

Writers Corner

Story Telling

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Who doesn't love a good story? From the earliest age, children love to hear bedtime stories and will do anything to keep from dropping off to sleep just to hear how they end. Even Jesus was a teller of parables and wherever He went, He shared them with the people. Nations around the world have their own cultural stories, which they pass on to their children. In fact, people love stories so much they pay huge dollars to produce and see them on the big screen.

The definition of story is a narration or a chain of events told or written in prose or verse. It comes under the heading of fiction in the library, which means it isn't true.

A parable is a short story that uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical situation. It comes from the Latin parabola, meaning a comparison between two things. One event mirrors the second in some profound way. Many scholars argue that Jesus spoke about actual people and events in His parables. Although some may have been fictitious, many were realistic.

Jesus' parables were also simplistic and only one point was ever conveyed in each one, not many. Often the people who heard Jesus failed to grasp the eternal, spiritual truth or 'pearl' behind that single point.

Jesus did say, however, that '...it has been given to you (His disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven...' Matt. 13:11. That was because their hearts were receptive to the truth.

Interestingly enough, the scriptures tell us that Jesus did not do or say anything except he first saw and heard His Father saying or doing them. Each parable came as a result of His communion with God. Because of His continual fellowship with His Father, He heard instantaneously from heaven and passed on these 'pearls' of wisdom to His listeners. He didn't pray and wait half an hour to hear something from God before He said it. No! His life was united to God twenty-four hours a day in prayer and fellowship.

Many times, He wandered up the mountain and spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12). He knew His Father and recognised His Father's voice!

For thousands of years, people have told their stories and have passed on their heritage in this way. God told Moses to write down all of His words and put them in a book because

they were a covenant between God and Israel. God also spoke to Jeremiah and told him to write on a scroll all the words He would tell him and then read it to Jehoiakim, the king of Judah.

The Apostle Paul wrote many letters, which were later canonised in the Bible. They have brought comfort, encouragement and enlightenment to countless believers for centuries. King David wrote many of the Psalms, which have brought comfort to many people. King Solomon wrote the Proverbs, which are filled with wisdom and teachings on righteous living. Need I say more?

We, as believers, are told in Psalm 78:5-8 to recount all that God has done, as well as teach His laws, so that our children would 'not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.' This would perpetuate a godly heritage throughout the generations.

Aborigines are such good storytellers that they even create the atmosphere for their stories. They'll sit under shady trees or around campfires at night and smell the wood smoke while they recount the Dreamtime stories to their children. They'll also weave songs and dances into their stories to make them more vivid. They'll go for walks in the bush and show their children plants, places and animals that enhance their tales. Their children have a real visual reminder of their stories.

Story telling is so important to people they'll spend millions of dollars creating one movie. Here are some well-known ones and what it cost to produce them:

1963 Cleopatra—\$44 million (although only \$3 was budgeted for it).

The Passion—\$30 million.

Titanic—approx. \$200 million.

Lord of the Rings—each movie \$94 million, a total of \$282 million.

Shrek—approx. \$70.

Avatar—cost between \$200 and \$500 million.

These days, most people own a television set in their homes. That's because they love to watch shows, especially a good movie. Let's face it, a good story is hard to pass up on a cold, wet weekend and the video shops are full most days. But the greatest stories of all are the ones we hand down to our children about the great wonders and miracles of God, the Creator of all things. They are definitely worth passing down and listening to, don't you think?