Lewin and Regine see the power of narrative not merely for transmitting meaning but for constructing it through reflection.

The examples of how stories are used informally by employees as part of the corporate culture are many. But business leaders, recognizing the power of story, are using this method to actually get work done. Annette Simmons reports that

Many companies are turning to metaphor and scenario planning to give direction to this

unpredictable, highly complex, and ever-changing world in which we now live. In other words, they are using story to replace the old strategic plan’s goals/objectives/strategy format.⁵⁶

Stories are used in the typical work day among the cubicles and conference rooms. Peter Giuliano reports what many of us have experienced at work:

... when people will not budge an inch, telling stories will put them at ease, break through barriers, and help to build relationships. Stories have

Narratives communicate the aspirations and fears of organizational members.



a way of getting others to open up and be more receptive to

you and your ideas. And, stories are persuasive. They let you broach subjects delicately, introduce ideas subtly, and adopt a kinder, gentler leadership style overall, winning over that difficult colleague or client.⁵⁷

Todd Post and others have shown that stories are used in business to increase the amount of knowledge that is shared between the more experienced workers and newer workers.⁵⁸

Stories enhance executive leaders' effectiveness primarily because the story helps their subordinates think through issues of identity and destiny.⁵⁹ Dennehy states, "With a well-told story, an executive can illustrate almost any key business concept."⁶⁰ Tom Terez summarizes the value of story in the business environment when he says that storytelling is "your most powerful (and least used) tool for sharing information, building community, capturing the imagination, and exerting influence."⁶¹

The long-term success of the Harvard Business School case study method of business instruction illustrates the power of story in the business school classroom. Storytelling in the classroom models for future business leaders both the value and the method of storytelling.

The Narrative of Faith

In her book on Christian education, Suzanne De Benedittis says that through stories the teacher "not only maintains an atmosphere that tells of God as caring and taking delight in creation, but also introduces the learners to living doctrine." Instead of teaching precepts abstractly, the story presents

God experientially as the storyteller recounts God's working in the everyday lives of real people. Stories, the vehicles for identification and affiliation, are the means of expressing personal faith. For De Benedittis and others, storytelling engages the hearts, minds, and spirits of students, "leaving them longing for more."⁶²

Catherine Wallace provides some insight into the value of stories in Christian faith:

*The life of faith, the liveliness and the vitality of religion in our day, depends very centrally upon the stories we tell one another about our own immediate encounters with an incarnate God. And the work of 'spiritual formation' as such, then, is learning to understand and to tell the stories that will teach us how to recognize God's activity in our own ordinary week.*⁶³

This, in essence, is a way of saying that stories touch all the key elements of human wholeness. I reason that stories must be comprised of an inherent integration for them to be as effective as they are. Sanner and Harper put it a slightly different way: "In the story, the idea is seen in its impact on the lives of

persons.”⁶⁴ James Lee, in his book on religious education, says:

*The learner is an integer; he does not possess one complete set of faculties by which he learns ‘natural’ phenomena, and a second complete set by which he learns ‘religious’ phenomena.*⁶⁵

He goes on to quote Ronald Goldman “that religious thinking employs the same modes and methods of thinking applied to other fields.” For Lee, religious and moral development is “deeply and intricately intertwined with the entire process of human learning and development.”⁶⁶ This is nothing other than saying that human beings are integrated whole persons.

Sallie TeSelle, bold in her creative and stimulating review of narrative in Christian experience, sees that stories are popular because of the “basic narrative quality of human experience.”⁶⁷ Basing her propositions on the parables of Jesus, TeSelle seems to assume the integrative power of story when she contrasts theology and narrative this way:

Theology becomes overly abstract, conceptual, and systematic; it separates thought and life, belief and practice,

*words and their embodiment, making it more difficult, if not impossible, for us to believe in our hearts what we confess with our lips.*⁶⁸

White agrees:

*Unlike abstract thinking, story is living language. It is real. It is concrete. It is made from the same fabric that shapes our lives. Though we struggle over the meaning of an abstract thought, we understand the story.*⁶⁹

To TeSelle, not only does narrative integrate mind, heart, and soul, but it also integrates the sacred and secular. The world portrayed in Jesus’ parables includes “both dimensions — the secular and the religious, our world and God’s love. It is not that the parable points to the unfamiliar but that it includes the unfamiliar within its boundaries.”⁷⁰

For TeSelle, when a person becomes a Christian, he or she does not live in “a secular world that must be discarded” nor does the Christian live in a religious world that has no connection with the secular. The world is a unified whole, and parable narratives bring this unity through them.⁷¹ Metaphor and parable provide for

theological reflection through uniting life and thought.⁷² Jesus' parables show a belief that is more than mere intellectual assent or a momentary experience. The belief portrayed in these extended metaphors shows a "style of life or belief chosen through a myriad of decisions and now com[ing] to a head" in the parable's situation.⁷³


Cove and Mueller see an additional practical side of parables. Through parables Jesus informed as well as "stimulated

His audience to inquire about their meaning that He might through dialogue explicate the meaning of the law."⁷⁴

Narrative is the capsule that carries the meaning of a faith experience from one person to another. Rood says that the story's power "lies in its embodiment of the elements of encounter."⁷⁵ TeSelle says that "we recognize in the stories of others' experiences of coming to belief our own agonizing journey, and we rejoice in the companionship of those on the way."⁷⁶ Perhaps this is the reason why stories seem to create community among the listeners.

It is no wonder that Christians communicate their core message primarily by one compelling story. The gospel is the biggest story ever told. It has served and will continue to serve as the right arm of the Holy Spirit to convict and convince. Every successful ministry has more than one blockbuster story that the leaders share with others. Annette Simmons agrees when she says, "Clothing truth in story is a

powerful way to get people to open the doors of their minds to you and the truth



... Christians communicate their core message primarily by one compelling story.

you carry ... Story is less direct, more gracious, and prompts less resistance."⁷⁷

At another level, every successful preacher uses powerful stories to communicate essential truth. The story is not simply an aid to learning the more substantive kernels of theological propositions. Stories in themselves are substantive carriers of complex truth. Partly because stories can carry such complex truth, they have the power to integrate all of life into one whole.

Stories are the foundation for the majority of the Scripture. In both the Old Testament and the

New Testament, narrative of one form or another makes up the majority of the text. White puts it this way:

*Though nearly all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, moves by narrative and story, it is Jesus who is the perfecter of the form ... Virtually nothing Jesus says is found in lecture form.*⁷⁸

White goes a step farther and boldly states that in the story, "... we come closer to the gospel language than in any other literary or oral communication form." We find story appealing because it is the language of revelation, the language of God's love.⁷⁹ He also says that the beauty of story comes from its intimacy. Each listener, no matter how large the crowd, is pulled into the story as if the story is being told just for him. Storytelling is always one-to-one, but, ironically, the telling of stories builds a sense of community.

Storytelling takes on many forms in Scripture. Gerhard von Rad points out that one form of Old Testament biblical narrative simply tells the historical events. Another storyteller seeks to encounter the reader "in the

depths of his own relationship with God and cause him to ponder."⁸⁰ The third form of story seeks to teach the "norms of behavior" and to encourage action.

Von Rad also sees in the Old Testament more than one kind of divine action that is the basis of the biblical stories. God acts through miracles of divine intervention. Exodus 14 and Judges 7 are paradigmatic of this. But God also acts in and through the thoughts and behaviors of humans (both good and evil). The story of Joseph is a good example of how God's action is seen only at the end of the story when the reader realizes that God has had His hand on the reins all along. Throughout the story it appears that secular people are in control. But, "God's leading has worked in secret, in the plans and thoughts of men's hearts, who have savagely gone about *their own* business. Thus the field of divine providence is the human heart."⁸¹ God's work appears to be hidden within the folds of the story's secular tapestry, but, as von Rad points out, because of this His action is understood more fully. God's work is included in all areas of life, "sacred as well as profane."⁸²

The story of the Exodus became the archetype story for many other stories that followed. Told as part of the Passover feast, the *Seder Haggadah*⁸³ became an Israelite institution designed to never let the people forget God's saving action for his people. This and other narratives became the backbone for and central part of corporate worship.

Stories have power when told one-on-one. When Nathan went to King David, instead of confronting the king openly about his sin, he told a parable. This had the power to disarm David. It was the key element that brought the king to repentance.⁸⁴

In addition to the evidence of actual stories that became a part of believer's lives, we also find biblical injunctions to tell and retell the stories for the benefit of future generations.⁸⁵ Sometimes stories were combined with religious rituals, as in the Passover Seder. Other times, simple object lessons and drama were used to teach.⁸⁶

The New Testament is replete with examples of the early Christian believers using stories to convey the essential message of the Person and Work of Christ. The experience of the believers on the road to Emmaus⁸⁷ shows

how important story was to them as they struggled to interpret the events they had just witnessed. Much of the early church preaching consisted of simply telling the story of Jesus.⁸⁸ The narrative of the coming of the Kingdom in Jesus defined the church of Acts. Hebrews recites, in capsule form, many of the stories that gave the early church hope and courage.⁸⁹

Story plays a significant role in the formation of theology. As the Apostle Paul began the first systematic theology of the Christ event, he based his propositions on the story of Jesus. William Bausch points out that "systematic theology engages the intellect; storytelling engages the heart and indeed the whole person. Systematic theology is a later reflection on the Christ story; the story is the first expression of Christ."⁹⁰

For Bausch, the academic and the spiritual can never be separated. Sanner and Harper agree and state that:

The Bible does not recognize a compartmentalized life. One cannot send his mind to school and his soul to church and his body to the gym. It is the whole spirit, soul, and body that are to be sanctified and preserved

*blameless (1 Thessalonians 5:23).*⁹¹

In agreement with this, Berkouwer makes a convincing case that humans are essentially whole beings created in the image of God, not dualistic, compartmentalized creatures with seemingly independent parts.⁹² It is this wholeness that has such a close affinity with narrative. In one package a story has the power to engage the whole person in all dimensions of life: physical, social, emotional, and spiritual. Perhaps this is the simplest way to think of the integrating power of story.

The Value of Narrative in the University

From the preceding review one can see the value of narrative in several environments. But in relating the literature on narrative to the university classroom, I find the following points:

Stories help students grasp abstract concepts where pure reason alone might leave these inaccessible. Stories free the power of reason to work along the channels of the spiritual. Stories communicate what matters most. Stories are the meaning behind the events that

we connect with and against which we compare our own lives.

Stories transport us to a place where we can become more than we ever dreamed. We listen to a story and we believe we can be changed if we become the subjects of the same experience. By listening to a story of how another person got more than they dreamed, I am drawn with an irresistible power to the same values. I think, “I can be that, too.”

Stories fire our imagination. My wife tells me that I have an over-active imagination anyway, but as a customer, when I hear a story of how someone got excited about a new product or service, my own imagination soars. I begin wondering how it might be the same for me. Through a story, I see possibilities that the sales specialist doesn’t mention. I see the benefits before the sales pitch gets around to benefits. Then when the customer care representative begins listing the benefits, I’m way ahead of him, ticking them off in my own mind. I wait to see whether or not he will get to the most important benefit — the one I’ve already selected as the one that carries the most meaning for me. When imagination is fired, we get involved.

Stories cover a multitude of errors in sharing our faith. Good storytelling can be effective when detailed exegesis of the text leaves some listeners far behind. You may not be a trained theologian, but you may be a good storyteller. I'm not suggesting that a story will take the place of a powerful biblical argument and sound exegesis. But a good story will set up a call for action like nothing else because it communicates core meaning when technical details are just words on a page.

Stories embolden us, enliven us, and motivate us to action. During the early church's persecution, stories kept the faith alive. The same is true during every major crisis that the church has faced. During a time of organizational crisis, one CEO gathered employees together and simply told stories of consumers and how employees helped them solve problems. This provided employees the context in which to reconsider the organization's mission. It motivated employees to unite behind this mission and serve another day.

Although narrative is an art form, it cannot be exclusively processed by the right brain, since the deeper meaning of the story requires the ability to process

logical thought and make connections with the power of reason. *Thus, narrative requires an integration of both right and left hemispheres of the brain.*

Stories require the ability to conduct a certain level of analytical thinking to make the connections between the content of the story and the emotions that result from hearing it. A story about what happens to workers when they receive their pink slips from managers who seem, on the surface, unconcerned about the effect of the action on the families involved will draw to the surface a host of emotions in all listeners. But these emotions are present only as the listeners draw conclusions based on the details and the meaning of the story.

The Christian story reveals what sets Christians apart in a way that captures and engages the listener. Stories create connections with people in a manner unapproachable by other methods. Stories help the teacher avoid conflict. Stories disarm defensiveness and create openness to consider new information.

Stories that contain elements of faith, life, and learning help students avoid compartmentalizing. They provide natural passage from the

content of the material for discussing morals and Christian values present or absent in the story. Because stories, if told well, carry the inherent power of integration, they can cause students to ponder the greater meaning of the business concepts under review. They are an avenue with the potential of bringing into the classroom an element of praise and wonder — the basis of worship.

Stories disarm defensiveness and create openness to consider new information.

the teacher as they do about the course content. Teacher,



Concluding Thoughts

One might easily begin a conclusion by saying that teachers simply should tell more stories. But that certainly misses the point and may or may not be helpful advice. Too many stories can compete for classroom time. Stories for their own sake will leave students disappointed that they did not get the meat of the course to properly prepare them for the world that is so nicely packaged within the stories.

The process of selecting stories for use as a classroom teaching aid requires informed, sanctified judgment on the part of the teacher. A prayerful approach to this element of the craft of teaching, it seems to me,

will go a long way to opening the lecturer's heart to the work of the Holy Spirit. A prayerful approach to storytelling will open both the listeners and the teacher to the gift the story brings to the teaching/learning setting.

One can hypothesize that the stories a teacher selects to use in the classroom tell as much about

beware of the stories you tell.

After considering the propositions outlined above, it seems to me that stories and their use, if they are to be a valuable force for integration of faith, life, and learning, must share the following:

- 1) The story must offer a single, well-defined point that illustrates the topic under study.
- 2) The story should relate directly to or illustrate a personal faith experience, moral maturity, or a highly prized Christian value.
- 3) The story should be positioned carefully within the classroom time frame and the rest of the teaching/learning activities. A powerful story can actually distract students from being able

to focus on lecture material that immediately follows.

4) A story that is set in one culture may not translate into the equivalent meaning in another culture. Thus, it is the teacher's responsibility to select stories that are culturally equivalent and, if this is not possible, at least to interpret the relevant portions of the story in a way so that students from other cultures can gain the story's impact.

5) Stories that integrate don't necessarily tie up all the loose ends and answer all the difficult questions. Rather, some of the best stories leave students to ponder the difficult questions. The process of integration is not necessarily served best by the professor that has all the right answers to life's persistent questions but instead allows students to reflect on their own ambiguous experiences.

6) Students should be given a chance to react to the story in their own words and actions. If the instructor is careful to not "lord it over" the students with one way of thinking but rather allow them to see life in a different way from that of the teacher, it seems that integration will take place. On the other hand, if the teacher has all the right answers to the ultimate

questions of life, integration may actually be slowed down if the students come to merely parrot the teacher's way of thinking.

God can use imperfect teachers to lead students toward integration. The teacher's own experience is, in a sense, on the line when offering a personal story to students. The humanness offered in a personal experience, if it contains the fully integrated as well as the partially integrated or even un-integrated beliefs and actions, can be an encouragement to students who are struggling with their own integration issues. Teachers, after all, are human, too. By telling a story that contains clear elements of moral value or one that contains personal elements, the teacher is exploring his or her own integration within the educational environment. If this is true, one can conclude that storytelling brings a power for integration for the teacher as well as for the student.

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ENDNOTES

¹A. Elwood Sanner and A.F. Harper, in their book *Exploring Christian Education* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1978, p. 147), refer to the concept of *internalization*.

"Internalization [of Christian beliefs] is the process by which the spiritual and ethical implications of a person's beliefs become his operational values." From reading Sanner and Harper, one might reasonably conclude that their concept of internalization is related to but not necessarily identical to the concept of integration.

²Thus we can live in partial fulfillment of the scriptural admonition to submit ourselves to God (James 4:7) and to one another (Ephesians 5:21). Thereby we become filled "with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God ..." (Colossians 1:9, 10). Also, in so doing we minimize the risk of being led astray by diverse and strange teachings (Hebrews 13:7). Our prayer should be that in such a process we will not be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewal of our minds, that we may prove what is the will of God (Romans 12:2). We should try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10). The same sentiment is expressed in II Corinthians 13:5.

³After surveying the four disciplines and comparing the elements of the proposition against what I find in Scripture, I am left in wonder that this, like so many other elements of knowledge, is one of the vast, unsearchable mysteries of God (Romans 11:33). The psychological, social, and spiritual interplay in the context of narrative defies complete understanding and, because of this, the proposition presented here may contain weaknesses.

⁴See I Peter 5:5 — "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older."

⁵Narrative and story are not identical, though it is easy to use them interchangeably since story is one common form of narrative used in Christian education.

⁶K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian faith* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1984), p. 28.

⁷H. Hoeksema, *Reformed dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966), p. 199.

⁸A. Simmons, *The story factor: Secrets of influence from the art of storytelling* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2001), p. 196.

⁹W.A. Haviland, *Cultural anthropology* (5th ed.) (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987), p. 36. Also, Muriel Damen-Schein in *The Anthropological Imagination* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1977) states that "the concept of culture makes a theoretical assumption of the integration of the parts, though it does not specify the nature of the integration" (p. 44).

¹⁰L.J. Luzbetak, *The church and cultures* (Techny, IL: Divine Word Publications, 1970), p. 135. Cultures are to be seen as a single organic entity. Integration for Luzbetak occurs when the following dynamics are present: relatedness of cultural elements, consistency (related cultural elements exist in a harmonious consistency with other elements), and reciprocity (one cultural element supports other elements).

¹¹C.M. Wallace, Storytelling, doctrine, and spiritual formation, *Anglican Theological Review*, 81(1), Winter 1999, pp. 39-59.

¹²The term "myth" is sometimes misunderstood. The basic meaning of the word is that of a story that is relevant to the ultimate issues of life, existence, origin, life, death, and the mysteries of existence. Many Christian believers, however, falsely ascribe to the word the idea that myths are always fictitious. Actually a myth can be either true or untrue. It has come to be used by anthropologists as the technical term referring to narrative expression. In *Myth*, G.S. Kirk (1970) writes, "For the Greeks *muthos* just meant a tale, or something one uttered, in a wide range of senses: a statement, a story, the plot of a play" (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), p. 8.

¹³P.G. Heibert, *Cultural anthropology* (2nd ed.). (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), p. 373.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵W. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in theological perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1985), p. 321.

¹⁶A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 29.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁸J.T. Adams III, Slide shows are dandy, but stories can educate, *HRMagazine*, 46(8), Aug. 2001, p. 8.

¹⁹C.E. Buxton, *College teaching:*

A psychologist's view (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956), pp. 145-146. This sentiment is shared by others, including Wilbert J. McKeachie (1994) in *Teaching Tips* (9th ed.). (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994). See also Alan Brinkley et al., *The Chicago Handbook for Teachers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 55-60; and Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991), pp. 78-79.

²⁰W.J. McKeachie, *Teaching tips* (9th ed.). (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), pp. 55-56.

²¹Ibid, p. 58.

²²Ibid.

²³J. Lowman, *Mastering the techniques of teaching* (2nd ed.). (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), p. 135.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 19.

²⁶Ibid, p. 23.

²⁷A. Brinkley et al., *The Chicago handbook for teachers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 60.

²⁸A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 8.

²⁹S.D. Brookfield, *The skillful teacher* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991), pp. 78-79.

³⁰K.E. Eble, *The craft of teaching* (2nd ed.). (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), p. 80.

³¹A. Westwater and P. Wolfe, The brain-compatible curriculum, *Educational Leadership*, 58(3), Nov. 2000, pp. 49-52.

³²J. Lowman, *Mastering the techniques of teaching* (2nd ed.). (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), p. 125.

³³J. Lowman, *Mastering the techniques of teaching* (2nd ed.), p. 124.

³⁴R. Stone, The power of stories.

In M. Goldsmith, B. Kay, and K. Shelton (Eds.), *Learning Journeys* (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 2000), pp. 205-209.

³⁵In Chapter 2 of her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, Ruby K. Payne draws upon the work of Martin Joos (*Language and Cultural Diversity in American Education*, the chapter "The Styles of the Five Clocks," Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967). Payne explains that students in poverty

most frequently use the casual register in storytelling. This approach to storytelling begins at the end of the story first or the part with the most emotional intensity. She states, "This story is told in vignettes, with audience participation in between." Students in poverty tend to go around the issue before finally coming to the point, whereas students who use the formal register tell stories chronologically. ³⁶See the book by Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings, *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991).

³⁷Genesis 11.

³⁸Genesis 12-23.

³⁹Genesis 37-50.

⁴⁰A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 68.

⁴¹J.W. Gurley, The great art of storytelling, *Fortune*, 140(9), Nov. 8, 1999, p. 300.

⁴²C. Barnard, *The functions of the executive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

⁴³E. Schein, *Organizational culture and leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1992).

⁴⁴L.E. Sandelands and C.J. Boudens, Feeling at work. In Stephen Fineman (Ed.), *Emotions in Organizations* (2nd ed.). (London: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 56-60.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶T.E. Deal and A.A. Kennedy, *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982).

⁴⁷C. Conrad, *Strategic organizational communications* (2nd ed.). (Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.). In addition, D. Mumby, The political function of narratives in organizations, *Communication Monographs*, 54, 1987, pp. 113-127; M.R. Grumet,

The politics of personal knowledge. In Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings, *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), pp. 67-77; M.B. Tappan and L.M. Brown, Stories told and lessons learned: Toward a narrative approach to moral development and moral education. In Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings, *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), pp. 177-178.

⁴⁸G.W. Fairholm, *Leadership and the culture of trust* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), p. 88. Fairholm presents five qualities that good business stories have: 1) The story is told

broadly, i.e., many people in the company know the story and know that others know it; 2) It must be vivid, containing a strong sense of specific people, times, and places; 3) It should be told in dramatic fashion; 4) It should inspire by teaching how one should act in view of the story; and 5) It should claim uniqueness, i.e., the story implies that the organization is "a unique place to work."

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid, p. 90.

⁵¹Representative of this point of view are the following: W.B. Gudykunst, L.P. Stewart, and S. Ting-Toomey, *Communication, Culture and Organizational Processes* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1985); A.D. Frank and J.L. Brownell, *Organizational Communication and Behavior: Communicating to Improve Performance* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1989); and H.M. Trice, *Occupational Subcultures in the Workplace* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1993).

⁵²W.B. Gudykunst, L.P. Stewart, and S. Ting-Toomey, *Communication, culture and organizational processes* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1985). A.D. Frank and J.L. Brownell see three functions of stories: 1) an anchor for the present in the past; 2) a means to maintain cohesiveness; and 3) a means to explain to group members the way things are. See their book, *Organizational Communication and Behavior: Communicating to Improve Performance* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.), p. 215.

⁵³J. Martin, M.S. Feldman, M.J. Hatch, and S.B. Sitkin, The uniqueness paradox in organizational stories, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 1980, pp. 438-453.

⁵⁴J. Martin and M. Powers, Truth or corporate propaganda: The value of a good war story. In L.R. Pondy, P.J. Frost, G. Morgan, and T.C. Dandridge (Eds.), *Organizational Symbolism* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1983), pp. 93-108.

⁵⁵R. Lewin and B. Regine, *Weaving complexity and business: Engaging the soul at work* (New York: Texere LLC, 2001), p. 63.

⁵⁶A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 37.

⁵⁷P. Giuliano, Spinning yarns, *Successful Meetings*, 49(8), July 2000, pp. 64-65. Annette Simmons (*The Story Factor*, p. 73) agrees with Giuliano: "Even when you have formal authority over a group, too clearly 'telling them what to do' may create

passive/aggressive nonresponse or even sabotage. Story is better at communicating your wishes in a respectful way that requests rather than demands. Story avoids a power struggle."

⁵⁸T. Post, The impact of storytelling on NASA and EDUTECH, *Knowledge Management Review*, 5(1), Mar./Apr. 2002, p. 26. This same thesis is put forward by Graham Smart in his article "Storytelling in a Central Bank: The Role of Narrative in the Creation and Use of Specialized Economic Knowledge," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 13(3), July 1999, pp. 249-273.

⁵⁹M.F. Kipp, Finding the key dimensions of leadership, *Strategy & Leadership*, 27(4-5), July-Sep. 1999, pp. 49-52.

⁶⁰R.F. Dennehy, The executive as storyteller, *Management Review*, 88(3), March 1999, pp. 40-43.

⁶¹T. Terez, The business of storytelling, *Workforce*, 81(5), May 2002, p. 22.

⁶²S.M. De Benedittis, *Teaching faith and morals* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1981), p. 52.

⁶³C.M. Wallace, Storytelling, doctrine, and spiritual formation, *Anglican Theological Review*, 81(1), Winter 1999, pp. 39-59.

⁶⁴A.E. Sanner and A.F. Harper, *Exploring Christian education* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1978), pp. 197-198.

⁶⁵J.M. Lee, *The flow of religious instruction* (Mishawaka, IN: Religious Education Press, Inc., 1973), p. 59.

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 120.

⁶⁷S. TeSelle, *Speaking in parables* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 138.

⁶⁸Ibid, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹W.R. White, *Speaking in stories* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), p. 12.

⁷⁰S. TeSelle, *Speaking in parables*, pp. 5-6.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid, p. 7.

⁷³Ibid, p. 121.

⁷⁴M.K. Cove and M.L. Mueller, *Regarding religious education* (Mishawaka, IN: Religious Education Press, 1977), p. 31.

⁷⁵W.R. Rood, *The art of teaching Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 90. Rood presents four points associated with using stories in teaching religion: 1) Story builds interest but should never be used just as a gimmick to capture interest; 2) Story should

never be used to make a point that is not inherent in it; 3) Story should not be substituted for abstract information; and 4) Story should not become the whole lesson that is taught.

⁷⁶S. TeSelle, *Speaking in parables*, p. 139.

⁷⁷A. Simmons, *The story factor*, p. 28.

Simmons' book is not about evangelism per se, however, its focus on the role of story to influence others is key to understanding some of the basic building blocks of the evangelism process. A few additional comments are worth considering: "Story is indirect when directness won't work" (p. 34). "When you offer a story that helps them feel curious again or helps them make sense of their confusion, they will listen ... A story can transform the impotent and hopeless into a band of evangelists ready to spread the word. Why do you think religion is full of stories?" (p. 35). "Before you can influence, you must establish some connection. Story builds connections between you and those you wish to influence" (p. 116). "A story is designed to communicate a Truth that is more than the sum of the individual accuracies or inaccuracies within it" (p. 194). "Inevitably, the churches that preach fear stories are the very ones that suffer from infighting, hypocrisy, backbiting, and gossip. The churches that preach hope stories better nurture community and compassion and become places where everyone feels welcome" (pp. 224-225).

⁷⁸W.R. White, *Speaking in stories*, p. 11.

⁷⁹Ibid, p. 12.

⁸⁰G. von Rad, *God at work in Israel*

(Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980), p. 11.

⁸¹Ibid, pp. 143-144.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Or, the "telling" through words and ritual.

See *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 7, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), p. 1079. See also H.M. Orlinsky, *Essays in Biblical Culture and Bible Translation* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1974), p. 21, where he comments on Exodus 13:8.

⁸⁴II Samuel 12:1-15.

⁸⁵Exodus 13:3, 8; Deuteronomy 11 combines the stories with the commandments, and the people of Israel are commanded to tell all this to their children; Hebrews 10:32-36; Deuteronomy 4:9.

⁸⁶Judges 8:16; Jeremiah 19.

⁸⁷Luke 24:13-35.

⁸⁸Acts 2:14-36; Acts 7; Acts 10:34-43.

⁸⁹Hebrews 11.

⁹⁰W.J. Bausch, *Storytelling: Imagination and faith* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1984), p. 27. Bausch describes 13 characteristics of stories that I find stimulating for thought: 1) Stories provoke curiosity and compel repetition; 2) Stories unite us in a holistic way; 3) Stories are a bridge to one's culture. He says "a humanity without its story has lost its soul;" 4) Stories bind us to all of humankind. He associates this with Joseph Campbell's proposition of the psychological unity of the human species; 5) Stories help us remember; 6) Stories use a special language that bridges the intellect and the imagination; 7) Stories restore the original power of the word; 8) Stories provide escape from loneliness and hurt, but they can also bring us back to reality; 9) Stories evoke in us imagination and therefore wholeness; 10) Stories promote healing; 11) Every story is our story; 12) Stories provide a basis for hope and morality. "When a people are in a hopeless situation, the only way out, so to speak, is to imagine other possibilities and alternatives. It is the imagination, therefore, that gives birth to hope, and it is the story that is imagination's vehicle;" and 13) Stories are the basis for ministry.

⁹¹A.E. Sanner and A.F. Harper, *Exploring Christian education* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1978), p. 48.

⁹²G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 203.

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