



## Restoring the Story

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One of the major endeavors of Rudolf Bultmann was to correct the writings of theologians in the last half of the 19th century who believed it possible to write objective historical “lives of Jesus.” Bultmann went about his task by drawing from various sources, but particularly from two scholars who are known for their existentialist thought.<sup>1</sup>

The first was Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard maintained that the life and ministry of Jesus can be determined, at best, only with approximate historical certainty. Moreover, such historical certainty is not necessary for faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ. This follows, regardless of the historical records of the gospel writers, because the believer must make a “leap of faith” by accepting the gospel tradition as true. Kierkegaard expressed this thought in the statement, “Truth is subjectivity.” This means truth can be determined only by the believer. That Jesus is actually the Christ, the Son of God, is not an objective historical truth apart from faith. Bultmann accepted Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity, but differed from him in that he perceived little if any possibility of establishing the historical objectivity of Jesus in the gospels.

The second major influence upon Bultmann’s thinking was Martin Heidegger, who was a colleague with Bultmann at Marburg University. Heidegger affirmed that the human race resides in a state of fallenness in a world of death and nothingness, and therefore lives an inauthentic existence. At the same time a person possesses the possibility of recognizing one’s own fallen state, accepting the world for what it is, and resolving to live authentically. The decision to live in authenticity is present to anyone by the voice of conscience. Bultmann agreed with Heidegger’s idea of resolution or decision, but differed from him in that the opportunity of authenticity is made possible to a person only by God’s act of grace in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Marlo B. Miller, “Revelation: The Subjective and Objective Dimensions in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1973. The dissertation is the basis for the interpretation of R. Bultmann, his disciples and critics.

### I. A STORYLESS THEOLOGY

Putting together the ideas of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, and employing the tools of modern historical critical research, Bultmann developed an existentialist theology which he, in turn, utilized to interpret the New Testament. The development of Bultmann’s existentialism was accomplished, first, by a dehistoricization of the New Testament. According to this view, the four gospels have been shaped largely by the needs and concerns of the earliest Christian community. The primitive community did not simply repeat the story of Jesus but responded to its total encounter with Jesus, i.e., with his earthly history and his presence in the on-going life of the

church. Only in rare instances, then, is it possible to get behind the *Sitz im Leben* (life situation) of the primitive church, in which the gospel tradition was framed, to the factual life of Jesus. Indeed, the character of Jesus, the vivid picture of his personality and life, cannot be clearly discerned. Bultmann wrote, "I do indeed think that we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist."<sup>2</sup>

Similar results were achieved concerning the words or teachings of Jesus. Bultmann declared, "Though one may admit the fact that for no single word of Jesus is it possible to produce positive evidence of its authenticity, still one may point to a whole stratum of traditions which do give us a consistent representation of the historical message of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> And yet, Bultmann acknowledged that even at this stratum many of the sayings attributed to Jesus originated in the early Christian community, and other sayings were modified by the community.

The conclusion of Bultmann's dehistoricization process was that the gospel tradition of the New Testament is not an objective historical recording of Jesus, the so-called "Jesus of history." Rather, the gospels are the "kerygma" (proclamation) of the Christ in whom the primitive community believed, the so-called "Christ of faith." Bultmann did insist, however, that the kerygmatic Christ implies the historical Jesus; the Christ of faith presupposes the Jesus of history, and the latter is the condition for the proclamation of Christ. Still, the Jesus of history is not a part of the proclamation! What is necessary for the proclamation of Christ, that is, in terms of historical information or data, is simply that Jesus was born, lived, and was crucified.<sup>4</sup>

A second endeavor, related to the dehistoricization process, is what Bultmann did with myth or story in Scripture. He understood myth, in which the Bible is framed, to be "a way of representing the other world in terms of this world, the divine in terms of human life, the 'beyond' in terms of this side."<sup>5</sup> He perceived the necessity to demythologize or to reform the story framework of the New Testament not because myth or story did not serve a purpose and have

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958) 8.

<sup>3</sup>R. Bultmann, *Form Criticism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962) 61.

<sup>4</sup>R. Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, ed. C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville (New York: Abingdon, 1964) 22-24.

<sup>5</sup>R. Bultmann & Five Critics, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 10.

a proper understanding at the time of writing in the first century A.D. Rather, such language as we know it today does not serve a purpose or speak to modern people. At the same time, Bultmann did not want to do away with myth or story, but merely to interpret it so that it is articulated in contemporary terminology and thus made relevant and meaningful in our age. He accomplished this, he thought, by interpreting myth or story in terms of human existence.

The proclamation of the Christ of faith confronts the listener with the call to a new understanding of his or her own existence. What the listener is given to understand in the proclamation is that Jesus is the Christ, and in knowing Christ, the hearer is given a knowledge of the self, a knowledge that makes possible a new self-understanding. The proclamation of Christ is part and parcel with God's saving action in Christ since it speaks to each person

concerning his or her existence. Bultmann claimed that “to speak of the act of God means at the same time to speak of my existence.”<sup>6</sup> God’s action is not saving action in the past tense, an action that happened once for all time, but is saving action at the moment the listener gains self-understanding anew and resolves to exist authentically. The purpose and importance of the proclamation of Christ is to make available the opportunity for salvation or authentic existence, i.e., a new self-understanding.

The results of Bultmann’s history-less and story-less existentialist theology, which he utilized to interpret the New Testament, was reason for concern and alarm to many in the Christian community. Biblical scholars were uneasy with a theology that left the gospel tradition devoid of historical content and the proclamation of Christ empty of this historicity. Karl Barth argued that Bultmann’s theology is such that Christology is completely absorbed in soteriology. He affirmed that the New Testament proclaims Jesus Christ as an event with an inherent significance of its own, rather than a primary significance for a person’s understanding of his or her present inauthentic existence and the possibility for authenticity.<sup>7</sup>

Bultmann’s existentialist theology had gone about as far as biblical thought could move in one particular direction. The pendulum could only begin to swing back in the opposite direction in the hope and expectation of establishing greater continuity and commensurability between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

## II. THEMES OR MOTIFS OF JESUS CHRIST

The movement of biblical theology began to swing away from Bultmann’s thinking when his disciples endeavored to correct or modify his position. In an essay published in 1953, Ernst Käsemann wrote concerning Bultmann’s theology: “Christian faith is here being understood as faith in the exalted Lord, for which the Jesus of history is no longer considered of decisive importance.”<sup>8</sup> Käsemann

<sup>6</sup>Karl Barth, “Rudolf Bultmann—An Attempt to Understand Him,” *Kerygma and Myth*, II, ed. Hans W. Bartsch (London: S.P.C.K., 1962) 94ff.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 196.

<sup>8</sup>Ernst Käsemann, “The Problem of the Historical Jesus,” *Essays on New Testament Themes* (Naperville: A. R. Allenson, 1964) 16.

maintained that the primitive community was concerned to identify the exalted Lord (i.e., the Christ of faith) with the earthly Lord (i.e., the Jesus of history); that the gospel writers believed the Christ they preached was the earthly Lord; and furthermore, that the Easter faith would dissolve in mythology without the identity of the earthly Jesus with the risen Christ. He set out to achieve what Bultmann said could not be done, namely, to get behind the “life situation” of the earliest community to the factual life of the historical Jesus. He affirmed in his book, *Jesus Means Freedom*, that in Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of God, God draws near to us in gracious freedom.<sup>9</sup> He brings the freedom to become the children of God. There is continuity and commensurability between the freedom announced by the Jesus of history and proclaimed in the Christ of faith.

Günther Bornkamm, another of Bultmann’s former students, declared his disagreement with his teacher’s understanding of the historical Jesus when he claimed that, in Bultmann’s

theology, “Jesus Christ has become a mere saving fact and has ceased to be a person. He himself has no longer any history.”<sup>10</sup> In 1956 Bornkamm published his book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, in which he took up the search for the historical Jesus with positive expectations and results. He held that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are interpenetrating in the gospels. The task of the biblical scholar is to see the history “in” the proclamation of Christ and also to see the community’s faith “in” the Jesus of history. Bornkamm contends that the messianic hopes and expectations of the Jewish people are understandable only in terms of Jesus’ words and deeds. Jesus corrected, clarified, and fulfilled the messianic prophecies of Jewish tradition. The messianic person perceived by the earliest church in the earthly Jesus would be one and the same as the person proclaimed by the church.<sup>11</sup>

A leading American scholar, who endeavored to seek great continuity and commensurability between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, was James M. Robinson. In 1959 he published his book, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, in which he held that the existential self-understanding reflected in Jesus’ preaching is the same as the summons or call to self-understanding proclaimed by the primitive church. He wrote:

The kind of material which the ‘kerygmaticizing’ process would leave unaltered is the kind of material which fits best the needs of research based upon the modern view of history and self. For the kerygmatic interest of the primitive Church would leave unaltered precisely those sayings and scenes in which Jesus made his intention and understanding of existence most apparent to them.<sup>12</sup>

### III. PORTRAITS OR PICTURES OF JESUS CHRIST

In the 1960s the attempt to add or expand historical themes or motifs that were continuous and commensurate with the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith

<sup>9</sup>E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

<sup>10</sup>Günther Bornkamm, “Myth and Gospel,” *Kerygma and History* (New York: Abingdon, 1962) 186.

<sup>11</sup>G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960).

<sup>12</sup>James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959) 69.

was slowly but surely coming to a close. Apart from the work of Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling,<sup>13</sup> there was little if anything written of major consequence. (An interesting side note is that by the middle of the 1960s the number of articles in theological journals attempting to correct or modify Bultmann’s position was steadily on the decline.) At the same time the pendulum continued to swing further away from Bultmann and his disciples. Now the gospels were no longer perceived in terms of themes or motifs, but as whole entities, as portraits or pictures, complete and understandable in themselves.

In his book published in 1963, Wayne Rollins wrote that each of the gospel writers was both an editor and an artist. As an editor, each writer compiled and organized the data into readable and usable form, but with a style that is particular to him so that the “fingerprints” of each of the four gospel writers are readily visible. The editor is also an artist, and the portrait he paints reflects the character of the subject matter but also the technique and mind of the artist. The artist leaves traces of himself, his thought, vision, imagination, the colors he chooses, the

organization of the material, and the use of contrast and highlighting. The result, Rollins concluded, is that “it is not pure Jesus who appears in the Gospels, but Jesus-as-seen-through-the-eyes of Mark, or Matthew.”<sup>14</sup> Mark’s Gospel is seen as a religious-existential portrait, and is Christocentric; Matthew’s is an ethical-apocalyptic portrait, and is anthropocentric, or “man-centered”; Luke’s is aesthetic-historical, and is theocentric, or “God-centered”; and John’s portrait is paradoxical-mystical, and is Logos-centered, or “Godman-centered.”

A similar approach was undertaken by Ralph Hein and Frank W. Klos in their book, *Four Pictures of Jesus* (1965). (Note the title “Jesus” here in contrast to “Christ” in Rollin’s book!) The endeavor is again to view the gospels in their entirety or wholeness and the writers as conveying pictures of Jesus. In Mark, Jesus is pictured as the Son of God, and the entire gospel bears the print of the mystery of Jesus as God’s Son, e.g., “Who do men say that I am?” (8:27). Matthew pictures Jesus as the Christ, and the print of the gospel is of the Supreme Teacher of the way of righteousness unto salvation, e.g., “For I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (5:20). Luke sees Jesus as the Lord and pictures him to be the center point in God’s historical plan for the salvation of all people. In John, Jesus is seen as the Word, with the picture of Jesus being a “paradox,” the giver of life in the future but also in the present.<sup>15</sup>

#### IV. SALVATION HISTORY IN SCRIPTURE

A continuing swing of the pendulum in biblical theology, from perceiving the gospels as complete and particular portraits/pictures, was to understand the Bible in terms of its historical wholeness. This step was best exemplified by

<sup>13</sup>Ernst Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (Naperville: A. R. Allenson, 1964), and Gerhard Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961).

<sup>14</sup>Wayne Rollins, *The Gospels, Portraits of Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963) 19.

<sup>15</sup>Ralph Hein and Frank W. Klos, *Four Pictures of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965).

Oscar Cullmann in his book, *Salvation History*.<sup>16</sup> He maintained that God acts redemptively in history, that is, in the history which is recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Salvation history is God’s saving action in the nation of Israel, the person of Jesus, and the primitive community of Paul, Peter, etc., interspersed in secular history. Bultmann, in an on-going debate with Cullmann and the theology of salvation history, affirmed that salvation history does have a clear precedent in the Bible, and there is some justification in the position that salvation history in the church is simply an extension of this approach already found in the New Testament. Nevertheless, Bultmann was critical of this biblical overview because he perceived it as a rejection of the initial intention of the proclamation by the church. He claimed that the author of Luke-Acts “has surrendered the original kerygmatic sense of the Jesus-tradition and has historicized it.”<sup>17</sup> The matter of interest here is not whether Bultmann is correct in his criticism, but to point out that he recognized the presence and prominence of salvation history in Scripture.

Wolfhart Pannenberg differed from Cullmann by assigning a more significant role to history in the process of salvation. He rejected the idea of salvation in history on the grounds that it sounds like an arbitrary postulate of faith. Salvation history does not come “in” or “through” history; it does not occur above history as though it was suprahistorical. Rather, salvation takes

place “as” history, in the context of mankind, and “not in a ‘salvation history’ ghetto.”<sup>18</sup>

## V. STORYTELLERS OF SCRIPTURE

With the rehistoricization process taking place, the restoring of story or myth would appear to be the next step beyond the emphases of the gospels as complete or whole portraits/pictures of Jesus Christ and the Bible as God’s saving action in history. If biblical theology were to continue in its current direction, the emphasis would naturally lead to the restoring of the story in which the Bible is framed, e.g., God’s Story or His Story. The story of God’s saving action is His Story in and through ancient Israel, Jesus Christ, and the primitive church. What Bultmann had taken away or interpreted in terms of human existence, contemporary biblical thinkers would have put back in order to restore God’s Story of redemptive action in history. And that decision is understandable from a biblical standpoint. The Bible, for the most part, is story or narrative, and what isn’t is mostly reflection upon the narrative. In fact, we may say that the Bible is a series of stories put together to form one long story! Joseph Sittler puts it this way when he writes, “By the story, I simply mean what our fathers called ‘The drama of the divine redemption,’”<sup>19</sup> in the Old and New Testaments.

<sup>16</sup>Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

<sup>17</sup>R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951-55) 1.117.

<sup>18</sup>Wolfgang Pannenberg, “Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte,” *Kerygma und Dogma* 5 (1959) 218-37 and 259-88; ET, “Redemptive Event and History,” *Basic Questions in Theology* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970-71) 1.15-80.

<sup>19</sup>Joseph Sittler, “Conversation with Sittler,” by Robert M. Herbold, *LCA Partners* 1, 3 (June 1979) 8.

As a result of the current understanding of the Bible as story, we are witnessing the efforts of biblical scholars to depict Scripture in story form. In 1976 Daniel J. Simundson and David L. Tiede published the book, *Chosen, The Story of God and His People*. The preface reads: “this book attempts to provide an ‘interpretive survey’ in which the biblical story is outlined in as close to chronological order as possible.”<sup>20</sup> Werner H. Kelber wrote the book *Mark’s Story of Jesus* (1979). Commenting on his work, he writes, “Because we have focused on the individual stories in Mark we have not really come to know the story ‘of’ Mark. This book is designed to introduce the reader to a single coherent story, Mark’s story of Jesus’ life and death.”<sup>21</sup> O. C. Edwards, Jr., followed the same pattern with his book, *Luke’s Story of Jesus* (1981), and wrote that his work was planned as a companion to Kelber’s story of Mark.<sup>22</sup>

From a communicative standpoint, the restoring of story also appears to be the next step beyond the emphases of gospel portraits/pictures and biblical salvation history. The portrait or painting can be visible apart from the portrayer/painter. Salvation history is printed and can be read apart from the author. But the storyteller must be present, at the moment, to tell the story, with all that the story-telling process involves. Further, there must be a listener to hear the story. The teller and listener are part and parcel of story telling.

The movement of biblical theology, in a real sense, has swung full cycle, so that today we perceive the return to the days of oral tradition, to passing on by word of mouth, to telling the stories of God’s Story in the life and events of ancient Israel, in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and in the life and mission of the early church.

The emphasis upon story telling is, perhaps, even more evident at the level of the local churches or parish life. In 1976-77 the Office for Research and Planning of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) conducted a study of nine congregations and some 300 people regarding the nature of nurture. The results, printed in the booklet *Congregations as Nurturing Communities* indicated among other things the relationship between stories and the way people best understand and communicate their faith. According to the study:

Stories of interaction with other members or with their pastor were the most frequent means through which people expressed their faith. We tried at times to encourage people to talk more like theologians and less like storytellers. For example, we sometimes asked questions about specific beliefs included in the Apostles' Creed. Invariably, people would respond by saying in a matter-of-fact voice and with little interest something like "Oh, yes, we all believe that here, but..." and then would follow in a very animated voice yet another story. After several such efforts, we concluded that stories provided the primary means through which people share their faith with others, including us who were interviewing them.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Daniel J. Simundson and David L. Tiede, *Chosen, The Story of God and His People* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976).

<sup>21</sup>Werner K. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 11.

<sup>22</sup>O. C. Edwards, Jr., *Luke's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 9.

<sup>23</sup>Roger A. Johnson, *Congregations as Nurturing Communities* (Philadelphia: Division for Parish Services, LCA, 1979).

The study also revealed that pastors, in contrast to the laity, spoke more like theologians than storytellers when sharing the meaning of their faith.

At the same time the Nurture Study was being conducted, the Division for Parish Services (LCA) was completing the field testing of an in-depth biblical study and relational style of witness program called *Word and Witness*. The biblical and witnessing components are designed so that they cross back and forth and are interrelated during the 54 sessions. The objective of the biblical or Word study is to assist participants in an intensive confrontation with the Bible (God's Story) so that its message may become an ever deeper part of their whole lives. The objective of the witnessing element is to assist people in sharing planned and informal conversations about God's revelation of himself in the Bible (God's Story), and what that story means to them, i.e., their story. The conversation is to begin with what is happening in my life (My Story) and, at the same time, to hear what is happening in the life of the other person (Your Story). When the three stories intertwine (God's Story, My Story, and Your Story), witnessing takes place. Stories are the key to understanding the Bible and to the witnessing of one's faith!

As a result of the Nurture Study and the *Word and Witness* program (which is nearing 50,000 participants) several seminary faculty members and pastor/ evangelists (parish pastors of the LCA) came together in 1979 to design a continuing education course in preaching. The purpose of the resource was to "bridge the gap" between the methods lay people and pastors use to communicate their faith. The result was the founding of the seminar "Preaching from

Commitment.” The seminar is many things, but its main objective is to assist pastors to develop and practice a narrative or story-telling style of preaching and sharing of the gospel message. The four-day course, led by a seminary faculty person and a pastor/evangelist, also encourages and helps pastors to perceive the Bible (God’s Story) as relevant to life, to see and interpret one’s own daily experiences (My Story), and to discern the experiences of other people—including the material from the various media—(Your Story), as appropriate for preaching. Stories again are the primary means of communicating one’s faith!

Narrative or story-telling preaching takes several forms. At the one end of the spectrum is the style of James Weldon Johnson who retells the old biblical stories with an appropriate comment every now and then.<sup>24</sup> At the other end is Richard A. Jensen, who suggests a style of telling a story, any story, even a made-up story, and reading the Scripture appropriate to the story at the end of the telling.<sup>25</sup> At this point in my own story-telling preaching, I am most comfortable with the method proposed by Edmund A. Steimle, where there is

the sensitive interweaving of three stories: first, the preacher’s own; second, the listener’s story; and third, the Bible’s story, usually in the form of a pericope or passage which may be a sub-story of the great biblical story itself.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>James Weldon Johnson, *God’s Trombones* (New York: Viking, 1976).

<sup>25</sup>Richard A. Jensen, *Telling the Story* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980).

<sup>26</sup>Edmund A. Steimle, “Preaching,” *LCA Partners* 1,3 (June 1979) 24.

My practice in the development of narrative or story-telling preaching is to ask readily the question, “Will it tell?” That is, reflecting upon life experiences, events, books, articles, movies, and songs—reflecting on almost anything that happens of which I am aware—and raising the question, “Will it tell?” in the story or sermon for Sunday. The question is good to ask for all who are interested in attaining or improving on a narrative or story-telling style of preaching. It encourages the speaker to be aware of what is happening and to give thought periodically to these experiences in life: the life of the family, ministry, congregation, community, and the world; and to share what is happening, when appropriate to the Scripture for the day, in the story or sermon. What is experienced in life, the world where people live from day to day—what is true of life in all its height, breadth, length, and depth, and relating “My Story” and/or “Your Story” to “God’s story”—is the heart and foundation of story-telling or narrative preaching!

Perhaps worth noting, if not already apparent by now, is that the style of story-telling preaching and witnessing is a return to the method of Jesus who, for the most part, was a narrative speaker. The New Testament calls them “parables,” but they are stories just the same. In fact, whenever Jesus wanted to make a point clear or to explain what he meant, he did not go into a theological discourse on the subject (which is what pastors and theologians are likely to do), but he simply told a story. For example, when a lawyer asked him about inheriting eternal life, Jesus told him to love God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. The lawyer, wishing to justify himself, raised the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus did not reply with a social and ethical dissertation on neighborliness, but said, “A certain man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho...” (the story of the Good Samaritan). Or when the Pharisees and scribes were murmuring because he was receiving and eating with



sinner, Jesus did not go into a lengthy discourse on the doctrine of justification, but responded, “There was a man who had two sons; the younger asked his father to give him the share of property that fell to him....” (the story of the Prodigal Son).

The restoring of story is not a fad, but the regaining of an emphasis in the primitive church, indeed, inherent in Jesus himself. Bultmann thought an existentialist or story-less theology was the best way to understand Scripture and to make it meaningful to the people of his day, and perhaps he was right(?). Those who followed him, attempting to correct or modify his position, believed the same of their endeavor, and perhaps they were right(?). Certainly, they are not to be criticized for what they perceived to be true for their time. But story telling is different! To be sure, story telling may not last as the most popular, or even the primary, means through which people share their faith. There will undoubtedly be other styles and methods that will receive emphasis; they will come and go. Story telling, however, will remain a viable and vital means of preaching and witnessing tomorrow, just as it is today, and as it was in the day of Jesus. The “My Story” and “Your Story” will change in keeping with the life and experience of the believer; and “God’s Story” will be understood anew and made relevant and meaningful for people in every age. But story telling will endure, because it is one of the most effective ways of speaking and sharing the

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truth of a faith and of the reality of life that we, or any generation, know as human beings. Story telling will continue to be utilized by the church, because, once upon a time, quite long ago, there lived a Palestinian Jewish storyteller by the name of Jesus:

Storyteller, yes he was the storytellin’ kind  
He painted pictures in their mind.  
It was the way he let them see  
How things were really s’posed to be.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Richard Wilson, ‘The Parable’ in the musical “He Lived the Good Life” (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973).