

PRESENTING THE BIG PICTURE PANORAMIC

The Storytelling Triangle: Story – Teller – Audience

Scope & Focus of Successful Storytelling:

- ✚ Unprocessed anecdotes are not usually the stories that stick.
- ✚ Storytellers impart great truths not “just the simple facts.”
- ✚ Each level or layer of a story utilizes first, second, and third place events narration with flash back/forward [1st Chapter Muscle & Shovel] or foreshadow/prefigure scenes and coming events as an additive chemical process organically building in its complexity. There are often two versions of the Bible Story – the short version or superficial story often told to children at bedtime and the one “more complicated” with multiple layer and mature meaning. For instance, the rebelliousness of human sin and God’s power to punish or the deeper message of His love, will to forgive and desire for reconciliation.
- ✚ Big Picture Stories are of the “Accordion” Type. Events Summary and Scene Description are used in the Storyline Economy so as to both background scope and plotline focus – story form reconfiguring according to audience participation and time constraints.

Communication Barriers To An Effective Presentation:

- ✚ **Hearing Without Listening.** Captive Audience Meets Irrelevant Topic.
- ✚ **Listening Without Learning.** Not Adaptive To Audience Type & Level.
- ✚ **Learning Without Applying.** Audience Not Engaged & W/O Empathy.

The animated fiction character Homer Simpson famously said: “Just because I don’t care doesn’t mean I don’t understand.” This is the unspoken attitude and unproductive mindset that we in the churches of Christ often face after our individual presentation having won the mind but not the heart of our hearer.

By definition the outcome of an effective presentation is a change in thinking and a new course of action. The purpose of the story climax or narrative resolution is to influence perspective - worldview & life view. The storytelling experience has been known to reorder personal priorities, reorient value systems, revisit pathway decisions, reconsider support networks, and reshape human identity. In other words, good communication of the gospel story can be a contagious cure and spiritually reproductive.

THE BIG PICTURE: The Hopeless Human Race & The Salvation Instrument Prepared From The Start

Broad Scope – Continuous Cross-Cultural Composites - Universal Themes & Ultimate Questions.

Figurative Representation – Antitype Metaphor, Archetype Situations, & Stereotype Symbolism.

Narrow Focus - Our initial task is to link with a sentimental hook that quick connects with our specific audience – transforming them from mere passive hearers and then buying them in as active listeners.

Tensive Dynamic - The cast of characters are introduced empathic along with the inciting incident that creates the dramatic dynamic – the emotional conflict that connects with the human condition: the reality vs. pleasure principle in human relationships; temptations between right and wrong as with the apostle in Romans 7: 15-25; mature judgments that hinge on intention/motivation; forced choice of the lesser evil or difficult decision between two goods with different outcomes of long-term consequence.

Emotional Threadline – The plotline often separates from the emotional arc of each story of our meta-narrative. The emotional link – the audience hook – proceeds scene to scene thematically through a series of images. The point of descending action is not necessarily the climax of the story – the point at which the main message is established. For instance, in *The Parable of the Lost Son* is the main point at the descending action when the younger son restored or is the older son revealed as the one hidden lost. Again, in the restoration from death of Jairus' daughter – is not the last verse not the real point – the command of nourishment – the daily sustaining bread of life.

The Bible Picture Emotional Arc – The emotional arc of our meta-narrative is our climax. If we have our audience in the skins of the characters of that period – experiencing it in real time - they would not have realized the significance of the crucifixion while in process – nor would they have a sense of completion after the subsequent supernatural events marking the episode. Vicariously, our timeline characters would have been in a state of dread. Only after the apostle had explained The Big Picture of Christ to them and their part in his death “...this Jesus, whom you crucified” did they rightly panic and sought **resolution** by way of the next verse - which is the key question “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*

The Most Important Thing – The thematic thread or M.I.T. – the main point of our storyline becomes clear in the climax. It is only low resolution pixilated picture without resolution until then - 1st Cor. 13.

In my opinion, the four gospels do not contain the climax or main point of the Bible narrative. I believe the **Bible Climax is in Acts Chapter Two & Verse 37**. Moreover, the answer to that question back then should be where today we should conclude our Big Picture Presentation – with the **BAPTISM** command and where the called-out church and brotherhood relationship is established in the following section.

Receiving as Personal Savior Response* defined differently today. During the first century it was both immediate and action oriented. Martin Luther & John Calvin of the Protestant Reformation postulated a grace faith justification and a passive monergistic (rather than synergistic) salvation in which Christ is the gift and not the road. Moreover, because of double predestination he is the gift that cannot be refused. Hearing the gospel supposedly is sufficient & simple to salvation. **In other words, because of remaining reformer influence, we need to point out the action-oriented response of these 1st century Christians.

Paper by David Lee Burris; Resourced from Teaching Company - Professional Storytelling Lecture Series