A Storytelling Manual: Course Outline and Facilitator Notes

by

Karl J. Franklin
Dedicated to the memory of Professor Kenneth L. Pike  
Scholar, Teacher, Mentor, Example

The following quotes are from:

Pike's Perspectives: An Anthology  
of Thought, Insight and Moral Purpose  
(Kenneth L. Pike with Hugh Steven, 1989)

"Invest ten percent of your time, energy, effort of study  
getting ready for the future." (p. 25)

"He who uses linguistics is wise,  
but he who trusts in it is a fool." (p. 182)

"The linguistic colonialist wants his power and name  
permanently on top. A servant of the Master  
washes the feet of the beginner,  
and teaches those beginners who are  
genetically more competent than himself  
to become his boss and teacher." (p. 183)

"When philosophies clash at the deepest epistemological  
level of their axioms or presuppositions,  
logical discourse is impossible, directly." (p. 60)

"Unless we are able to pioneer  
in giving native speakers working with us  
MUCH MORE GLORY for their contributions,  
our candlestick may well be taken from us  
and given to others." (p. 64)

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Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 5

Storytelling Modules .............................................................................................................................. 8

Storytelling Map .................................................................................................................................. 9

Why Stories? (WS) ............................................................................................................................... 10

Kinds of Stories (KS) ............................................................................................................................. 19

The Big Idea in a Story (BI) ................................................................................................................. 29

Story Audiences (SA) ................................................................................................................................ 33

Telling Stories (TS) .................................................................................................................................. 38

Constructing Stories (SC) ....................................................................................................................... 47

Bible Stories (SB) ..................................................................................................................................... 55

Examining Stories (ES) ............................................................................................................................. 64

Stories as Songs and Drama (SS) ........................................................................................................... 75

Recording Stories (RS) ............................................................................................................................ 80

Using Stories (US) .................................................................................................................................... 85

Concluding Remarks ............................................................................................................................... 91

References ................................................................................................................................................ 96
Appendices

Appendix A: Two Storytelling Workshops ...........................................................103

Appendix B: A Brief Overview: Melanesian Worldview ........................................115

Appendix C: Some Major Themes in PNG Stories ..................................................130

Appendix D: The Oral and the Written in SIL Fieldwork ....................................133

Appendix E: Bible Storying Roles .........................................................................145
Introduction

This Manual is primarily for those who wish to teach others something about storytelling. Although for the most part the audiences will be those who teach or tell Bible stories, it is also intended for those who want additional information on storytelling in general. The materials are introduced in such a way that trainers and facilitators can both use them in courses and consult supplementary materials for further study and research.

Telling a story is inextricably linked to how the story is imagined. C.S. Lewis (1984:68) described how he utilized this approach as follows:

“… in a certain sense, I have never exactly ‘made’ a story. With me the process is much more like bird-watching than like either talking or building. I see pictures. Some of these pictures have a common flavour, almost a common smell, which groups them together. Keep quiet and watch and they will begin joining themselves up. If you were very lucky (I have never been so lucky as that) a whole set might join themselves so consistently that there you had a complete story; without doing anything yourself. But more often (in my experience anyway) there are gaps. Then at last you have to do some deliberate inventing, have to contrive reasons why these characters should be in these various places doing these various things. I have no idea if this is the usual way of writing stories, still less whether it is the best. It is the only way I know; images always come first.”

The information outlined in this Manual may seem to contradict one major dictum of Lewis because it discusses in considerable detail how to construct stories and may seem to leave little to the imagination of the storyteller. However, this detail is necessary for trainers and facilitators of storytellers to learn the craft of storytelling well.

I estimate that it will take at least two hours of class interaction and participation to work through each module, including the mentoring exercises. The materials given here have benefited from two workshops held in Papua New Guinea (see Appendix A for reports) and a course taught in Melbourne, Australia at the EQUIP course for 3 weeks.

Although I have freely incorporated materials from an earlier Handbook on storytelling, the present work provides additional ideas and examples about storytelling.¹ I have also freely quoted from many experts on storytelling in the sections called "Facilitator Notes".

Module Orientation

The following orientation outlines the modules for the course:

1. A **Banner** at the top of the page gives an **abbreviation** for the module, which is also on the **Storytelling Map**.
2. The **Title** of the module is next, followed by an overview of what the module contains.
3. Next is a short **Objective** for the module, sometimes with a number of sub-goals as well.
4. Following the objective are some ideas on **Preparation**, including some exercises and suggestions that the facilitator can do prior to introducing the topic. Other modules that can be helpful in preparing for this particular module are cross-referenced.
5. The next section is **Practice**, suggesting exercises that can help fulfill the objectives of the module and give some indication of the competencies of the learner.
6. A **Skill-Check** follows, outlining further exercises to indicate that the student has a sufficient understanding of the lesson to perform the objectives of the module.
7. **Facilitator Notes** is a beginning set of background and research materials designed with workshop leaders or facilitators in mind. These include information that has contributed to the formation of each module, as well as additional sources. Facilitators will undoubtedly add their own materials to this section.
8. **References** are materials consulted and that have proved useful in designing this Manual.

In the development of the modules, I consulted the Criterion Referenced Instruction (CRI) approach, as outlined in the adult education model of Robert F. Mager. His is one of the many on learning and instruction that are on the website. The main principles in the approach are:

- Derive instructional objectives from job performance and be sure they reflect the competencies needed
- Study and practice only those skills that are not yet mastered to the level required by the objectives
- Practice each objective and obtain feedback about the quality of the performance
- Repeat practice in skills that are used often or are difficult to learn
- Sequence each module according to the pre-requisites and the progress noted by judging one’s own competence (mastery of objectives)

Additional information that can be a helpful for facilitators is in the following Appendices:

1) Appendix A has reports of two storytelling workshops held in PNG.
2) Appendix B outlines some of the salient aspects of a "Melanesian" worldview.
3) Appendix C outlines some major themes from PNG stories by giving the titles of stories found in McElhanon (1974, 1982).
4) Appendix D is an essay that considers the plight of members of oral societies who are not likely to become literate.
5) Appendix E outlines the training needed for certain storytelling roles

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Finally, I of course thank God for the privilege in serving him and hope that this manual will be
instrumental in convincing others that Biblical storytelling, while not translation, can be a first
avenue for small and neglected language groups.

Karl J. Franklin
Dallas, November 2006
Storytelling Modules

Course Objective

Although many of the materials outlined here have field workshop participants in mind, they are also intended for facilitators and trainers interested in the general art of storytelling. By consulting and reading the background materials and working through the exercises, students should have enough knowledge and experience to conduct a course or workshop on storytelling. Note that many of the exercises require at least one partner for adequate practice.

By the end of the course or workshop, trainers or facilitators, as well as trainees and participants, should be able to discuss a wide range of concepts related to storytelling and help determine the kinds of Bible stories that would be beneficial in various situations. Trainers will have had practice in telling and retelling stories and should be able to teach others to retell stories as well. They should be able to evaluate the kind of information that is appropriate to add to a Bible story, as well as what kinds of additional information is appropriate. They should also understand and explain the differences between oral and written story styles, including how different kinds of stories are constructed.

Modules in this course:

- **WS**: Why Stories?
- **TS**: Telling Stories
- **KS**: Kinds of Stories
- **BS**: Bible Stories
- **BI**: Big Ideas in Stories
- **SA**: Story Audiences
- **CS**: Constructing Stories
- **ES**: Examining Stories
- **SS**: Stories as Songs and Drama
- **RS**: Recording Stories
- **US**: Using Stories

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3 The materials developed here do not argue for or against a chronological ordering of the Bible stories, the methodology widely used and described in detail elsewhere (Payne 2003; [www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com](http://www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com); Willis, et al. 2002). In the approach suggested here the participants decide on the stories that are most relevant for their cultural situation. For teaching purposes, the Bible stories we have used are a number of the parables and sayings of Jesus that we assume have cross-cultural application. Although songs and drama are instances of stories, they require special skills.
INTRODUCTION

A Storytelling Map

SS Stories as Songs

WS Why Stories?

US Using Stories

RS Recording Stories

KS Kinds of Stories

BI Story Big Ideas

BS Bible Stories

CS Constructing Stories

SA Story Audiences

TS Telling Stories

ES Examining Stories

SS Stories as Songs

BI Story Big Ideas

BS Bible Stories

CS Constructing Stories

US Using Stories

RS Recording Stories

ES Examining Stories

SA Story Audiences

TS Telling Stories

WS Why Stories?
Why Stories?

According to some literacy experts, 70% of the world’s population depends upon oral communication because the people are either illiterate or semi-literate. Nevertheless, every society has stories, even if they do not have them in written form. In addition, thousands of language groups do not have written vernacular Bible stories (or written stories of any kind). Bible stories told in the languages often come from some other dominant language.

This first module outlines some of the rationale for using stories and focusing upon their retold versions, rather than upon translations of Bible stories.

Objective

Given the general background of why stories are important and how they function in particular cultures, facilitators and participants should outline how stories are used in their own culture and language setting. Based upon this information, trainers can summarize the importance of stories in the languages and culture groups that are represented in the workshop or course.

Preparation

It is important that facilitators and participants not only know but also can tell several stories from their own culture and in their own language. In many courses and workshops, participants and facilitators may tell the stories in English, although in other countries, such as Papua New Guinea (PNG), Tok Pisin (TP) may often be used. If you are going to use your mother tongue for instruction, then you should practice telling stories in your own language first.

It turns out that the way people tell stories can be as important as the content of their stories. You want your stories to be interesting and helpful, so that listeners will want to hear more stories. Think, in particular, about telling and using good stories in your culture.

For example, consider a storyteller that you have heard and think about why that person was a good storyteller (or perhaps was not a good storyteller). What are the characteristics of good and bad storytellers in your culture? The following modules will also be helpful as you complete this exercise:

- **BI** = The Big Idea of a Story
- **KS** = Kinds of Stories
Practice
Participants should have a partner(s) so that they can tell and listen to each other’s stories. They should also discuss the story, noting in particular:

- Why the story was told
- Why the particular characters and events were introduced
- What parts seemed to be important and for what reason(s)
- What parts of the story were not well understood (or liked)
- How the story might be changed

Skill-Check
The purpose and design of this first module is to help students understand why stories are so important. Participants should be able to discuss:

- How and why stories are used in other cultures, but especially their own.
- Some particular stories (from the Bible or elsewhere) that have influenced them.
- How stories are generally used in their culture, specifically in religious or political contexts
- Are the stories effective? Why? How can they be made more effective?

Facilitator Notes
As previously noted, these sections expand the information for a particular topic. Here we provide elaborate further on why stories are told and why they are so important.

WHY STORIES OR WHY “STORY”?

The art and practice of storytelling is probably as old as mankind. Folk stories have abounded since people first started talking to each other, recounting their experiences. For the teller of the story this was indeed a personal “history,” an account of the “facts” as the person could best remember and tell them. However, in order for something to be accepted as a “factual story” it was (and still is) necessary for someone to corroborate it. It was not enough to believe someone if they alone told the story, other witnesses were needed.

Steffen (1996) gives a number of reasons that he believes support our telling stories, particularly Bible stories, and ends with a plea for the more widespread use of stories because:

- They are a universal form of communication
- Half of the world’s population prefer that mode for learning
- They connect imagination and emotions
- Major religions socialize the young and indoctrinate with them
- 75% of the Bible is narrative
- They create instant evangelists
- Jesus taught theology through stories

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4 Classical stories are sometimes called folklore (Pickering 1999), encompassing a wide range of materials from the oral tradition. This includes not only stories, but customs, dances, games, rituals, songs, legends, myths, proverbs, etc., as well. See, for example, McKinney (2000) on the use and classification of oral genres.
In order to do this effectively Steffen claims that we need to get rid of certain myths, such as:

- Stories are for entertainment and separated from reality
- Stories are only for children
- Stories are for those outside urban areas
- Stories can only be told well by professionals
- Stories and theology are unrelated and waste time

**Scientists Tell Stories**

Skip ahead of Bible times for several centuries and consider the “scientific method,” a more elaborate and widely acclaimed method of telling a story. Observations are made about something and then statements are made to account for the nature of whatever is observed or, more precisely, what can be measured. Other observers agree or disagree upon the measurements or observations and the hypothesis by testing it and by means of argumentation. The examining community agrees to accept certain established criteria that are dictated by its own community. Observations, such as folk descriptions regarding the “rising” and “setting” of the sun are accepted by the scientific community as valid, if they are explained in terms of scientific vocabulary or jargon, based upon observations or measurements that can be replicated. The various parts of the sun and its “actions,” for example, are given names and the person or community, if it wishes to be accepted as scientific, must use those names in the developing discussion. Scientists prize the language they use because it is said to “explain” or “describe” the phenomena better than folk language, like the “rising” and the “setting” of the sun. When folk language is used, everyone in the scientific community considers the language imprecise and metaphorical.

In the so-called “post-modern” world, even the sacredness of scientific terminology has been questioned. The very notion of reality, truth and its objective nature is up for grabs. What is your truth is my semi-truth or my untruth. This is not very helpful to “science.” Although discoveries in science can be talked about in different ways, there is still the belief (based upon examining and measuring the object) that something really does “exist.” There is matter and there are “laws” that regulate how matter “behaves.” Gravity is a law and so is weightlessness, which seem at first to contradict each other. However, the results of both are observable, although the causes may be disputed. One culture may see an apple falling from a tree as an act of a supreme being, not something “happening” in response to a natural law.

The point is that we would need stories to describe the world around us, even if we did not believe that something exists. We may not believe that animals talk, but we are willing to hear or read a story in which they do. In addition, when they do, we expect what they say has some meaning, that it is relevant to the theme of the story. Therefore, we expect a story to be built around some main idea or argument with other supporting ideas and arguments. Scientists tell us stories about gravity and cultural storytellers tell us stories about their universe. One set of stories may be simply to “entertain” us, but another may be constructed to “educate” us. In other words, to be a creditable story there must be some idea or theme that is central—it has to be “going somewhere.”
STORIES BELONG TO SOMEONE

We can become much more personal about stories: each of us has a story to tell and the story of our lives is the macro-story, made up of as many stories as we can remember and recount. It is memory and imagination that enter into the storyteller’s version, not necessarily facts built from empirical evidence. If I tell you an autobiographical story about hunting squirrels, it is built upon all of the images in my mind about the event: primarily these will be from my own experience, but the story will draw upon the experiences of others as well. To be a “good” story it will build upon some of the experiences of the hearer as well because the hearer will be forming mental images as he or she hears the story. If parts of my story do not connect very well, the story can easily be misunderstood or, worse still, ignored. When I tell my story, I introduce scenery, I assume background, with people and animals a part of it. If you do not know what a squirrel is, then my story about hunting squirrels will not make the same sense to you that it does to me. You may be used to hunting coons, so your coon hunting imagery will interfere or be transposed onto the squirrel-hunting scene. The scenes and scripting for the two will have some parallels, but there will be important and contrastive differences. The insider has the advantage of knowing what is central or pivotal in describing hunting for either a squirrel or a coon. However, the insider may not be able to give you a very good plan or script for the activity. The insider may assume too much: he (and women hunt too) will think you know what kind of gun is used, or dogs, when and where the activity takes place. The outsider does not know these things and might prepare a much more elaborate script based on what is asked or researched, not yet experienced, about the hunting venture.

In addition to what is “real” about the activity: the need for a gun, dogs, and a place to hunt, when the hunt takes place, there may also be “symbolic” dimensions. All the coon hunters may wear coonskin caps, or all the squirrel hunters may wear certain kinds of jackets or boots and carry nuts in their pockets. The particular details are worked out by the participants: if you want to look the part of an accepted coon hunter, you look and act in the prescribed manner. Scientists and farmers also have their own codes (or non-codes) of dress and speech, often conventionalized to particular “dialects.”

JESUS THE MASTER STORYTELLER

Let us switch now to examples that might concern us in trying to make the Bible understood to non-experts. (We can simply assume that there is a greater degree of understanding by the expert exegetes, although it is seldom that simple.) The Bible is full of stories and Jesus turns out to be the best storyteller of all. He is recorded more than any other speaker is because he tells more stories than anyone else does. Further, his stories are hotly debated right up until this very hour. Every weekend preachers, priests and rabbis may elaborate upon his stories to make all kinds of points, even those that are very obscure from the text itself. So how do they do this? First, they assume that some of what Jesus says is “symbolic,” that is, it is not literal in the sense that Jesus is relating factual instances. Each of the stories may be built on actual first-century life (peasants and Palestine), but the teaching point of the story extends far beyond its application to the literal life and times of Palestine. If it did not, we would have little motivation to believe or tell the stories today.
Jesus also used real objects to represent principles and themes: grain, seed, weeds, fields, nets, vine and vineyards, sheep and shepherd. All of these were actual objects in the culture. Other things were not: the kingdom of God, Abraham’s bosom, eating flesh and drinking blood, and eating pig’s food were not the everyday experience of the Jews. This incongruity was because Jesus was trying to get across a particular principle and the most effective way to do so was by telling a story using culturally relevant objects and stationing them in metaphors. Alternatively, he took culturally difficult events and objects and recast them in terms of metaphors. For example, in the concept of entire dependence upon God, he used the branches of a vine depending upon the vine and the vinedresser, or a person depending upon sustenance from Jesus himself, not upon ritual enactments of the law or cannibalism. However, Jews had mental images of vines, vinedressers, and wine gardens firmly fixed in their minds, so the metaphors made sense.

**Main Points in Stories**

Think again about some of the necessary ingredients for a story: a main point, imagination, motivation, style, all involving plots with characters, events and a space-time orientation. In addition, Jesus always had a point to make, most often centering on the kingdom of God and its importance to individuals. He was motivated to tell his story because he had been sent to the earth to do so by the Father. However, he used his imagination and the cultural artifacts at his disposal to tell the stories so that they were challenging and convincing. His style was persuasive; it was a story of utmost importance and worth listening to. In fact, it was to the peril of the listeners if they did not heed the story and change their ways.

In telling a story like Jesus did we should not get tied up simply in the actual details and form of the source text. We do not want to miss the main point or points, and we want to ensure that they are made in a way that is culturally explicit and persuasive. This does not mean that the meaning will be immediately transparent—which is why Jesus used parables. Parables are simply a kind of story in which certain objects are used to symbolically represent actual or potential situations. In the parable of the sower, the seed represents “the word of God.” “Seed” can be used to represent it because some of the family of expressions about seed can apply equally well to the word of God. It can be “planted,” “watered,” “cultivated,” and “harvested,” and it can “grow” and “mature.” We can even “eat” or feed upon its fruit. However, there are some things we do with the word of God that we cannot do with seed: we cannot memorize or even hear the seed (although some environmentalists might disagree), we cannot husk it and we should not cook it. In the same way, there are some things we can do with seed that we do not do, even symbolically, with the word of God: fertilize it, store it, and grind it, and so on.

When we tell a story, we need to be conscious about how the mapping of images and metaphors takes place between languages. The background of agriculture enters into a discussion and description of sowing seed and its maturation. However, we do not need to transfer the complete Palestinian agricultural scene into parables in order to learn from them. In addition, it does not follow that the more we can map, the more we can learn and the better our application. Many things about agriculture in Jesus’ day were not relevant to his parables, and especially to their

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5 Capon (1985:61) calls the sower “the watershed of the parables” and Wierzbicka (2001:246) sees the sower as the key to Jesus’ other parables and the theme as the Kingdom of God.
meanings. However, we can know what was salient and crucial to Jesus’ story and make sure these points are relevant in the language in which the story is being told.

The gospel story is the “good news” about God and Jesus but it can be “bad news” if poorly and improperly told, using words, metaphors and comparisons that are culturally misunderstood.

Using storytelling is a technique and strategy to communicate the Gospel that takes us back to the way Jesus and his disciples did it. Recording the Gospel message was much later and, even when people heard the message read, they relied on their own memories to retell the story. Most could not read the Scriptures even if they were available.

SMALL LANGUAGES AND STORYTELLING

The oral nature of societies is apparent in many areas of the Pacific (and elsewhere). Despite near universal primary education, literateness is a skill that must be nourished regularly. As we know, children do not begin their eating habits by chewing on steak; rather they rely initially upon milk. So it is with the translated message: new literates should not have to begin the reading habits with Scripture. Instead, they should have stories. In addition, the stories should sound natural, not like a text imported from a religious setting that is used for an hour (or more) and then rarely heard the same way again the rest of the week.

Small languages in the Pacific represent people who communicate orally, not by means of newspapers and books (See Appendix D for further comments on this point.) The viability of a language depends upon its use in common situations, representing the most efficient and effective way to communicate. When translated, Scripture contains a meta-vocabulary that religious practitioners use regularly, often with the same revered sense that scientists have with their jargon. On the other hand, storytellers can represent the Bible stories without recourse to religious vocabulary, although often it may be used as well. However, when such unknown vocabulary is introduced, some folk explanation is needed immediately, much like a pastor “explaining” that “justification” means “just as if I had never sinned.” Key terms in storytelling are revealed when the audience represents the story’s mental images.

THE PRACTICE OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling, as Denning (2001) clarifies, does not replace analytical thinking, but it supplements it with new perspectives. Audiences intuitively can leap ahead in their understanding in the story and become involved in the storytelling process. This is not so likely in the case of listening to a passage read or listening to an exegetical sermon. Again, to echo Denning (2001:137, 139), the force of a story is in the telling, where there is interaction between the storyteller and the listeners. People can discuss the story, complain about it, praise it, but in each case, they are embodying their concepts and ideas at a deeper level of understanding.

Given the problems of translation and explication that exist in all cultures, it seems imperative that we understand the stories that we hear. For example, Christians everywhere need to understand the implications of stories about the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son for their
culture. What is the point of a translation if the main idea of the story is lost and not considered for application?

Biblical storytelling is not the answer to all of life’s problems, but it is one avenue to ensure that the problems of life are related to the Bible show how God has provided help for seekers.

Authors have documented the value of folktales and stories in cultures and societies around the world. McDonald (1993) also reminds us that there is no correct version of a folktale and, we would add, the same is true in retelling a story. Rather, there is a myriad of retellings and because of this every person is a potential storyteller. In our courses or workshops, we want to facilitate telling stories by talking through an entire story, re-telling the story in groups, then evaluating the story. In the process, we need to listen to personal stories, literary stories (usually heard in school or in church), myths and historical accounts. We want stories to have impact, to not be easily forgotten, and to be told everywhere.

Stories should also make us more aware of other groups and cultures and therefore make us think differently, giving us new messages to apply to our lives. In the socialization process and as Rodari (1973.ix) has explained, stories should mold groups of children into cooperative and imaginative learning communities, where the teachers and children explore reality through their imaginations. These are excellent goals for Bible stories as well.

Storytelling involves creating imagination to evoke emotion and spiritual conviction, so the careful selection of stories and the approach used in telling them is important. A trainer should be his or her own critic, “developing love and propensity for the art” (as Sawyer 1942:35 puts it). We learn best about people by hearing their stories. “We owe it to each other to respect and learn from our stories” (Coles 1989:24).

The roots of spiritual and moral values also lie in stories, even folk stories or fairy tales, as Murphy (2000) has illustrated from several of the Grimm brothers’ stories.

**Knowledge is Stories**

Schank (1990) says that when we explain the world (at least to ourselves) it is a critical aspect of intelligence. He claims further, “Comprehending events around you depends upon having a memory of prior events available for helping in the interpretation of new events” (p. 1). Schank and others have demonstrated that we understand the world around us and interpret it in terms of scripts. Scripts make clear what is supposed to happen and make mental processing easier by allowing us to think less about routine things. You do not have to figure out what is going to happen once you know the cultural script. “People have thousands of highly personal scripts used on a daily basis that others do not share” (p. 8). Sometimes of course, people only partially share scripts, for example, my wife and I both brush our teeth, but we follow slightly different scripts.

We may have difficulty remembering abstractions but we can remember stories. We tell our stories to illustrate our beliefs, even if they are highly abstract. To do this well, we have to know what story to tell and when is the right time to tell it. According to Schank “People who fail to
couch what they have to say in memorable stories will have their rules fall on deaf ears despite their best intentions and despite the best intentions of their listeners” (p. 15). A good teacher or trainer couches explanations in an interesting format demonstrating knowledge by means of experiences in stories. We hear stories and correlate them with what we already know because “Stories are everywhere, but not all stories look like stories” (p. 26).

Schank outlines five basic types of story:
- **Official**: where details are left out and things are made to appear simpler than they really are
- **Invented (adapted)**: often for entertainment and therefore difficult to trace
- **Firsthand experiential**: how these are formed depends on the goals of the teller
- **Secondhand**: firsthand ones that are remembered, but are often less rich and more specific
- **Culturally common**: from our environment, so they belong to no single person

When we tell stories we want to:
- Illustrate a point
- Make the listener react in a particular manner (feel something)
- Transport the listener somewhere
- Transfer some piece of information
- Summarize significant events

**EXAMPLES FROM A NUMBER OF CULTURAL SCRIPTS**

Creating a story is a memory process, so if we do not tell the story soon enough “the experience cannot be coalesced into a gist since its component pieces begin to mix with new information that continues to come in” (Schank 1990:115). We tell stories to remember them and telling a story makes it happen again. Schank distinguishes between a story that is based on memory and one that is a story passed on as a generalized event. The use of scripts is essential because we have a general storehouse of information in our memory but need to break up our daily experiences into component parts. Story-based memory contains memory encapsulating general world knowledge. Our memory expresses our world-view but this depends upon telling and retelling our stories over a lifetime. Telling dreams, for example, is a way of remembering them. We can use our story skeletons to tell other people stories. We learn the meaning of complex words through stories and skeleton stories provide the foundation for the meanings of words.

Schank believes that our memory contains a database of partial stories rather than whole ones and that from these stories we formulate a single unit in our memory. It follows that the more stories that we have available from our cultural databank the more inventive we can be. People define themselves through their stories, as well as through the stories of others. Many people who are good storytellers know how to take advantage of this feature. The stories we live by and take for granted are primarily the ones we have learned from within our culture or subculture.

**STORIES AND INTELLIGENCE**

Furthermore, people think in terms of stories and understand the world in terms of stories they understand (Schank 1990:219). Therefore, stories are basic to human thinking even if humans sometimes use stories to avoid thinking. Stories reveal various dimensions of intelligence because they require finding data, being reminded (even the ability to be reminded), searching for data, manipulating data, mapping data, and adapting old data to new situations. Stories
provide comprehension by connecting new stories to old ones, inventing coherency for otherwise incomprehensible data, explaining our expectations, and discovering predictive rules based on past failures. This involves planning, executing plans that we copy, learning how to create plans for communicating and learning how to generalize, crystallize and elaborate stories. We also learn to integrate imaginary scenarios in stories through conceptual blending.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Fauconnier and Turner (2002) discuss conceptual blending in some detail, arguing that this process underlies and makes possible all human accomplishments. Their book’s goal is to explain the principles and mechanisms of conceptual blending. Ken McElhanon, a professor at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (Dallas, Texas), has taught a course on “Culture, Language and Mind” that includes aspects of conceptual blending.
Kinds of Stories

There are many kinds of stories so it is possible to categorize them in various ways. For example, many languages have origin stories that tell us how something first appeared. Such stories may be based on resemblance—people’s heads are round like a coconut, so there may be a story that tells how the first person originated by means of a coconut. The account in Genesis tells how man and woman were created and how the world began, so these too are origin stories. We believe the story in Genesis to be factual and the story about coconuts and people’s heads to be fictional, but not all stories are easy to classify as purely fictional or factual, and each encompass varying degrees of faith.

This module examines the kinds of stories told in cultures and suggests that various words, expressions and aspects of grammar promote mental images that underlie and support the story.

Objective

To discuss a range of stories, including names that help classify them (that is, calling the story a particular type) in a particular language.

Preparation

Listen to several kinds of stories and decide the main point they are meant to illustrate (their Big Idea, which we will discuss later). Are there, for example, stories about old men and women? About non-humans? About battles? Family heroes? When we listen to stories, we should attempt to categorize them: old people’s stories, spirit stories, wars, genealogies, and so on. But how are such stories told in such a way that they contrast with one another?

For practice, examine three different kinds of stories, for example, origin stories, conflict stories, genealogy stories, etc. If a story does not have a title, provide one that will highlight its main idea and think about its purpose and the manner in which it is told. Are the stories mainly for amusement and entertainment? Are they meant to teach children about the way they should live and act? Do some stories suggest certain relationships with dead relatives, with the spirits, or with God? What makes such stories effective? What specific words or expressions are used in the stories that provide impact and hold interest?

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7 See http://www.bsu.edu/classes/vancamp/genres.html on classifying children’s stories.
The following modules will be helpful to complete this exercise:

- SA = Story Audiences
- BS = Bible Stories

**Practice**

The facilitator can elicit the names of story types from each participant, then combine, and conflate them into a list of categories. Once this is done, decide on the particular kind of story you wish to discuss and:

- With a partner discuss that story type
- Examine several stories in the Bible to determine what kind they are
- What name(s) will help you classify and remember various kinds of stories?
- What makes a particular kind of stories interesting or important?
- What kind of stories is generally told to children in church?
- What kinds of information are most often included in children’s stories?

**Skill-Check**

As trainers, you should be able to differentiate kinds of stories, for example, a folk story and a historical story. Assuming contrastive styles how are various types of stories introduced? Are there particular words or grammatical constructions that are unique to a type? Think how you would go about constructing a folk story. Check your efforts with others.

What techniques or methodology can be used when telling particular kinds of stories? For example, there are stories that predominantly employ:

- Proverbs
- Metaphors and allegory
- Cult or taboo language
- Folktales or myths
- Riddles or puzzles
- Songs or poems
- Comments and questions

**Facilitator Notes**

Simmons (2001) explains that there are six basic types of stories:

- Who I Am
- Why I Am Here
- Vision
- Teaching
- Values-in-Action: “A good test for yourself is to see how many stories you can come up with to demonstrate the values you profess to hold” (2001:23).
- I Know What You Are Thinking: “If you name their objections first, you are that much closer to disarming them” (2001:23). Such stories can neutralize concerns without engaging in direct confrontation.
GOSSIP, LITERATURE, AND FICTIONS OF THE SELF

Fulford (1999:1) says, “Gossip remains a folk-art version of literature, the back-fence way of compressing events and exploring their meaning….Gossip has always fed literary art.” He makes these additional points

• There is a difference between a story and an experience. The former has shape, outlines and limits while the latter “blurs at the edges and tends to merge imperceptibly with related experiences” (1999:4).
• “Popular narrative on television has come to be seen as the opiate of the masses…[yet]…For all the reasons that fill this book, we cannot do without it” (1999:7).
• Stories acquire structure as they are told and the narrator has the power to be selective, even untrue, and producing the feeling of events actually happening.
• An individual who is thwarted by the lack of a good story demonstrates “narrative deprivation,” that is, the person is “story-poor” (1999:20).

MASTER NARRATIVES AND THE PATTERNS OF HISTORY

Stories can become massive in scope. Fulford gives the example of Arnold Toynbee, who set out to explain the meaning of human history and wrote the “master narrative,” a work of history that draws upon thousands of facts to give “lessons” about human beings. “A master narrative always speaks with the confidence of unalterable and unassailable truth—and yet paradoxically it is always in the process of being altered” (1999:35). Fulford claims that every society builds a master narrative to refer to as its source of righteousness and moral certainty, although recently the master narrative has come under deep suspicion. Education depends on narrative and even though certain narratives are against university rules these days. This is because when you tell a story it is difficult to avoid judgments, which create difficulties in the university (1999:39).

THE LITERATURE OF THE STREETS AND THE SHAPING OF THE NEWS

Fulford claims that the genre of “urban legend” exemplifies the popular living form of folk narrative. In fact, in recent generations it has replaced the tall tale and is now fueled by the Internet, depicting a form of “self-generated journalism, a way of wrapping in a narrative package certain observations and anxieties…” (1999:68). Narrative journalism has no fixed rules except the danger of libel laws and often comes close to fiction (1999:92). According to Fulford, storytelling has gone from a once fairly ambiguous art form to a philosophical and personalized semantic maze.

NAMES FOR STORIES

Despite their semantic maze, stories are called by various names. In the Bible, for example, we read the “parables” of Jesus, which are short stories, somewhat symbolic, and often convey some particular truth or moral. In many cases we cannot be sure that a particular detail or series of events outlined in the parable actually happened. Such stories form what Lakoff (1987) has called idealized cognitive models. In parables, Jesus allowed his followers to form their own mental images, which can sometimes be analyzed in terms of their metaphors or families of metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

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8 An additional example of a world meta-narrative can be found in Daimond (1999), who attempts to outline the evolution of mankind in one volume, including New Guinea, where he did field work.
In a more general sense, a story is a narration of events and experiences, which may be true or fictitious. If the fictitious aspect is in focus, we may refer to the narration as a myth, legend or even a tale. Such stories may have a traditional point to them and even, in the case of a yarn, an incredible (almost unbelievable) aspect as well. Legends are non-historical and unverifiable and are handed down through generations, so that eventually they become apocryphal or even pseudo-historical.

Myths do not necessarily refer to stories that are false. They may simply be abbreviated or detailed written and spoken records, passed down from generation to generation.

Some stories are transmitted by means of songs (Lord 1974) and poems (Finnegan 1977), while others by means of movies, videos, dramas, the epic poem, etc., where visual and auditory impact are the key factors.

In a more practical sense, stories which are “true” (non-fiction) are contrasted with fiction. The former has an historical or factual basis. On the other hand, although fiction is a story imagined by the author, it may be based on a true story. Fictional writing is often referred to by names such as fairytale, legend, myth, folktale, fable, parable, allegory, novel, science-fiction, ghost story, Western, romance, and so on.  

Additional terms that are commonly used to categorize general stories are novel (such as a historical novel), biography, memoir, record, narrative, history, account, autobiography, record, discourse, allegory, folktale, yarn, and version.

Carol McKinney (2000) outlines a variety of terms that describe oral traditions: children’s game stories, dilemma tales, dirges, epics, explanatory tales, fables, folktales or fairy tales, founding or origin tales, genealogies, gossip, history, insults, jokes, legends, myths, oracles, parables, performances, poetry, praise songs, prayers, proverbs, puns and tongue twisters, riddles, sagas, secret languages, sermons, tall tales and trickster narrations.

**Kewa Speech and Behavior Categories**

Every language will have names for some of the varieties of speech types that McKinney notes. Kewa, for example, (Franklin 1977), exhibits a rich taxonomy of speech types (not necessarily story types). In addition, there is a long repertoire of speech and behavior categories that are used extensively in stories to describe certain aspects of stories and storytellers. In the following examples the speech and behavior categories are not meant to correlate with each other.

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9 In Tok Pisin (PNG) story categories include: *stori bilong tumbuna* (ancestral stories), *stori bilong bipo* (ancient stories), *stori bilong pikinini* (children’s stories), *stori bilong meri* (women’s stories), *stori bilong wokim ol kain samting* (stories on how to make things), *stori bilong sing sing* (stories that are sung), *stori bilong wokabaut* (travel stories), *stori bilong graun* (common stories), *stori nating* (stories with no point), and *Baibel stori* (Bible stories).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SPEECH CATEGORIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>BEHAVIOR CATEGORIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lorae agaa ‘discontinued talk’ [cut-off talk]</td>
<td>ratu yawe kone ‘anger’ [cooked behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaa mana ‘instructions’</td>
<td>ona maulape kone ‘homosexuality’ [woman changed into behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaa mana mana ‘minute instructions’</td>
<td>adawe kone ‘hope’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaa mea ‘questions’ [talk fetched]</td>
<td>kudiri kone ‘secretiveness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaa mimamo ‘feverish talk’</td>
<td>ona paake rume kone ‘adultery’ [woman stealing behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaa yola ‘lengthy talk’ [pulled talk]</td>
<td>epe pawa pirape kone ‘patience’ [good, slowly, sitting behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arere pi agaa ‘arguments’</td>
<td>oro yaalo pirape kone ‘living forever’ [always sitting=living behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asubaa agaa ‘leader’s talk’</td>
<td>wae puku pi kone ‘evil/ stinking ways’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balina agaa ‘European or white-man talk’</td>
<td>udipaa kone ‘jealousy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>betene agaa ‘prayers’</td>
<td>makuae kone ‘understanding/wisdom’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eke tole ‘tongue tied’</td>
<td>epe kone ‘goodness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epe agaa ‘good, acceptable talk’</td>
<td>wae abulae kone ‘vengeance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epe garulue agaa ‘promises’</td>
<td>odo omape kone ‘pity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epe yaina pi agaa ‘blessings’ [good spell saying talk]</td>
<td>abana kone ‘old ways’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ero agaa ‘insults’</td>
<td>rope pi kone ‘pride, rudeness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotena agaa ‘God’s talk’</td>
<td>lotu kone ‘religious’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imaa niti ‘taboo talk’</td>
<td>rulae kone ‘belief, faith’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koso lape agaa ‘court talk’</td>
<td>kone mareka ‘excitement’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudiripu agaa ‘secrets’</td>
<td>rawa pi kone ‘competition, boastful’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurakura agaa ‘questioning talk’</td>
<td>oyae epame ome kone ‘covetness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lapedepe agaa ‘confession’</td>
<td>kone rasa ‘disobey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makirae agaa ‘deliberate deceit’</td>
<td>ona rasini meape kone ‘divorce’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misini agaa ‘mission talk’</td>
<td>puri mapalape kone ‘encouragement’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogo ne agaa ‘unclear talk’ (distant)</td>
<td>epe raba meape kone ‘grace, helpfulness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mumu ne agaa ‘whispering’</td>
<td>yala polape kone ‘indecency’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ora agaa ‘true talk’</td>
<td>omape kone ‘mortality’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa agaa ‘idle conversation’ [just talk]</td>
<td>kone pogati ‘proud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedo pi agaa ‘flattery’</td>
<td>ropa pi kone ‘proud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rado rado ne agaa ‘contradictions’</td>
<td>bipa kone surubea ‘self-control’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redepo ne agaa ‘straight or honest talk’</td>
<td>pupitagi nape kone ‘sinfulness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reka agaa ‘initiated talk’</td>
<td>robaapa i kone ‘conscience’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rekena agaa ‘ten commandments’</td>
<td>orope ne kone ‘procrastination’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remani agaa ‘court language’</td>
<td>musiduma rume kone ‘aspirations’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ribu raguna agaa ‘ribu ceremonial language’ [archaic]</td>
<td>ora lana kone ‘dependability’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rome agaa ‘trade talk’</td>
<td>sukilima kone ‘stubborn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rugula agaa ‘interrupted talk’</td>
<td>kone laapo ‘doubt’ [two behaviours]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumula agaa ‘ritual pandanus language’</td>
<td>maraeae kone ‘ignorance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saa pi agaa ‘hidden speech/parables’</td>
<td>kone mayolo ruba ‘confused’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tisaana agaa ‘teacher’s talk’</td>
<td>kone rugula ‘forget’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutu agaa ‘imperfect talk’</td>
<td>kone sa ‘think’ [put (one’s) behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wae agaa ‘bad or indecent speech’</td>
<td>kone rolo rumua pea ‘reluctant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wae rero pi agaa ‘curse’ or wae man yaina pi agaa</td>
<td>pedopu rana omape kone ‘love, happiness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya(pi) agaa ‘deceitful talk’</td>
<td>[throat happiness dying behaviour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yada maluue agaa ‘challenges’</td>
<td>kone mea ‘ask what one is thinking’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kewa people have stories as an integral part of their culture. Two particular kinds of stories in West Kewa are *remaa*, which is any kind of tale or story, but generally personal and historical, and *iti*, which are particular tales that are passed on from others, especially involving older events and myths. The following summaries of Kewa stories are based on my reviews of LeRoy (1985a, 1985b).

LeRoy began his collection of 81 Kewa stories in 1971, adding to them in 1972, and completing them in 1976-77. *Kewa Tales* (KT) contains the unabridged texts, as well as the notation for the analysis of the 11 sequences (i.e., sets of similar texts) found in the stories and the various functions (i.e., ordered events) found in the sequences. *Fabricated World* is an in-depth analysis of the tales.

LeRoy claims that his collection comprises tales (*lidi*) and not myths, in that the Kewa see them as a fictitious type of literature. His theoretical position is that the tales reflect “a close connection to the cultural circumstances of their origin, but they cannot be reduced to them” (KT, xix). They are models for interpreting and clarifying other parts of the culture (IKT, 257). By following the “structuralist method” LeRoy is able to screen out considerations that do not suit the purpose of the analysis and identify their metaphorical nature, i.e., the Kewa's fabrication of the world (IKT, 259ff).

As noted, LeRoy claims that Kewa tales (the *lidi*) can be distinguished from legends (*remani* or *remaaa*) because the former are fictitious, but the latter are true. Part of his argument rests on the fact that his recordings of Kewa tales are all in the simple past tense and never in the remote past, which is largely reserved for legends. LeRoy acknowledges, “Tales are set in an indefinite past” but says, “this is made evident only at the tale's close” (IKT, 248).

KT contains 7 chapters, with named themes: on good and bad brothers, on improper brothers and sisters, on jealous spouses and siblings, on marriages to ghosts, tricksters, little-men and old men, on skin changing and other transformations, and on broken promises and angry ghosts. IKT is divided into 5 parts: I, the Introduction, which comments on theories of narrative as well as the tales and their culture; II, the Axis of Siblingship, which contains tales of siblings; III, Alien Affines, including ghost marriage; IV, Denial of Death, and V, Dimensions of the Test, which deals with the interdiction, the ends, and the meanings. An Epilogue and Appendixes conclude the book.
LEROY'S OUTLINE OF SEQUENCES AND THEIR FRAMES

Appendix 1 in *Fabricated World* and Appendix 2 in *Kewa Tales* list the same sequences and functions from the stories. In Appendix 3, the “sequences” and their frames are as follows:

1. Two Brothers
   a. A brother benefits from a source of wealth
   b. Another brother misuses the source
   c. There is an act of retaliation
2. Brother and Sister
   a. One of the siblings acts improperly
   b. The other sibling reproves the first or becomes distant
   c. The siblings separate
   d. The siblings rejoin
3. Ghost attack (male ghosts, male victims)
   a. A ghost attacks the hero
   b. He receives aid, and escapes or kills the attacker
4. Ghost attack (male ghosts, female victims)
   a. A ghost attacks the heroine
   b. She receives aid, and escapes or kills the attacker
5. Ghost attack (female ghosts, male victims)
   a. A ghost attacks the hero
   b. He receives aid, and escapes or kills the attacker
6. Ghost attack (female ghosts, female victims)
   a. A ghost attacks the heroine
   b. She receives aid, and escapes or kills the attacker
7. Brother sister and wife
   a. A brother marries a woman of special status
   b. His sister and his wife are kept separate
   c. The sister and the wife engage in mortal combat
   d. There is an act of retaliation
8. *Abuwapale* the provider
   a. A young man unites with a woman of special status
   b. The woman gives him wealth, but under a condition
   c. He ignores the condition, and she dies as a result
   d. There is an act of retaliation
9. Ghost marriage
   a. A youth (or his spirit form) visits a young woman
   b. Left behind, she journeys to meet him
   c. On her journey she meets kin of the youth’s
   d. She joins the youth
   e. (The ghostsister of the youth helps her)
   f. (Men capture the ghostsister)
10. Poor-man little-man old man
    a. A foe attacks a group
    b. The group’s last surviving member overcomes the foe
11. Skin changers
    a. A young man’s or woman’s spouse has a disagreeable appearance
    b. During ceremonies the spouse appears very attractive
    c. The young man or woman destroys the spouse’s homely skin
12. Restorative transformation
    a. A hero or heroine is attacked
    b. The victim’s condition deteriorates
    c. The victim is restored
13. Regenerative transformation
    a. A human substance is put in a concealed place
b. People grow from the substance

14. Interdictions
   a. A woman has the company of a man
   b. She is warned not to do something
   c. She does not heed the advice
   d. The inobservance has grave consequences

15. Result
   a. Heroes or heroines cause or respond to death or injury
   b. The character’s actions have lasting results

The Appendixes in LeRoy give an excellent overview of the contents of the book: Appendix 1 lists the sequences and functions; Appendix 2 is a list of the sequences in tales, including any chaining, embedding, or equivalence features. Appendix 3, as already noted, is a set of tables that gives frame sequences for each of the sequences.

RELIGION AND KEWA STORIES

Mary MacDonald worked as a Catholic missionary among the Mararoko (the name of her book, after a village in the South Kewa area) from 1973-77 and returned to the area on visits from 1980-83. Mararoko is the result of her PhD studies at the University of Chicago and is based upon the analysis and interpretation of 188 stories related to her by numerous Kewa people. Of the stories, 104 were originally told in Kewa and 84 in Tok Pisin (p. 223).

Part One of the book is on exchange and change and includes seven chapters as well as a number of photographs; Part Two comprises the stories and is divided into 21 sections, according to the six locations where the stories were told. Each story is told either in Kewa or in Tok Pisin (TP, that is, Highlands Melanesian Pidgin), with the author, date, and cross reference to similar tales, also noted. The stories were translated from Kewa to TP to English, or directly from TP to English, but no transcription was made of the Kewa (p. 224). There are numerous vernacular terms scattered throughout Part One, a number within the copious notes for each chapter, as well a few in Part Two; a bibliography and index conclude the book.

MacDonald’s concern is with both the Kewa insiders’ interpretations of the stories and her own as the scholar or analyst. She claims that “Insiders tend to interpret through analogies and metaphors; outsiders, if they are scholars, use the categories of their disciplines. My task is to move between the two styles of language and analysis” (p. 3). In doing so, she moves back and forth between the traditional and the Christian (mainly Catholic) forms of Kewa religion. Her methodology is one of participant observation, not so much of Kewa traditional ritual, but of indigenous storytelling.

The “all-embracing metaphor pervading and uniting the culture” (p. 9) is exchange, mainly involving affines, ghosts, shells and pigs. The Kewa word kaba (p. 15) is what MacDonald says describes give and take, buying and selling, and it is therefore the communicative symbol of reciprocity. Elsewhere in Kewa, kaba means both “to buy/sell” or “to break off something,” and is not always the traditional word for barter or exchange. The form rome agele “exchange talk” is also given by MacDonald, but the expression ropa pea “to barter or exchange goods” is missing.
Chapter One outlines the Mararoko world, both in terms of traditional structure and in reference to more recent changes. Both are freely mixed in the stories that make up Part Two of the book. Death and ghosts, a prominent theme throughout, are linked to Yakili, (God), sky people, patrol officers, missionaries, and the intentions of all concerned and form the design of many stories.

MacDonald relies upon interpretation because Kewa people talk in a hidden manner. So do birds, insects and musical instruments (p. 88). Often the metaphorical nature of communication comes out not only in songs and dances, but also in mourning, courting and trade negotiations. The text is therefore “situated in a social, cultural, linguistic, historical and psychological environment” (p. 121). MacDonald comments upon the plausibility of psychological interpretations of the symbols recounted as themes in the stories. This internal structure of the text and its external references are the “idiom of exchange and change” (p. 128).

MacDonald notes that words and work were combined in magic, taboos, spirit cults, healing and sorcery (p. 133). Spirit cults and healers have been readily transferred over into the Christian context. Sorcery is another matter: it “belongs to a worldview in which those outside one's own group are not credited with the same rights” (p. 161). It therefore acts as a social sanction and a process of justice.

The Kewa people are preoccupied with pigs. They form the main “carrier of meanings” (p. 179), both male and female, as exchange objects. In ritual, marriage, and in competitive festivals they form the main attraction in storytelling. “How pigs lost the power of speech” is repeated by narrators in Menakiri (p. 297) and Kagopoiya (p. 307) and stories that mention Puramenalasu, the big pig which talks, occur several times. Pigs carry meaning because they are the principal mediators in exchange and negotiation, both with people and with spirits. Later in the book (p. 201) MacDonald establishes that pigs, along with other animals, are metonymic human beings. She concludes Chapter 5, “Pigs and People,” by surmising that pigs and shells promote “life-giving relationships” because they are redistributed within the community and there is “a new opportunity to change the world” (p.205).

In Chapter 6, at the conclusion of Part One, MacDonald attempts to unite Kewa tradition and Christian practice. The Christian stories and rituals are exchanges as well but there is a “dilemma of interpretation” (p. 218). MacDonald concludes that we must be satisfied with partial understanding.

The stories of Part 2 include both traditional stories and historical or personal accounts. Sometimes they are mixed. MacDonald attempts to clarify the two genres by examining the Kewa words that are used to describe certain speech events. The traditional stories or tales are called tida (see also iti in the West ad lidi in the East Kewa), and these have the components of both common interpretations and imaginative creations. The ramani are claimed to be accounts of true or real events and are historical or cultural in content.

The 188 stories generally include (1) the interaction of people with ghosts; (2) the ritual participation of people (usually men) with cult spirits; (3) the interaction of brothers, enemies, spouses and their affines; (4) hunters and their encounters with snakes, possums, cassowaries and flying foxes; (5) comments on the origin of people, animals and clans.
MacDonald outlines the basis for her methodology of interpretation using a story about a woman and a snake (p. 115ff). She demonstrates how the structural analyst position (from Levi-Strauss) allows one to determine “patterns of opposition between elements in a text and to arrange them in a master code which represents the deeper meaning of the text” (p. 118). From these patterns a metatext of relationships represented by metaphor is suggested. For example, to MacDonald the snake is not only a symbol of renewed life (p. 125) but also, with the eel, a phallic symbol (p. 126).

MacDonald has organized the stories in Part 2 of her book according to the cultural themes discussed in Part 1. Her work complements that of LeRoy.

By consulting the MacDonald’s index the general subjects of the stories and number of times they are represented in the text of the stories are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancestors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying fox</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsupials</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bones</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassowaries</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clans</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enemies</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and food crops</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life/life cycle</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light/heat</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon and sun</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net bags</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig kills</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs/pork</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shells</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snakes</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorcery</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stones</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tok Pisin</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warfare</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have outlined the works of LeRoy and McDonald in some detail to demonstrate how helpful stories are in understanding the cultural and worldview of a people. For additional examples of story themes in PNG consult Appendix C.
The Big Idea in a Story

Stories are told for a purpose. This may be simply entertainment, but more often it is to get a particular point across. When a central point is expressed at the conclusion of a story, it is often the “moral” of the story, the teaching lesson contained in it. (In Tok Pisin this is called the *as bilong story*, or the “reason/substance for the story.”) In the case of parables, the meaning or main lesson of the story may be hidden, or left to be deduced. In other stories, the figures of speech and metaphors must be explained in terms of their basic components, as in the parable of the sower. Wierzbicka (2001) has shown how the basic universal concepts inherent in the parables of Jesus can be explicated and reduced to universal semantic primitives. Once this is done, she claims that we can have a clearer idea of what Jesus really meant by the parable. Although such a detailed type of analysis is not outlined here, the storyteller does need to be aware of what the main theme of the story is and how this can be determined and expressed.

We expect Bible stories to have a lesson behind them, often more than one. They are also part of a larger narrative, which needs to be made clear as well. In the case of folk stories or legends the meaning may be difficult for an outsider to grasp, although an insider may see the point of the story quickly. If the main idea is clear to insiders, but outsiders do not grasp it, this may mean that the story needs to be recast for the outsider. It may also reveal that the language and culture need more study.

In examining the main idea in a story, think of the hearers, those you hope will have some compelling reason for re-telling the story. They need to understand the main ideas of the story and decide if, in turn, their audience can readily determine them. If not, some adjustment and elaboration of the main idea is in order.

It is important to recognize that the name or title of a story as given in the Bible may be quite different than the theme or main point of the story. For example, the name of the story in Luke 10:25-37 is commonly called “The Good Samaritan,” but the point of the story is to illustrate who really can be considered a “neighbor.”

Objective
This module will give practice in determining what the Big or Main Idea(s) is in a number of stories.

Preparation
Listen to or read several different kinds of stories in order to understand how an author goes about presenting the Big Idea most effectively. Also, it is helpful to examine several traditional
stories and determine the main idea in each story. Stories are told to reveal something—what is it? The following modules can assist in this exercise:

- **KS = Kinds of Stories**
- **SA = Story Audiences**
- **TS = Telling Stories**
- **CS = Constructing Stories**

**Practice**

Consider three different kinds of stories, such as: a Bible story, a legend or myth (called *stori bilong tumbuna* in Tok Pisin—see McElhanon 1974 and 1982), and someone’s personal story. Following this, decide:

- What is the big or main idea of each story?
- What clues inform you of the main theme or point?
- How and when does the author introduce the main idea?
- Is there only one Big Idea?
- What are some minor or smaller ideas in the story?

**Skill-Check**

Ask someone to tell or read you the parable of “The Laborers in the Vineyard” (Matthew 20:1-16). Then:

- Explain the Big Idea of the parable
- Explain how you decided why it was the Big Idea
- Discuss how to ensure that the Big Idea is presented in re-told parables and stories

**Facilitator Notes**

“One people think we’re made of flesh and blood and bones. Scientists say we’re made of atoms. But I think we’re made of stories. When we die, that’s what people remember, the stories of our lives and the stories that we told.” (Ruth Stotter, quoted in Maguire 1998:127) As Maguire notes, “We need to remind ourselves over and over again that storytelling is a vocal art” (1998:134).

“There are just three essentials to a good story: humanity, a point, and the storyteller.” (J. Frank Dobie, quoted in Maguire 1998:137). The storyteller constructs scenes but must be sure to connect with them every time. Maguire claims that it takes 23 minutes to communicate a scene in sufficient detail. He uses an activity called “stepping stones” (storyboarding), where sketches or notes are outlined that depict step-by-step progressions in the development of a story. We can focus on one of these particular techniques as we tell our story:

- Adding dialogue and, where possible, showing, not telling
- Appealing to all five senses

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10 Micheal P. Knowles (in Longnecker, ed., 2000:303) claims “the identity of the laborers is less important than the character of the landowner, and what it implies about the character of God.” The laborers have been variously interpreted as the Pharisees and outcasts in general, the disciples, or the disciples that followed Jesus for longer or shorter periods of time.
• Adding interesting facts or allusions
• Building in repetitions and catalogues
• Planning appropriate pacing and inflection

Jeremias states “In attempting to recover the original significance of the parables, one thing above all becomes evident: it is that all the parables of Jesus compel his hearers to come to a decision about his person and mission. For they are all full of ‘the secret of the Kingdom of God’ (Mark 4.22), that is to say, the recognition of ‘an eschatology that is in the process of realization’” (1972:230).

Jeremias (p. 130) summarizes his observations on the Kingdom of God as “The strong man is disarmed, the forces of evil are in retreat, the physician comes to the sick, the lepers are cleansed, the great debt is wiped out, the lost sheep is brought home, the door of the father’s house stands open, the poor and the beggars are summoned to the banquet, a master whose kindness is undeserved pays his wages in full, a great joy fills all hearts. God’s acceptable year has come.” Jeremias also comments on the translation of the parables into Greek, noting representational changes and embellishments that takes place. Just to what degree and how this is done is influenced by the OT and folk story themes, audiences and the horatory use of parables by the church. Jeremias gives additional comments on allegorization in stories, noting how these have influenced the interpretation of the parables, such as:

• Now is the day of salvation
• God’s mercy for sinners
• The great assurance
• The imminence of catastrophe
• It may be too late
• The challenge of the hour
• Realized discipleship
• Exaltation of the Son of Man
• The consummation
• Parabolic actions

However, it is not always easy to summarize the main or Big Idea of a parable or story. For example, how would you characterize the main theme of the Gospel of John? Griffith-Jones (2001) writes on themes that are in the Gospel stories. His book is meant to show “why the Gospels present strikingly different visions of Jesus.” (From the book cover)

**THE FOUR GREATEST STORIES EVER TOLD**

Griffith-Jones writes, “First and foremost, our witness wrote stories, and to hear their own concerns we must hear the stories as they wrote them.” Therefore, they “discovered possibilities of which we, their later readers, have almost completely lost sight” (2001:11). He bases his observations and comments on the reply of Jesus who says, “Who do you say that I am?” In his concise summary, Griffith-Jones sees the main themes of the Gospels as follows:

• **Mark**: a simple Greek style, abrupt and unadorned storytelling. The Jewish Mark is first introduced in the Bible from Jerusalem but decades later he immigrates to Rome and lives on the outskirts of the city. “In Mark’s stern, stark story we hear a rebel speak” (p. 5). Just as immigrants to the US master English, it was important for missionaries like Mark to write in Greek. His work has traces of Aramaic accent, which is no surprise because the stories were first told in that language, then later translated into Greek. Mark does not “pander” to the educated elite.
• **Matthew:** finished his account ten years after Mark. He is a wise experienced teacher, well schooled in the Law. “Matthew builds his gospel in careful sections of miracles and teaching” (p.6). He highlights prophecies and their fulfillment. Tradition says the manuscript was written in Aramaic, but the source text we use is unlikely to be a translation of a long-lost original because much of the story is drawn from Mark.

• **Luke:** writes for the Gentile followers in two books, where the Gospel opens in the Jerusalem temple with Jesus not yet born and ends decades after his death with Paul as a missionary in Rome. Luke “has the historian’s eye for the great sweep of history and for its most telling detail.” (p. 7)

• **John:** casts his narrative differently, building long and riddling conversations between Jesus and others. “John is a mystic, a poet. He has an insight to convey that is almost too deep, too bewildering to speak of” (p. 7). Like Mark, John’s writing has a Semitic flavor with Hebrew as strong an influence as Aramaic. The Greek is rhythmic and simple.

### Considering the Bible as a Novel

In his lengthy book, Wagnerian (1996) suggests a number of Big Ideas in the Bible, as well as describing the principle characters who voice them. He divides his novel into eight parts, each with supporting cast and important place or character markers. The stories and their characters reveal the main ideas as follows:

- **The Ancestors:** Abraham, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph
- **The Covenant:** Moses, Sinai, The Children of Israel
- **The Wars of the Lord:** Joshua, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, The Levite’s Concubine
- **Kings:** Saul, David, Solomon
- **Prophets:** The Man of God from Judah, Elijah, Amos and Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah
- **Letters from Exile:** Ahikam utters a curse; Ahikam must make a decision; Ahikam in Jerusalem
- **The Yearning:** my Messenger, Nehemiah, Ezra
- **The Messiah:** Zechariah, Mary, John the Son of Zechariah, Andrew, Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, Son of Father, To Jerusalem, Jesus, The New Covenant

For another example note Bailey (1976: 55-56), who summarizes the main ideas of the Prodigal Son story as “[we] must become a neighbor to anyone in need, even enemies,” because self-justification is doomed to failure. The story provides a dynamic concept of neighbor and further demonstrates that God’s sovereignty is not bound. As Steven C. Barton (in Longnecker, ed., 2000:211) states, “the fundamental moral-theological point … is compassion for the lost….” This makes repentance and restoration possible.

### The Big Idea in PNG Traditional Stories

Examining the traditional stories of any country or culture is helpful. For PNG the two volume set of legends edited by McElhanon is representative (but see also Haywood, 1997 on the Dani of Papua). The list of story themes and names, followed by the references to specific languages and their reference numbers in the volumes, are given in Appendix C. The stories represent a wealth of traditional values, so select some of them that students might examine for their Big Idea.
Story Audiences

Stories are told to a variety of audiences and each will represent a wide range of backgrounds and ages. Some stories may appeal more to children and benefit from visual dramatization and action. Other stories may interest married couples, singles, farmers, city workers, and so on, but any audience will benefit by adopting appropriate metaphors and styles. When there is a mixed audience, it may be necessary to tell the story with variations that take into account the backgrounds of several sub-groups.

This module will examine issues of audience and give indications on how to best assess needs of the audience and address them, such as:
- How to examine the nature of an audience
- Why the viewpoints of the audience are important
- How the audience impacts and relates to the story

Objective
Choosing a particular audience and responding to its needs by means of particular stories, as well as discussing how to structure a story for a particular audience.

Preparation

Choose two or three short parables from the Bible (such as from Matthew 13 on the Kingdom) and think about two different audience types that may listen to the stories (e.g., children, on the one hand, or university students, on the other). What vocabulary and settings in the story might be emphasized or modified in each case? What may need to be done to help each audience understand the main theme and purpose of the story? For example, would the vocabulary and introduction of characters that is used for stories told to women or children be different than that used solely for a men’s group? What adjustments and cultural illustrations might need to be made if the audience consisted mainly of older people? How might stories be restructured to appeal to audiences that have children in them?

The following modules will give assistance in working through this exercise:
- CS = Constructing Stories
- BI = The Big Idea in a Story
- KS = Kinds of Stories
- BS = Bible Stories
Practice

Telling stories to different kinds of audiences is one way to improve your storytelling technique. Think about the particular audience and the metaphors and illustrations that will contribute to the mental pictures that are formed as part of the story.

For practice:
- Choose two stories (one a Bible story and the other a traditional tale)
- Tell the stories to two different audiences
- What adjustments can be made to the “original” story?

Skill–Check

Have two people listen to stories that you have prepared for two different kinds of audiences. Later, check the stories again by:
- Asking the audience about the main point of the story
- Asking the audience what scenes they remember best
- Asking the audience if there were words, expressions, illustrations, or other parts of the story that could be changed to help them more
- Discuss the kinds of audiences that you expect participants to encounter in telling stories

Facilitator Notes

Steffen (1996:34) uses the analogy of a four-legged stool to remind storytellers of several points to consider when using stories in other cultures. On the stool, one leg is the “anthropological leg,” which “respects the mariner’s [other cultures] worldview, values, and social environments.” This leg aids the storytelling facilitator to know what kind of background information is necessary and most helpful for the audience. The other “legs” are the pedagogical, theological, and curricular.

It may be helpful to take a story that is common in at least two of the Gospels and recast it for different audiences. Pretend that in your own culture you are telling the story of the feeding of the 5000 (Mat 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14) to these groups of people:
- A group of people in a rest home
- A teenage Sunday School class
- A group of children in a nursery
- A group of university students
- A professional group, e.g., teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.
- A group of politicians at a $500 plate gathering

How have you adjusted and adapted the story, taking into account the background, understanding, and application for the audiences? Have you used cultural analogies? For example, note the kind of food offered, where people sit, the items they bring, and so on. Does one Gospel account seem more fitting than another in respect to your audiences? How can this module be put into practice when teaching people of other cultures?
Stories for Organizations

Springboard stories (Denning 2001) are stories that are meant to promote changes in an organization, just as Bible stories are meant to promote changes in individuals and in the culture as a whole. They have certain characteristics\(^{11}\) (that are not unique to original stories):

- They should be told from the point of view of a protagonist that is in a predicament
- The change proposal in the story should solve the predicament
- The story should be plausible, even familiar
- The story should be told as simply and briefly as possible
- Speed and conciseness of style are keys
- The story should spark new stories in the minds of the listeners, but not details
- The listener’s minds should be encouraged to race ahead, to imagine further implications
- The story is no panacea, but is only as good as the underlying idea being conveyed
- Intuition will help tell you if you are giving the wrong information in the story
- Conversations will debate the feasibility of the change idea
- Every teller or listener may be an “expert” who has a different idea of what is best

Robert Coles, a psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard, recounts that hearing stories contributed to his understanding of how the physician should relate to the patient (his audience). He recalls how the habit of reading in his family played a dominant role in his life. His work in “psychiatric anthropology” is presented in the *Children of Crisis* series.

The Patient’s Story

For Coles the importance of a patient’s story is crucial in understanding how people feel in relation to their illness. Patients want doctors to hear their stories so that they can be understood better. Cole’s supervisor wanted these stories repeated, so Coles put aside formulating the medical problem and listened to the events in the patient’s life. He held off on his interpretation of the illness and concentrated on the variations of the stories. The things the patients expressed helped him to get to know them. Coles relates that “Dr. Ludwig [his supervisor] wanted me to worry about messages omitted, yarns gone untold, details brushed aside altogether, in the rush to come to a conclusion” (1989:21).

The treasure of a person’s life is always hidden in the childhood. However, often physicians’ minds are made up from the start of a consultation and they simply go along with their “diagnostic and therapeutic regimen” (1989:24). Physicians, in Cole’s view, owe it to each other to respect and learn from each other’s stories.

In order to have meaningful interaction with people and be able to provide some degree of help we need to know what they think. We don’t know the particular help that a story might be to someone. As Coles notes, “When Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* she could not have

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\(^{11}\) Note, for example, the story often told in SIL circles of how Kenneth Pike was prompted to write his Phonetics textbook: There was a predicament (Townsend needed the book); A change proposal to solve the predicament (Pike can do it); The story is plausible, even familiar (He didn’t want to do it); It sparks new stories (of how others benefited), and so on.
known its possible value for Americans caught up in racial conflict” (1089:40). The reader must enter into the story with his imagination for it to become “his” story.

**Finding Direction**

Coles also discusses the books that began to give him directions.\(^\text{12}\) He mentions Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in particular as authors who did not have any reluctance in raising religious and philosophical questions. However, although college students are forever trying to find a direction for their lives there are political currents and cross-currents to negotiate, especially arena in secular educational institutions. It is different for a doctor, for as Coles notes, “Someone approaching death can help the doctor to a reconciliation with the inevitable, as opposed to that fury of distracted busy-work that can mask an attending a physician’s despair as he or she sees the losing battle to be nearing its end” (p. 94).

Coles also claims that if doctors took the time to read poems they could find a better picture of what happened in a patient’s life than if they spend their time trying to find the right words for a headache or chest pain. He believes there are correlations between what doctors believe and how they act (marriage, morals, etc.) and practice medicine. “The so-called psychopath or sociopath, the immoral one, is a person who has no such [good character] company, or maybe pretty bad company—the terrible silences of an emotionally abandoned early life or the demonic voices of a tormented childhood” (1989:198).

**Fairy Stories?**

We may be surprised to find that the roots of spiritual stories can be found in fables and myths. Murphy (2000:3) reports that the Grimm brothers thought of fairy tales as remnants of ancient faith expressed in poetry. Wilhelm was a gleaner, collecting and re-expressing the religious faith found in poetic tales from three ancient traditions: Classical Greco-Roman, Norse-Germanic, and Biblical. He was also a fluent reader, student, and storyteller in all three and in one of them, Christianity, he was a believer. The brothers were professors and librarians who studied literature, philosophy, history of words, stories and languages. William wrote that his reason for telling fairy stories was to awaken the thoughts and feelings of the heart. Murphy cites additional evidence of spiritual interest and motivation for the stories.

**Audiences Determine Stories**

Stories can be adapted for audiences if the teller of the story knows something of their background, interest and needs. This is aided by listening to the stories as they are re-told by members of the audience.

Following Sawyer (1942) the storyteller must also learn to discriminate by evaluating the selection of stories and know for whom they are told. The introduction and climax are the important parts of a story but intricate stories that involve many characters or too much digression are difficult to tell. Stories can stir courage, love and beauty, invoke reverence, mercy and loyalty. But, “the form [must be] simple, complete; the subject matter universal; the

\(^\text{12}\) Other examples that come to mind are the anthologies by Yancey (19xx) and Muggeridge (19xx).
language forceful, pictorial” (1942:157). Retelling the best stories contribute “a feeling of home-
ness with words, [and] provides that final weight that swings the balance in favor of the
storyteller” (1942:160).

Sawyer reminds us that children’s books are not meant to become profitable and a commodity,
but to arouse the enthusiasms of the slow, the lazy and indifferent readers. She notes many
books, including those for adults, which will contribute to building background for the
storyteller.

WHY TELL PERSONAL STORIES?

Maguire (1998) has many applications and hints for personal storytelling that also seem to be
applicable to vernacular story telling.

Maguire says to think of storytelling as a painting instead of a photograph. Personal storytelling
engages us by:

- Investing our lives with more meaning. *(Exercise: Think of a person who remains somewhat of a mystery to you: Why
  are you curious about him or her and what would be interesting to know about them? Are there major experiences in
  life that you don’t like to talk about?)*
- Connecting us vitally with others. *(Exercise: Identify two groups to share with and describe some significant event in
  your life.)*
- Developing creativity. *(Exercise: Identify a meaningful period from your past family; what information do you lack?
  How can you supply or imagine what is missing?)*
- Strengthening humor. *(Exercise: Think of a particular story and tell what happened and how if affected you.)*
- Increasing courage and confidence. *(Exercise: Keep a journal and reflect on how the story began, and the significant
  moments or milestones in the story. Who are the major and minor characters and what are their points of view? What
  are the possible endings or sequences?)*
- Rendering our lives more memorable. *(Exercise: Recall an event and tell why it was difficult and what you learned
  from it. Include some of the specific details.)*
We enjoy hearing stories told by a good storyteller. But what makes a storyteller “good,” and how does this judgment vary from one culture to another? It is possible to take a story that is of average interest and tell it so that it “comes alive,” capturing the attention of the audience throughout the telling. This even happens when teachers retell textbook materials to students in a way that helps them to remember the important principles of the lesson. A pastor has the same principle in mind when he or she takes a difficult passage from the Bible and illustrates it with various kinds of stories.

This module will examine some of the techniques and principles that are used by recognized storytellers and will solicit examples of stories that are told by “good storytellers” from among the course or workshop participants.

**Objective**

To learn how to tell a story effectively, so that the audience retains the story accurately and can retell it well. Participants will be asked to outline those items that make a story most attractive and then illustrate them by telling stories.

**Preparation**

Examine a number of stories from Luke, the storyteller, and see what makes his stories effective. Note in particular how the stories presuppose certain cultural knowledge and experience—if the hearer is to really understand the story well. Note that a story should not sidetrack the listener or reader from the main point of the story.

Consider how “non-verbals” are used in storytelling: gestures, pauses, the loudness and softness of the voice, and so. We don’t have these features in the “original” Bible stories so we must decide if we can determine what the intention of the speaker was. The writers of the parables demonstrate intention in a number of ways, but primarily by speech acts (warnings, commands, exhortations, etc.) Try introducing gestures, pauses, and so on into a Bible story.

The following modules may be helpful in completing this exercise:

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13 *The Journal of Biblical Storytelling* includes valuable articles about storytelling. In Volume 10 (2000), for example, Tony McCaffrey outlines a practical method of teaching storytelling that captures both the visual and verbal imagination. He uses what he calls “gap tales,” “animation dubbing,” and “imagination integration exercises” to help storytellers understand the overall process in greater detail. These are further discussed in his book (McCaffrey 1996). The Network of Bible Storytellers (www.nobs.org) is a valuable resource.
Practice

Choose a partner and tell him or her a story that you know well. Add background and other information that is not in the original story but would seem to fit well without distorting its central theme (its Big Idea). Be sure to:

- Use your voice to show surprise, anger, or other emotions
- Use your body (if this is culturally appropriate) to emphasize points
- Try to tell both shorter and longer versions of the story
- Have your partner do the same with you
- Discuss the exercise and determine what would help you (or others) to tell your stories better
- Use some speech act verbs to add force to common verbs, such as say, ask and tell (Franklin 1992)

Skill-Check

- Outline some techniques that storytellers use in your culture
- Outline how you would prepare to tell a story
- Outline what kinds of props and materials might make the story more effective
- Outline how you would tell stories to children

For example, stories told of two brothers can be told from the perspective of either brother, or from that of the storyteller. The brothers can be introduced differently, more cultural information can be provided about them, and so on. In many cases the stories can be shortened or modified for practice.

Facilitator Notes

Prepare the audience for your story by carefully crafting its opening. Note their response as you begin the story. Are you using pauses in your delivery and does your voice and body gestures tell the tale with you? Note how various storytellers perform in terms of being in control. Is there relaxation and obvious enjoyment for you in telling the story?

Find Your Own Story

Facilitators should encourage each person to discover his or her own story and then to tell it in various settings. The teller should avoid simplified and “overdone” stories and consider how best to use his or her own experiences in telling the story. As a storyteller you need to learn to listen and reflect on your own story, as well as others.
Although we are not interested in storytelling as a profession, it is insightful to examine the websites of professional storytellers and their associations for ideas.

For example, Margaret Read MacDonald tells stories to “10,000 children each year as a children’s librarian with the King County Library System in Seattle,” and runs workshops for teachers. Her book is “a litany of the reasons people need to hear story” (1993:10). She says that storytellers can learn the story in one hour by selecting a story that they are eager to learn. Then: concentrate, memorize key bits, analyze into episodes, say the story, repair it, tell it through, evaluate it, even practice on the go. Then have a final rehearsal, but keep telling the story and evaluating it for later audiences. She also notes that the values of storytelling include the happiness of laughter as the wonder of the story unfolds. Stories help provide self-discovery, solitude, companionship, and they build understanding with others. They also provide satisfaction and enable us to be creative.

Next comes the part of performing the story. Here you as storyteller must set the stage, prepare the audience, begin with an appropriate pause, and then carefully construct an opening bridge to the story. As you communicate, observe the audience is carefully. You should revel in language and its use, develop your own style, use gestures that are natural, and then end the story with confidence. “I refuse to even discuss technique with my students until they have had experience in shaping a tale through repeated telling.” In evaluating performance, “We are about joy; not art” (1993:27). MacDonald concentrates upon:

- **Communication**: Did you see the audience; were you communicating and aware of their needs and responses?
- **Delivery**: Did you take time to pause before beginning? Was the ending skillful and effective? Did the listeners savor the ending? Did your voice carry well and did your body tell the tale with you?
- **Scripting**: Did the language flow easily? If not, mark spots that you need to work on.
- **Control**: Were you in complete control? Did you relax and enjoy the sharing?
- **Experience**: When can you tell the story again?

The storyteller should think of story as an event and plan for its desired effect. This can be done best by:

- Meeting the audience on their ground in the introductory comments. This also exerts control over the situation.
- Playing with the story. Use audience participation, repeated telling, dramatic play, music, movement, art, creative writing (see MacDonald, 1993:44 for example).
- Teaching others to tell the story by talking through the entire story again, then breaking into small groups (3 to 6) to evaluate its effect.
- Telling it everywhere: to preschoolers, churches, nursing-homes, homes, in parks and recreation centers.
- Finding the story: in written word, but telling it orally, for storytelling is an oral tradition. Collections of stories may come through elders and traditional tellers, but “being a member of a culture does not necessarily mean that an author has an ear for the oral tale. Evaluate each collection you discover carefully” (MacDonald 1993:64). Find a storyteller whose style matches your own and investigate the stories that excite you. Start a story bank.
- Looking at stories critically. Avoid simplified and overwritten stories. Find variants, explore other genres such as: personal stories, literary stories, myths and historical stories. “My colleagues sometimes suggest that those elaborate, soul-searched, personal stories and the hard-honed literary pieces which they construct and perform for adults are a higher art form, somehow on a different plane from the work of simply “telling stories to children. Nonsense… Art is judged by the ear and the heart. A simply told parable may stand above all of these elaborately developed twenty-minute recitations” (MacDonald 1993:80).
- Defending the story. Tales do not create fears but rather provide safe avenues to discuss the fear.
• Accepting the role of storyteller by listening, identifying with the hearers, instigating responses and reflecting upon the whole process. There is no right text, but infinite variants; repeated telling tends to perfect a tale; plunge in and let the audience help mold the story as you tell it. Learn the context in which the story originated and don’t worry about exact cultural reproduction.

• Networking with other storytellers.

Again, the final question is: Why tell the story? What are the values of storytelling? According to MacDonald, we should be convinced that stories broaden our awareness of other cultures by helping us to see ourselves better. Storytelling also gives a sense of our belonging to a group and can allow a space in which to think. When we do this we should look for:

• Happiness, with laughter and rhythmic responses
• Wonder, as stories unfold
• Self-discovery
• Quiet solitude
• Companionship
• Building understanding
• Creativity

“I truly believe that the power of storytelling is the one best hope we have to improve the communities we live in and the people we love.” (MacDonald 1993:104)

**Transferring Imagery in Stories**

Storytelling involves the transfer of imagery with varieties of expression, humor, pauses and rhythm, as well as repetition. “Imagery is the internal representation of actual or fanciful experience” (Lipman 1999:41).

You can always begin with a personal account about what the ideas of a particular story has meant, perhaps by adding a poem, dramatizing some point, or even singing it for more effect. We do not know what meaningful impact the interaction of an audience with a story will be, but there is much evidence that the importance of a personal story cannot be overestimated.

At the beginning of this Manual we recounted how C.S. Lewis, when writing his stories (see Hooper, ed. 1982), always began with a mental picture. All of the Narnian books and science fiction books began with Lewis seeing mental pictures. Lewis gives many valuable comments on writing stories for children.

Children or adults should be encouraged to use pictures, even drawing their own, to supplement and complement their stories.14

Ruth Sawyer was a great storyteller who shared her rich experience and joy in her classic book (1942) in which she also relates eleven of her best-loved stories. She compares the art of storytelling to the days of guilds when the worker was teacher, director, and inspirer of the apprentices. They lived for their work—the rightness and beauty of it. One of the characteristics of those who became masters was that they would try and try again, thus gaining experience.

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14 See Robert Coles (1964) and his Children of Crisis for elaboration on this point.
Sawyer further explains, “The art of storytelling lies within the storyteller, to be searched for, drawn out, made to grow” (1942:26). It involves:

- Creative imagination
- The power to evoke emotion
- A sense of spiritual conviction
- Careful selection of stories
- The right approach, as a folk-art (embracing emotions, imagination and folk-wisdom)
- Sharing one’s heart and spirit—to be “gloriously alive” (1942:28)
- Studying in solitude and silence for understanding
- Not simply imparting information or training in a specific direction
- Not simply giving prescribed material
- Being your own teacher and critic, developing love and propensity for the art (1942:35)
- Dependency upon the power of creation, with integrity, trust and vision

Note that Sawyer says that storytelling involves a sense of spiritual conviction. She calls it a “folk-art” that promotes emotions, imagination and folk-wisdom. The most important component of storytelling, however, is experience. The storyteller needs experience to demonstrate a love for storytelling, a pride in telling the story, and how to speak the story with physical vigor and faith. Sawyer wants no compromise with the trivial and mediocre, no commonplace performances. The storyteller must learn to listen to the voice, control the breath, and choose carefully the words and figures of speech that are used.

**THE ANTIQUITY OF STORIES**

Sawyer looked at the inspired, traditional storytellers of the past and discovered that what began as the narrative later was told for entertainment. Her observation was that “Out of growing imagination came the impulse to exaggerate and idealize” (1942:53). The use of prose and metrical narrative began to be distinguished. Literary forms like the ethical tale in fables, allegories, parables and legends began to unfold.

According to Sawyer, the first challenge to the art of the storyteller began when stories were written down, no longer belonging to a particular person. She outlines the history of the storyteller, from the first Pharaoh, through the Gypsies, pilgrims and crusaders, the conquering Romans, the historical tales, and so on. In many cases “A master owned certain stories which no apprentice would tell without his permission” (1942:66). Tales had to be known by the apprentice before becoming a master storyteller. Later the troubadour animated the minds of men by amusing them and leading them to think, reflect and judge.

Sawyer proposes a classification for ballads (narrative folk songs that relate adventures of love and war) such as:

- Heroic ballads
- Ballads of magic and marvel
- Historical ballads
- Ballads of chivalry and romance

Sawyer encourages storytellers to memorize the story and then forget about the mechanics so that the story is extemporaneous. Again, note that she sees experience as the most important aspect in storytelling. It includes:
- Assimilation, by repeated telling, and therefore trial and error
- Having a pride in what is told so that one speaks with physical vigor and faith
- “the grace of God and the power of imagination, living substance” (p. 88)
- Not compromising with the mediocre by giving commonplace performances
- Using drama for effect

THE BUILDING OF PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Sawyer states that the background of the storyteller can be enriched by prayer, meditation, self-denial, human service and even nature. For example, a storyteller should find the best music to build background on and not be concerned solely with amusement, education, distraction or pleasure. Rather, the storyteller should be concerned with an aspect of the spirit, some beauty and truth that lies hidden (1942:107). There must be an intellectual understanding, as well as shared spiritual conviction between the storyteller and the hearer. In addition, “To know good English, good form and good substance, one must be familiar with good writers” (1942:110). These commentators on literature provide the storyteller with a basis for judgment. Sawyer suggests that the storyteller also write at least one original story every year.

To tell a story well, the storyteller must hold the mind steadily upon it until everything is known and felt about it. Sawyer says that this can happen by exercises where the teller closes the eyes and visualizes the objects that picture the story. In this way the storyteller feels the story with his or her imagination but doesn’t resort to trickiness or sensationalism in order to win applause. Qualities that excite listeners are: directness, simplicity, elusiveness, dramatic interpretation, intonation, enunciation and charm but, above all, integrity (1942:127). Sawyer also believes that creative art at times involves communication between God and man and notes that children are the freest and the most innovative communicators.

A TECHNIQUE TO ABOLISH TECHNIQUE.

“I am conscious of nothing that might be called technique; but there are specific things to be accomplished by every storyteller and definite ways to accomplish them” (Sawyer 1942:131). This involves two main things:

- **The voice**: by learning to listen to it and control the breath. Stand erect, even panting, so that the chest and the head become sounding boards.
- **The words**: by cultivating a rich vocabulary so that the story does not have to be memorized. Learn each incident by means of pictures, not word by word, so that the pictures provide the continuity for the story. Use figures of speech, timing and pauses.

Sawyer summarizes her work by saying that storytellers should:

- Use their voice to reduce tension, using vocal warm-up
- Control performance anxiety by having a support team
- Note the layers of attention and know the changes expected in the listeners
- Keep attention flexible by connecting to the moment
- Balance the details with the goals and knowing what matters most
**Story Styles**

Lipman (1999) claims that there is no “right way” to tell a story because there are locally preferred styles. (This observation complements our own search for locally recognized storytellers.) The storytelling triangle consists of the teller, the audience and the story. He discusses the transfer of imagery in terms of:

- **Oral language**, where the varieties of expression, the use of characterization and humor, pauses and rhythm, as well as repetition, affect the story.
- **Transferring images of sights and sounds.** “Imagery is the internal representation of actual or fanciful experience” (1999:41).
- **Kinesthetic imagery**, where the body portrays key concepts in the story providing the feeling of a character, and emotion.

The storyteller also has a relationship to the story that:

- Includes the believability of the plot; the actions, characters and their development, moral clarity, ending lines and general commentary (1999:77).
- Allows a natural process of informal telling
- Discovers the meaning of a story and how to best state that meaning.
- Discovers the structure by outlining, using time-lines and other tools
- Includes memorization—(however, don’t begin by memorizing.)

The storyteller has a relationship to the listeners that includes:

- Fuzzy situations where one must sense expectations
- Telling as beneficiary as well as helper
- Four tasks: uniting, inviting, offering, and acknowledging
- Planning: the slots, e.g. an opening, participatory song, a short participatory story, a stand up and stretch time, a longer leaning back time and a final (optional) lively version of the story or song (with audience volunteers)
- Developing an audience: the rehearsal buddy, the home audience and other practice audiences

**Getting Story Ideas**

We have available what Sawyer calls our inner storyteller. Our mind works by having us tell someone a story. (One activity is to close your eyes, see the images of a story, and then tell it out loud.) As she reminds us, when we learn to read our own minds we are never short of material. In her terms, we “loaf” and invite our “soul” to re-stimulate the kinds of personal memories that make good stories (1942:55). Why do we see the image, how did we feel about it before? What does it remind us of?

Maguire reminds us that memory legwork involves a number of things, including remembering family history. He gives several examples of what storytellers can do to improve their stories (1998:92; 96-97; 100-101):

- Concentrate on the decision-making episodes in our lives
- Interweave the real with the possible—the bittersweet liberating movements
- Note important emotional events
- Examine a photograph for expressions on faces, postures, clothes, the surrounding environment in general, as well as specific objects, and ask questions about the photo
- Note childhood stories and legends in our family, dreams, first meetings, experiences, significant people, places and events
- Actively explore recollections from some family members
YOUR STORYTELLING POWERS IN ACTION

Maguire writes that “embodying a story” means doing things that you would not ordinarily do on a regular basis. This requires commitment, practice and experience. The storyteller should memorize certain phrases and scenes for each tale. Some suggestions on learning a story by heart include:

- Stop using a written text even if it means not telling a perfect version of what is on paper
- Think about your tale often during the day and every three days or so review the story
- Tell the story out loud at least every three days
- Make mental notes of things you can see, hear, smell, taste or feel that add to the tale or any of its parts
- Tell the tale to yourself in appropriate ways: peace, enlivenment, celebration, and so on.
- Think about individuals or groups that might enjoy the story
- Contemplate additions, substitutions, etc. that could be made (related memories, incidents or images of characters in the tale, facts or historical events related to it, analogies and examples that can be added).
- Do the same with deletions and condensations
- Consider what would you tell if you had twice as long; half as long

Maguire notes that the most common mistake in telling a story is speaking too fast. The storyteller should also choose the right time and environment for telling the story, using a firm, low-pitched natural voice and varying the pace and tone of the voice for emphasis. Included should be gestures, body language and maintain rapport with listeners. Earlier in the story, the ending should be eluded to, allowing the ending to come to a gentle, but definite, close. Gradually slow the pace and use special emphasis on the final few words.

Steffen's (1996) main concern, on the other hand, is that storytelling (from the Bible) should be connected with ministry. He understands that myths and stories play an important part in the development and transformation of worldview and presents a “Storytelling Analysis Worksheet” that can be helpful for storytelling facilitators. (1996:24)

Steffen discusses the terms storybook, storyline, storyteller and storysmith. In Bible stories the storyteller should outline carefully the landscape, in that 95% of the Bible takes place in an area 150 x 50 miles. Further, the storyteller can point out that the history of Israel was influenced by tribal, peasant and kingdom heritage (Lingenfelter 1992). Listeners therefore need an adequate knowledge of the backdrop (history, setting, and context) of the Bible stories. The Bible should be viewed as a whole story, rather than fragmented.

When entering a foreign (Steffen calls this “mariner”) context, storytellers need to collect life stories, proverbs and analyze them from the outsider’s perspective so that the contrast between the storyteller’s own land (and that of the Bible) will be clear. It follows that an awareness of paradigm shifts in new generations, universities, neighborhoods, or even evangelism, will assist the storyteller in doing a better job.
Constructing Stories

The way in which stories are put together varies from language to language and even from speaker to speaker within a language. However, taken as a linguistic exercise, there are ways to compose stories that make them more acceptable and attractive within any culture. This includes how characters are introduced, what background and supplementary information is included, and how the story is developed and concluded.

The same story can be told by different speakers with varying degrees of attraction because non-linguistic features come into play, such as the expressions and gestures used. We have mentioned some of these features in the modules on “Telling Stories” and “Story Audiences.” In this module we will examine techniques that help the student vary the way the content of a story is given, including the use of metaphors and other figures of speech.

Objective

You should be able to construct a story that meets several criteria:
- It is natural, one that could be told in the village to a general audience.
- The setting for the story, as well as the events and characters, are described.
- There is adequate supplementary information so that its purpose is clear to the audience.
- It can be re-told from various perspectives.
- It takes into account the way stories appropriately begin and end.

Preparation

Choose a folk story and also a parable and modify it so that:
- You can easily recall and retell it
- A friend of yours could retell it
- A pastor or priest could retell it
- A child could retell it
- Another storyteller you know could retell it

In each case, are there variations on how the story is introduced, then held together? What vocabulary can be changed in the case of each audience? What appropriate and helpful figures of speech or idioms are included? Suppose there is an audience where people are not familiar with the culture in the story: What information would need to be added to help them understand the story better?
The following modules will help in working on this exercise:

- **TS = Telling Stories**
- **SA = Story Audiences**
- **BI = Story Ideas**

**Practice**

Make up an original story, followed by:

- Listing all of the characters involved in the story (human and otherwise)
- Justify the sequence of character introduction
- Try another order of introduction: Is it better? Worse? Why?
- What information have you provided as background? Why?
- What additional background information might help the audience?
- Re-tell the story as if it happened a long time ago
- Re-tell it as if it has not yet happened

**Skill-Check**

You should be able to examine a story and:

- Identify how the main and minor characters are introduced
- Describe the characters and how they could be modified
- Discuss how background information was introduced and why
- Re-tell a story based on one that you have constructed, but tell it from a different point of view (“This is a story that my grandfather told me,” etc.)

You can also examine someone else’s story and suggest how it might be adjusted to help the listener understand it better.

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**Facilitator Notes**

A study of the Good Samaritan (from Luke 10:25-37) by Kistemaker (2002) contains information that is helpful in deciding what additional information can be included in the story.

First of all, he provides a description of the “place and people” (pp. 166-169). Jesus is confronted by a theologian who wanted to debate the question of who his “neighbor” was. Kistemaker notes that “The Jew lived in a circular world: at the center was himself, surrounded by his immediate relatives, then his kinsmen, and finally the circle of all those who claimed Jewish descent and who were converts to Judaism. The word “neighbor” has a reciprocal meaning: he is a brother to me and I to him. Thus, the circle is one of self-interest and ethnocentrism. The lines were carefully drawn to ensure the well-being of those who were inside and to deny help to those who were outside (p. 167).

To understand the story better it may be necessary to provide additional information for the hearer, such as: The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is only 27 kilometers or (17 miles) long and the area was mainly uninhabited, without vegetation and marked by limestone cliffs and gulleys. It was an area of regular crime. The people portrayed in the story (apart from the robbers) are:
the wounded and robbed man, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan and the innkeeper, with the Samaritan the favorite of the story because he had no regard for race, religion, or class distinctions.

History teaches us that the Samaritans were half-breeds and occupied the land of Israel during the Jewish exile. Their Bible was the five books of Moses and they had built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. An example of the Samaritans in the OT occurs in II Chronicles 28:5-15, which tells of the people in Jerusalem and Judah during the reign of King Ahaz. These people were led captive to Samaria. Cf. also Hosea 6.9.

The application of the story is to show that one cannot draw the line as to who is a neighbor. The person beaten is a Jew. The application of the good Samaritan is timeless, such that occupations, nationalities, and races can be substituted in the story. However, we may not wish to go as far as the patristic exegetes in constructing and interpreting the story. They, especially Augustine, interpreted the parable symbolically, seeing the victim as Adam; the robbers as the devil and his angels; the priest and Levite as the priesthood and ministry of the OT; and the Samaritan was interpreted as Jesus. Further, the oil was seen as comfort, wine as exhortation to work; the inn was the church, and the two coins were the two commands of God. Nevertheless, in constructing a story we can take into account the various possible interpretations.

**Figures and Idioms**

Clinton (1997) has constructed a series of studies related to hermeneutics. Other studies include historical background, structure and theme, context and grammar, words, Hebrew poetry, parables, types, symbols and prophecy. He covers figures and idioms by examining simile, metaphor, metonymy, as well as relationships and classification procedures. Stories often include all of these features.

Clinton also outlines some “general language laws,” on hermeneutics, such as finding the historical background of a book (author and perspective, recipients and situation, purpose, style, geographical and cultural factors), its theme, structure, context, grammar, words, and the relationship of the book to the Bible as a whole. His format includes maps, blocks, related maps, overview and preview, feedback and exercises and examining will provide a thorough study for any story.

Regarding figures and idioms, Clinton suggests listing them and providing definitions in our own words, then differentiating them. For example, we should look for figures in Scripture and note how commentators capture their essence. We can then outline our conclusions and describe any patterns that occur.

In a story the use of a figure in a story increases the power of a word by drawing special attention to a particular point. Figures are pictorial uses of words that often depart from the normal patterns. For example, in Romans alone Bullinger (1969) lists 235 examples of figurative language.
EXERCISES IN CONSTRUCTING STORIES

Rodari (1973) describes how he helped children in Italy learn to imagine and tell stories. In the Foreword Herbert Kohl states “The imaginative exercises in this book and the new role of the teacher were tested and eventually instituted as the core of teaching young children in the schools of Reggio Emilia in northern Italy. The goal of this work was to mold schools into cooperative, imaginative learning communities in which teachers and children engage in the imaginative exploration of reality….The teacher is an active participant who brings exercises and ideas to the learning situation, engages in doing those exercises along with the children, challenges…, and brings work to the point where it can be shared…” (1973: ix, x).

Rodari was born in 1920 and died in 1980. He grounded his thinking in European romantic and dialectic thought, influenced by Novalis, Breton, Dewey and Russell. He attended the Catholic U. of Milan but dropped out and eventually became a member of the Communist Party. He was a prolific contributor to the reform movement in Italian schools and felt that children should be “encouraged to question, challenge, destroy, mock, eliminate, generate, and reproduce their own language and meanings through stories that will enable them to narrate their own lives” (1973:xix). Further, “He never stopped thinking of children. He never stopped inventing stories. He never stopped questioning the status quo” (1973:xx).

Rodari wanted to help children to invent their own stories, so that they could serve as the basis for theater, puppet play, comics, films and cassettes, games, etc. The following sections summarize a few of the exercises he used in constructing, expanding and relating stories.

The stone in the pond. analogy of the ripple effect

- Find all the words that begin with /s/ but do not continue with /t/: seminar, silence, system.
- Find all the words that begin with /st/: stag, stamp, stem, start, stop, stink.
- Find all the words that rhyme: bone, tone, phone, cone, drone.
- Find all the words that come close in meaning: rock, pebble, marble, brick, granite.

The exercise is to find words that “by chance can function as a magical word to exhume fields of memory that have rested under the dust of time” (p. 6), e.g., brick > sick, tick, lick, stick, click, nick, kick…. A story is then composed using imagination triggered by the associations, where ideology or worldview “makes its mark in an ostensibly mechanical process”. Another exercise consists of listing the letters of STONE vertically, then using the letters to initiate the parts (e.g., beginning sentences) of a story.

What would happen if…

In this exercise the technique of “fantastical hypothesis” is employed such that the storyteller is involved in interaction with a protagonist

- What if everyone in Sicily lost their buttons?
- What if a crocodile appeared as a contestant on a TV quiz show? etc.

The arbitrary prefix

In this exercise, grammatical prefixes are employed to produce reverse effects. Some examples are:

- Sharpener becomes de-sharpener, something not used to sharpen pencils
The prefix *bi*- added to *pen* produces a pen that writes doubly
The use of *micro-, mini-, and maxi-* as productive prefixes, e.g. a *mini-skyscraper*

**Old games**
- Use clipped out headlines and mix them to obtain news about absurd, sensational, or amusing events
- Q and A routine using a series of Questions that include a sequence of events forming a narrative
- Children may draw pictures that depict scenes, etc.

**How limericks are made**
Roderi claims that limericks are “an organized and codified genre of nonsense” (1973:26). They are built as follows:
- First line is the protagonist
- Second line points out characteristics
- Third line amplifies the characteristics
- Fourth line realizes the actions of protagonist
- Fifth line is the final point or extravagant epithet
- Variations can occur: protagonist, attributes, reaction of others, final epithet
- Basically 1st, 2nd, and 5th lines rhyme with each other and 3rd rhymes with the 4th

**How riddles are made**
According to Rodari (p. 29), riddles are an exercise in logic and the imagination at the same time and are based on a sequence of estrangement leading to association and then metaphor. Here it is crucial to control the first step, estrangement, where one sees the object as if for the first time. For example, in the riddle “What is black and needs white to make its mark look bright?” the answer could be a pen. The step of association allows the analogy of “a black path on a white field;” and the final step a metaphorical definition of the pen, namely “something that makes a black path on a white field.” Children are particularly fond of riddles because “Their own presence in the world is a mystery to be resolved, a riddle to solve, and they circle around it with direct or indirect questions” (p. 30).

**Popular folk tales can provide raw material**
- Brothers Grimm transcribed common tales told by storytellers
- Andersen created fairy tales populated with romantic characters from everyday objects
- Collodi took life from a Tuscan landscape to create Pinocchio

**Making mistakes in the story**
- Using “Yellow” for “Red” Riding Hood
- Using mistakes for therapeutic effect: establishing boundaries between world of real things and the world of fantastic things
- Alternatives or parodies can only be initiated and developed at certain points
- Example of Little Red Riding Hood in a helicopter
- Reversing the tale: Little Red Riding Hood is bad, the wolf is good, etc.
- Reverse the starting point and go backwards

**What happens after**
- The structures of particular motifs in the fairy story are given preference and altered
- Fairy tale salad: the Prince who wakes Snow White is the same one who married Cinderella the day before

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15 An example of this method in Tok Pisin is like this: Wanpela man bilong *Lae*; em i no save kisim gutpela *pe*, olsem i gat *kros*, na em tokim *bos*; bai mi go long Mosbi *tude*. "There was a man from Lae who did not get good pay; so he became cross and he told the boss, "I will go to Moresby today."
Recasting fairy tales so that different messages emerge

**The cards of Propp (1968)**
- Breaking the fairy tales down into the component parts
- Structure of the fairy tale repeats the structure of the ritual
- Thirty-one functions with variants and internal articulations (p. 45)
- Make a deck of Propp cards with the functions or motifs on each card
- Use these to set up, multiply, reduce, extend, order, or recompose the images
- Give children three objects and invite children to invent and act out a scene with them

**Stories for laughing**
- Take advantage of errors
- Animate metaphors: the ticking clock
- Horse goes into a bar and asks for a beer; eats the glass except for the handle, etc.

**The Child who reads Comics**
- Child has to attribute conversation to characters
- Child must attribute and represent voices
- Child must recognize and distinguish surroundings
- Entire course of the story is reconstructed in the imagination

**Imagination, Creativity, School**
- A mind where creativity is cultivated in all directions
- A mind where creativity is synonymous with “divergent thought”
- A mind that asks questions, discovers problems, prefers fluid situations
- A mind capable of making autonomous and independent judgments
- A mind that rejects what is codified
- A mind that reshapes objects and concepts without being hindered by conformity

Rodari uses various exercises to draw out the creativity of children, including those we have briefly outlined. His work echoes that of Robert Coles, who used the pictures that children drew to understand their feelings and problems. Rodari uses word play to draw out their creativity. In the case of storytelling in endangered languages, the work of Rodari and Coles may provide methods of involving children creatively in constructing stories in their own languages.

**Other Contributions**

In examining the construction of Bible stories, questions such as the following can be considered: What does the theme of “lostness” represent in the parables of Matthew 13? If someone replies, “the Kingdom of God,” what might that phrase mean to an average listener in a pagan or post-Christian context? What kind of cultural images and metaphors would be

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16 An example of using this method in Bible stories might be the Prodigal Son story where scenes are invented for: brothers, father, road, pig and food, the fat calf, music and a party


18 We mention Coles elsewhere, but here attention is drawn to his “Children in Crisis” series.
appropriate in the cultures of PNG to represent the Kingdom of God? Wierzbicka (2001) has an excellent discussion on what represents the basic cross-cultural semantics in the “Kingdom of God” and how this term could be explicated.19

For a general background on how narrative is defined and how it can be changed and manipulated by the storyteller, note in particular the work of Fulford (1999). Often in traditional stories, the historical events have been re-created, somewhat like Arnold Toynbee did when he set out to explain the meaning of human history by writing his “master narrative.”

Kenneth Pike outlined what he called experimental syntax (1962, 1963, 1983) to demonstrate the constraints and creativity of syntactic variation in language learning, linguistic analysis and poetry (Pike 1988). Here is an example of how this might work:

- Construct a story using a man, a woman, two children, a pig, the “bush”, a garden and a house
- Now tell the story from the perspective of: the woman, the man, the children and the pig.
- Tell the story as if it happened yesterday, a year ago, or could happen tomorrow
- Note the location for each construction
- Note the lexical and syntactic variation and try to determine how topics are introduced and changed

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19 She condenses the range of interpretations into two broad categories: eschatological (distinctions between this world and the world to come) and non-eschatological or ethical. According to Wierzbicka (p. 19), “the core idea behind the metaphor of the kingdom of God is that of people living with God,” both in this world and the one to come.
Knowing how to tell, or rather “retell” Bible stories is one of the main goals of this Manual. This has been done by providing a “storytelling methodology” that can be applied by trainers, facilitators, consultants, participants or trainees. In PNG the source texts of the Bible that are available to all students include English and Tok Pisin Bibles, as well as, in some cases, other vernacular translations. Our first goal is to know how Bible stories are told using such texts. What information did the listeners in Jesus’ day already have at their disposal that is outside the listener’s worldview? For example, what would a “bruised reed” mean to PNG people (and what does it mean to most English speakers)? We need to determine how the stories can be enhanced to make them more easily, effectively and appropriately retold in other cultures. We then need to help people retell the stories. This includes outlining the general purpose for the stories, noting for whom they are told, and so on. All of the modules that have been outlined and covered so far come into play and aid in this goal.

A story is not necessarily a “good” story (from a cultural or vernacular point of view) just because it is a Bible story. We can see this by examining and listening to various Bible stories for children. Some authors do well in conveying the story themes throughout, while other authors do not do as well. Our goal is to have the stories told well, so that people want to hear or re-tell them. We want people to desire Bible stories as much or more than they would a traditional story. This is not simple. In the West, Christians are more likely to watch a movie or TV than they are to listen to a televangelist tell stories, although some of them are accomplished tellers. Here, and elsewhere, the matter of story evaluation also comes into play.

Objective

This module will focus on selecting and re-telling Bible stories, so that they can be retold easily and accurately. We will also discuss the differences between Bible stories and other types of stories.

Preparation

20 The materials developed here do not argue for or against a chronological ordering of the Bible stories, the methodology widely used and described in detail elsewhere (Payne 2003; www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com; Willis, et al. 2002). In the approach suggested here the participants decide on the stories that are most relevant for their cultural situation. For teaching purposes, the Bible stories we have used are a number of the parables and sayings of Jesus that we assume have cross-cultural application. Although songs and drama are instances of stories, they require special skills.
Listen to some pre-selected Bible stories as well as some traditional stories. Make sure that you know some well enough to retell them by memory. Select a Bible story that has been adapted for children. Read (or listen to) versions of the Bible story in the trade language (e.g., Tok Pisin in PNG) often so that, as a facilitator, you can retell it to your partner or to course participants.

The following modules can help you as you prepare for this exercise:

- **BI = The Big Idea in Stories**
- **ES = Examining Stories**
- **RS = Recording Stories**

**Practice**

As an example of outlining a Bible parable, students can examine the analysis of four parables and two poems in Luke given by Bailey (1976). It is one method of ensuring an adequate background and understanding for a parable before presenting and retelling it to a class. As a facilitator or teacher you should be able to demonstrate various study methods, not simply talk about them.

Choose a participant and tell the person the parable of the Good Samaritan in... Students can do the same exercise in their vernacular. Before telling the story, talk it over with your partner and discuss:

- Does anything seem to be missing in the story?
- What information could be supplied to help the hearer better understand the parable?
- Are there other Bible stories that can be told in conjunction with this one?
- Can you combine other Bible stories with this one into a larger meta-story?
- What makes this Bible story different than other stories?
- What is the main purpose of the story?

**Skill-Check**

In order to carry out this assignment and exercise well, both the facilitators and the participants need basic information about the Bible and its main characters. Facilitators can discuss with the participants how they attained their knowledge and provide help for those who need it. As you work through these skill-checks, think of what else you can read and study to prepare additional Bible stories. Encourage the participants to:

- Discuss six parables that they can retell in their language
- Explain why they choose the particular stories, i.e., how they believe these Bible stories will be helpful
- Have the participants tell one or two of these stories to a facilitator
- Discuss how to change or modify one of the stories
- Note the aids that might also assist them (pictures, drama, etc.) in telling the stories
- Demonstrate how at least one such aid would be helpful in a particular story
Facilitator Notes

Materials in this section include cultural information and background on ancient Israel. Remember, in particular, that good stories begin with images (Lewis, in Hooper ed., 1982), so the storyteller needs a mental picture or a series of pictures before attempting any new adaptation or rendering of the story.

**CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE “STORYING”**

Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) is a popular and well-documented method of recording and telling Bible stories. First initiated as a missiological method by New Tribes Mission, it has since been adopted as part of the strategy and training of the International Missions Board (Southern Baptists), Wycliffe and others—in a coalition now called Epic Partners. J.O. Terry reports that “Perhaps the greatest factor supporting the use of CBS is that of introducing God’s Word in a manner by which it can easily spread among a people, changing their lives and planting churches.”

To highlight and illustrate CBS the IMB has produced a series of audio CD modules that attempt to answer the question, “How can I make disciples of those who do not read or write?” One set, called “Following Jesus: making disciples of primary oral learners” contains six audio modules with “a world class team of eight specialists in communicating Biblical truth,” including host Dr. Avery Willis. It outlines the 10 step process that is used for evangelization and discipleship by the IMB, as follows (abridged and simplified here):

1. Choose Biblical principles
2. Define cultural worldview
3. Identify bridges, barriers and gaps between worldviews
4. Select Bible stories
5. Build stories
6. Tell stories
7. Dialogue stories
8. Apply stories
9. Answer stories
10. Tell others stories

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Storytelling in missions has focused upon “chronological” story telling as the most logical (and Western) way to present the Bible. However, some societies do not order events in the same historical and chronological manner that westerners do. Rather, stories are remembered on the basis of the characters and events in them, not only on the basis of chronology. Similarly, many of the stories that Jesus told had no direct link to historical events and indeed the same story is not always given in the same order by the authors of the Gospels. Chronology is powerful, but it is a universal worldview.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND: ANCIENT ISRAEL

Matthews and Benjamin (1993), as well as the classic two-volume set on Ancient Israel by Roland de Vaux (1965 [1961]), provide background reading that is helpful for understanding and constructing Bible stories. The following summary of the work by Matthews and Benjamin provides some indication of the scripts and expectations of members of the Jewish society at the time of Jesus and before. The paragraph on “Protocol for Storytellers,” is particularly relevant in understanding the values of storytelling in the society at that time. As we shall see later, stories also provide clues about values in a society.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE BIBLE:

History as we understand it was almost meaningless for the people of the biblical world. Consequently, the two most common genres in the Bible are story and law, not history. History and story do not exclude other, but they are different. “The historian is a scientist; the storyteller is an artist. Both make only limited observations of all that occurs in their worlds” (Matthews and Benjamin 1993:xix). The people of the ancient world viewed their culture as:

- Ancient and eastern, not modern
- Changeless, not changing
- Agricultural, not industrial
- Limited, not renewable
- Communal, not individual
- Aging, not youth, was a blessing
- A world of story, not history
- Established religions, not religious pluralism

The sections that follow outline some the protocols that Matthews and Benjamin suggest for people of Biblical times. Their comments are built upon an anthropology of villages and states that includes:

- **Politics**: power of a father, mother, monarch or virgin to protect and provide for a village or state
- **Economics**: power of a farmer, herder, midwife, priest, or slave to work the land and bear children
- **Diplomacy**: power of a host, chief, legal guardian or prophet to make war or trade with strangers
- **Law**: power of an elder, widow, or lawgiver to solve problems between neighbors
- **Education**: power of the wise, the fool, and the storyteller to hand on culture to the next generation

Protocols for fathers of a household:
- Adopted or excommunicated sons and daughters
- Recruited workers and warriors

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23 In addition to the authors and materials we have mentioned, there are numerous books that demonstrate and describe the anthropology of the people in Bible times. See, for example, Malina (1986), Stegemann, et al. (2002) and Stambaugh and Balch (1986).
Negotiated marriages and covenants
Hosted strangers
Designated heirs

Protocol for mothers of a household:
- Bore children and arranged for other wives to bear children
- Managed the household by supervising production, rationing, preparing food
- Taught clan traditions
- Mediated domestic conflicts
- Designated heirs

Protocol for farmers in village work:
- Cleared fields and hillsides of stones
- Transported soil for building walls and terraces
- Fertilized and plowed the soil
- Planted seeds, vines, hoed weeds, pruned vines, and pulled flax
- Harvested crops

Protocol for owners and herders:
- Provided a herd of about 38 animals with silage or pasture near village during dry season
- Fed the herd and protected, bred, sheared and slaughtered them
- Received a flat fee or commission after repaying owner for advances or losses

Protocol for midwives:
- Before the birth: negotiated covenants, monitored menstruation, nutrition, certified the process, and responded to problems
- During the birth: sterilized, eased pain, cut cord, negotiated covenant for named, bathed, anointed, clothed, nursed, and responded to traumas
- After the birth: disposed of cord, supervised care, and responded to traumas

Protocol for hosts and strangers by the fathers of households in village:
- Offered an invitation, then repeated it
- Washed strangers’ feet
- Provided food and protection
- Did not question guests
- Strangers: refused first invitation, accepted second
- Remained only for agreed upon time
- Did not ask for or covet host’s possessions
- Blessed household upon departing

Protocol for chiefs:
- Elders called for help in attacks
- Mustered warriors and selected chief
- Prophets confirmed and declared war
- Maintained vows, used weapons
- Sacrificed plunder
- Remained on call

Protocol for legal guardians (when there was no legal heir):
- A brother of the deceased
- Lived in the same village
- Assumed dead brother’s assets and liabilities
- Father provided heir with dead brother’s wife
- Returned to the heir the household at proper time

Protocol for elders (assembly of elders):
- Plaintiff stood at city gate
- At dawn when workers went to the fields he cried out “justice”
- Elders listened to testimony, examined evidence, reviewed customary law

Protocol for widows (when dispossessed):
- Protested day after day before the assembly
• Restored land and children of the poor by legal perseverance, not legal expertise

Protocol for the wise and fools:
• Labels were accepted or rejected
• Labels became permanent
• Labels based on behavior, appearance or viewpoint of the village

Protocol for monarchs:
• Raised a standing army to control population, protect and expand borders
• Forged specialized network to produce and distribute goods
• Negotiated alliances
• Promulgated universal code of law and judges
• Commissioned teachers and architects

Protocol for virgins:
• Not only a physical condition but also a political power
• Avoided promiscuity
• Resisted rape, a challenge to the father
• Ratified covenant of father with marriage

Protocol for priests:
• Ruled which households had honor and legal standing, shame or ineligibility for benefits
• Assessed productivity of fields and herds
• Collected sacrifices or taxes
• Offered or processed sacrifices for storage
• Deposited sacrifices in sanctuary treasury until redistribution

Protocol for slaves:
• Prisoners of war
• Racially distinct from their owners
• Became permanent slaves on state projects
• Set free if ransomed or rescued by own soldiers
• Debtors who were racially identical with owners:
  • Became temporary slaves to those they owed
  • Set free after debt paid or maximum of 6 years service

Protocol for prophets:
• Analyzed short-term consequences for state on decisions of monarch to impose taxes, negotiate covenants, wage war
• Represented the state before divine assemblies
• Promulgated those decisions with words and pantomimes while in ecstasy

Protocol for lawgivers:
• Promulgated code of law
• Annually reviewed the covenant
• Appointed judges to hear complaints of households

Protocol for the storytellers:
• Handed on traditions by telling stories regarding foundation of state, nomination of monarch, coronations and covenant renewals
• Celebrated ancestors of the state and helped monarch to react at times of crisis such as in death and war
  “People in the world of the Bible looked for solutions to their problems in past experience” (1993:240).
• “The most common genres in the Bible today are law and story. Storytellers did not compose the Bible like modern authors write books. Originally, they developed stories orally” (1993:246).
• “A certain amount of tolerance is always necessary to adapt stories to specific cases. However, when the variance in application becomes too wide, a series of quality controls is established in order to limit the number of applications which can be made and thus reduce the variation between one story and the other. Canon is a control on storytelling” (1993:251).
• “However, even with a canon, storytelling is still used today to initiate new members into the community and to teach and preach to them during worship. The ability to tell the story remains a requirement for membership” (1993:251).
...it is the weekly preaching and teaching carried on in temples, churches and mosques which have the strongest impact on the way believers understand their faith and tell their stories. Thus, each generation of believers must learn the ancient craft of the storyteller in order to face the new challenges and the unique crises of their own day” (1993:252).

THE STORYTELLER’S COMPANION TO THE BIBLE

An excellent resource set of materials on Bible storytelling has been published by Abington Press. The volumes are laid out with overviews that contain the text of the stories, followed by comments on the stories and finally a retelling of the stories. Unique to the stories are sidebars with traditional and ancient stories often told by rabbis, the Midrashim. These Jewish forms of interpretation provide a way of “interpreting the Bible that involves the imagination and speaks to our experience” (Williams 1992:18). The volumes provide a model on how to re-tell stories in a format relevant to our time.

Each volume includes a short section on learning to tell Bible stories, or what is called a “Self-directed Workshop.” Condensed, the advice is to:

- Read the story aloud at least twice, paying special attention to where the story took place, when it took place, who the characters are, what objects are important in the story, as well as the general order of events in the story
- Close your eyes and imagine the story taking place
- Look back and make sure you have not left out anything important
- Try telling the story
- Read the comments on the story
- Examine how you would tell the story differently
- Read the midrashim that accompanies each retelling
- Practice and revise—each time you tell the story it will be a little different
- “Taste and see” that the stories of God are good

BIBLICAL NARRATIVES

Alter (1981:178), in his study of OT Biblical narratives, concludes (from the Joseph story) that “a basic biblical perception about both human relations and relations between God and man is that love is unpredictable, arbitrary, at times perhaps seemingly unjust…” He further notes that literary studies at large have branched into two divergent directions: elaboration of formal systems of poetics on the one hand and “text virtuoso exercises of interpretation” on the other hand. He suggests that in reading biblical narratives we should be concerned with:

- **Words**: their choice alone or in phrases, revealing thematic saliency and significance, in particular noting the thematic key-words
- **Actions**: the recurrence, parallels and analogies, as well as causal chains
- **Dialogue**: demonstrating that man was made in the image of God.
- **Narration**: noting how omniscience and unobtrusiveness are combined to break time-forms by insertions, forward jumps, summary pauses and the slowing of tempo.

Bible stories will, hopefully, be the first step in demonstrating and developing an interest in the vernacular, so they should be developed using various tools, such as dramatization, pictures, recordings, and so on. Perhaps in some cases they will lead naturally to requests for videos of

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24 Volumes that I have examined are on: Exodus-Joshua; Judges-Kings; Old Testament Women; Old Testament Wisdom; The Prophets; John; The Acts of the Apostles; and New Testament Women.
Luke or the Jesus Story, although this will depend upon the interest of the people and the availability of trained vernacular speakers.

We have emphasized that one of the most profound methods that Jesus used when telling stories was the use of parables. As Yancey reminds us (1995:95), “[T]here are no fanciful creatures and sinuous plots in Jesus’ parable; he simply describes the life around him…. The parables served Jesus’ purposes perfectly. Everyone likes a good story, and Jesus’ knack for storytelling held the interest of a mostly illiterate society of farmers and fishermen. Since stories are easier to remember than concepts or outlines, the parables also helped preserve his message: years later as people reflected on what Jesus had taught, his parables came to mind in vivid detail.” Parables then, seem to be one of the most effective methods of teaching that Jesus used.

**THE PRODIGAL SON: BAILEY (1976)**

According to Bailey, the basic exegetical problem for the parables is a cultural one. He overcomes this by discussing the cultural aspects with Middle Easterners, examining the ancient literature and consulting Oriental versions of the Gospels.

Oriental exegesis is recovering the culture by consulting the Middle Eastern lifestyle of the peasants. At the same time it is necessary to see how the Oriental exegetes described the texts.

Past attempts are in terms of what Bailey calls:
- “a view from the saddle,” where observations and insights were made in passing
- “a view from the study window,” where things are measured, diagrammed, photographed, charted and recorded.
- “the view from the single village,” which is in general piecemeal and partial.

According to Bailey (1976:41) three aspects of a parable are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. The telling of the parable</th>
<th>II. The listener’s response</th>
<th>III. Reflection on ground and content of that response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Story is told from life that has one or more referents in reality which</td>
<td>press the listener to make a single response which is informed by a cluster of inter-related theological themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bailey provides the literary structure for Luke 15:11-32 as:  

25 See also *Through Peasant Eyes* (1980, Eerdmans). Chapter 3 is on the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25137)
A There was a man who had two sons
1 A SON IS LOST
2 GOODS WASTED IN EXPENSIVE LIVING
3 EVERYTHING LOST
4 THE GREAT SIN (FEEDING PIGS FOR GENTILES)
5 TOTAL REJECTION
6 A CHANGE OF MIND
6’ AN INITIAL REPENTANCE
5’ TOTAL ACCEPTANCE
4’ THE GREAT REPENTANCE
3’ EVERYTHING GAINED RESTORED TO SONSHIP
2’ GOODS USED IN JOYFUL CELEBRATION
1’ A SON IS FOUND

B Now the elder son was in the fields
1 HE COMES
2 YOUR BROTHER—SAFE A FEAST
3 A FATHER COMES TO RECONCILE
4 COMPLAINT I (HOW YOU TREAT ME)
4’ COMPLAINT II (HOW YOU TREAT HIM)
3’ FATHER TRIES TO RECONCILE
2’ YOUR BROTHER—SAFE A FEAST
1’ [MISSING]
Examining Stories

Although stories may have a natural and expected range of variation, it is important to learn how to check stories for content and, especially, for accuracy. When do degrees of variation diminish or detract from the point of the story? In Bible stories, in particular, the range of variation will be subject to careful scrutiny and extended discussion. It is therefore important that the principles that govern variation be considered and stated. This is especially so when adding new information to stories that may already be known.

This module will examine issues such as:
- Determining the choice for the basic text of a story
- Noting how the exegesis for a story is determined and accepted
- Checking a story
- Techniques involved in checking a story
- Materials that provide background or supplementary information for the story

Objective

This module will focus on checking a story for its characters, plot structure, accuracy, style, supplementary information, and other things. The teller of the story contributes by being one of the main checkers of the story by outlining a set of questions about the story.

Preparation

The facilitator should choose a particular Bible story that is well known (such as the story of the sower in Mark, chapter four) and note variations when it is told by different people (or in different Gospels). Also, if there is a well known traditional origin story, such as how humans, pigs, or some other animal or vegetable originated, have several people tell that “same” story and note the variations. Chart the differences so that they can be examined. Participants can learn to note variations in stories by listening to several people tell the same Bible story from memory.

The following modules will help you as you think about this exercise:
- CS = Constructing Stories
- BS = Bible Stories
- SA = Story Audiences

Practice

The more stories that you hear and retell, the easier it will be to determine how the stories differ when told by different people and for different audiences. Stories differ because people have
different backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions that influence how they re-tell or interpret the stories. The perspective of the teller and the situation in which the story is told are key issues. Now attempt the following:

- Tell three people the same short story
- Have each of them tell it back to you
- How did it differ from the story that you told?
- How was it the same?
- What key points did you examine to know this?
- What would make the story easier to remember?

**Skill-Check**

Examine a story that is told to you by a participant and practice retelling it. As a facilitator, you may want to ask questions such as the following:

- At what points in the story has something been added?
- At what points has adding information detracted from the story?
- When, in terms of the time-line, can information be added?
- How can information best be added (footnotes, pictures, etc.)?
- Who can best add the materials (the author, the story-teller, etc.)?
- What questions can be asked to ensure the accuracy of the story?

**Facilitator Notes**

The plot structure of a story will vary according to certain well-know themes. According to the editors of the Dictionary of Biblical imagery (1998), a taxonomy of plot motifs is possible to indicate certain clusters of them in four large categories, such as:

- Archetypes, indicating initiation and journey;
- Narrative conventions of reversal and recognition;
- Narrative genres, including battle and love stories;
- Those based on subject matter such as terror and sin;

Stories may, of course, vary according to the perspective of the teller and the audience(s). Pike (1982) uses the analogy of particle, wave and field to discuss language in which he demonstrates multiple perspectives and viewpoints. He also represents the viewpoint of the “insider” (the emic view) and “outsider” (the etic view). The dimensions of etic and emic are helpful in discussing other aspects of a story, such as the terms the “accuracy” and “truth.” What is considered proved or true can lead to emotional discussions about the Biblical canon and related topics.

You should be able to discuss what can be added to a story without distorting its so-called “history” or accuracy. For example, how do cultural dynamics come into play and how can cultural redemptive analogies and contextualization improve stories? When someone is preaching a sermon, certain “extra” information is considered legitimate. For example, music or dance, drama and readings often facilitate the understanding and recall of a story. If the story is eventually written and published, various formats are used that include pictures, glossaries,
indexes, footnotes, section headings, and so on, are used. All of these can be relevant and helpful information because they provide background and history for understanding the story.

People with various perspectives and denominational orientations and convictions may also add details to a story. If the story is to be published, editors can help clarify what basic information the reader needs.

The nature and purpose of retelling and then writing stories should also be discussed. For example, how can folk stories, novels and allegories legitimately supplement the Bible story and be helpful to readers and listeners?

For Scripture passages, a back-translation from the vernacular into English (or Tok Pisin) is considered an effective way to check the exegesis. However, it may not be as useful in checking oral naturalness, depending as it does upon certain written conventions. Nevertheless, a spontaneous back translation can be helpful to the facilitator although certain assumptions underlie the use of the back translations, such as:

- The back translation reveals the accuracy of the translation
- Back translations reveal both points of style and cultural viewpoints
- Back translations can point out problems of collocations and grammar
- The back translation will reveal the basic meanings of the source text
- The literalness of the back translation will reveal “holes” in the vernacular translation
- Back translations can check the story theme as well as the correctness of the text

A Universal Semantic Language for Checking?

Anna Wierzbicka (2003) has written extensively on the use of a universal semantic language as the basis for understanding a text. Her theory operates on the principle that there is an underlying set of “culture free” and primitive semantic categories that can be framed before the particular sentence or text is translated into another language. Her book on the sayings of Jesus in the parables is relevant to our discussion on checking meaning in stories. Although, we may not be able to adopt of her terminology and semantic explications for a course on storytelling, understanding her concerns on translating are helpful. She notes, for example, that using metaphors in translation without discovering their basic meanings can undermine the understanding of a story. The following paragraphs summarize a few of her major contributions and concerns.

Wierzbicka begins by raising the important question ("What did Jesus mean?") rather than the more cautious one, “What did the biblical authors mean?” It is the latter question that most commentaries spend their energy on, answering questions about what Jesus did, who he was, and what he said. To answer her own question about what Jesus meant, she examines a number of parables and ethical aphorisms from the Gospels. She states that the most important criterion is “coherence,” which presupposes some semantic analysis. The book is also a “study in the semantics of religious language and in the interpretation of religious metaphors” (2003:5).

This set of universal concepts used in explicating the exegesis of the parables launches what Wierzbicka calls “semantic exegesis.” Her Natural Semantic Metalanguage employs the universal human concepts and the conceptual primes listed above. Her goal is always to reduce
the words and their meanings to definitions that cannot be further reduced. Primes are concepts like good and bad, do and happen, etc. that cannot be made clearer by defining them further, so that a sentence like “I did something bad,” cannot be further explained or defined with more basic words.

There are other important reasons why her approach can be helpful in examining a story (such as a parable that Jesus told). One is her view that the “intended Gospel message was universal rather than culture-specific,” otherwise what would be the point of the Great Commission? Although Jesus was a Jew and grew up in a Jewish cultural context, aspects of this setting can be separated. As she notes, “For this message to be clothed in new garments, it has first to be stripped of its old ones,” that is from its Palestinian metaphorical context (2003:12).

WIERZBICKA ON EMOTIONS (KEY TERMS)

Scripture translation and storytelling often include what translation scholars call “key terms.” As an example of some, Wierzbicka (1992, Part 1) discusses key concepts like soul, mind, and heart (Ch. 1), as well as fate and destiny (Ch. 2). In her contrast of the English and Russian words for soul, for example, she demonstrates that the Russian word has a much wider scope than its English counterpart because in the former it represents what might be called the “national character” of the people. On the other hand, in English mind has been reified to become an objective category of thought and has been made to contrast sharply with soul. She illustrates clearly the differences in cultural outlook between people speaking different languages and how this must be taken into account when examining a story. In the case of soul and mind in English and Russian, Wierzbicka summarizes the difference as follows: “...the orientation of the old English soul was, above all, metaphysical and ethical; the orientation of the modern English mind is, above all, epistemological; the orientation of the Russian duša is, above all, phenomenological and ethical” (1992:60).

Wierzbicka also addresses a question very relevant to translators and storytellers, “Are emotions universal or culture-specific?” These issues are important to language learners, particularly those who work cross-culturally and are concerned with translation and non-trivial communication. Regarding the question on the universality of emotions, she concludes that “Different systems of emotion terms reflect different ways of conceptualising emotions, and conversely, any cross-cultural similarities in the conceptualisation of emotions will be reflected in the ways different societies converge in the labeling of emotions” (1996:134). Only a rigorous semantic analysis, worked out with a metalanguage such as her own, will reveal the similarities and differences. In coming to this conclusion she illustrates how the metalanguage can be applied to a number of emotional concepts, including disgust, shame, embarrassment, anger, compassion, boredom, fear, and several others in a number of languages. However, in specifying these English words the assumption is that “they can only be identified in a culture-independent semantic metalanguage” (1996:176). Only then can the concepts be compared in a consistent and illuminating manner.

Other emotions investigated are moral concepts that are assumed to occur across cultures, particularly piety, fate, apathy, humility, pride, courage, bravery and recklessness. Again, carefully controlled semantic lexical labels identify the ideas and ideals of the cultures without
apparent ethnocentrism. This is possible because the semantic explications build “on a non-arbitrary system of universal semantic primitives” (1996:200).

Wierzbicka discusses how language is a mirror of culture and “national character,” by looking at Australian English and the Russian language in particular. Elsewhere she tackles the issue of the relationship of language and culture by explicating the abbreviation of first names in Australian English, showing how affectionate abbreviations (as in Caz for Catherine), affectionate diminutives (as in Jimmy for James), depreciatives (as in mozzie for mosquito), and other expressions demonstrate particular cultural attitudes and values. The same holds for vocabulary and expressions in the Russian language, especially in respect to emotionality, non-rationality, non-agentivity (typified by fatalism), and moral passion. The lexicon and grammar reflect, by means of semantic explications in formulae, the links between the Russian language and culture in a very revealing and insightful way.

Wierzbicka’s insights on semantics and pragmatics are detailed and insightful, providing a methodology for checking words and their meanings in storytelling

**DISCOURSE AND CHECKING**

Discourse analysis plays a significant role in translation. Longacre (1983), Larson (1998), Beekman and Callow (1974) and others have written extensively on the subject. Wallace Chafe (1994), for example, places discourse into the context of one’s conscious experience in speaking and writing. The picture on the front of Chafe’s book is symbolic: Two men, dressed from an earlier century are standing on a rock outcrop above a canyon, with a stream below and wooded hills beyond. They are in conscious discourse, out of context spatially and temporally, yet the scenery has not changed perceptibly over the generations. The picture is a reminder of Chafe’s contention that “The twentieth century has focused its attention on matters quite remote from relationships between language, consciousness, and time.” We must “restore conscious experience to the central role it enjoyed in the human sciences a hundred years ago” (1994:4). In the parables, for example, various features of rural Palestinian agricultural worldview are used and yet they are understood by today’s generation as well.

Chafe’s book deals with two main aspects of discourse, its flow on the one hand and its displacement on the other. His study reviews the nature of understanding, which encompasses language, memory, and the imagination, all emphasized in our previous chapters on storytelling. Understanding deals with observation (data) and schemas (theories). Chafe notes that, “[much of] contemporary linguistics has focused on the construction of elaborate theories invented for the understanding of minuscule and questionable observations” (1994:11). By dividing observations into Public versus Private (also objective and subjective, but he is not claiming that one is more real or scientific than the other), he attempts to show that any study of discourse is equally dependent on introspective insights.

Public and private observations can be manipulated or they may be natural. Examples of the former are experimentation and elicitation or, in the case of private observations, semantic judgments, ones about how to construct language. Natural observations, on the other hand, are
public in the case of ethnography and corpus based research, or day-dreaming and literary when they are private.

SIL students who have studied under Longacre will see many similarities with Chafe, including the idea of discourse topics. These are chunks larger than intonation units (i.e. clauses) and have topics which include one referent with a “point of view.” Chafe discusses the universal versus culturally determined properties of a discourse schema that includes orientation, complication, climax, denouement, and coda. All of these features are present in Bible stories.

In the third and final part of his book, Chafe discusses what he calls “displacement” by examining the nature of immediate and displaced consciousness in conversational language. To account for this Chafe distinguishes between what he calls introverted ideas, those remembered and imagined on the one hand, and extroverted ideas, those that are perceived, acted upon, and evaluated in the consciousness, on the other. We expect both to take place in stories. Applying his work on discourse can also provide a basis to stimulate storytellers to take advantage of the rich imaginative consciousness that native speakers bring to the table.

We conclude by noting that Chafe has taken introspection seriously and that his insights on discourse are therefore quite different from linguists who stick mainly to the overt manifestations of speech. He is not interested in the manipulation of abstract constituent structures, which is often the main concern of syntax today, but in the general nature of what lies behind a discourse.

**Propositions and Checking**

Cognitive linguistics and psychology can also contribute greatly to our understanding of the meaning of a story. Rather than discovering and outlining a text vis-à-vis propositional analysis, we should ensure that the participants understand the conceptual framework with which they are interpreting the story. Lakoff (1987) and others have studied how humans categorize the world around them using, in particular, metaphors. Metaphors are particularly relevant in parables.

Earlier, Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) studied the use of metaphors in everyday life. Additional materials that follow up the topic are by Mark Johnson (1987) and Lakoff and Turner (1990). The latter book deals with poetics and metaphor.

Taken as a unit, the materials by Lakoff and his colleagues argue that meaning is not satisfied purely by a propositional analysis wherein the utterance satisfies certain truth conditions. Lakoff argues that meaning is represented through image schemata and that these concepts are a reflection of how we experience the world. Meaning is always tied to background, i.e. the cultural experiences of the speaker and hearer.

An earlier key concept that Lakoff introduced was “Idealized Cognitive Model,” or ICMs as he called them. Each ICM is a structured whole, a gestalt and includes: a) propositional structure, b) image-schematic structure, c) metathoric mappings, and d) metonymic mappings. Lakoff develops ICMs through “metonymic models.” Metonymy is a surface phenomenon whereby a subcategory or submember is used for the category as a whole. He uses the “housewife stereotype” to show how a prototype arises, in this case a social stereotype. He arrives at the conclusion that mother can best be represented in its meaning by associating it with “radial
structures,” i.e. certain kinds of mothers, which converge and radiate from the central case (p.83ff): stepmother, adoptive mother, birth mother, natural mother, foster mother, biological mother, surrogate mother, unwed mother, and genetic mother.

Lakoff claims that categories of language can be best described by using four types of cognitive models: a) propositional models, which specify elements, their properties and the relationships among them; b) image-schematic models, such as the trajectory and thin-object ones; c) metaphoric models, which are mappings from the other models to one domain, such as the conduit metaphor for communication which is mapped from our knowledge about conveying objects in containers and conveying ideas in words; d) metonymic models which transfer a function from one model to another.

The relevant point for storytelling from Lakoff is that is the cultural insiderer's cognitive map of information can be revealed by introspection and analysis. The study can help storyteller facilitators be aware of the processes that underlie meaning as developed in stories.

**Examining History in the Sepik (PNG)**

We have demonstrated briefly how the methodology of several authors can be helpful in examining stories. Each has presumed a history of words and their meanings that can be discovered. But what happens if the whole notion of “history” is different in another culture? For example, consider the study by Schuster (1990) who claims that two Greek words underlie the English definition of history. The first, *historeo* refers “to know something by one’s own experience” and the activities for obtaining that knowledge. The second, *historia*, always included in it the meaning of narrative. The processes of history therefore started with “stories” and unconnected narratives of various kinds were combined into *history*. Schuster develops this concept further in “Aspects of the Aibom Concept of History,” a study of the history and migrations along the Sepik, including in particular the Iatmul, Abelam and other areas, in which he emphasizes that:

- We cannot simply assume the Western concepts of history.
- Traditional history includes what has been called mythology and folklore
- Traditional history does not use chronological data or prehistory
- It includes statements with historical value in Aibom, the mythical
- Western chronology is linear and proceeds in logical steps
- Western chronology calls for a conceptualization of time that may be quite different than one’s experience
- Western chronology suggests an uninterrupted flow without beginning or end (p.10). It requires abstract notions of time segments: months and years.
- The past is before now, what we know of former times
- Time: the distance between now and something else
- History is the organized way that cultures conceive of their past (p.12). It is the causal dimension parallel to relations in parts of the world: clans, villages, village and land, etc.,
- Space: The Aibon hill where history becomes geography
- Totem: the conceptual framework to unite the non-human past with the prehuman past
- Aibon non-chronological history is represented by features such as: 1) the first born; later, earlier and later; 2) iterative, not duplication or repetition; 3) parallelism, what takes place at another conceptual level

It seems, then, that chronological history (written) and mythical history (oral) overlap but are not the same, a concern that should be kept in mind in storytelling.
EXAMINING PARABLES

According to McKenna, parables are the “arrows of God.” The first “arrow” was John the Baptist who is “a practice parable to get us used to the stories that Jesus will tell” (1994:11).

Stories that begin with “The kingdom of god is like…,” such as Mt. 13:43-45, include the story of a man who finds a treasure hidden in a field and then goes and sells everything he owns so that he can purchase it. He buries the treasure again to guarantee ownership because the one who owns the field owns the treasure. McKenna states that “Parables frustrate us. They make us feel we may be missing some thing crucial Jesus is frustrated that people listening to him won’t make choices, won’t decide, won’t act on what they hear…” (1994:16). Jesus’ stories require hard things such as wealth getting in the way of justice and the kingdom of heaven. “A parable causes an emotional response, evoking fear, loneliness, sorrow, horror, because the parable always throws the ending, the reality, the circumstances back into our lap” (1994:27). We may focus on the small details and not understand the Big Idea of the parable. This is a crucial point in examining how stories are re-told.

FURTHER PARABLES FROM MCKENNA

The sower and the seed: Mt. 13:1-9

Because parables are dense with information, McKenna says we can start with just almost any detail or image to look deeply into its meaning (1994:31). For example, what makes the seed grow? Do we do it? The seed represents the Word of God in us as the field (not the footpath), and as such represents all of life. We should:

- Not take parables personally, but let the them question us
- Remember that the seed is the word of God, the treasure hidden in the field which the plants need
- Realize that on many larger issues there is not much of a yield
- “If this seed has been sown in us for years, then sooner or later we must become the sower and go out into the world and the other fields, and sow there what has been sown in us…” (1994:42).

The parable of the good seed and the weeds (Mt. 13:24-30), shows that there does not need to be any violence or struggle until the harvest, when the growing cycle is complete. “We have lots of practice with the weeds all around us, sharing the same ground, the same sun, water, time and cultivation” (1994:46).

The parable of the fishing net: Mt. 13:47-53

In terms of its form the parable:

- Undermines existing structures and relationships and attitudes
- Reveals the teller’s frustration about those who do not make choice or change, but only want to hear and discuss
- Is confrontational, coming up and in from underneath, like the kingdom
- Demonstrates “how the kingdom comes in the presence of violence and opposition, in relation to money, greed, selfishness and economics, politics, racism and social biases and classes, both personal and communal” (1994:53)
- Questions us about our commitments and allegiances, like all parables do

The first and the last: Mt. 20:1-16
People who have lived among the poor know how they try to take care of one another. Entrance into this group requires restitution of the balance and inequality. “A good deal of the initial practice of the virtue of poverty is connected to material possessions, reputation, connections, lifestyle, choice of neighborhood, job and social status, the existing structure, even within the church” (1994:74).

The sheep and the shepherd
*Mt. 18:12-14* is the parable of the wandering sheep. The least of the sheep, etc. are those not protected by law, without insurance, shelter, education or basic care.

*Mt. 10:29-33* reminds us of how *God cares for the sparrow* and *Mt. 18:12* again of how *God looks for the one lost person*, quite unlike what we may do.

*Mt. 5:43-48* is a reminder that we *must love everyone, just as God does*. “Mercy will be extended to us by how we treat those least among us. Mercy assumes that justice has been done. The practice of justice is a response to the experience of God’s mercy in our lives” (1994:87).

*Mt. 25:31-46* is the scene of *separating the sheep from the goats*. Judged by our actions and attitudes we would most often be in the “goat” group. Jesus did not tell John to feed the goats because the goats feed themselves.

The widow and the unjust judge
*Lk. 18:1-6*. We pray most fervently when we are at the end of our rope. We should consider that we are the judge and that God is the widow because:
- The judge is corrupt and uncaring
- God is after us
- Prayer is concerned with others getting justice and mercy
- We as children of God are in collusion with the unjust judge

The talents
*Mt. 25 and Luke 19*. Why do we insist upon interpreting parables in the Scriptures so that they conform to our experiences and situations? We want them to endorse our own cultural values. “The parables are about how the kingdom comes in the context of violence, fear, injustice, amid nations and states, war and terror, and how it comes communally though based on personal choices…. We tolerate injustice and violence, and we rationalize it all, even using the gospel to further our culture’s influence on us and others” (1994:122).

The lost son
*Luke 15* is a story of conflicts: the father breaks the Jewish tradition by giving the younger son the inheritance. The undercurrent for the older son is that now he is dead too unless he comes in (1994:138).

The compassionate one
Jesus is sharp, tough and challenging in this story, he successfully plays word games with the lawyer, but puts the two prongs of the law together: loving the neighbor even if the person is our enemy. “The lifestyles and ministries and place within the existing religious structure for the priest and the Levite mitigated against personal works of mercy and justice. They had much to lose in stepping off the road” (1994:150). Lk. 10:38-42 is the story of Martha and Mary and their reactions when Jesus visits them. He does not allow Martha to chastise him. The set of parables is about neighbors. “Our neighbors are those in need of compassion” (1994:155).

McKenna depicts Jesus as the last arrow and the archer. In Jn. 5:19-27. she says “Jesus is the parable of God” (1994:162) because he is the apprentice of God. “Jesus is the storyteller, the parable maker, the one who turns upside down the image of God: from dominance to justice and tender-hearted mercy, from warrior-king to widow in search of her rights, from the singular God of the chosen people to the God who chooses all peoples, especially the poor and the cast-aways and the lost sheep…” (1994:164).

These parables and their “explanations” are interwoven with stories that illustrate them from a variety of other cultures and traditions.

EXAMINING AND Classifying Parables

Stein (1981) discusses and attempts to classify all parables in the NT as: clearly parables, extended comparisons, and possible parables. He has chapters on the why and whence of parables, how they were interpreted throughout church history—including modern interpretations—and chapters on the Kingdom of God in parables, and the God of the parables and the final judgment. Stein looks at parables from three main perspectives:

- The historical setting of the parable
- The point of the parable in the Sitz im Leben (the perspective or worldview)
- The interpretation of the parable

He concludes that Jesus taught in parables (1981:34-36) to:

- Conceal the message from “those outside.”
- Reveal his message to the insiders (and those outside)
- Disarm the listeners

When investigating parables:

- Seek the main point of the parable, not the details unless it is absolutely necessary. (1981:56)
- Seek to understand the context in which the parable was uttered.
- Seek to understand how the evangelist interpreted the parable
- Seek what God is saying to us today in the parable (1981: 70)

Osborne (1997) discusses the meaning and use of parables, as well as a riddle or proverb with the background of wisdom and prophecy. He notes that Jesus was preparing citizens for the Kingdom, not helping the young to learn as responsible members of society.

Some forms that Jesus used were:

- Proverb: Lk 4.32: Physician heal yourself
- Metaphor: Mt. 15.13: Every plant not planted by the Father…
• Similes: Mt. 10.16: Sheep among wolves
• Figurative: Lk. 5:36-38: New wine in old wineskins
• Similitudes (developed similies): Mk 4.30-32: Comparing the Kingdom to a grain of mustard seed
• Story Parable: Lk. 10:29-37: Ten virgins
• Allegory Parable: Mk 4.1-9; 13-20: Sower and seed

Osborne questions the difference between a so-called pure parable and an allegory. Usually described as a single point vs. multiple ones, but many parables have multiple thrusts:
• Good seed and good or bad seed: sower in Mk 4.3-9 has different positive results
• Bad seed and good seed: tares in Mt. 13:24-30 for different results, either positive or negative
• Good harvest and good and bad fish in Mt. 13:47-50 for the general harvest
• Good vine and vine and the branches for good and bad: Jn.15:1-8

SUMMARY

Examining parables for content and accuracy must take into account aspects of cultural background and discourse setting. This requires additional knowledge that the facilitator for storytellers must provide.
Stories as Songs and Drama

Stories that are sung are a part of most cultures of the world. In the Bible the Psalms are the most vivid examples of this art form. In some cultures epic poems put the story in a form that is both creative and easier to remember than a straight narrative style.

There are creative people in every society, so perhaps the creation of songs should not be surprising. Just as Charles and John Wesley left a legacy through songs and sermons, other cultures have people who can be encouraged to use this avenue of creativity.

The notes at the end of this module give some background to the way poetry and songs are used in cultures around the world.

Objective

This module will encourage storytellers to use songs and drama and provide some practice in determining how songs are composed, following the music of their own culture. Songs will be encouraged as a means of strengthening the content of stories. Ethnomusicologists and play writers are the experts in this field—the presentation here is rudimentary.

Preparation

The facilitator should recite or sing a number of songs, or write down some songs that illustrate a theme or story. Find some songs that are well known, regardless of the church denomination. Elicit any songs that are sung in sorrow, or when someone dies. Note songs sung for children, special occasions, or ones sung by certain groups of people.

The following modules will help you as you do this exercise:

- KS = Kinds of Stories
- SA = Story Audiences
- CS = Constructing Stories

Practice

Listen to three different kinds of songs: a children’s song, a church song, and one sung at a traditional dance or singsing.

- What helps you to remember the song?

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26 The Ethnomusicology department of SIL International offers courses and information on researching music within cultures, encouraging musical creativity and assisting in the development of applications. See their website at (August 2006), http://www.sil.org/anthro/ethnomusicology.htm
How does singing a story differ from telling one?

- How is the song introduced?
- Who introduces the song?
- How many parts are there to the song?
- Who “owns” the song?

Skill-Check

As a facilitator, sing, recite a song and play and then:

- Discuss the feelings participants had from hearing the song
- Discuss what feelings you expected from the song
- Discuss how a song conveys the true essence of the story
- Illustrate how drama can enhance stories and songs

Facilitator Notes

Lord (1974) provides a way of studying the composition of oral narrative poetry and poetry as a natural outcome of music content. He states that in epic poetry two things that singers have in common is illiteracy and a desire to attain proficiency in their singing. The oral poet learns to sing the songs orally and composes and transmits them orally as well. It is not possible to memorize a song and then compose it, a consideration that will enter into memorizing Scripture and then composing songs. The composition will not usually exactly match a particular text.

When Lord says that “the tale’s the things” (1974:68), he means that groups of ideas occur that form the theme of the song. The theme is a grouping of ideas. In epic poetry the singer always has the end of the theme in mind—he knows where he is going.

Orality

Lord (1974) notes in particular the oral style that is relevant to vernacular languages. When oral is changed to a written style, people may claim that it is better in terms of quality. However, Lord claims, “When a tradition or individual goes from oral to written, he or it, goes from an adult, mature style of one kind to a faltering and embryonic style of another sort.” (1974:134). A summary of Lord’s points are:

- “Stated briefly, oral epic song is narrative poetry composed in a manner evolved over many generations by singers of tales who did not know how to write; it consists of the building of metrical lines and half lines by means of formulas and formulaic expressions and the building of songs by the use of themes” (p. 4).
- What is important is not the oral performance (presentation) but rather the composition during oral performance. (p. 5).
- The oral poet learns his songs orally, and composes and transmits them orally as well. It is not oral memorization.
- The idea of calling such compositions “folk epic” is not helpful because it seems to be derogatory and equates the poetry with fairy stories and children’s tales.

27 There are several articles on orality in Word&Deed 2.3 (2003), including my own called "Oral societies and our textual bias" (pp.47-58). I discuss storytelling as an oral approach, but do not see that a chronological approach to the Bible is essential. The article is reprinted in Appendix D of this Manual.
The oral poet is the composer of tales. The singer of tales is not only singer, but also performer. The composer and poet represent different aspects that take place at the same time. The singer is a creative artist making contributing to the tradition of oral poetry.

There is a special technique of composition that allows the performance to move quickly.

Lord says that there seems to be two things that singers have in common: illiteracy and the desire to attain proficiency in singing epic poetry. There are three stages in the process:

- The singer sits aside as others sing, laying the foundation, listening and absorbing, applying, then singing before a critical audience.
- The singer begins to sing with the rhythm and melody that he has learned, but stays within the limits of the learned patterns. His problem is fitting his thoughts and expressions into a fairly rigid form. He imitates others and his competency is judged by being able to sing one song all the way through for a critical audience (p. 24).
- Training comes to an end when the singer’s repertory is large enough to furnish entertainment for several nights. “The singer never stops in the process of accumulating, recombining, and remodeling formulas and themes… perfecting his art by refining what he knows and learning new songs” (p. 26).

Lord notes “The poetic grammar of oral epic is and must be based on the formula” (1994:65). Formulas, or groups of them provide a means for telling a story in song and verse. “As he says, “The tale’s the thing” and as groups of ideas occur these become the theme of the song. “The theme, even though it be verbal, is not any fixed set of words, but a grouping of ideas” (1994:69). Furthermore, the singer always has the end of the theme in mind—he knows where he is going. The singer’s task is to take the theme and adapt it to the song as a whole, binding the song together.

Bards and singers never sang the songs exactly the same, so when the songs were written down it put them into a fixed form. A poet might be able to read and write, but he was still an oral poet. Becoming a “literary” poet is determined by a technique of composition, so it is a different process than oral literature. “An oral text will yield a predominance of clearly demonstrable formulas, with the bulk of the remainder “formulaic,” and a small number of nonformulaic expressions. A literary text will show a predominance of nonformulaic expressions, with some formulaic expressions, and very few clear formulas” (1994:130.) Therefore, the seeds of the literary are already present in the oral style. A difficulty in the change form oral to written styles is that the latter are always thought of in terms of quality and assumed to be better than oral style. Lord’s comments should warn us that becoming literate can, in fact, work against creativity, at least in the use of poetry and song in storytelling.

Finnegan (1977:2) also makes strong claims about the importance of oral poetry: “Oral poetry is often ignored or relegated to folklore studies, special ethnographies, or underground cultures. It is the basic contention of this book that oral poetry falls squarely within the field of literature and that there is no clear-cut line between oral and written literature. This point should also be emphasized in connection with storytelling.

Finnegan reminds us that oral literature is common around the world. Some forms of it are:

- Epic, the long narrative poems with the main emphasis on the heroic
- Ballad, a sung narrative poem
- Panegyric odes, in praise of rulers and notables
- Lyric, which includes psalms, hymns, songs that accompany drinking, work songs, spirituals, lullabies, laments and so on
Others, such as chanted sermons, dialogue verse, prayers, curses, street-cries, etc.

She provides a number of criteria to help decide if something can be called poetry within oral literature:

- Rhythm or meter, depending upon culturally defined perceptions
- Heightened language, metaphorical expression, musical form or accompaniment, structural repetitiveness, prosodic features like meter, alliteration parallelism
- Delivered in a manner and mood that sets it apart from everyday speech and prose utterance (1977:25)
- The local [or emic] classification: praise poetry, hunters poems, or festival poetry
- Performance: “…an oral poem is an essentially ephemeral work of art, and has no existence or continuity apart from its performance” (1977: 28). This brings into account the skill and personality of the performer, the reaction of the audience, context, and purpose

**Poetic Style**

How do style and performance enter into the poetry? The social nature of style adds several further dimensions. We should recognize the social conventions concerning style:

- Repetition can provide structure and coherence in oral poetry: “The most marked feature of poetry is surely repetition.” (1977:90)
- The prosodic process: the beats and meter, the notion of rhythm—some say that this is primary.
- The functions of parallelism.
- The physical accompaniment to rhythm may be less prominent.
- Three basic principles are quantity, stress and the syllable.
- The use of imagery and symbolic language.
- The use of hyperbole and poetic irony.
- The use of allusion and poems of address.
- Conventions about the overall speed of delivery, dramatization and individuality.

How is oral poetry composed?

- Memorization is usually given as the key ingredient (1977:52). However, one has to consider the effect that the audience has upon the performance.
- Variability is evident in examples of recorded poetry.
- Improvisation and freedom for the poet are parameters as well.
- Repetitions and the use of formulae, especially building on repeated ones.
- Deliberate and protracted composition, devoid of the performance.
- Dialogue songs or poetic duels (1977:85).

According to Finnegan, units like lines, verses, stanzas—even poems and cycles--are relative and not always already defined by the material itself (1977:107). She states “Perhaps the most striking and elaborate use of metaphor is to be found in Polynesian poetry, where a poem often moves on two levels, the overt one perhaps a description of nature..., the inner one conveying some hidden meaning of love, or insult, or historical claim” (1977:114, italics added). “The search for one touchstone of ‘oral style’ thus turns out to be fruitless… But in conclusion, I emphasise again the importance of performance in oral art” (1977:133).

Because oral literature is common, found all over the world and is all around us, including kinds of ballads and folksongs, or even kinds of children’s verse, it should be exploited in storytelling.

How does oral literature reach its ‘patrons’? “The modes of transmission, distribution and publication of oral poetry turn out to be complicated, and not, as used to be commonly supposed,
confined neatly to two distinct traditions, one oral, the other written” (p. 168). Furthermore, classifying a poem as folk, oral, popular on the basis of style or expected origin does not give any automatic information about its likely mode of distribution and transmission (p. 168).

Who are the poets? Who composes and performs oral poetry? There is an immense variety of people and often the occasions for poetry and song are in relaxation after work (p. 243). Other times are work parties, singing sessions, football matches, healing, etc., demonstrating again that there is an infinite range of possibilities.

**Drama in PNG Culture**

Micheal Mel (1996) has written a thesis that is both highly symbolic and autobiographical, applying to certain key concepts of the Melpa or Hagen culture by means of theatre and drama. His work is imaginative and personal, both in terms of the process and development of a theatre play, but also because of Mel’s responsibility was to do both research and report on what he is doing, while at the same time directing the operation.

Mel refers to the *Mbu* throughout his thesis, which is set within the structure of the Melpa people in the Western Highlands, with key concepts of: the *Mbu Iamb*, the individual, or “seed person”; the *Pugl Iamb*, authority, or the “root person”; and the *Mbu Kola*, the boundary, or the “seed place.” The symbolism revolves around the *Mbu* “the individual,” who, through a process of *Mbu Ugl* (knowledge, but literally “things that are done with seeds”) arrives at various stages of *Nanga Noman* (thoughts or behaviour, save in TP). The forms of knowledge are related through songs, dance, chants, drama and so forth (p. 144).

Mel calls the *Noman* the “brains” or “mind,” and places it within a paradigm of *Noman Pila*, *Noman Tekim*, and *Noman Kond*, all related to thinking, feeling, knowing, relating and living, therefore “symbolic notions of temporal experience.”

Mel is confident that his viewpoint of the *Mogei* worldview reflects an emic framework (p. 31 and elsewhere). His use of the *Mogei* lexical images are projected into the drama framework, with the following terms central:

- **Na**: the individual students, other persons, and their responses;
- **Iamb**: the relationships, discussions and interactions that take place;
- **Kola**: the project, department and institution
- **Mbu**: the overall discourse, ideas and understanding

The *Mbu* then sprouts and grows, as it becomes Mel’s story. Mel’s own storytelling revolves around his experiences of teaching and researching drama at the Goroka Teachers College. His work with students and the *Raun Raun* theatre is highly interactive, where the storyteller portrays the feeling that he and others have as they “discover meaning” through the process of putting on a play called *Mani Tok*. The theatre becomes their way of “playing around with reality” and through the drama process Mel and others are attempting to identify themselves.

The self-identity process, which merges drama and song, can be an important component in the storytelling process.
RS

Recording Stories

Objective
This module will discuss what kinds of materials should be recorded, some of the media available to do the recording, and, when practical, give practice in recording the materials.

Preparation
The facilitator should be aware of the range of materials to be recorded in the vernacular and have templates for recording each item. This may include Bible stories, word lists, songs, and oral histories. In addition, the student should be familiar with matters related to oral history, such as (from Sitton, et al. 1983) options for an interview, sequencing it and developing stories that result from such a project.

The following modules will help you as you do this exercise:
- **KS = Kinds of Stories**
- **CS = Constructing Stories**
- **US = Using Stories**

Practice
There is nothing more embarrassing that forgetting some vital piece of equipment or template for recording materials. The facilitator or recording technologist should have on hand and be familiar with the technical items necessary for recording.

In addition to the technical aspects of actually recording the vernacular data, the facilitator will need a template of items, including:
- Bible stories in the trade language
- Wordlists, e.g. the Swadesh 100 or 200 wordlists, or those that are used in the area
- Sociolinguistic data, such as maps and census materials
- Questions for interviews that include oral history

Skill-Check
As a facilitator, practice recording a Swadesh list or two in a vernacular language. Then:
- Examine the list to see where you need additional practice on certain sounds

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Determine what IPA symbols you are unfamiliar with or use the Pike system
Practice checking recording levels on your machine(s)

Facilitator Notes
There are many potential stories that a fieldworker can develop. Sitton, et al. (1983) suggest the following areas for study and recording:

- An oral autobiography
- A living history from community informants
- An oral history of the home neighborhood
- A memory book
- The origins of local place names
- Oral history of schools
- Oral histories of local buildings [or land]
- Oral life history in general (it may come from anywhere)
- Topical focus
- Chronological focus
- Family life focus
- Folk and popular artists
- Family genealogies
- Family archives
- Mainstreet oral history
- Local industry history
- Immigrant oral history
- Environmental history
- Trades and professions
- Significant local events
- Institutional or organizational histories
- Traditional crafts
- Political structures, meanings, folklore

SIL courses often include “Field Methods,” which deals primarily with data gathering, storage and analysis. Various clues on how this can best be done are found in SIL resources. Wolcott

29 See, for example, the SIL International web site http://www.sil.org/computing/ for information on FieldWorks Data Notebook, Linguist’s Shoebox, Speech Analyzer, Speech Manager, Speech Tools, and LinguaLinks Lexical Database and Interlinear TextTools. There are also complete libraries of reference materials available on-line from a variety of sources.
(1995) does not regard fieldwork as a particularly creative art, nor as a systematic science. He leaves it hanging between, combining the elements of both art and science. Wolcott’s book invites an artistic approach toward fieldwork that may be instructive to storytelling facilitators as fieldworkers. “The real genius in fieldwork lies in knowing how to answer the seemingly simple question: What counts?” (1995:18). The artistic challenge of Wolcott is to preserve, convey and celebrate the complexity found in fieldwork. He provides several definitions of “art” based on the Random House Dictionary but it also includes: a collection of some kind; a genre, such as dance; a school or college; principles or methods of a craft or trade; a skilled workman of a craft; a branch of learning or study; or to artificiality or trickery in behavior. Surely storytelling can be found somewhere in this broad definition of fieldwork!

**WOLCOTT'S FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork is everything that one does from the outset to the completion of a field-based study. More narrowly, it is everything of the research process when the fieldworker is “in the field.” One aspect of fieldwork includes emotion, such that one can discuss “doing fieldwork” and “borrowing fieldwork techniques.” The latter refers to technique—figuring out how to record and convey to others one’s experiences and observations. A list of topics to cover in a training program would include: observation; recording physical environment; photography and video; constructing and testing interviews; data management; finding resources (e.g. HRAF), thematic analysis, computer skills, translation and back-translation, statistical processing, sampling theory, etc. (1995:71-2).

**FIELDWORK AS ART?**

Wolcott suggests that analysis and interpretation are not synonymous and suggests that one perceives fieldwork like a potter or carver: finding what is “inside” the object. Fieldwork is that part of the art which can be taught and “One way to provide such encouragement is to remind fieldworkers of the many ways in which their forbears exercised intuition, regardless of whether they called attention to it” (1995:31). All art involves the joint activity of a large number of people.

But can an activity like storytelling be defined as art? If so, we should be able to recognize genius extraordinary natural ability, which is often a decision made by others. Professional teachers often help to define what art is and in professional fieldwork this means finding out what research funding agencies will support.

**FIELDWORK AS COMMON SENSE**

Wolcott states that fieldwork involves gaining and maintaining rapport; reciprocity; tolerance for ambiguity; personal determination, coupled with faith in oneself. He wants fieldworkers to couple analysis and observations—focus, review constantly, capitalize on bursts of cultural activities; assess by reports and reflect on the notes taken and write-ups. Wolcott mentions casual or conversational interviewing, such as gathering a life history, which are, of course, relevant to storytelling. The use of interviews can be enhanced if the fieldworker sees listening
as an active and creative role, with questions that are short and to the point, revolving around a few big issues. These will also lead to good stories.


SIL fieldworkers are sometimes weak in theory as well as in writing up and reporting upon their activities. However, rendering the work into suitable form and media can help others understand the project. Wolcott suggests that the fieldworker write early and anticipate how the work will be laid out--at the start think also about the finish. He suggests that fieldworkers develop a literary style and make writing a central part of their fieldwork. One habit is to set aside a time each day for writing; to begin writing early; and to have an easy place to write from. Writing is a disciplinary activity that may seem daunting to a facilitator at a storytelling workshop, but it is necessary if we wish to become storytelling scholars.

Fieldwork, as Wolcott notes, has the satisfaction that it allows respect, is adventurous, and, most important, is an intellectual challenge. “The art of fieldwork is achieved to the extent a fieldworker is able to render from research-oriented personal experience an account that offers to a discerning audience a level of insight and understanding into human social life that exceeds whatever might be achieved through attention solely to gathering and reporting data.” (p.251)

Bible storytelling in particular, but storytelling in general, seems to fit well within the criterion of fieldwork as art. The literal or propositional meaning is not what is in focus, as in translation. Rather, it is the capacity to see “what counts” in the story and experiment with how the meanings of that story can be best and most appropriately represented in the culture.

**EPIC AND BIBLE STORIES**

The Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International have become a part of a group that is embracing the “Chronological Storying Method.” Payne outlines the contributions that he believes SIL can make to the Chronological Bible Storying movement, abbreviated as follows:

- Helping others glean relevant academic information
- Helping others have cultural awareness in selecting suitable Bible stories
- Helping others be culturally aware when using the methodology
- Training on the use of the key terms used in Bible stories
- Training in translation principles
- Providing comprehension testing
- Providing consultant review
- Incorporating mother-tongue speakers, as well as expatriates into the storying approach

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David Payne has been the Wycliffe Bible Translator's International Coordinator for Oral Bible Translation and Chronological Storying. His focus and that of Wycliffe and SIL International (as reported by the CEO of Wycliffe and SIL International) is upon chronological Bible storying. Wycliffe, the IMB, Campus Crusade for Christ International and YWAM have combined storytelling efforts into a group called “EPIC” (now OneStory) See their web site at www.OneStory.org.
Payne recognizes that other organizations use their chronological storying methodology to support their goals of evangelism and church planting. He sees the local community “in coordination with agencies and individuals who already have these activities as their focus” as being responsible for the way the stories are used. This kind of partnership is very much within the strategy of WBT and SIL and involves:

- Translating particular passages that underlie selected stories
- Developing oral stories from the translated passages
- Training other in translation principles so they can craft and test stories
- Checking stories prepared by others for integrity and naturalness
- Facilitating awareness of orality and storying
- Training mother tongue speakers to craft and test stories
- Facilitating mother tongue speakers to use the stories in evangelism and church planting.

Dr Grant Lovejoy, formerly an Associate Professor of Preaching at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been one of the leading proponents of the Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) methodology. In his use of the stories, a questions guide helps “listeners to discover meaning and significance of the biblical story.” Lovejoy gives extensive historical documentation to the development and current uses of the CBS methodology.31

**CBS and Small Languages**

As already mentioned, the CBS method has been studied and endorsed by SIL and Wycliffe International. However, in the case of very small languages in the Pacific, it may not prove practical because:

- It concentrates mainly upon a large set of pre-selected stories, not necessarily those suggested by the community
- It utilizes the stories mainly to answer the needs of evangelism and church planting, whereas in the Pacific both of these activities have been done extensively by missions and churches
- It sticks closely to the written text, which many of the storytelling participants cannot read
- Its goals may not take into account the intricacies of the languages and cultures of the people
- It demonstrates storytelling from a Western historical perspective, and not necessarily that of traditional storytellers
- It allows little in the way of embellishments
- It suggests that a linear view of history is the correct one
- It suggests that nationals in many societies cannot think abstractly
- It implies that national thinkers cannot or do not analyze
- Its emphasis is missiological and theological, not anthropological

These comments are meant to point out some of the differences between CBS and the storytelling methodology that is outlined in this manual. The following comments relate to the traditional and historical perspective of SIL as a non-sectarian organization:

- Its focus is academic and educational
- It promotes the inherent worth of each culture group and language
- It promotes vernacular languages in various ways
- It recognizes the worth of non-Western cultural traits
- It records and preserves cultural and language data in vernacular languages

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31 See also [www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com](http://www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com) for additional references and comments.
In other words, the goals of CBS and SIL are historically different in scope, although both have similar interests in storytelling.

**OTHER AGENCIES**

The web site of Gospel Recordings is now under the Gospel Recordings Network at: [http://globalrecordings.net](http://globalrecordings.net). It provides links to many resources and agencies as well.

For printing of Scripture selections, Scripture Union ([http://www.suvic.org.au](http://www.suvic.org.au) in Australia) offers booklets in English that can be translated and printed in vernacular languages. This implies, of course, some on-going literacy program in the languages.

A search on Internet will provide links to many agencies that may have helpful programs.
Using Stories

The sociolinguistics department of SIL International outlines a training track at the intermediate level that includes Scripture use (often referred to as “Scripture Impact” courses). That site, the LinguaLinks library, and the Graduate Institute of Linguistics (www.gial.edu) all have information on the use of Scriptures, but not necessarily on storytelling. GIAL offers an MA with a major in language development, which includes courses on Scripture use.

Objective

This module will enable participants to discuss the difference between storytelling as a language development strategy on the one hand and simply telling stories on the other hand. Participants will also learn how Bible stories can be used in various contexts.

Preparation

Outline some of the most simple, reliable and culturally appropriate ways to use recorded and re-told stories. Be prepared to tell and re-tell a number of stories taken from recorded audio cassettes. Use some stories that are specifically recorded for children, for special occasions, or for certain groups of people.

The following modules can be referred to as you do this exercise:
- KS = Kinds of Stories
- SA = Story Audiences
- CS = Constructing Stories

Practice

Skilled storytellers remind us that the way to have stories used is simple: tell them and have them re-told. Here the focus is not so much Scripture Use, but Story Use.33

- Facilitators should choose a story and tell it to their peers
- Explain how the storytelling methodology has been utilized in telling the story
- Listen to someone re-tell your story and discuss the process

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32 In the fall bimester of 2006 I offered a course on Oral Communication that was attended by seven graduate students. In 2005 I taught a three week seminar on Storytelling at the Australian SIL school (EQUIP).
33 This is not meant to imply that Scripture use is unimportant and should not play a significant role in the life of the church. However, Scripture use, by definition, has traditionally emphasized the written rather than oral medium for memorization. A number of Christian schools and SIL programs offer courses on Scripture use.
**Skill-Check**

Critique your story and that of someone else by:

- Discussing the feelings participants have after hearing the story
- Discussing the feelings you hoped to promote with the story
- Discussing where the various stories you know can be told

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**Facilitator Notes**

**STORYTELLING AND TELLING STORIES**


The two quite dissimilar meanings should warn us that storytelling can be a two-edged sword. To distinguish between the two meanings, we use “storytelling” in this chapter to refer to factual narratives and “telling stories” for the more fanciful ones, but not necessarily lies. There may be considerable overlap at times as well, but it is wise to consider these distinctions, which can be represented as:

![Diagram of Storytelling and Telling Stories]

Storytelling, when tied closely to Scripture narration, should include commentary, exposition, exegesis, inferences and deductions. These are all part of the storytelling scene.

To be effective, the storyteller includes aspects of the features that are represented in both circles (above) to be effective. As represented in the left circle, storytelling is more like translating. Telling stories, on the other hand, is more like a free interpretation. The translator can go slow, do research from records and history and craft a narrative. The interpreter, on the other hand, has to do everything orally, including imitating style, as the story unfolds. There is no time for research while telling a story.
Telling stories is creative and imaginative because the performer must keep the audience in mind. The telling of stories involves paraphrase, rewording, restating, and even acting. The one who tells stories well is therefore also an entertainer.

Storytellers, on the other hand, are encouraged to plan their stories, and craft them in cultural appropriate ways, keeping in mind the worldview of the audience. A key part of the CBS methodology is a ten-step approach that includes the following:

- Identify the Biblical principle to be illustrated
- Be aware of the worldview issues
- Take into account the bridges, barriers and gaps that will result from the story
- Select the story
- Craft the story and later dialogue about it
- Tell the story in a cultural appropriate manner
- Dialogue with the audience about the meaning of the story
- Give guidance on how to obey the lessons of the story
- Establish some kind of accountability
- Encourage groups to reproduce the story

**USING STORIES PERSONALLY**

There are many ways that we can use storytelling individually, including involving our immediate family, relatives, close friends, staff, trainees, clients, business associates, bosses, as well as the community. We can use stories that are spiritual or educational, determining in each case what might be interesting to the group.34

Family storytelling times include birthdays, bedtime, holidays, hiking, and suppers. “Inside the world of story, our minds run free—to do what children do when they are drawing—to color beyond the lines, all over the pages.” (Maguire, 1998, quoting Jimmy Neil Smith). Maguire also comments on forming storytelling groups and suggests ground rules for them. He gives some clues for “taking the telling leap,” that is, using the stories by:

- Giving special care to develop and embody personal stories
- Respecting the value of the story, the teller, the telling and the listener
- Committing to storytelling ventures
- Identifying the potential problems and issues
- Keeping in mind personal concerns and listeners’ enjoyment
- Seeing it as a homespun art, knowing your mind may go blank at times
- Remembering that listeners won’t even notice if you leave something out
- Refraining from replying to interruptions
- Doing your storytelling in the spirit of giving a gift
- Knowing why telling personal stories is important
- Keeping a notebook and an image file
- Finding the place for telling the story

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34 Peter Kreeft has constructed stories using the dialogue method, introducing people who tell their story from a particular point of view and then interact with others with different views. In one book (1982) he has a conversation between John F. Kennedy, C.S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley, all of whom died on the same day. In another book (1987) Socrates and Jesus discuss matters of current concern from our Western society. In both books Kreeft uses dialogues to discuss points of conflict and interest and demonstrates a style that can be employed in storytelling as well.
Knowing how to listen to other people
Listening to tapes or CDs of storytellers

STORIES ACROSS GENERATIONS

Greene and Fulford (1993) provide a series of questions that is useful in gathering family histories and preserving them. These are useful for a fieldworker who is just starting and perhaps unsure about the categories and topics that may prove useful.

Michael W. Pratt and Barbara H. Fiese (2004) edited a book that studies family stories throughout various stages of people’s lives. Their book recounts recent psychological research and theory on family stories. The content and coherence of family narratives links the process of telling to aspects of development. “The messages inherent in these stories serve to socialize children into gender roles, reinforce moral lessons, consolidate identity, and connect generations” (2004:xii). They include studies from developmental psychology, personality theory, and family studies. The family is seen as the context of interpreting the wider world and during the life cycle stories are an intimate part of the process. The book studies and describes how families “support, guide, or sometimes stifle” (2004:3) the process.

Fiese and Pratt (2004: 401-418) also studied Metaphors and their meanings in family stories and found that the elements of family stories across the life span are:

- *Lifespan* > *Medium* > *Meaning* > *Metaphor* > *Coherence*
- *Childhood* > *reminiscence* > sharing everyday memories is relational > how do I learn to behave > *Narrative* & *social competence*
- *Adolescence* > *Dialogue* > Synthesizing experiences > *Who am I?* > *Coherence of personal identity*
- *Adulthood* > *Prosaic* > Relationship histories > *What do others mean to me?* > *Coherence of immediate family relationships*
- *Older adult* > *Epochal* > Family preservation > *What does my life mean to others?* > *Continuity across family generations*

USING ORGANIZATIONAL STORIES

Denning (2001:xiii) comments on how storytelling relates to organizational change. He notes that “Time after time, when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers or front-line staff in a large organization to get enthusiastic about a major change, I found that storytelling was the only thing that worked”. Further, “The standard management manual, written in the rigid grip of theory, relies almost entirely on analytic thinking telling us to fix the systems; re-engineer the processes, enhance the quality, streamline the procedures, reform and flatten the organizational structure, analyze things in terms of grids and charts, and so on. The solutions are found when we develop plans in which individuals are programmed to operate like so many obedient computers. We are to hone our interpersonal mechanics and build skill inventories. We are to “bring to our difficulties a fix-it attitude as though our past errors can be easily corrected with straightforward explanations” (2001:xvi-xvii).

Denning’s book is about understanding relationships through stories to assist in mobilizing managers and employees so they can understand complex and difficult changes. It enables a leap in understanding so that the audience intuitively grasps what the change involves and why it may be desirable.
Storytelling does not replace analytical thinking but supplements it with new perspectives. It does not neglect abstract thinking nor demote experimentation and science. Denning understands that there is academic hostility to the narrative. Here “springboard story” means using a story to help an audience grasp how an organization or complex system may change. Springboard stories have certain characteristics:

- They are told from the story of a protagonist who was in a predicament and proposes a change that is meant to solve the predicament
- The story is plausible, even familiar and is told as simply and briefly as possible
- The speed and conciseness of style in the story are key components
- Stories are meant to spark new stories in the minds of the listeners, not details
- Listener’s are encouraged to race ahead, to imagine further implications
- Stories are not a panacea, but are only as good as the underlying ideas being conveyed
- A story can be used as a way of explaining the idea at the outset
- If an idea is bad, telling the story should reveal the weaknesses
- Intuition will tell you if you are giving the wrong story
- Every expert has a different idea of what change is best

Given this background, why don’t we tell more stories? One reason is a mental blockage, just as in writing. It is also partly theological: I have heard, for example, that in SIL “We don’t tell Bible stories— we translate the Scriptures.”

Denning suggests that we should use the true story as far as it goes, but then we should extrapolate. “An idea cannot easily enter into the listeners’ basic perceptual framework as a fresh idea through which they view the world unless they themselves co-create it. For this purpose, a story that rings true can be a useful tool” (2001:39). In an organization everyone needs to know what is going on because there is a real risk in ignorance. “People are less interested in the overall program than in having autonomy to do their own thing” (2001:44). Organizational resistance is often not from the idea of change itself, but involves the process of change and how insiders react to it. Denning suggests that people simply tell their story about what they are doing and how and why it will be or is successful, and allow listeners to draw their own conclusions about the implications for their own situation (2001:80). The problem is not information transfer—the listeners already have most of the information they need, but they need to see how their knowledge is part of a potential solution.

There is a big difference between two groups getting along (as in many partnerships) and coming to a level of understanding together (2001:100). The outcome of a presentation depends on what story is told by the participants to each other and to their colleagues. It is the shared stories that hold the organization together and the structures and management are simply tools.35

Denning also comments on drafting the springboard story so that it can be used most effectively. The parameters involved are:

- **Strangeness**: the story must violate the listener’s expectations in some way. One doesn’t want a debate on details, there has to be the shock of the unforeseen—such as divergent opinions, unpredictable data, sudden emotion, new characters, or unexpected relationships” (2001:127).

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35 We have seen this in SIL and WBT in stories of Uncle Cam in Guatemala, Kenneth Pike at linguistic conferences, and so on.
• **Comprehensibility**: the story embodies the idea enough to spring the listener to a new level of understanding by focusing on the big picture by letting go of structure and instructions;

• **Informal storytelling**: knowledge fairs can create multiple opportunities for informal storytelling by interaction between the storyteller and the listener;

• **Testing**: volume or quantity do not stir groups; instead, it must be interesting and have meaning.

• **Immediacy**: launching into a story at the outset has proved effective, even when it isn’t a direct answer to the question that has been posed (2001:150);

• **Serendipity**: the telling of multiple stories can help enhance the chances of the audience co-creating the follow-up aby allowing the audience imagine and fill in the missing elements.

• **Sensitization**: stark delineation of ongoing problems can help an unreceptive audience to see the relevance of a springboard story (2001:156);

• **Urgency**: where time is short, the whole weight of the argument may be placed on the story. Instead, what often happens is that a team writes a report, reviews it, redrafts it, then sends it somewhere so that months later there may be a response to it.

“In the case of springboard stories, the evidence may be slender—a single experience of a single person—and the inductive leap may be immense—the future of an organization in the twenty-first century—but the logical structure of the argument is identical to that of science” (p. 176). The question is making the right leap of imagination, so rational analysis and testing is also needed. Storytelling rather than translation for small languages is a conceptual leap for many fieldworkers.

Additional elements for developing the Springboard Story (from Appendix 1) are:

- It should be relatively brief with “minimal texture”
- It should be intelligible to a specific audience and inherently interesting
- It should spring the listener to new level of understanding
- It should have a “happy ending”
- It should embody the change message
- It should encourage listeners to identify with the protagonist
- It should deal with a specific individual or organization

**Using Stories from Oral History**

Bible stories should not be the single goal for endangered languages. Rather, the project design should include stories that fieldworkers can elicit in oral history. Managing a project includes approaches to interviewing, interview progress sheets, structuring the interview, and preparing for the interview. The interview itself includes (Douglas et al. 1996):

- Language and culture learning as prerequisites
- Ethical obligations noted and carried out
- Delimiting the community for study
- Establishing self in the community
- Pre-interview practicalities: equipment, identification, questions, extras
- Beginning the interview: environment, seating, arranging equipment, scheduling
- During the interview: tape, recording levels, difficult words noted
- Ending the interview: review, final identification, photographs and documents
- Collecting informant profiles, biographical questionnaires
- Knowing what is on the tape: information sheet, brief summary, evaluation
- Numbering the interviews: by year, subject matter, geographical location
- Indexing: all names, interviewee’s names, subject
- Making summaries of tape contents: tape side, counter number, contents, profile
- Following a style guide: general notes, punctuation, ellipsis, quotations, brackets
• Auditing the interviews
• Depositing the collections
• Deciding on what to preserve and its quality
• Archiving the data: master-tape, protection, storage, lending, carrying

It seems clear that if we are telling what we believe is God’s story, we should also extend the courtesy to listen and, where possible, record the stories told in oral cultures.
Concluding Remarks

Objections to Storytelling

In this chapter I respond to some comments and objections that I have encountered about storytelling. I do this by outlining a number of objections, followed by my observations and answers. I have been concerned in particular about the and needs of small and endangered languages, groups that are unlikely to have the published Scriptures. I will also include some stories that support both the work of storytelling and Scripture translation, emphasizing that the two are complementary and not in competition.

V2025 and Storytelling

Comment One: Some have the understanding that storytelling is a “devil's advocate” presentation, pushing people to think through where the “limits” might be in V2025 by going overboard. The idea seems to be that SIL is responsible to God to reach every language with the gospel by 2025, and that by using storytelling we are saying “Anything is better than nothing, and we have only 20+ years to get it all done. Here’s a quick-and-dirty shortcut way.” Some were shocked to hear that it was an honest proposal.

Answer One: When I was VPAA the International Conference of SIL International passed a motion that encapsulated the essence of V2025. As an international officer, I began to think about it (mainly in the context of the Pacific, which I know something about) and to take it seriously. The questions that came to me were:

- What does it mean to “start” a program with every language that needs Bible translation?
- What does it mean to “need” a Bible translation program?
- Does this vision refer to “all” languages, even those that are very small?
- What has been the results to date with small languages in PNG and the Pacific?
- Based on past SIL history, what is the likelihood of starting translation programs in small languages?
- Are there other ways to initiate programs besides the traditional one in which one or more people are assigned to a language?
- Could a team be assigned to several languages?
- Could there be an introductory program that relied initially entirely upon stories?
- How could storytelling be initiated as a legitimate project?

I began to read on storytelling, coming across a vast amount of literature with which I was unfamiliar. Several things were immediately obvious and relevant to PNG and the Pacific:

- These are primarily oral cultures
- The small languages are endangered, that is, surrounded by social and economical factors that could lead the young people out of their traditional language areas
- Most of the populations will never read (with meaning) literature of any sophistication in their own languages, such as the NT

V2025 is the SIL and WBT (and affiliated organizations) shorthand for completing the entering of every group that needs a translation by the year 2025. These comments and answers are based on an exchange I had with a senior translation consultant.
- SIL had worked in only 6 languages of less than 500 speakers in 45 years
- Story use could help determine attitudes towards the vernacular and motivation to use it
- People were telling stories in their languages (particularly children) would provide some evidence of language use in at least one traditional setting

This led to further considerations, such as:
- How do people traditionally tell stories?
- The Gospel and Bible stories could be told in the same way
- How could we teach people to use Bible stories?
- A workshop could help people use stories to examine:
  - The main idea behind the stories
  - How stories are constructed and checked
  - The background and supplementary information
  - Story audiences
  - Songs and drama as stories

**Comment Two:** In Wycliffe and SIL members believe deeply that the scripture is the accurate record of the Word of God, it tells us how we can be saved spiritually, and that it is the norm for guiding our daily lives in a way that pleases God. Without a print translation in the vernacular, how does one have any authority to go back to when opinions differ? Of course church evangelists, catechists, pastors and Christians may play a part with their family members, neighbors and strangers and tell them about the joy of knowing the truth about God and what he has done (and does) for us. But when differences of instruction appear, where does one turn for ‘the truth?’ When differences appear, God told us to ‘search the scriptures.’ That requires a hard copy, not just a story

**Answer Two:** In PNG and many other countries there is already “hard copy”. The hard copy that is being used and read (when this happens) in PNG is the Tok Pisin Bible. This is because:
- There are no vernacular Bibles or Scriptures at all in 95% of the small languages of PNG
- Even when people have the vernacular Bible, they use the Tok Pisin Scriptures
- A hard paper copy presumes and requires an infrastructure of literacy, printing, distribution and supervision that is difficult to pursue and sustain with small language groups
- The Tok Pisin Bible is the source text for the majority of the church members in small languages
- Tape-recording Bible stories provides an adequate and working ‘hard’ copy

**Comment Three:** When God wanted the growing number of children of Israel to keep from varying interpretations, He told Moses to write his words down on stone. After years of neglect what brought the Jews back to proper worship and honoring of God and knowing his laws was when Joash and Hezekiah had the words of God read aloud. This refreshed everyone’s minds about the spiritual situation they were in and how they were to show their change of hearts. They didn’t go searching for the storyteller to retell what he had heard about God doing from Creation to that present day. Few were literate, percentage-wise, but the words of God were carefully copied and preserved. The written record was the norm.

**Answer Three:** There is a lot of debate about the written word of God and even when we accept a particular translation as accurately representing what God said, what happens?
- There has been a proliferation of interpretations
- There is continuing argument and debate over the smallest detail
- A written text makes it easy to argue, debate, quarrel over versions by those who are “educated”
- We tell our children stories about Daniel, but we don’t read to them from the book of Daniel (unless it is simplified and abridged)
- The Bible stories have always been retold and passed on orally

**Comment Four:** Jesus quotes the written record as the agreed authority as to what God had said in the past. It was not Jesus’ word against some other rabbi’s. He didn’t quote the rabbis, but rather the written record. Preservation of the inspired record requires it to be passed on in written form. The form by which people hear it has many
possibilities, but there must be a written, unchangeable standard. If it’s not in a group’s own language, then “the few”
too easily can misguide “the many,” whether accidentally or purposely.

**Answer Four:**
Jesus did not always quote the OT verbatim and neither do other NT writers
- The words of the prophets were transported into the context that the NT author thought would serve best in
  his illustration or argument
- It took several centuries to sort out the books that were the “Word of God” and the criteria established,
  while agreed upon by church councils, does not come from the Bible itself
- When authors quote Jesus they do not tell the same details in their stories
- If Jesus considered his stories unchangeable, would he not have written them down himself?

**Comment Five:** Oral storytelling can too easily change the ‘original text.’ Again, that may be accidentally or
purposefully. Why else would languages have veracity markers? A hearer wants to know just how reliable the words
of the speaker are, how trustworthy the person is who is telling the story. This is especially critical for ‘new’
information. Why should I trust it if I don’t know or have trust in the individual telling me? A written text stands,
regardless of the teller in any one situation. Without a written record, on what grounds would Christians oppose
homosexuality, especially in preachers of the gospel? Our western culture’s situational ethics would have as much
ground as any other view. BUT THERE IS A WRITTEN RECORD OF RIGHT AND WRONG!

**Answer Five:** There is no doubt in my mind that the Bible is the written record of right and wrong. However, I also
believe that God speaks directly to people by means of his Holy Spirit, correcting, convicting and enabling them,
especially if they do not have the written word. The emphasis upon a certain text as the “original text” causes me to
wonder:
- Are we able to clearly understand the original text without translations that give punctuation, without
  section headings, footnotes and other help?
- If so, why do we bother with all the background information, paragraphs, italics, indenting, proper name
capitals, maps and so on? Don’t publishers and editors assume that the readers will not understand the text,
  that it is not clear in certain places?
- How trustworthy are all of the notes, dictionaries, commentaries, etc. that we read and accept?
- Does one have to go to Bible school or seminary to know what the essential points of the Bible message
  are? John Wycliffe didn’t think so!
- The Koran is “trustworthy” to the Muslims, the Book of Mormon to the Mormons, the Jehovah Witness
  Bible to their adherents, and so on. It doesn’t matter that critical analyses of the texts show errors and
  distortions, people accept these texts as given from God

**Comment Six:** Although you gathered some small languages from around Amanab and Hauna and encouraged the
course participants to tell Bible stories in their vernaculars, there is no one to verify how those Tok Pisin versions
came out in the vernacular. (Or did the participants tell their Bible stories in vernacular to the other speakers of their
language at the course?)

**Answer Six:** At Amanab we had several speakers from each language and some speakers knew more than two
languages. We couldn’t tell, of course, if their renderings in the vernacular were accurate. (I sent their re-told
stories in the various languages to translators for comment, but received none.) The participants understood Tok
Pisin well—certainly as well as most of the translation assistants that SIL translators commonly use. We could
therefore assume that the re-told versions would be as accurate as any first draft work, and that they will certainly
sound more natural.

**Comment Seven:** In some areas of PNG evangelists have had a year, perhaps two years, of Tok Pisin Bible school,
but key terms in Tok Pisin still are translated poorly. By working on the key terms in translation the meaning of
terms they may have been using Sunday after Sunday became clear.
Answer Seven: Searching and settling on key terms often takes a lot of time and revision. After 40 years Kewa speakers are still using variants for some of the key terms. We know that in PNG languages the use of verbs or verbal variants is common and that abstract nominal categories are not, so that words like love, hope, faith are expressed as actions. I would think—but have no proof—that storytellers would naturally use event words and expressions and that the hearers would begin to understand what the key terms are conveying. Words express and represent ideas—the way people think—key terms do not show what an English or Greek word is supposed to mean in the vernacular.

Comment Eight: Relationships take time and although the chronological storying method is excellent, it is only a start. When a person is staking his eternal destiny on what someone told him, first it's the credibility and relationship with the person who told him, but then there has to eventually be an ultimate source that doesn't even rely on the person who told him. At first it is the scripture in some other language that the teller has access to, but eventually it has to be in the language of every believer. God has said that the game must be played by his rule book, so let’s not plan to teach only the games’ highlights and not give them the rule book in a language that touches their hearts.

Answer Eight: Good storytelling may be perceived by non-storytellers as “quick and dirty,” but gifted storytellers craft their stories carefully and understand clearly the audience impact it should have. Bible storytellers must know the Bible well enough to use those stories that are most helpful to culturally critical situations. This is not automatic and depends mostly upon the work of the PNG churches that have taught the storytellers. But we have hundreds and thousands of faithful pastors and churches in PNG to draw from. Hopefully, stories in the vernacular will lead them from tape-recorded stories to written stories, even if the stories when written reach only a small percentage of the population. They may then want Scripture booklets of the kind Scripture Gift Mission puts out, then perhaps a translation program. That will require trained writers and translators, supervision and the infrastructure that I mentioned earlier. Realistically, we must say that this is not happening and is unlikely to happen. I won’t comment on comparing the Bible to a “rule book,” except to say that seems to be one of the problems in PNG. You obey rules because you have to, not necessarily because you want to.

Comment Nine: The big strategy in Branch history was one-team-per-language-family--get going in one language of the group, then interest and draw into training MTT's of other key languages of that family. The work done by the first team could serve as a translation pattern for the other, related languages. Obviously, it hasn't worked that way, certainly not in PNG, if anywhere in SIL. For those clusters in which multiple NT's have been done it has taken the SIL translator as catalyst and guide to take what may or may not have been progressing at all and see to it that it reached the necessary end of a hard copy of all that had been drafted.

Answer Nine: I concluded four years as director in 1976 and I had pushed the language cluster approach (even publishing an article about it). Although it has not worked except for a few cases this is partly because some SIL translators maintain that nationals cannot get the publication process completed without outside help, such as SIL needs to provide. I understand that position but am not convinced it is without remedy.

Comment Ten: Translators will keep on listening, watching and praying. We don't have to only do translation the way we've always done it, but let's be sure new ways still reach the same desired ends. Perhaps there are different assumptions as to the desired ends of WBT/SIL’s.

Answer Ten: What are some of the desired ends that I have for storytelling? To me they are:

- People telling the Bible stories they need and want in their own languages
- People telling the stories well, just like they would traditional stories
- Listeners who get excited about the story, convicted by it, and apply it
- People who may desire a translation and literacy program as a result of storytelling

An additional point is that Jesus explicated key terms like Kingdom of Heaven by stories. He said “The Kingdom of Heaven is like…..,” then expounded faith, repentance, forgiveness and other key terms in the stories. He didn’t explain what prayer means by discussing the semantic components of the term from Aramaic, Hebrew or Greek. Instead, he told stories about prayer and how to pray.
• People who do not leave their cultures to become Christians
• Stories as a precursor to translation and literacy
• Stories concomitant with translation and literacy
• Stories that explain and amplify translated parts of God’s word
References


38 Not all of these books have been cited in this Manual, but they have all contributed to my research and writing.


Lipman, Doug. 1999. *Improving your storytelling: beyond the basics for all who tell stories in work or play.* Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc.


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Appendix A: Two Storytelling Workshops

This section briefly outlines the results of two storytelling workshops that I conducted in PNG, one at Amanab in the Sundaun Province (October 15-22, 2002) and one at Hauna, in the Sepik Province (December 8-12, 2003). Both courses were conducted in Tok Pisin.

AMANAB:

The staff were: Karl Franklin: Lecturer, Facilitator; Andy Weaver: Recording Technician; Joice Franklin: Cook, Facilitator; Elsa Drews: Linguistic Student, Cook; Bob Brown: Participant, Local Knowledge Expert. The venue was the Baibel Tisa Trening Senta, Amanab. The sponsor of the course was The Seed Co.

GENERAL

The Amanab District is a part of the Sundaun Province—on the northern coast and bordering Papua (former Irian Jaya) to the west. According to the 2000 census, there are 185,741 in the Province as a whole, but the Amanab Rural census division indicates that there are 9,579 in the general vicinity. The linguistic situation in the Sundaun Province consists primarily of language and culture groups that are quite small and diverse. There are exceptions: Amanab (Awai) has 3,500 speakers in several dialects and Abau (to the south at Green River) is a language spoken by 4,500 people. Telefol, still further south and in the mountains has 4,800 speakers and some of the languages at the eastern end of the Province (such as Olo, Au and Mende) have over 5,000 speakers. The Sundaun Province as a whole has a small per capital gross income and Amanab would be in one of the poorer districts. It is therefore an ideal area in which to hold a workshop because the people appreciate any assistance that they receive. SIL once had a center about two miles south of Amanab, at Tapina. It has been vacated for several years and cannot be found without local assistance. There is no evidence of it except for a small and almost overgrown cross that marks the grave of Dottie Graham, SIL translator, who died there in 1982. There are 20 languages listed in the SIL & BTA translation map where translation work was once started or is in progress. The map is undated but it seems to be at least 3 or 4 years old. For example, it does not list all of the multi-translation languages that are being facilitated by the Nystroms. Of the over 100 languages in the Province, 10 New Testaments have been completed by SIL members.

THE VENUE

The “town” of Amanab consists of a small airstrip, the CMML mission station, a small “hospital,” several additional government departments (public works, a primary school, a vocational school), and four churches (SDA, Catholic, Charismatic, and the Brethren), as well as assorted other buildings. The Amanab Center, where the course was held, belongs to the CMML (Brethren Mission) and is managed and directed by Steven Aikei. Steven graciously assisted with the practical details associated with living at the Center. Bob Brown, long time translator in the region, arrived at Amanab several days before the workshop began and worked with Steven to arrange for classrooms and so on. The CMML mission station has four classrooms, several “dorms,” a three bedroom house (where we stayed), several other houses and a trade store. There are two small trade stores located near the airstrip. At one time a road ran from Amanab south to Green River, but this is now virtually impassable.

THE COURSE

Prior to leaving for Amanab, I selected 15 parables and miracles (drawn from the tables in the back of my Good News Bible) and had the stories recorded in Tok Pisin in the Media Services department. The men who read the stories were SIL employees, Raphael Totome and Tulia Wanu. There were no handouts because the purpose of the
workshop was to focus on the oral approach. I used an acronym to remind the participants how we would be conducting the course: **HAR = Harim** (listen to the tapes and to others tell stories), **Autim** (repeat the stories and in some cases dramatize them) and **Rekordim** (record and edit the stories). My part was to discuss, and in some cases retell, the stories after we had heard them read, then facilitate a discussion in terms of their setting, participants, actions, and so on. As the stories were read (some of them two or three times because they were in different Gospels), I elicited their input to help chart the main features of the stories on the board for comparison and for additional comments. It did not take the students long to warm up to the task of identifying and working on two particular aspects of each story:

1. What was the story about, i.e., what was it called? (Nem bilong stori, e.g., The Good Samaritan)
2. What did the story teach, i.e., what was its main point? (As bilong stori, e.g., the illustration of a true “neighbor”)

Fifteen men participated in recording stories and several created songs (or already knew songs) that they also used to append to their stories. At the conclusion of the course each of the men were given tapes of their stories and songs and they were sent a complete set of stories from their particular language. (Andy worked long and hard to make that possible.) This was important because we furnished no other handouts or certificates.

**THE PARTICIPANTS.**

From 16 to 19 men attended the course, averaging about 17 regulars. There were two men that I judged to be over 50 (and who could not read or write), but most of the others were 26 to 35 years of age, according to their own estimates.

Four language groups were therefore represented: 1) **Awai** (Amanab), 2) **Angor**, 3) **Glefe** (Kwomtari) and 4) **Dra**. Both Awai and Angor have New Testaments that were dedicated in 2000, but the translators (Andy and Audrey Minch and Bob and Shirley Litteral) were on furlough. The Awai also has an **Adapt It** New Testament in another dialect. Glefe is where the Honsbergers work (who were also on furlough). There are no translators working in the Dra language, although the men want to have Bible translation work in their language and have been translating Genesis independently. The churches represented were CMML, Catholic (two men from the Dra language) and SDA (one man).

The daily schedule for the week was as follows:

- **Tuesday, Oct 15**: Arrive and set up; contact participants (most of whom had arrived)
- **Wednesday-Friday, Oct 16-18**: Introductory discussion on storytelling topics and techniques, with regular interaction encouraged by all participants.
- **Saturday, Oct 19**: Recording sessions for all storytellers
- **Sunday, Oct 20**: Participation at local CMML church (I was asked to speak)
- **Monday, Oct 21**: Additional recording and videoing sessions
- **Tuesday, Oct 22**: Recording of one local oral historian, clean-up and leave

**SOME LESSONS**

The materials in the **Storytelling Handbook** that I had prepared needed daily revision because it was more suitable for the trainers of storytellers or literate participants. I assumed that students would know how to read and write English and that there would be pre-course preparation. There were a couple of men who could read and write English, but even their backgrounds would have been insufficient to handle the Handbook. Other lessons learned from the workshop were regarding:

- **The language of instruction.** In many parts of PNG it is necessary to teach in Tok Pisin and certainly that was the case in Amanab. This approach demands concentration—sometimes I misunderstood questions or they misunderstood the story. However, all were accomplished vernacular speakers.
- **Devotions.** I began the first class by outlining my own life story and each day I told stories of missionaries (David Brainerd, Adoniram Judson, William Carey, the 1965 Congo massacre, all books I had read and taken notes on—but I told the stories from memory!).
• **Storytelling as a subject and art.** No one had to be convinced about the value of retelling Bible stories, but the differences between simply retelling a story and restructuring it where necessary was a learning process. Most participants were not accomplished storytellers—we had taken whoever came—but all showed a desire to improve their storytelling abilities.

• **Memorization.** I was surprised how difficult it was for many to remember the story. Some wanted to use notes or keep their Tok Pisin Bibles open, but I suggested that their audiences—for the most part—simply listen to them, so they should try to listen and learn, not take notes and read.

• **Enjoyment and articulation.** Good storytelling abilities could be recognized but not always articulated. When I evaluated each of the 15 storytellers, I told them what I looked for: enthusiasm about the story, good audience contact, the flow of the story (at least how it seemed to me), and so on. Storytelling for enjoyment was recognized as a positive value.

• **The syllabus and its development.** I discussed: Why story? (*Bilong wanem yumi wok long stori?*); Kinds of Stories (*Ol kain kain stori*, with illustrations from PNG stories); The Big Idea in a Story (*As bilong stori*); Story Audiences (*Husat bai i harim stori?*); Telling Stories (*Pasin bilong autim ol stori*); Constructing Stories (*Pasin bilong mekim o wokim ol stori*); Stories as Songs (*Strongim stori long song o singsing*); Examining Stories (*Pasin bilong sekim o glasim ol stori*); and Bible Stories (*Ol Baibel stori*).

• **Translation vs. storytelling.** I had to keep reminding the participants that translating the Bible and retelling stories from the Bible were very different activities. Some simply wanted to tell the story back like they remembered it from Tok Pisin.

• **Group interaction.** Because of the culture, group interaction along critical lines was virtually impossible, perhaps just as well. No one wanted to criticize, many lowering their heads as the story was told.

• **Miracles and parables.** The use of miracles and parables was appreciated because there was some background knowledge. However, using Bible stories involves some assumptions that the way the writer put the story together cannot be changed.

• **Repetition by different writers.** Repeating the story from the perspective of the different writers of the Gospels or conflating the stories (as in the feeding of the 5000) was helpful.

• **Repetition by different participants.** Repeating the story from the perspectives of the participants of the story was also helpful, e.g., the Good Samaritan was told by participants from the view of the robber, the man who was robbed, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, the innkeeper, even the donkey. These perspectives were enjoyed and showed how stories could be varied according to audience, etc.

• **Drama.** Dramatization of the stories was enjoyed but needed constraint so that there was not too much time spent on unimportant details (like the little boy with the 3 loaves and 2 fishes arguing with the disciple about taking his lunch from him).

• **Children’s stories.** Telling stories to children, especially one’s own, is necessary. One scene I will never forget: After one man told a particular story to the class, I asked him to tell it to his son (who was about 6 or 8). He turned to his son, with his back to me and slowly and softly retold the story, to his son’s obvious delight.39

• **Partners.** We could have done more partnering in class. There was a lot of interaction with each other that took place outside of class hours.

• **The big idea.** Instead of recounting the Big Idea of a story, often the response was to tell what the story was about. For example, “This is a story about three different kinds of ground,” instead of, “This is a story that shows that good ground always produces something good.”

• **Restructuring.** We did not do much in terms of restructuring stories, illustrating how the story could have been introduced differently. We did go into the setting of the story and how it would help the hearers (for example, about the dangerous nature of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho).

• **Animation.** Animation and body use of one’s hands, etc. came naturally to only a few participants. Many looked out the windows as they told their story, looked at the ceiling, stood sideways, did not talk clearly, etc.

• **Examining stories.** We could have spent a lot more time examining PNG stories. I gave a few illustrations from Kewa.

• **Imagination.** Participants caught on to the fact that they all had mental pictures that they formed as stories were told, or before they were told. We could have spent more time on developing this aspect.

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39 For some examples of Children’s Bible story books and other reference works, see Appendix F.
• **Meta-stories.** Joining stories with similar themes was discussed. E.g., the story of the wise man that came to Jesus and asked him what he might do to have eternal life is similar to Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night and asking a similar question.

• **Creativity.** Allowing and suggesting creativity in strengthening a story using a song about the story was followed up by a number of participants.

• **Spontaneity.** So-called spontaneity came from knowing and practicing the story.

• **Recording.** When recording the story, the participants appreciated the fact that they could sit at a table with a lapel mike. No one could see them shaking!

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Stories can be checked by the SIL translators, particularly in the cases of Amanab, Angor and Kwomtari. In the case of Dra, in the past there was not interest in translation work (although this has since changed), so any materials they got in the way of storytelling was the first Bible materials in the language. We need a better correlation of the Language Recording pictures and Scriptures, with cross-references to stories with the same themes. We did demonstrate and give sample LRI materials. Checking an oral story by a back translation only gives what the hearer remembers was said in Tok Pisin. Otherwise, a sentence by sentence interpretation is necessary. A well-told story is one that the audience accepts as clear and well-told, with no static or noise (as defined by information theory). Too much clarification or exploration of detail while a story is being told detracts from the flow and meaning of the whole story. For example, the issues of Jewish inheritance practices in the “Prodigal Son,” can be left to the encyclopedic commentary because it is not a part of the essence of the story.

As a linguist, tagmemic insights were helpful: I could note the contrasts between stories, their variation and discuss the distribution of the stories. I also kept in mind the etic content and the emic (i.e. what the story really means). For example the story given in Luke 10:25-37 of the Good Samaritan is a story within a story. There is a meta-story (Luke’s writing of the story) and a story (The Good Samaritan) within a story (Jesus and the saveman). We can contrast the actions of the three men who come in contact with the incapacitated man, note the variations of their backgrounds and note the distribution of the story (the road, the roadside, the inn), and conclude with the climax or purpose of the story.

We all ate lunch together—fish, greens and rice everyday, with sago two days as well. It was an important time of fellowship and swapping stories. We employed two women to cook the midday meal for us. Often men simply showed up at the house to talk. On the final evening, six of them came to spend some time reflecting on the course and discussing their concerns for smaller languages and dialects around them. During the recording sessions, many young boys came to listen and stayed for several hours, obviously enjoying what they heard. Fifteen of the participants handed in a written assessment (in Tok Pisin) of the course, answering these questions:

• **What parts of the course was most helpful?**
• **What more would you have liked to do in the course?**
• **How do you expect to use what you have learned?**
• **What can be done in the future to help you?**

Here are my summaries of some of the answers:

• Stories are good because they are for everyone, not just the people who can read and write. We need to learn and use Bible stories.
• Stories have a main point that should always be made clear. We need to learn how to do this better.
• Bible stories, when told orally, have to be remembered. This is hard to do at first.
• Stories are good because they can be passed on from one generation to the next.
• Stories are good because “we don’t sit around reading our Bibles together, we talk,” and Bible storytelling fits into the cultural patterns.
• Stories should be told well and this requires practice.
• We would like to record many more stories.
• We would need tape recorders in some places that don’t have them.
It was clear that the men want and need a lot more practice and they thought that the course was much too short. On the other hand, what is needed now is for the men to demonstrate that they can put the principles into practice. Some follow-up is needed to encourage all of the would-be storytellers—someone to go and record stories that they have been telling. Nevertheless, I believe they will continue with what they have learned. What we did was not high-tech because anyone can learn to tell Bible stories well. But I have several thoughts and recommendations about storytelling:

- **Storytelling is a natural introduction to Bible translation.** People become familiar with the stories before translation begins and can therefore identify with the translated materials more quickly.
- **Storytelling should accompany Bible translation.** Stories are natural renditions of the translated text, but are not subject to the same constraints because they do not claim to be translations.
- **Storytelling should follow a completed New Testament translation.** It gives purpose to the whole project because everyone (not simply the church pastors or leaders) can be involved in telling the Gospel story.
- **Storytelling should be a part of the SIL translation strategy.** I had thought that it should be foremost in small language groups that do not have any materials, but I now see that it can be effective in areas where a translation has been started or completed.
- **Storytelling accommodates the oral approach and allows the 70% of the population who cannot read (and who probably never will) to understand clearly the stories from the Bible because they, too, can retell them.**
- **SIL (or other facilitators) must themselves demonstrate the oral approach by memorizing and telling Bible stories (and traditional stories), rather than always reading their materials.**
- **Storytelling is not “high-tech.” Although we taped stories and used some videoing to show storytellers how they looked to an audience, storytelling does not rely on either technique to be useful. Of course, tape recording the stories does provide some constraints that prevent wild divergence from a base story.**

**A CONCLUDING NOTE**

Just as we were about to leave Amanab, three men from the Baibai language arrived. They had walked for 2 days but, because of a mixup in the dates, they didn’t know about the changes. They are from a small group of 250 people; an alphabet workshop had been held there in October 1998 and three shell books and a duplicated alphabet book were their sole literacy possessions. They wanted to participate but could not. We did a small amount of linguistic work, collecting and recording word lists in all four languages and Baibai as well. Recording an oral historian on the last day was also an important contribution that could be done in the future.

I would again like to thank The Seed Company for financing the project and having the faith to believe that something good would come out of it. I had in mind small language groups with no materials, as well as linguistic salvage, the groups were already well documented. Scripture Use was not done by teaching people to read the Scriptures, but by teaching the retelling God’s word in the vernacular in a practical and compelling manner.

Although I was given ample opportunity in PNG to introduce or discuss the storytelling approach, there has been no opportunity for follow-up. Being guests in the branch, I was at the mercy of others to arrange for workshops and solicit our help. In fact, without the interest of the Sepik Regional Director (Michael Harrar) and one of the local translators (Bob Brown), there would not have been any workshops conducted. This was a pilot project and only a small step in what could lead to more use of the storytelling strategy.

**HAUNA**

The second workshop took place at Hauna, in the Sepik Province from December 8-12, 2003. The staff were: Karl Franklin (linguist and director); Neil Coulter (ethnomusicologist); Dan Bauman (recording technologist); Bob Brown (linguist and translator). The venue was the Sepik Christian Ministries at Hauna in the E. Sepik Province. Participants were from the AOG (Assemblies of God); PIM (Pacific Islands Ministries); and SCM (Sepik Christian Ministries)
There were 17 men and one woman who took the course from the languages of Swagop, Kubkain, Chenapian, Sepik-Iwam, Wario, Pei, Nein/Sinein and Usok. The language groups, except for Sepik-Iwam, all had fewer than 360 speakers.

**The Setting**

On December 5 Neil, Dan and I left Aiyura and flew directly to Hauna, a 2 hour flight in a Cessna 206. Minutes before arriving at Hauna, Bob Brown had arrived from Wewak by MAF. We boarded a motor canoe and were taken to the village of Hauna, a half an hour trip. Bob Conrad (senior translator in the Sepik area) had arranged with the various language groups to send at least two people from each area to the workshop.

Four clans of about 700 live at Hauna: the Waun, Soman, Auna and Mayo—who are the owners of the land. Shirley Killosky works with a team of Hauna people to manage the Sepik Christian Ministries (SCM), a large educational and medical work in the middle-Sepik.

The Hauna Christian Mission station consists of 1) a large 2 story office-dining hall-gathering room complex, with classrooms as well; 2) several other buildings with classrooms and dormitories; 3) radio and office rooms; 4) a large church; 5) a large medical center across the river (using a 150 foot suspension bridge), a 10 minute walk; 6) other facilities, such as a 17.5 KVA generator that is on most of the day, a sawmill and workshop, etc.; 7) the airstrip, which as I mentioned, is one half hour downstream by motor canoe. A group called “Kids Alive” from the US is the main benefactor of the Mission, but medical teams come yearly from the US as well. We were amply provided for in all respects: sleeping quarters, someone to wash our clothes, meals were provided (fortunately we had brought quite a bit of food, including fresh vegetables, which are not attainable at Hauna). We also had excellent classroom facilities and power for recording stories and for video use.

For some time extensive oil searches have been carried out in the area. A gold mine also operated on the Frieda River for some years. At present eaglewood (sandalwood) is sought in some areas of the Sepik by Malaysian traders and handsome prices are paid for it. Vanilla is also under cultivation and seems a likely cash crop for export.

**The workshop**

**Day One:** The workshop was conducted entirely in Tok Pisin. I began the first day with the story of Nathan and David from 2 Samuel, both for devotions and as an illustration of how a story can have a powerful effect on the hearer, then as a teaching device on how to tell a story.

I outlined the essential aspects of what we would use in every story, consisting of the:

- **As bilong story** (the purpose of the story),
- **Bun bilong story** (how the story was constructed) and
- **Bilas bilong story** (things added to the story for effect and interest).

Throughout the course I also tried to show that a story had to start somewhere and it had to end somewhere. In this way it is like a road (or river travel): You have to know where you are going and how to get there; you cannot be sidetracked; and you have to know what is part of the road and what is scenery.

All of the Bible stories had been pre-recorded in Tok Pisin at the SIL media studio. However, at first I could not get anyone to try and retell the Nathan and David story. The small groups seemed to be intimidated by the larger and well-educated Hauna participants, and many of the participants were uneducated (several could not read or speak Pidgin well). Finally, by having each language group retell the stories on a 2x2 basis (with two from each language group), they began to retell the story. They seemed to appreciate the story and knew that it was powerful but were afraid to try to retell it alone. We worked on this story and aspects of storytelling all day. (A five day syllabus had been prepared earlier and I tried to follow it, although not in that outline).

We then tried to work on the Nathan-David story by means of a drama. In general there was not a lot of participation—not a good start for day one. In the late afternoon Neil and I recorded on mini-disk the “Laycock test list and sentence examples” (7 pages of data) in the Chenapian language, and Bob and Dan recorded Wario. It took us about an hour to do each. The next day speakers of Chenapian brought me some samples of their writing and
orthography. I did not note any major problems, although Sepik Iwam has a barred /i/ vowel and other language speakers seem to think that should have one too!

**Day Two:** The second day I started with a devotional on Uncle Cam and then had Dan Bauman give his background story (he grew up in India). During the class sessions we finally got two groups to do a drama of Nathan-David, but no one had practiced (as I had requested). I had thought this was quite a simple story but have since become convinced that something even simpler is needed for a starter.

We spent considerable time on how to build a story and then went to the story of the Good Samaritan. I outlined the main characters of the story and Nick (from Hauna) gave a Tok Pisin and then Sepik Iwam retelling of the story. A few others then retold the story.

In the afternoon I had Neil talk to them about songs in general and about making the Good Samaritan story into a song. They got quite excited and composed two verses and a chorus. (It became the most popular song during the course.) Although it was done in Tok Pisin, Yosua from the Waria language composed it in his tokples as well, and played the guitar and sang it for the class. It seemed to go over well.

In the afternoon Neil and I recorded *Swagap* language and Dan and Bob recorded *Usok*.

On Wednesday there was a beautiful sunrise. As I sat in the upstairs room of the main building I could see a steady stream of canoes with people leaving their houses to go to gardens, work sago, cut firewood and so on. Some women had little fires in the back of their canoes, others had babies, dogs, sago in banana leaves, pots and kettles, fish nets. Still other canoes were seen towing smaller ones. Very large kwila canoes (several are under construction in the village) have outboard motors. People cross the suspension bridge that leads from the main mission house to the hospital is located some ten minutes away. In the morning they carry water, petrol, babies, etc.

**Day Three:** The third day I began with devotions—the story of Ken Pike. Neil then gave some of his life story and calling to ethnomusicology. We then worked on the story of Jairus, the woman with the 12-year issue of blood. The story went over pretty well as a teaching story because there are a limited number of characters and the event line is fairly simple. We looked at it from two Gospel accounts, combining them into one. Almost everyone, except the men from Sinein and Nain, seemed to participate. We had the story retold from various points of view: Jesus, Jairus, the sick woman, the disciples, the crowd, and the sick child. We then worked on songs again, with several men composing one about Nathan and David. We tried to get them to be sure to put the meaning of the story in the song. Neil and Dan recorded all of the songs that were composed. Neil and I recorded the test list in *Wario* and Dan and Bob did the same in *Kubkain*.

In the evening a Chenapian string band performed, led by Lawrence (with Jeffrey participating). There were 3 guitars, a bamboo flute, mandolin, a drum, a tea chest bass drum and a man with a stick who thumped the floor. All the men were decorated with headbands of flower pods, paint, grass skirts, white feathers and all sang, mainly in Tok Pisin.

**Day Four:** On Thursday I gave devotions on Judson, Carey and Brainerd then Bob Brown gave his life story. We worked on the Jairus and Good Samaritan stories all morning, with some songs composed in the afternoon.

While Dan and Neil were recording songs I worked through several pictures from the Tok Pisin NT, asking for cultural analogies and parallels.

We also worked on the story of the Prodigal son, with several of the men retelling the story. Five songs were written on the board and the class participated in singing them: 3 in Tok Pisin, one in Wario and one in Hauna.

Later in the afternoon Neil and I recorded *Nain/Sinein* and Bob and Dan recorded *Chenapian*.

**Day Five:** The last day of the course consisted of a drama on Jairus, etc. We did this in the church and Neil recorded it on video. We did it three times before I was satisfied. We then worked on combining the 4 Gospel accounts of the feeding of the 5,000.
In the afternoon we had a review, got comments from the class and then group pictures. Some comments (translated freely from Tok Pisin) are as follows:

**Hauna team:**
This has helped us in Sunday school production ideas
It has helped us to know how to outline Bible stories

**Kubkain team:**
This has helped us to compose songs from Bible texts
It showed us how to set out a story
We needed transportation to pick us up as well as books and pencils

**Nain/Sinain team:**
It helped us see how to do a drama and stories
It helped us to stand up in front of people like a teacher
It was hard to read things on the blackboard

**Pei team:**
It helped us to know more about the Bible
We want to tell the stories to our people

**Wario team:**
We learned how to do a drama
We were able to stand up front like teachers
It was good to use both Tok Pisin and tokples

**Usok team:**
They were good songs
We liked the video
We can’t read

**Swagap team:**
We learned how to do good stories
We learned how to tell a story with someone telling us
We learned how to write some of our language words

**Chenapian team:**
We liked the stories, songs and drama
You must bring tapes to us when you come so that we can listen to them
You must bring pencils, paper and notebooks for us

In the evening we recorded a wordlist in the *Pei* language—the last one. The ancestors of Pei were from Wainame in the mountain area and one man had gardens there now. He gave us a remnant of the old body part counting system: fingers, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, ear, eye, with a cross over point at the nose. It turns out that Usok and Wario also have the system—a very old “Papuan” system.

**Some Final Comments:**
- It is easy to be discouraged with a workshop like this because it seems that the storytelling crumbs that we are providing is all that many of these tiny languages will every get;
- Many of these small language groups seem utterly destitute: isolated and without much promise of development;
- It is not that the language groups do not need translation work in their own languages, but help in training seems unlikely;
- In addition, the language groups, although mainly oral, want something written in their own language and they want to know how to read and write;
- If there is economic development (logging, sandalwood, vanilla, gold, oil), I fear it will serve as the end of the traditional languages and cultures, even as they are known today;
- Next April Bob Conrad plans to follow up the course by visiting all of the villages;
- The rental of the satellite phone was imperative and greatly appreciated;
- Without the financial support of the Seed Co., this workshop would not have been possible;
- I spoke at the Sunday service on the 14th; the other SIL men shared their testimonies;
- SIL is invited back to hold other workshops at any time;
There is a language beyond the upper Wario (beyond Usok) called Natie in the mountain area; We could have done more linguistic salvage, particularly by recording local stories and getting simultaneous Tok Pisin translation. We deposited what we had done with the survey office at Ukarumpa along with a copy of the test list.

Follow-up

On April 27-29, 2004, Bob Conrad and Peter Brook visited several of the villages where participants in the Hauna workshop lived. Bob comments as follows:

Peter Brook and I left Wewak and went to Hauna April 27 via MAF. The purpose of our trip was to investigate the impact of the story workshop which was held at Hauna in December 2003 by Karl Franklin and his team. We also wanted to find out if there was an interest in another course in the future.

The groups we visited were Hauna (Sepik Iwam), Chenapian (Senapian), Wogamus (Kubkain village), Walio (real name Wasiak), Pei, Nain, Sinen, and Usok.

The uniform reaction in every place was that they want another course, want longer (at least 2 weeks) and want orthography design and writing stories. There was also a strong desire for cassette tape players to play the stories they had written and had been recorded on audio cassettes. Only Hauna has the equipment to play these stories.

The re-telling of the stories which they produced in the Dec 03 workshop turned out to be different from what I had expected. Many of the participants did not tell their stories to anyone. It may be that they were too embarrassed or that they felt the time was not ready. The man from Sinen told them just to his family. The man from Wasiak (or Nain or Usok?) told it to a lot of people, several times. Many people implied that if they would have tape players they would play them a lot for others to hear.

The three partially trained pastors who used to preach at Wasiak, Senapian and Kubkain have all stopped or been disqualified for some reason.

We could not promise that there will be another course, but took their ideas and comments in a way that most of them expect another course. The only barriers to having another course that I can see are lack of literacy, lack of personnel, and lack of money.

Peter Brook accompanied Bob Conrad. His report now follows:

From 27-29 April Bob Conrad and I conducted “follow-up” visits to the groups who were involved in a Storytelling Workshop held at the Sepik Christian Ministries (SCM) centre at Hauna in December 2003. The chief purpose of the “follow-up” visits to the various communities was to evaluate the effectiveness of the course, and whether the people wanted further courses at some point in the future. We visited the villages of Kubkain, Chenapian, Wario, Pei, Usok, Sinen, Nain and Hauna, but were unable to visit Swagap due to time constraints.

On 27 April, Bob and I left Wewak and flew with MAF via Ambunti to Hauna airstrip. From there we traveled the thirty minutes by motor canoe to the SCM centre at Hauna where we were greeted by Shirley Killosky, who oversees the running of the centre. After lunch, at about 12:30pm, Bob and I boarded a motor canoe and traveled to Kubkain where we met with the Storytelling Workshop participants, some elders and other community members. Following a good meeting there we traveled to Chenapian for another meeting with participants and community members. We arrived back at Hauna around 5:30pm. The next day we traveled by dinghy up the Leonard Shultze River, with meetings at Wario (Wasiak) and Pei. When we arrived at Nain we found that most people had gone to their gardens, so we told a couple of men to let the community know we would be back in a few hours for a meeting. The same happened at Sinen. When we arrived at Usok, the council greeted us, as well as the workshop participants and a fair number of community members, so we held the follow-up meeting. Both Bob and I sensed that we ought to share the Gospel with the people at this meeting and I shared my testimony. The council translated it into tokples with much difficulty and most people seemed to have little understanding of Tok Pisin so it was difficult to know how much was understood or translated accurately. The meetings at Sinen and Nain were similar, we both sensed the we should share the Gospel and my testimony as well as follow-up on the workshop. We arrived back at Hauna
at around 7:30pm, having had delays during the day with fuel line problems to the outboard motor and picking up some remaining fuel from the workshop at Wasiak.

**Responses to the follow-up questions and discussions:**

**Kubkain (27 April 04)**

- The people felt that the course was a good start, however the participants of the workshop felt that it was still too difficult for them to tell the stories back in the village in a public setting;
- Eric made the observation “In church they are trying to use less Tok Pisin and English, though it is very hard for him because he grew up with Tok Pisin”;
- This was the first time they had translated anything into Tokples, though it was mixed with a little Tok Pisin.
- They have not used the drama from the workshop in church here;
- The storytelling workshop was not enough--the participants felt that it did not help a great deal. They voiced the feeling of those present at the meeting that they would like another course – a “second or third step”. They would like to attend some more short courses 1-3 weeks in duration;
- The participants found it hard once they finished the workshop – they voiced the desire for a “supervisor” who could check on their progress every now and then at Hauna;
- They would really like an Alphabet Development Workshop (ADW) to straighten out what they have already worked on with their alphabet;
- The older people do not understand Tok Pisin, it is not clear or deep;
- The younger people don’t understand pure tokples, they understand about half of what is said. The tokples appears to be changing and becoming a mix of vernacular and Tok Pisin;
- According to those present this tokples (Gublu) covers the villages of: Kubkain, Biaga, Yamanumbu and Waskuk, however each village is a slightly different dialect;
- There is no adult literacy, and the school for Prep – Gr. 6 is in Tok Pisin;
- Most people seem to think they know how to read, but not the older men and women. Most of those who have gone to school, at Hauna, have not completed through to Grade 6. Very few women have had any schooling;
- The people can be notified of an upcoming workshop via radio at Hauna, with the radio toksave (information) going out with people who come into Hauna;
- The people are willing at this stage to provide at least some food for their own people at upcoming workshops;

**Chenapian/Senapien (27 April 04)**

- The people would like more tokples (vernacular) materials;
- One man stated that the workshop was helpful as a start for tokples (vernacular) learning;
- The participants have made 12 small booklets in tokples (vernacular) with material from Kristina at SCM Hauna. In my estimation (Peter) they are ready to attempt an orthography workshop;
- The workshop was a help to the church, especially for the older people who do not know Tok Pisin;
- The participants felt that the workshop was too short as they did not finish some of the projects;
- Another man had made 3 small books including a counting book and the beginning of an alphabet primer that demonstrated quite a good understanding of literacy methods/activities;
- Both participants stated that the people “need to gain a better understanding of numeracy so older adults are not tricked with the younger people not giving correct change in return during transactions.”;
- They would like more short courses of 3-4 weeks in duration;
- The participants have started work on an alphabet and dictionary;
- The people can be notified of an upcoming workshop via radio at Hauna, with the toksave going out with people who come into Hauna;
- The people are willing at this stage to provide at least some food for their own people at upcoming workshops;

**Wasiak (28 April 04)**

- The general consensus was that the people want another course – some sort of literacy course for 2-3 weeks duration;
- The Prep-school is in its second year of operation with 22 students;
- Very few of the older adults can read, although some of the younger ones can read;
This group needs an orthography workshop (called ADW in the PNG SIL Branch) as they are unclear about the orthography they are using;

The people say they want literacy so they can understand God’s Word much better;

**Pei** (28 April 04 – 45 minutes motor boat ride from Wasiak)

- According to Mark everyone in the community wants more tokples courses, particularly literacy, of 2-3 weeks in duration. Mark can read and write a little bit;
- The youth – 18+ are able to read and write fairly well according to those present at the meeting, though this is doubtful;
- There are no schools for this language group;
- There is no way that the people here can listen to the tape produced at the workshop, which bothers them somewhat;
- They seem to want to send a young guy who can read and write in Tok Pisin and an elder who knows the tokples well for literacy workshops;

**Usok** (28 April 04)

- Tom felt that the workshop was “okay”;
- Some materials from the workshop are still in Usok, and several stories have been written since the workshop;
- Both workshop participants would like some more courses;
- There is almost 100% illiteracy in Usok. The council can read a little Tok Pisin, though not the Bible. He has completed as far as book three of “Kisim Save”;
- There is no school or church in Usok;
- As present no one is ready to attend an ADW or other literacy course, let alone a translation course;

**Sinen** (28 April 04)

- Transportation to and from the workshop was a big problem for one man;
- A few men who can read and write and two understand the vernacular well;
- There are many children who go to school in Hauna;
- One man feels that the next course should be 2 weeks in duration;
- They still have the cassette tape of tokples Bible stories produced at the workshop, which they share with Nain. There is, however, no way of playing it;

**Nain** (28 April 04)

- One man stated that he would like to have another course. His comment was that a one week course was not enough, that two weeks would be better;
- In order to attend a literacy workshop they would have to send a child or youth who can read and write Tok Pisin, and an elder who understands the tokples well;

**Observations and Recommendations**

The visited groups are at various stages of “readiness” for beginning literacy workshops such as an Alphabet Development Workshop (ADW). For Usok, Sinen and Nain this could be some time away, following basic literacy classes at Hauna. For Kukkain and Chenapian they are pretty much ready now to try orthography design. Perhaps another storytelling workshop, combined with recording stories onto cassette tape and providing each group with a crank handle player would be the next step. Book production of what they record onto tape could also be integrated as part of the course as a beginning of materials production, reading readiness and motivation for the people.

Running literacy and translation courses with people from these language groups will take much time, patience and perseverance. It appears from the discussions that the communities want literacy, so it is a matter of designing courses that are appropriate to their basic literacy needs.

While expensive, transportation to the various remote groups is not impossible. The main cost for future courses will be MAF tickets for staff from Wewak, and fuel for transportation on the Sepik River and the Leonard Shultze River.
I tend to agree with Karl Franklin in his report on the Storytelling Workshop that some of these groups, particularly further up the Leonard Shultze River, are “isolated and without much promise of development (economic).” I feel that our presence with the different groups was an encouragement to them, as well as a great opportunity to share the Gospel with them. At least they know now they are not forgotten people.
Appendix B: A Brief on Melanesian Worldview

INTRODUCTION

A worldview consists of various, beliefs, assumptions and interpretations that people or groups of people make in reference to the world around them. Underlying a worldview are sets of values that support its importance or usefulness, as well as certain moral principles that may guide it. An example of one component of a worldview might be stated as follows:

- **Worldview:** The earth is running out of natural resources
- **Underlying value:** Natural resources must be conserved

A worldview and its values may in turn lead to ethical statements, that is, principles, rules, instructions and rights that are stipulated to influence behavior and attitudes. In such cases, there may be overt or implied judgments of what is right and wrong or acceptable and unacceptable.

In the example above, we could further note:

- **Ethic:** Certain parts of the environment cannot be disturbed, or specifically
- **Ordinance:** Trees cannot be cut without permission of the government (council, etc.)

We assume not only that Melanesians have a worldview, but that it can be determined by noting certain values that underlie and support it. The rest of the paper briefly expounds that assumption.

THE TERM “MELANESIAN”

In Papua New Guinea (PNG) the term Melanesian has been used to refer to groups of people who are genetically related and who live in the Pacific area (e.g., Chowning 1973; Codrington 1957; Mantovani, 1984; Narokobi 1980; Schwarz 1985; and Whiteman 1984), although this is not universally so. In PNG Melanesians live on scattered coastal areas on the mainland, in the southern part of Bougainville, most of New Britain, New Ireland and most other islands. Melanesian is also a general term used for a particular cluster of languages in the Pacific that are related to other linguistic groups in the Pacific, such as Polynesia or Micronesia. All of these groups form part of the great Austronesian complex (which extends to the mainland of Asia, to Madagascar, to Hawaii and even Easter Island). By contrast the group called “Papua,” does not imply a common genetic and linguistic heritage. Nevertheless, Papuan languages are by far the

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40 Forthcoming, in a revised form.
41 I have discussed values elsewhere as well. Note in particular “Cross-cultural advertising: Tok Pisin and English in Papua New Guinea,” *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia, 21.* 71-97 (1990), and “Advertisements and values: observations from a Papua New Guinea newspaper,” *The Papua New Guinea Journal of Education.* 31.27-36 (1995). Dan Harrison, in an unpublished report, did research on value orientation among the West Kewa people in 1968 and 1969 using the Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961) research instrument. He examined four main parameters: the relationship of man to nature (over it or subjugated to it); time orientation (past, present and future); activity (doing or being) and relational (collateral, individual or lineal). A surprise to me was (at the time) how future oriented the Kewa were, following only 10 years of serious and sustained contact with the outside world.
most common in PNG—some 750 out of the over 850 languages listed for PNG are Papuan (Foley 1986:3).

With such a broad distribution of Papuan languages and groups in PNG, it is fair to question why we would call this paper a worldview of “Melanesia,” rather than what might be called a Papuan (or even Trans-New Guinea or Highlands) worldview. We have chosen the term “Melanesia(n)” to conform to the more general studies (mentioned above) and because we believe that many of the values we discuss cross any so-called Melanesian-Papuan divide. Somewhat arbitrarily, but in deference to Narokobi as well, we have decided upon the term Melanesian to represent the total sub-set of values proposed here for PNG.

Over a century ago Codrington (1897) provided a general description of what was considered Melanesia and this has not changed greatly as far as a cultural classification is concerned. However, as already noted, the linguistic groups and subgroups have had considerable refinement.

In 1980 the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies published a book by Bernard Narokobi called The Melanesian Way. It consisted of a series of articles that had previously been published in the Post-Courier newspaper, in which Narokobi articulated his views on traditional Melanesian knowledge. Mainly, however, the book is an idealistic summary of what Narokobi viewed as the best attributes and values of the people who live in Melanesia.

In Narokobi’s book, Melanesian is meant to refer to all of Papua New Guinea (including Papuans) about the building of a nation, which was his main concern at the time as both a lawyer and a political leader. It includes the central Pacific, most of the islands and coastal areas of PNG and even Irian (now, with some confusion, called “Papua” by Indonesia).

The idealism of Narokobi’s writings is apparent in his introduction: “I write to unite Melanesians and all men and women of good will to struggle for justice and freedom everywhere. No race has a right to dominate another through culture, religion, politics or economics. Every nation has a duty to free its soul from the bondage of excessive materialism, greed and racism. But, unless we Melanesians assert ourselves, we cannot expect others to affirm for us our identity.” (Narakobi 1980:ix)

Narakobi classifies anyone who lives in PNG as a Melanesian, unless they choose not be a Melanesian, and in such cases they are foreigners, “…someone whose body is in Melanesia, but his or her soul is elsewhere in foreign lands” (Narakobi 1980: ).

Given the excellent articulation by Narokobi concerning what is Melanesian, as well as the responses to his views that followed in the newspaper (which were often critical, but published regularly for some time in the same newspaper), we will use his comments as a launching pad for our discussion.42

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42 Information on the Pacific as a whole can be found in many resources, but see Oliver (1961) for an overview.
VALUES UNDERLYING THE MELANESIAN WORLDVIEW

1. THE VALUE OF LAND AND WATER (GRAUN OR WARA)\(^{43}\)

This is implicit in Narokobi’s writings, who wished to “…develop a nation in which everyone has a piece of land he can call his own and has food and shelter…” (1980:54).

It is also a theme that is common in Melanesian thinking. Note the comments by Waiko (1993:237): “Land is life, which means that villagers have a very strong and emotional and spiritual relationship with land.” Waiko goes on to say that the traditional viewpoints on land and its use has not been recognized by the modern state and that “Nowadays the most important single distinction between traditional society and the modern state concerns land and resource use.” (Waiko 1993:237).

Anyone who has worked for sometime in PNG can identify with Waiko’s comments on the strong emotional and spiritual relationship between the land and its people. I remember visiting a man from the Gulf Province who was in a hospital in Brisbane many years ago. When I said that I had done a linguistic survey in his area and had seen the Vailala River, his response in Tok Pisin (TP) was “O wara Vailala, em mama bilong mi.” (Oh, Vailala River, it is my mother.)

However, not every citizen has been happy with the way land has been treated in PNG. The rape of the land with pollution from mines in Bougainville led to a war. Highland clans regularly fight over land and clans and villages often recognize large areas of contested ground as “no-man’s land.” In the urban areas the squatters are often at odds with the traditional owners of the land. Since independence in PNG (1975), there have been regular attempts to extract additional payments from the present occupants of land, even when there is evidence that the land was procured legally. The occupancy and “ownership” of land is of primary importance, with the understanding that the clan or village leaders (or politicians) most often oversee the rights of the successors in a particular area.

SIL teams and other expatriates are generally given the “right of occupancy” by a landowner in a particular village setting. However, it is most often with the proviso that everything built on the land will eventually revert to the “owner” once the SIL team leaves. In practice there are often continual demands on the occupants by the owner(s) of the land.

2. THE VALUE OF THE CLAN (LAIN OR WANTOK)

Clan is a term that implies some recognized lineage. It may be patrilineal (always in the Highlands) or matrilineal (in most Melanesian language areas). In TP people refer to their clan as their “lain” or their wanpisin (which may also imply a totem). The point is that the “clan” is a cohesive social group, interrelated by blood and marriage, which has a name that recognized and used by its members. Again, quoting from Narokobi, “Papuan New Guinean villages were places with real faces and souls. In these, people mattered. The laughs and the cries of our neighbors were shared and we cared for each other” (1980:59).

\(^{43}\) For examples of how land enters into the life and disputes in the Highlands, see the classic work of Brookfield and Brown (1963).
Narokobi contrasts this friendly rural village scene with the modern urban community, which is “impersonal and alienated without a true community solidarity. [The individual] is like a precious seed cast into the desert where its only future is death and desolation” (1980:59).

But even in urban areas communities are formed, most often around cultural and linguistic affinities, so that the Southern Highlanders or the Sepiks can usually be found concentrated in specific areas around or in the towns, much like immigrant ethnic communities in other countries.  

In a hierarchy of loyalty, clan relationships are preferred over religious or political ties. For example, in the Southern Highlands I knew two Chimbu pastors, one a Lutheran and the other a Catholic. In cases of dispute their relationship as Chimbus was more important to each other than loyalty to their denomination or doctrines. They were “wantoks.”

In the male oriented and patrilineal systems of many parts of PNG, in particular the Highlands, it is crucial that male offspring carry on the name of the clan members. Female offspring are valued as well, but with an eye towards their potential bridewealth. The traditional practice of multiple wives in many areas of PNG allowed the potential for more children, more gardens, and therefore more wealth for the clan.

3. The Value of Reciprocity (BeKim, BeKim Bek)  

Reciprocity includes trade, where trading partners contribute to the social relationship between groups and provide information and goods that both sides value. Traditional trade items were various shells, food, salt, stone and steel axes, pork, as well as more modern tradegoods such as knives, pots, pans, rice and beer.

Reciprocity also includes marriage relationships. As Narokobi notes, “In the Melanesian societies marriages were not in fact always forced or arranged. Even if they were, consent of both parties remained crucial” (Narokobi 1980:62).

In PNG societies marriages reinforce the communities by establishing relationships that are sealed by the exchange of goods. Both parties enter into new kinship networks that are bound by rules and certain taboos. In many cases there is marriage between clans or communities that were formerly enemies or where there was at least hostility. The marriage arrangement promotes new and better avenues of communication.

Westerners often view arranged marriages as “bad,” because of their view of individual rights and the so-called democratic process. In Western marriages, the resulting relationship of the families is most often secondary to the “happiness” and independence of the children. This is not the case in Melanesian societies.

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44 Strathern (1971) demonstrates the economic ties of the clan as they extend from the Highlands to urban settings. Kyakar and Wiessner (1992) discuss the role of women in Highland societies. 
45 Glasse and Meggitt (1969) edited a volume that discusses reciprocity in relation to marriage in a number of Highland societies.
The primary benefit and value of reciprocity extends beyond marriage and incorporates other values as well, such as the exchange of food and other goods and the relationships that result.

4. THE VALUE OF FOOD (KAIAK, MUMU)

Food, for the most part, is not a commodity in PNG that can be stored, so community members often depend upon one another for assistance in garden and food preparation. In some smallscale societies this includes hunting and along the coast it always includes fishing, with various rituals associated with planting yams, fishing for certain fish, and so on. But the food is traditionally shared, not hoarded by an individual family. One of the positive characteristics of a “big man” in the Highlands is his capacity to share his wealth.

Westerners may notice that items that are given to a particular person often end up being freely loaned or distributed to other people. However, in every case some kind of kin relationship exists that allows people to ask each other for the “loan” or use of a particular item.

When a mumu (earth oven feast) takes place in a village, it is common practice for others (not simply the nuclear unit involved) to attach themselves to the perimeter of the feast, with the hope that food will be given to them as well. These observers may not be immediate family or even clan members, but they are invariably given food.

Food can be such an important commodity that people “fight” with it (Young 1971), using it as a value to defeat other clans or communities.

5. THE VALUE OF ANCESTORS (TUMBUNA, TAMBARAN)

It is not overstating the case to say that the Melanesians are, without exception, spiritual communities. To say this we also incorporate into the term “spirituality” the traditional view of some veneration and recognition of one’s ancestral spirits. This is generally true throughout PNG, although the way this recognition takes place varies a great deal. In the Central Highlands elaborate pig feasts (the moka—see Strathern 1971) help to seal the ancestral relationship through pork exchanges and rituals, while in other areas cargo cult activities are a reminder that the influence of the ancestors extends into the material needs and the view of the mythical past or future.

There is a superabundance of churches in PNG, with denominations representing the mission agencies that first began their work: the French Catholics in 1847 on Woodlark Island, the London Missionary Society in Port Moresby in 1847, the Methodist mission in the Duke of York Islands in 1875, the German Lutherans at Finschhafen in 1886, with Anglicans, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists and numerous other agencies not far behind. In the last 25 years many independent missions and agencies have sprung up all over the country. However, clan

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46 Many Kewa (Southern Highlands) tales involve food and ancestors. See LeRoy 1985a, 1985b; MacDonald 1991.
47 Lawrence and Megitt, eds. (1965) illustrate Melanesian concepts of religion for many areas of the Pacific.

Somare, in his autobiography (1975), pays careful attention to the rites of his ancestors.
obligations and relationships may override certain moral or ethical values, so that clans are known to shelter their own criminals, redistribute stolen goods and in general not cooperate with the police and judicial system if their own people are in jeopardy.

Nevertheless, PNG considers itself a Christian nation. As Waiko states “Encouraged by the government, the churches significantly extended their influence in this decade [1975-1985]. By 1985 Papua New Guinea was a more apparently religious country than… the colonial powers who had introduced Christianity into the country….According to the 1980 census it appears that almost all adults professed belief in a Christian denomination” (Waiko 1993:213).

6. THE VALUE OF RITUAL (TABOO, SINGSING, LOTU)

Closely related to the spirit of the ancestors are many rituals. These include instances of secret and special languages in the cultures of PNG. We have already alluded to the importance of cargo cults in some areas of PNG. Cults of this type often involve elaborate rituals. However, ritual is also heavily followed in churches of almost any denomination.

Important rituals include how to counteract or (in some cases use) sorcery. Sorcery is prevalent throughout the country, including areas that have been missionized or Christianized for many years. The causes of unknown and unnatural events are attributed to someone or something and there must be some technique to establish control over it (them). The key words for sorcery in Tok Pisin are “poisin” and “sanguma” and there is a rich taxonomy in many cultures illustrating a strong cultural knowledge and interest in the topic.

In regard to taboo, not only are certain affines given special names, but the acts of hunting and fishing, in particular, have experts who use ritual language. Gardening and healing magic are also common. Participants in the cultures generally recognize and follow, to some extent, rituals, even in the case of many of the Christian churches.

Elaborate rituals often accompany dances and the distribution of food (see also value IV).

7. THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP (HETMAN)

In the Highlands, leadership is often represented by the “big man” complex, (“big men” would be more accurate), such that men (seldom women) who have acquired pigs, women (usually wives) and gardens (for the potential of excess food), and who have oratory and other leadership skills assume this role. In a few parts of Melanesia the positions of clan or political leadership are passed on by royal descent. Traditional leadership is somewhat recognized by the government, politicians, police and others as they seek out people to represent their views and to help them solve problems.

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48 Ritual is an essential part of Melanesian religion. See, for example, Habel, ed. 1979 and Rappaport, 1987. As mentioned, ritual is inherent in various “cargo cult” activities as well. The literature on this subject is enormous, but for a sampling see Gesch (1985), Lawrence (1964) and Worsley (1957). For a classic work on sorcery, see Fortune 1963.
With the advent of Independence in PNG political parties and voting wards have been established. This has led to the election of non-traditional leaders, although some have had a minimum of support in the rural areas. Such leaders sometimes retain or have their leadership “rights” by force, instead of the traditional allegiance by clans where it is built upon the basis of trade, ritual and other relationships.

What one often finds are levels or degrees of leadership, “headmen” who are recognized as such, depending upon their corresponding activities in church, school, government, politics, business and so on.

8. The Value of Education (Skul)⁴⁹

Although universal primary education is recent in many areas of PNG, education of any sort is widely prized throughout the country. Indeed, the Provinces that have placed education as a foremost value have in turn produced leaders on the local and national level. In its earliest instances education was a part of the missionary enterprise and its outcome contributed greatly to the country.

Families are often pragmatic: if there are three schools in the area, say one predominantly Catholic, another Lutheran, and still another government, a family may send their children to all three schools, rather than sending all three children to the same school. Children’s education is no longer free. It now demands school fees, provided for by the closest members of the clan, often those who have money because they are working at urban centers.

Students in tertiary institutions often pursue degrees in economics or politics, knowing that such careers are more economically beneficial than others.

9. The Value of Compensation (Peibek, Bekim, Birua)

Compensation is different than reciprocity, but related to it in concept. Reciprocity is positive and deliberately decided upon, while compensation is negative and the unfortunate outcome of accidents and fights. Compensation is expected and extracted for “accidents,” murder and warfare, domestic quarrels, land use—in short almost anything can be a conduit for compensation. Of course, nothing is an “accident” in PNG. Rather, as Tok Pisin so well suggests, it is a birua or “enemy,” and enemies have to pay for their wrong. Compensation is one of the most prevalent aspects of PNG culture and placing it late on the list is not meant to imply that it is of lesser value.

Whereas in warfare compensation always comes from a source that is outside of the immediate clan or village, other kinds of compensation may come from within the clan. Both imply sums of money and therefore require “work,” to which we now turn.

⁴⁹ Kiki (1968) summarizes the great changes in his own life in terms of education, missions, and politics. Whiteman (1983) gives evidence of the positive effects of missionary work, including education, in the Pacific. Romaine (1992), on the other hand, criticizes missionaries throughout her book, even when they promote the local languages. She claims, for example, that the “motivations for withholding English were at the same time paternalistic and racist” (p.80).
10. THE VALUE OF WORK (WOK)

When examining words in a language like Kewa, we might have concluded (erroneously) that there was no such category as “work” in the culture. The word *kogono* in Kewa does not occur in any context other than introduced work, or work which is measured by the day, or in some other manner. But the Kewa people obviously work, but when they do, they specify the exact nature of the job: *ada pa* is “to build a house,” *maapu pa* is “to cultivate a garden,” to “split wood” is *repena rekepea*, or some such form, depending upon the exact nature of the task. “Work” is therefore very specifically related to particular functions within the culture, and not to time or payment.

However, once “work” is imported within the culture a broader descriptive label is necessary to refer to kinds of work. In Kewa sometimes the word for “government,” “mission,” or “road” is used, along with verbal adjuncts like *pa* “to make.” But the descriptors are also non-cultural concepts, so they are first talked about with non-cultural expressions.

Once “work,” according to our Western definition (with components of physical/mental, purpose, employment, and profession) enters into a society other definitions and specifications follow: finer gradations on time is one of them. There is now a need to measure time so that the job or work can be paid for in some way. We can see how time may then become a value as well.

The first major division of *work + time* took place in Kewa when the people were informed that they were to work on certain days by the government and they were at the same time told that they were not to work on certain days by the missions. This was a new concept to the Kewa. Although not tightly regimented to any daily cycles, the people kept track of months or “moons” by means of enumerating body parts in a particular sequence that began with the little finger of the left hand and proceeded up the arm, across the body at the head, and down the other side of the body until some 37 or so body parts were named. But “days” were not counted in any particular cycle, as they are in other parts of PNG.

We could go on to show how the notion of work + time altered the counting system to account more precisely for the outcome of the work—money. However, the above is enough to show how value orientations change, and as they do, how worldviews are altered.

Additional changes include the use of reading and writing in respect to weighing produce, sending messages, etc., as aids for a cash economy that in turn provides access to goods and more money. Materialism eventually becomes an index of peer recognition, so the radio, video, watch, vehicle, house with a tin roof, stove, etc. are symbols of success.

A HIERARCHY OF VALUES

It may be helpful to outline an ordered structure that underlies the values that we have discussed. Do they represent relative layers of dominance or importance? Because many of the values are interlocked—as we might expect in a coherent worldview—a strict ordering of them may be misleading. Which, for example, is the most important—*land* or *clan*? It turns out that one cannot exist without the other, so that the relationship is:
These two values and their relationships are in turn only part of the story, for neither is meaningful without the *ancestors*, the progenitors, as it were, of both:

\[
\text{Ancestors} \\
\text{Land + Clan}
\]

But as soon as we discuss *ancestors*, we must discuss *ritual*, and *ritual* demands *reciprocity*. In turn there must be recognized *leaders of the ancestors* and *clan* who deal with the *ritual*. And of course *ritual* also implies *food*, especially pork. By now the relationship (not the dependency) of the values begins to look something like this:

\[
\text{Ancestor + Leader} \\
\text{Reciprocity + Ritual + Food}
\]

As we would expect, this leaves very few values that are unrelated, even *compensation*, *education* and *work*, with the latter two more clearly the products of culture contact and change are interrelated. They have in fact emerged as dominant values in many parts of the country (although compensation has always been a major factor in warfare). Education is pragmatic and directed toward a “better” life, meaning more opportunities and symbols for success. Although compensation has always been related to warfare, its inclusion and relationship to modern day problems like road accidents is more recent.

**A NOTE ON URBAN VALUES**

Most of what is outlined in this paper refers to the more traditional village settings. Urban life cannot incorporate all of the traditional values (land, rituals, ancestors) consistently, but it does maintain certain ones, such as clan relationships, limited reciprocity, education and work. Some values transcend location, e.g., leadership, compensation and work, although each may be somewhat dependent upon location for the way they are interpreted.

New values have come into play as well: a stronger emphasis on hygiene, linguistic code-switching, time orientations, sports competition and team identification, crime and prison, security and protection, bureaucracy, squatter settlements with their needs and rights, transportation, and in the case of churches, denomination allegiance (or the lack of it).

Of course, urban settings also provide more opportunity for negative values, practices that are widespread, but are not of benefit to the majority of the people, including activities such as gambling, drunkenness, drug use, prostitution, pornography, and corruption in general.
As towns and cities develop, a view of history and time emerges that is somewhat different than traditional views, largely due to “official” government records. Nevertheless, as Schuster (1990) so effectively demonstrates for the Abelam (Sepik), the process of history always starts with stories. Such stories are unconnected narratives of various kinds that are combined into a “history.” Time is a distance between something “now” and something else and in this sense it is “non-chronological.”

Concepts about work and other values are often difficult for Westerners to grasp and therefore not considered in discussing the Melanesian worldview. It follows that an understanding of Melanesian work and time are crucial for cross-cultural interaction and friendship.

**SOME POSTULATES ON KEWA LEGAL VALUES**

The following brief summary demonstrates values that are particularly prevalent in the Kewa worldview. They can supplement the values that we have already given:

1. Living in harmony with nature
2. Maintaining clan solidarity
3. Recognizing the role of ancestral spirits that are
   a. Generally localized in the clan territory
   b. Venerated for protection
   c. Included in ritual activities
   d. Inherent with powers
4. Passing on knowledge through the older men
5. Avoiding contamination by women

In Kewa these values can be stipulated in terms of certain postulates (Franklin 1978:460):

**Postulate I: The solidarity of the clan is of prime importance**
Corollary 1: Disputes within the clan should be solved quickly and peaceably
Corollary 1a: The clan recognizes certain members as arbitrators
Corollary 2: Clan members form a unit against their enemies

**Postulate II: Kinship relationships are of primary importance**
Corollary 1: Clan kin of the same sex and generation are equal
Corollary 2: A brother should protect his sister in any dispute
Corollary 3: When the clan functions as a unit all members contribute their wealth and possessions
Corollary 3a: Items entrusted to individuals are the property of the clan

**Postulate III: Evil spirits control the universe**
Corollary 1: These spirits must be placated at all times
Corollary 2: Departed souls reside in the domain of the spirits
Corollary 3: Dead ancestors are clan members for a period of time
Corollary 3a: Dead ancestors are in close communion with other spirits
Corollary 3b: Dead ancestors can help control the evil spirits
Corollary 3c: It is not safe to mention the name of the recently departed
Corollary 4: Supernatural sanctions influence all realms of the individual’s life

**SOME KEY TERMS WHEN DISCUSSING VALUES IN TOK PISIN**

*as*—the reason or basis for some action or the meaning of some word
*askim*—to try and get something
*asua*—the fault of someone
*bagarap*—to destroy something or harm someone
*banis*—an enclosure, figuratively protection
*bekim*—to repay a loan or to payback a wrong, to compensate
bikhet—a person who is deliberately foolish, arrogant
bilas—decorations, an extra something
birua—an enemy or an accident
brata—anyone considered at the same level as the son of a father or uncle
brukim tambu—seriously disregard something that is sacred
bun—bone, figuratively strength
bus—opposed to the village, the jungle or forest
dinau—debt or loan, depending on the direction
diwai kros—Christian symbol
driman—dream, also figuratively about getting information from spirits
giaman—lie or be misleading
graun—land used for gardens, houses, etc
grisim—curry favor by saying the “right” thing
haiden—the heathen, generally someone who does not go to church
hetman—recognized or appointed leader
jas—the judge, one who can pass sentence for jail or extract fines
kago—goods, material things that arrive from “elsewhere”
kaikai—a feast or celebration
kalabus—jail, enclosure, surrounding circumstance
kanaka—unsophisticated person
kina—money, something of value
kompensesen—money and goods paid back for an accident or personal harm
kot—location where sentences for jail are passed, money extracted, etc
kusai—a clever yet deceitful person
lain—a clan or recognized group of people; a village
lan—the ground that is used for gardens, houses, etc
lapun—an old person, custom
longlong—activity or person that is “unusual” or deviant
lotu—building where church is held
mama—female guardian, literally or figuratively one’s mother
mangal—jealousy, envy, desire, covet
matmat—the graveyard, cemetery
mauswara—be insincere and talk a lot
mone—valuables such as coins or paper money
mumu—earth oven
opim dua—ritual ceremony at churches or spirit houses
painim—search earnestly for something
pamuk—prostitute
papa—male guardian, literally or figuratively one’s father
pasim dua—ritual activity or to not have any more children
ples—one’s village
poisen—used to describe sorcery in general
poroman—dependable close friend
potnait—pay period
raskal—criminal and criminal activity
raun nating—loitering
sande—pooling wages from a group of men for a specified period
sanguma—any kind of unusual and unpredictable sorcery
satu—gambling with dice or cards
sem—male or female genital organs
sik nating—no apparent cause for sickness
singaut—to summon someone
singsing—ritual dances
sios—church, or its activities
skelim—to deal out wages, goods, etc
skul—activity of reading, writing, attending classes
smok brus—traditional tobacco
spak brus—marijuana
susa—sibling of opposite sex for male (no longer used in traditional sense of opposite sex sibling)
tambaran—spirit house
tambu—something forbidden
taun—contrasts with ples; large, densely populated, multi-lingual
tewel—soul or shadow; travels during one’s dreams
toea—coin, or something small and insignificant
trabel—unfortunate circumstance
train—take a chance on getting something					
tumbuna—ancestor or ancestral spirit
waitman—expatriate, non-citizen
wanpis—same clan or totem
wantok—acknowledged friend, perhaps speaking same language
waspapa—appointed guardian
Some references


Appendix C: Some Major Themes in PNG Stories\(^50\)

1. Two brothers, two cousins or two sisters
   a. Anggor 7: The brothers that became bats
   b. Au 17: The two brothers
   c. Awa 14: Two brothers separate
   d. Barai 31, 35: Two pairs of cousins: Two cousins go hunting
   e. Gadsup 34: The two brothers
   f. Kamano-Kafe 78: The two brothers
   g. Kewa 49, 50: The brothers, Agadarai and Murai; Agema and Yalu
   h. Omie 61: The two cousins
   i. Patep 102: The two brothers
   j. Rawa 111: The brothers and the spirits
   k. Selepet 75, 76, 119: The brothers and the old man; The two brothers; The brothers and the cannibal
   l. Tairora 83: Two brothers
   m. Timbe 127: The sisters and their brother
   n. Urii 84: The brothers
   o. Vasui 132: The two brothers

2. The Cassowary
   a. Abelam 1: The cassowary
   b. Daga 31: Why the cassowary cannot fly
   c. Iatmul 73: The cassowary’s child
   d. Managalasi 94: The cassowary
   e. Patep 107: The cassowary and the red-capped flowerpecker
   f. Wantoat 88: The cassowary
   g. Yareba 94: The cassowary and the crocodile

3. Origin Stories
   a. Abelam: coconuts, cucumbers, pigs, spears
   b. Ampel-Wojokeso: thunder and lightning; Pleiades and spiny anteater; food
   c. Au: wind; sacred kingfisher
   d. Awa: lice, reeds
   e. Barai: Birarie people
   f. Baruya: bamboo knives, thorny palms, thunder, two lakes
   g. Buang: the first house, pandanus palm
   h. Buin: coconut
   i. Bukiyp: coconuts
   j. Daga: bananas, yams, and taros

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\(^{50}\) From McElhanon (1974, 1982). See also Haywood (1997:229-230) who provides English translations of 43 Dani myths, 19 Mbanungwok stories (ogre tales), two narratives of contemporary events and 12 origin stories. In concluding his book (p. 217), Haywood outlines 5 categories of Dani oral tradition: folk talks, myths or origin stories, entertainment stories, love stories and ribald talks and explanations. The themes that emerge in the myths were: 1) People become vulnerable by foolish actions; 2) Malevolent spirits react to such actions; 3) Women’s sorcery is especially dangerous; 4) Dogs are man’s best friend; 5) Accepted social norms of behavior are constantly threatened.
k. Gawigt: The spirit Peamo
l. Iduna: sugar cane, taro
m. Kwoma: women; fire; moon; eagle
n. Managalasi: the Managalasi
o. Omie: fire and evil
p. Rossel Island: coconuts
q. Rotokos: garden Jew’s harp, coconut
r. Salt-Yui: salt
s. Selepet: pigs
t. Timbe: the cliff at Hemon
u. Wantoat: the Jaw’s harp

4. Animal Conflicts
   a. Ampeli 7,9: The opossum and the anteater
   b. Anggor 10: The cockatoo and the blackbird
   c. Au 19: The rat and the lizard
   d. Buin 47, 49, 52, 53: The red ant and the lizard; The snake and the dog; The kingfisher and the
      hornbill; The eagle and the flying fox
   e. Dobu 62, 67: The shark and crab; The ant and the lizard
   f. Kamano 76: The owl and the white bird
   g. Kewa 52: The cricket and the bug
   h. Kwoma 87: The flying foxes and the roosters
   i. Managalasi 93: The turtle and the cockatoo
   j. Muyuw 95: The opossum and the sting-ray
   k. Putep 107: The cassowary and the red-capped flowerpecker
   l. Vasui 135-37: the dog and the opossum; The cat and the opossum; The opossum and the pig
   m. Yareba 93, 94, 96, 101-104: The cat, the opossum and the pig; The snake and the dog; The
      cassowary and the crocodile; The eagle and the crocodile; The snake and the rat; The parrot and
      the blackbird; The wallabies and the dogs

5. Snakes, dogs and other animal stories
   a. Abelam 7: pigs
   b. Ampele 5: dogs fight back
   c. Au 18: sacred kingfisher
   d. Auyaana 24, 28, 30: eels; wallaby, python
   e. Awa 17: opossum with toe missing
   f. Buang 27, 28: eel, pig and man
   g. Bukiyip 57, 59: lizard, wild dogs
   h. Daga 32, 33: crow, hornbill
   i. Dobu 68: the rat
   j. Kwoma 86: the eagle
   k. Muyuw 97: the snake in the canoe
   l. Rossell: black python
   m. Salt-Yui 117: the Miaba snake
   n. Selepet 122: wild pigs
   o. Selepet 80: pigs
   p. Tairora 82: parrot loses a toe
   q. Urii 86: snake man
   r. Vasui 133-35, 138: dog stories, bats

6. X changes into Y [transformation stories, often embedded in other stories]
   a. Anggor 9: brothers > bats
   b. Au 14, 16: spirit > man; tulip tree > clouds
   c. Auyaana 27: man loses skin
   d. Boiken 43: man changes skin
   e. Buang 26: children > flying foxes
f. Daga 32: crow > black
  g. Iduna 44: Koliya > fish
  h. Kamano 74, 80: boy > bird; boy > parrot
  i. Managalasi 90: woman marries flying fox
  j. Omie 64: village > lake

7. “Natural” and manufactured phenomena
   a. Abelam 8: spears
   b. Ampeli 4, 6, 8: mango tree; sand from sky; food
   c. Anggor 11: moon
   d. Au 10: wind
   e. Awa 16 reeds for arrows
   f. Baruya 20, 21, 23, 24: earthquakes; panpipes, thunder, lakes
   g. Boiken 41: darkness
   h. Buang 25: house
   i. Dobu 61, 69: giant stories
   j. Iduna 45: mountain
   k. Kamano 75: water at Fomu
   l. Kewa 56: earthquakes
   m. Kwoma 84, 85: fire, moon
   n. Lakalai 58: flood
   o. Rotokas 70, 71, 72: bottle, garden, Jaw’s harp
   p. Salt-Yui 116: moons
   q. Selepet 120: the cavern
   r. Urii 87: sky and dirt
   s. Vasui 139 thunder
   t. Wantoat 89, 90: creation, Jaw’s harp
   u. Yareba 97, 98: falling star, hot springs,

8. Spirits, ghosts and weird people/places
   a. Abelam 6: the place where only women lived
   b. Anggor 9, 12: the brothers who became bats; two women
   c. Buang 26: children who turned into flying foxes
   d. Gadsup 35: why only men play musical instruments
   e. Gawigl 38, 39: origin of the spirit Peamo; the tunnel story
   f. Iduna 44, 45: Koliya became a fish; mountain went away
   g. Lakalai 57: boy who tricked a monster
   h. Omie 60, 63: bush spirit exchanges babies; origin of fire and evil
   i. Rossell 67: death of Muo, the cannibal
   j. Selepet 78: the mouthless man
   k. Tairora 82: the parrot loses a toe
   l. Urii 85: the insects rescue a man
Appendix D: The Oral and the Written in SIL Fieldwork

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I propose that for small and endangered languages an oral approach should be the default introductory strategy in SIL fieldwork. I therefore question the SIL assumption that a written approach to translation field projects achieves the best results. My comments are based upon a number of observations, but primarily they support and promote the thesis that small and endangered groups are basically oral communicators. I also note that the natural and pervasive bias of SIL is toward the written approach and that this can mitigate against adopting an oral approach as a legitimate project strategy.

ORAL SOCIETIES AND THE TEXTUAL BIAS OF SIL

Literate societies and the “educated” people who live in them are by definition textually biased. As participants in such a society, we receive the bulk of our “education” by means of books and lectures, although the electronic media, magazines and other newsprint notices provide a form of “literacy” as well. Various kinds of advertising, upon which a society like ours depends, reinforce our textual bias. It may be natural, but it is also somewhat ironical, that highly literate and educated fieldworkers, such as those of us in SIL, work most commonly with non-literate societies. And when we do (and here I identify myself as an SIL fieldworker), our bias is further demonstrated by calling the societies “pre-literate,” as if they were in some primitive stage, and would become fully human when literate.

One way to address this bias is to consider how strongly we adhere to it. What are our beliefs about the nature and future of literate societies on the one hand and oral societies on the other? (Brown calls them print communicators and oral communicators.)

How strongly does SIL hold to its literary bias? Alan Kent Scholes (1999) makes a useful distinction between matters of conviction, those of persuasion, and those that are opinions. He applies these categories in his discussion on the theology of knowing and enjoying God, but I

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51 Presented at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) Academic Forum on March 17, 2003 and then published later in an in-house journal. The GIAL context was a natural one in which to provide this argument and perspective. As an educational institution, GIAL is quite separate from SIL, yet it has a mandate to provide training for that institution (as well as others). It can therefore examine training and educational issues independently and relate its findings to enhancing and revising the kind of training that it provides for its clientele.

52 This bias does not appear to be as strong for SIL in some countries. Rick Brown has written an extensive review of Walter J. Ong (1982) in which he contrasts oral and written communicators. In Brown’s promotion of the oral approach, he also recounts the experiences of the IMB (Southern Baptists) in their use of Chronological Bible Storytelling. We will return to some of Brown’s comments later. Paul Frank, in an unpublished paper called “SIL looks at chronological Bible storying,” outlines the assumptions underlying the IMB position and suggests that in a number of situations SIL might engage with them in a combined strategy. The web site www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com has information on instructional resources, news and events about the IBM and other programs, as well as links to other similar sites.
would like to apply them to how SIL seems to view language projects. A strong literacy component for all language groups with which it works seems to be a conviction of SIL.

According to Scholes, a conviction is crucial and central to one’s belief system. It is a dividing line—you are on one side or the other. One is convinced or persuaded, for example, that literacy for all vernacular speakers is the best and necessary course of action. In theological (or linguistic) camps, convictions form the basis for fellowship in the “academy,” and one must be armed with evidence to justify the convictions.

Let us briefly examine how SIL International defines its purpose. According to the SIL International web site (www.sil.org) “the purpose of SIL… is to work with language communities worldwide to facilitate language-based development through research, translation and literacy.” This purpose statement is linked to the so-called “Linguistic Creed” of SIL, which I summarize as:

- Language is a gift from God, making possible cultures and civilizations
- Language is the vehicle for human interaction and complex thought
- Language usage reflects personal worth
- Languages should be preserved in written form
- Language speakers should have the opportunity of literacy

It is clear that one of the major ways that SIL wishes to recognize, support and assist the indigenous groups and their languages is through literacy, i.e., making oral communicators into print communicators. SIL further describes itself as a “non-profit, scientific organization of Christian volunteers that specializes in serving the lesser-known language communities of the world…. In partnership with these communities, SIL helps to develop in them the skills and capacity to preserve their culture and language in a way that serves the people best.” (Underlining mine)

But what serves the people “best” and how is this determined? In small and endangered languages, are people served best by providing them with a written form of their language? Are they served best only when they can read their language? And are such SIL convictions open to question?

On the one hand, no one would probably want to work with SIL or support its translation activities if he or she did not believe the statements about the worth of one’s language and (probably) that it is God-given. And, from a theological standpoint, the statements seem to contain nothing that contradicts Scripture. On the other hand, how do we demonstrate our degree of support for those items that are part of our “Creed”?

One way, of course, is by helping societies to become literate, one of the main motivations and goals of SIL. We want people to read and, at least to some extent, understand the Scriptures in the vernacular. But is this persuasion or a conviction? We are persuaded that one’s understanding is best achieved through the “heart language,” but this may not always be the case. Here our bias is evident by the use of emotive language, claiming that one’s “heart language” is

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53 The SIL International and the related Ethnologue web sites are accessed by millions of people. During July of 2006 there were almost 8 million requests for pages from www.sil.org.
the vernacular and that this alone will provide the depth of understanding that is necessary for a proper reading of written materials. SIL vernacular language programs nearly always include the component of literacy. The expectation in “language development” is that newly literate societies will emerge, a feature of “development.” This expectation seems to be more than an opinion, yet less than a conviction—perhaps it is best called a persuasion.

There is no doubt, of course, that being literate and having literature are defining characteristics of “educated” societies. It would be impossible to sustain information, make observations, prove experiments, and convince other educated people about the nature and worth of one’s task, or record a talk like this without a system of writing. Science likewise, as a defining discipline, has its information verified by adherents of the academic community who comment and contribute in a written form. It doesn’t matter how convincing and useful any scientific argument may be, for verification and replication it must be published.

Our educational systems in the west were supposedly built upon a system incorporating the three so-called “r’s”: reading, (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic, and some of us may remember the tedious system well. Today, however, we might change the building blocks to the three “t’s”: television, technology and tests. What one sees, how it can be manipulated electronically, and how it can be tested, are fundamental approaches to literacy technology and even, more broadly, to education in general. Primarily, in “modern” education, our tests are designed to demonstrate that one “knows” something. This involves reading, research, writing and lecturing, all programs that can lead us ever further away from understanding and participating with oral societies on an equal basis. Further, without technology to supplement any literateness in their societies, the small endangered groups are at a disadvantage.

**ORAL TRADITIONS AND HISTORIES**

The designation or classification of a particular group as an “oral” society can be pejorative, and conjure up images of people who are socially and psychologically handicapped. On the one hand, they cannot read or write and achieve “human rights,” make “appropriate choices” for the future, or even “understand” what is going on around them. On the other hand, they may become even further handicapped in urban settings because they cannot participate fully in mundane tasks, such as reading a menu, passing a driver’s test, or reading the daily newspaper. The new media they encounter has a form of orality that is also new to them. However, it is not a renaissance of an oral culture because it is largely faked. It is almost as if the members of oral societies have nothing to offer to a larger literate community or nation.

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54 SIL doesn’t suggest that literacy is only for reading the Scriptures. It interacts and cooperates with secular agencies, such as education departments, government officials, UNESCO, and many organizations to foster literacy. The SILUK has an office devoted primarily to the interests of literacy, multilingual education for minority languages, and language development concerns. See [http://www.sil.org.uk/literacy_work.htm](http://www.sil.org.uk/literacy_work.htm) which states that “The SIL worker is ultimately a facilitator who empowers local communities to develop a literate environment for themselves.”

55 Questhoff (1995) refers to orality in the mass media as faked orality (pretending to be spontaneous), faked publicity (claiming democratic decision making) and faked dialogue (the “window” effect).
How can we acknowledge and support oral societies apart from our interest in literacy and translation? We know that the participants of such oral societies do not need to acquire literacy in order to function well. They know how to reason, debate, count, name, trade, dance, fight, worship and perform acts that require memory, wisdom, understanding and awareness to a degree that often far surpasses those of us who live in literate communities.

Trade, for example, demonstrates the innate abilities of those in oral societies. It has been a feature of societies ever since a group or person came in contact with another group or person where each had something that the other wanted. Each calculated the worth of an object in terms of what they were willing to exchange: perhaps it was a pig for three pearl shells, or a pearl shell for a packet of salt. The concept of value and worth is inherent in such societies and is displayed in various ways. For example, in the Southern Highlands of PNG a prize pearl shell may receive a “name,” giving it prestige it for future reckoning and trade. Knots tied on the band of the shell indicate the number of times it has been traded and the owner can recite them. An important man may symbolically represent his pigs, shells, or wives with small bamboo pieces made into slats that are worn as decorations on his chest. Or he may assemble the pigtails on his bark belt or apron, indicating the number of the pigs he has slaughtered. Such mnemonic devices symbolize the importance of the man or his clan—no one disputes them seriously because of the public display and record.

We are also familiar with the genealogies that people in oral societies can recite, as well as their poems (Finnegan 1977, 1978), or songs of past episodes that they sing (Lord 1974). These modes serve as living histories of the past, recounted for the present generation. Nevertheless, these oral methods are largely unknown, despised, or at the best tolerated in our own literate society. Some attempt is made to overcome this lack of “history” by TV “documentaries,” which require less attention than reading, but may sometimes be of questionable scholarship. In the US projects such as the “Foxfire” series of books record the “wisdom and ways of the mountain people in rural America.”

One way to support oral societies is to acknowledge the expertise that people in the society have. They have, for example, oral histories that can be recited and recorded, although researchers may see their histories as something to be recorded and studied. When this happens the histories lose much of their flexibility and personal ownership, although to some degree copyright laws protect the “intellectual property” of oral historians—if they are informed of such rights. However, SIL can record and help preserve such records for the people, demonstrating our appreciation and respect for their cultures and knowledge.

Although the “Bible” is a collection of oral histories that have been passed on to us, we have them in written form. But as oral stories, they were passed on from one person to another, one group to another, or from one church to another, long before (and after) they were written down. Subsequently, they were canonized (given formative and definite approval by way of conviction

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56 See, for example, the books listed on [http://stamper3hypermart.net/foxfire.html](http://stamper3hypermart.net/foxfire.html). Included are stories and illustrations as diverse as log cabin building, spinning and weaving, midwifery, wagon making, butter churns, hide tanning, berry baskets, blacksmithing, flintlock rifles, shoemaking, gourd banjos, snake handling, camp meetings, pottery, groundhog kilns, quilting, home cures, railroad lore, chair making, herbal remedies, and much more.
in church councils) and given a special sacred status. We recognize that some of the stories differ in their written versions, just as they must have differed when Jesus or others first told them (Griffin-Jones 2001). Further, when Jesus or NT authors quote the prophets or writings from the OT, they seem to do so quite imprecisely.57

**STORYTELLING AS AN ORAL APPROACH**

I come now to my main point: that storytelling is a natural part of oral societies and is the place where we should start our fieldwork. This is because the art and practice of storytelling is as old as mankind and each culture that is viable has storytellers. Since people first started talking to each other, recounting their experiences, they have told their stories.

Everyone has a story to tell, based upon memory and imagination, not necessarily upon facts systematically recorded as empirical evidence. If a Kewa tells me a story about fighting, it is built upon images in his mind that deal with fighting. These may be from experience, but he will draw upon the experiences of others as well. For me to understand his story, I will also have to build upon some of the experiences that I have as well, because I will be forming mental images as I listen to the story. When a Kewa friend tells me his story he introduces background that I may not recognize. If I didn’t know the names or locations of the clans that were fighting, then his story about fighting will not make sense. The scenes and scripting for the storyteller and hearer may have some parallels, but there will be important and contrastive differences. The Kewa as an insider has the advantage of knowing what is important about fighting, but he may not give me the best plan or script to follow the activity. As an insider he may assume that I know too much and leave out details that I, as an outsider, would need to prepare a much more elaborate script about fighting.58

In traditional societies people who use the oral approach do not have a dictionary or encyclopedia to refer to—they rely upon mental, not written or literate images. Nevertheless, although storytelling seems to be natural in every society, the way it is done can be improved upon and taught to others, including children (Rodari 1978). Coles has demonstrated that medical students can perform more helpful and accurate diagnoses if they listen to the stories of their patients (Coles 1989). Stories are of course more attractive and enhanced by good methodology and pedagogy (MacDonald 1993, Maguire 1998, Sawyer 1942), regardless of the particular culture. And in many instances their moral cultural values are implicit (Murphy 2000, Bailey 1976) in the cultural knowledge and setting.

However, once literacy is introduced into a society, a more elaborate and widely acclaimed method of telling a story evolves. This process evolves slowly, but it is well documented by the so-called “scientific method,” where observations are made about something, a hypothesis is...
formed, and elaborate texts are written to account for the nature of the observations. Because the observations can be measured and written down, observers can agree or disagree with them and test the hypothesis. Criteria that have been established by the examining community accept or reject the findings. But as science changes, with new discoveries and paradigms, the stories change too.

On the other hand, scientists tolerate oral descriptions that use folk terminology, such as the “rising” and “setting” of the sun. The scientific community views the language as imprecise and metaphorical in nature, but recognizes that people in any society need stories to describe what happens in the world around them. Most scientists may not believe that animals “talk,” but they are willing to hear or read a story in which they do. And when animals talk, the listeners expect what is said to have some meaning and be relevant to the story. Listeners expect a story to be built around some main theme or idea, with supporting information and arguments—it has to be “going somewhere.”

THE ORAL BECOMES TEXT

Because oral societies “explain” the world through “folk” descriptions, often these are discounted as mere stories or myth. We don’t act like the people in such societies have much to offer in their preliterate state. We are expecting and waiting for the oral forms to become written. Once this is done, changes take place immediately. We move from something that has been “experienced” to something that can be “proven” as true or false. Although we accept this dichotomy, Kelber reminds us that an integration of the propositional and experiential views of the Word is possible:

“We like to think of textuality as the principal norm of tradition, whereas I wish to show that speaking was a norm as well, and writing often a critical reflection on speech, and also a transformation of it...This book aims to broaden biblical hermeneutics by developing a sympathetic understanding of both the oral and the written word, and by studying ways in which one acts upon the other. (Kelber 1983: xvi)

The integration is especially necessary when we try to make new literature understood by oral experts. Take, for example, stories recorded in the Gospels. Jesus’ words are recorded more than any other speaker and he tells his stories to both literates (like the scribes and Pharisees) and illiterates (like most of the crowds and some of his disciples). In either case, we read that it was difficult for his hearers to comprehend that some of what he said was “symbolic,” that is, it was not literal in the sense that Jesus was telling an actual witnessed event. Although each of his stories was built upon actual first-century life (peasants and Palestine), the teaching points extended far beyond that day, with applications to both oral and written societies.

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59 Of course “science” doesn’t really work in this mechanistic fashion, as Polanyi and others have pointed out. The intuitive grasp of the investigator often turns out to be crucial in new “discoveries.” The Mars Hill Audio has published a set of tapes on the life and thought of Michael Polanyi called “Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing,” that are very instructive about the part that intuition plays in “science.”

60 George MacDonald questions the assumption that most ordinary folks were illiterate, citing Jesus as the son of a carpenter but one who could read Isaiah from the scroll in the synagogue. He claims that Matthew, Mark, Hohn, Peter or James were all literate and for proof cites the fact that they did not use an amanuensis like Paul sometimes did.
Jesus used cultural objects to stand for certain principles and themes: grain, seed, weeds, fields, nets, vine and vineyards, sheep and shepherd—all of these existed in the culture of the hearers but extended to new situations. Other themes, such as the Kingdom of God, Abraham’s bosom, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, or about a prodigal Jewish boy eating pig’s food, were not the everyday experiences of the Palestinians. Jesus was teaching a particular principle and he did it by using culturally relevant objects as metaphors. Jesus communicated the concept of entire dependence upon God metaphorically when he gave the analogy of the branches of a vine depending upon the vine and the vinedresser.

A story has a main point, imagination and style, and involves characters, events and a space-time orientation. Jesus always had a point to make and he was motivated to tell stories using the cultural illustrations at his disposal. His style was persuasive and worth listening to, but he did not write his stories down. He was communicating to an oral society and he used their methods.

In retelling a story that Jesus told, the storyteller does not get tied up in the actual form of the source text—as happens in translation. In storytelling we do not want to miss the main point or points of the story by focusing on the detail of the text. We want to ensure that the main points of the story are made explicit in a manner that is culturally acceptable and persuasive. That does not mean that the meaning is, or must be, immediately transparent—that is why Jesus used parables. Parables are a kind of story in which certain objects are used to symbolically represent actual or potential situations. In the parable of the sower, the seed represents “the word of God,” and it can be used that way because some of its family of expressions can apply equally well to the word of God. It can be planted, watered, cultivated, and harvested. It can grow and mature and even be eaten.

In telling a story the narrator is mapping images and metaphors that take place between languages and cultures. In the parable of the sower, the whole scene of agriculture enters into the story, with a description of sowing the seed and its maturation. However, we don’t need to map all of the Palestinian agricultural scenes into the parables in order to learn from them. A lot of things about agriculture in Jesus’ day are not relevant to the parable, and especially to its meaning. The story should not be poorly or improperly told, using words, metaphors and comparisons that are misunderstood because of their cultural context.

Despite near universal primary education in PNG, remaining literate is a skill that must be nourished regularly. New literates shouldn’t have to begin their reading habits with difficult texts that are easily misunderstood. Rather, they should begin with stories about the texts and drawn from them. And the stories should sound natural, not like a religious text used for the hour (or more) of church, then rarely used again during the rest of the week.

Small languages in the Pacific consist of people who, for the most part, communicate orally, not by means of newspapers and books. The viability of their language depends upon its oral use in common situations. Even when carefully and properly translated, the Bible contains a meta-

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61 George MacDonald claims that the Kingdom of God/the Lord was not a new concept in Jesus’ time and gives examples such as IChronicles 28:5, 29:11, Daniel 4:3 and Obadiah 1:21. Nevertheless, it was a concept and theme that Jesus elaborated upon with numerous stories, suggesting that the hearers did not understand his teaching on the matter very quickly or well.
vocabulary that is religious in nature. Practitioners may begin to use it regularly, often with the same revered sense that scientists have when using their jargon. Storytelling should take place without recourse to preferred religious vocabulary.

Storytelling, as Denning (2001) explains, does not replace analytical thinking, but it supplements it with new perspectives. Audiences can leap ahead intuitively in their understanding and participation in the storytelling process. This is not as likely when listening to a passage read or when listening to an exegetical sermon. The force of a story is in the telling (Denning 2001:137, 139), providing an interaction between the storyteller and the listeners. Listeners can discuss the story, complain about it or praise it, but in every case they are embodying the ideas to such an extent that it takes them to a new level of understanding.

Storytelling is not the answer to all of life’s problems, but it is one avenue to ensure that the problems of life are understood as clearly as possible. As Schank (1990) reminds us, about the best you can expect of a person is a good story.

A PERSONAL NOTE

In 1958 my wife and I began fieldwork with a group of people in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The people called themselves by the name of their clan or sub-clan, not in reference to a particular social dialect or a language. Outsiders, such as government officers, missionaries, anthropologists and linguists, gave names to clans that could speak to each other with good understanding, such as Kewapi, Kewabe, Kewa and Pole. Now, almost 45 years later, the vernacular speakers refer to themselves by these names.

In SIL we ask questions such as: “What is the name of your language?” or “What languages do you speak?” And from a more distant perspective we ask, “Is the language viable?” The first two questions are answered by insiders, but the third is answered based on various sociolinguistic criteria, and usually by an outsider.

We have had contact with the Kewa people, as I shall call them, since the middle of 1958 when Harland Kerr, an SIL colleague, and I visited their territory. At that time there were no schools in the Kewa area and government and mission stations were just becoming established. Literacy was unknown but stories were widespread and well documented (LeRoy 1985a, 1985b, MN MacDonald 1991), just as they are in PNG as a whole (McElhanon, ed., 1974, 1982).

In the intervening years thousands of Kewas have learned to read (not because of us, and with varying degrees of fluency). Despite almost universal primary education however, the Kewa people still represent primarily an oral society. There are at least five high schools that grade 8 graduates can apply to, but in a population of almost 100,000, less than half of one per cent attends a tertiary school. That leaves most of the people in the oral tradition that they have always had. Almost, but not quite, because there are new kinds of “oral” settings, such as radio, video, and the pictures found in magazines and newspapers.

As I have pondered the PNG SIL strategy, I have wondered how it relates to a strategy for small oral societies because it seems to be clear that the goal is to make people literate. It is reflected partially by their mission statement, “Empowered by the written word.”
The SIL PNG mission statement quite naturally focuses on the written word, perhaps implying that groups are not “empowered” by any other means except literacy. There are always various ways to read a document, so the intent may be that SIL sees its contribution in PNG as giving people literacy and the Word of God in the vernaculars. But in any reading the emphasis is upon the written aspect. And, without doubt, SIL has been singularly successful in providing written materials in the vernacular languages of PNG (and elsewhere).

But again, what about the small groups of people who are oral communicators? The Sandaun Province in PNG seemed like a good place to start: There are over 100 languages in the Province, with linguists claiming that they represent some seven different phyla (not family) groups. Approximately 30% of the languages have 500 or fewer people who speak them. Remember that within the Province any language with over 3,000 speakers can be considered “large.”

It seems to me that concentrating on the written mode often ignores the fundamentally oral nature of communication in such societies. This is not to say that efforts should not be made to assist people in their quest for “education” by providing schools that teach students how to read and write. It would be unusual for anyone to say that they would not like to know how to read and write. However, statistics indicate that some 70% of the world’s population represents people who are either illiterate or functionally illiterate (they read poorly and without adequate understanding). There is little accurate and reliable research to show how many readers there are in any of the PNG Provinces, let alone the Sandaun, although census figures inflate the literacy rates.

In October 2002 we ran a one-week storytelling workshop at Amanab, at the extreme western end of the country, near the Papuan (read Irian) border. Seventeen men from four language groups attended the course. Most, but not all, of them, could read and write Tok Pisin and two groups (Angor and Amanab/ Awai) already had the complete New Testaments in their languages. The third group had some materials and the fourth had nothing at all. My intention, in this pilot project, was to have an oral approach, not allowing the use of written materials (in any language) or the taking of notes. I wanted the participants to understand and empathize with how most of the people in their villages learned and communicated.  

Prior to leaving for Amanab we pre-recorded a number of miracles and parables from the NT. These were done in a sound studio by competent Tok Pisin speakers and readers and formed the basis for the materials used in the workshop. There were a number of things that we learned using such an oral approach:

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62 There is another aspect of the oral approach that could be further exploited: On the final day of the course one of the participants asked if his father, whom he indicated knew all of the local land tenure and knowledge of ownership, could record his “story.” This he did and it seemed obvious to me that this is one way that SIL could help the people in a very practical and beneficial way: tape-record the local knowledge of the older men, in particular, before it died with them. We collect and file linguistic materials—why not oral materials? It would of course belong to the people as their property, but we could help them by archiving it.

63 I am grateful that the Seed Co. provided finance for this pilot project.
• Storytelling introduces participants of an oral society naturally to written materials if they want them. Hearers become familiar with the stories before a translation project begins and information is written down. Stories can therefore identify more quickly with the translated materials that come later.

• Storytelling can accompany any written translation work. Stories are natural renditions of a translated text, but are not subject to the same constraints because they do not claim to be translations. However, in the case of Bible translation, one can always return to the source text (in the case of small languages in most of PNG, this would be the Tok Pisin Bible) for documentation and reliability checks.

• Even when there is a completed SIL program, storytelling should follow. Stories give purpose to the whole project because everyone (not simply the church pastors or leaders) is then involved in re-telling stories.

• Despite the size or endangered status of a language group, storytelling should be a part of the SIL translation strategy. This should certainly be the case in small language groups that do not have any materials, but it can be also be effective in areas where a translation project is underway or completed.

• Storytelling acknowledges and accommodates the oral communication status of 70% of language populations who cannot read (and who probably never will). They can have the opportunity to understand and re-tell the stories they hear.

• Storytelling involves mentoring, so intensive and demanding in a different way than sitting at a desk using a computer and written or electronic resources. This is because fieldworkers need to demonstrate the oral approach by memorizing and re-telling stories (and traditional stories) in the vernacular, rather than always relying upon written and translated materials.

• Storytelling is not “high-tech,” in fact it does not depend upon any technology. Although tape recording stories is helpful pedagogically and practically, it does not need to rely on this technique to be useful. Of course, recording the stories does help prevent wild divergence from stories.

Many other authors (Fulford 1999, Holzhausen 1975, Spaeth 1996, Steffen 1996) have commented upon and outlined the benefits of retold Bible stories. Although it is by no means a new and novel approach, like eating eggplant, many have not yet tired it.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

It is my opinion that the training that GIAL provides should include elements of the storytelling and the oral approach. To begin with, some of these features might be:

• The art and practice of storytelling, including music and drama as modes
• The methodology of oral history, including aspects of interviewing (their structures and equipment), the use of questionnaires, photographs, songs, and life histories
• The role of creativity and art in oral forms and their relationship to literacy and translation
• The discussion and application of folklore as an aspect of oral history, including folklore analysis, and verbal arts\textsuperscript{64}

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**References**


\textsuperscript{64} Douglas et al. (1988), and Finnegan (1992) include extensive bibliographies and information on oral history methodology and practice.


Appendix E: Bible Storying Roles⁶⁵

STORYING FACILITATOR
This role is designed for the Bible storying strategy that is proposed for the smaller language groups in the Pacific. People filling this role will be involved in an 18-24 month program. A Storying Facilitator will learn about orality, language and culture acquisition, translation issues, and worldview. Working with national cross-cultural workers and mother-tongue story crafters, they will facilitate the development of sets of Bible stories that are relevant to the local situation for oral translation and audio recording. They will also help train gifted local storytellers to become storying facilitators.

MINIMUM QUALIFYING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS ROLE
Two years of post-secondary education or experience is recommended. Appropriate education would be Bible College or Theological College, or a minimum of two years university education. Individual life experiences and maturity are also considered.

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS ROLE
- Three week Foundations course at EQUIP Training. This course provides basic training in cross-cultural communication (language learning, anthropology, phonetics)
- Three week Orality and Technology course. This course involves training in Storytelling, Training Across Cultures, and basic translation principles
- WBTA orientation courses (Insight, Partnership Development and Getting Ready—a total of 2.5 weeks)
- In-service training, coaching and mentoring will be available on the field

STORYING AND ORALITY CONSULTANT
This role involves:
- Being responsible for the training, mentoring, coaching, and career path development of Storying Facilitators,
- Negotiating to enter into new areas and partnerships,
- Assisting with quality checking of the naturalness, accuracy and comprehension of storying sets and key terms,
- Developing theory and policy in the areas of orality, and
- Assessing the potential for the effective use of storytelling in church growth and development

MINIMUM QUALIFYING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS ROLE
The regular qualifications for longer-term service in the agency or entity of affiliation apply.

⁶⁵ Adapted from Wycliffe Australia (September 2004).
TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS ROLE

It is recommended that the person have

- Three week Foundations course at EQUIP Training. This course provides basic training in cross-cultural communication (language learning, anthropology, phonetics)
- Three week Orality and Technology course. This course involves training in Storytelling, Training Across Cultures, and basic translation principles
- WBTA orientation courses (Insight, Partnership Development and Getting Ready) (total of 2.5 weeks)
- Skills in simple publication and production of materials (including the use of standard format marking)
- Ability to encourage partnerships and cooperation
- Developed a set of skills and abilities largely similar to those of a Translation Consultant

Personnel suitable for the role would be members of SIL who have received training and gained experience as literacy specialists, Scripture Use specialist, or translation specialists.

It is recommended that the person complete training in:

- Aspects of storying implementation which may not have been adequately addressed in another training path (e.g. worldview considerations in story set selection, storying as a strategy in engendering church planting movements, multiple-source/whole-discourse story crafting, study of indigenous oral narrative style and other genres)
- Cross-language communication issues or translation principles if not adequately addressed in another training path (e.g. contextualisation, choosing key terms, maintaining biblical integrity, expressing figurative language, avoiding literal renderings, handling linguistic and contextual gaps)
Appendix F: Some Children’s Bible Story and Reference Works

From cover: “The book provides a comprehensive introduction to every aspect of Jesus’ life: the historical background into which he was born; the stories of his birth; his ministry as a teacher, preacher and healer; his death on the cross and the stories of his resurrection that inspired his followers to spread their message of faith, hope, and love all over the world….The text is simple to read and scholarly in its insights. A wealth of carefully researched illustrations, maps, diagrams, and photographs make this book something that everyone will enjoy reading.”

Cartoon format. Divided into EVERYDAY LIFE (nomadic and sedentary, food, eating, family, teaching, children, women, crafts, trade, bread and oil, vines and wine, houses, towns and villages, travel); FAITH AND RELIGIOUS LIFE (the Sabbath, prayer, festivals, Passover, sanctuary, law and justice, sacrifices, psalms and music, Herod’s temple, religious life, prophets, synagogue, Jewish groups and two sections on What is the Bible?); PLACES, FACTS AND IDEAS (Canaan, climate, flora, fauna, time and the calendar, desert and water, Egypt, slavery, Jerusalem, royal court, war, neighbours, universe, Greek culture, Romans, Palestine, the past and four archaeological adventures, index.)

57 OT stories and 39 NT ones, with an index and reference, followed by Palestine map at the time of the Lord and missionary journeys of Paul. Reproductions of paintings used for illustrations.

Introduction on the expected Messiah; chronology of 600 years at a glance; In Jesus’ footsteps; A tale of three cities; Heirs of Jesus Christ; Defending the faith; Bearing the cross; Up from the wilderness; Thy kingdom come; Decline of the empire; Dawning of the Middle Ages; Key

Illustrated with some “history” sidebars. 152 OT stories divided into three sections:
- The creation and the Patriarchs (How god made the world-4; Noah’s ark-3; God’s promise to Abram-9; Joseph and his brothers-9; The birth of Moses-22; The ten commandments-14);
- The Birth of Israel (The promised land-8; Samson and the Philistines-5; Samuel, the child of the Lord-3; The Philistines seize the ark-1; Samuel and Saul-3; Saul is made king-3; David is chosen by God-2; David and Goliath-5; Saul and the spirit of Samuel-6; David, king of Judah and of Israel-3; David and Absalom-5; The death of David-1);
- The time of the Prophets (The wisdom of Solomon-2; The building of the temple-3; Elijah, a prophet of Israel-2; Elijah is taken to heaven-5; Joash becomes king of Judah-1; The warnings of the prophets-4; When Isaiah was prophet-4; Josiah is a good king-1; Jeremiah and the fall of Jerusalem-3; Jeremiah the prisoner-1; Jerusalem is destroyed-1; Songs of exile in Babylon-3; Daniel is taken prisoner-7; Ezekiel, the prophet of exile-2; The return to Jerusalem-8; The tale of Jonah-2).

142 NT stories as follows:
- Zachariah and Elisabeth-1; The annunciation-3; The birth of Jesus-4; Jesus speaks to the teacher-2s; John baptizes Jesus-2; Jesus in Galilee-1; The marriage in Cana-1; Jesus teaches in the synagogue in Capernaum-5; The Pharisees ask questions-4; The sermon on the mount-13; Jesus preaches the Gospel of forgiveness-3; The parables of Jesus-4; Jesus in Nazareth-3; The martyr, John the Baptist-1; The promise of the Eucharist-4; Jesus and Peter-2; The transfiguration-1; Jesus teaches his disciples-5; Other parables Jesus told-6; Journey to Jerusalem-15; Signs of Christ’s coming-10; The garden of Gethsemane-6; Death and resurrection-7; The appearances of Jesus-5; The coming of the Holy Spirit-6; Peter and Paul-5; The travels of Paul-20; The letters of Peter-1; The vision of John-2.

A glossary concludes the book.


Reproductions of 68 of Rembrandt’s [Rembrandt van Rijn] works, including color oils, drawings, and black and white etchings. NKJV is used for Scripture readings. Introduction and comments on paintings Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah and the Ark; Lot’s Departure from Sodom; Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away, as well as something on Rembrandt’s life and works.