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A CLOTHESLINE THEOLOGY FOR THE WORLD: HOW A VALUE-DRIVEN GRAND NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE CAN FRAME THE GOSPEL[1]

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Abstract

This article attempts to answer the question, why is it important to view Scripture as a single grand narrative? Too many of us are specialist in fragmentation when it comes to Scripture. We therefore continue to perpetuate a fragmented understanding of Scripture, and her Author. To grasp a more comprehensive picture of the face of God we must be able to move beyond the individual pieces of clothing placed on the clothesline, whether linear or circular, and learn to value how they all tie together to form a comprehensive wardrobe that brings honor to the Wearer.

As a checker of the New Testament for the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao of the Philippines, spearheaded by SIL's Dick and Lou Hohulin, our co-workers, SIL provided me with exegetical helps to help assist in the translation task. Each volume succinctly summarized ideas and terms presented in commentaries written by renowned theologians. Each book or letter of the New Testament was covered verse by verse. These aids sped up the Bible translation process and cut costs, as purchase of all these commentaries by each translator was no longer necessary.

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the Honor-Shame Conference held at Wheaton College on June 19–21, 2017.

However, a major glitch occurred. The reader ended up with a very fragmented understanding of each verse, which became amplified with each chapter and compounded with the entire document. This resulted in a disjointed document. It had depth, but depth divorced from a unified whole. It was not good for discovering author intent.

Time passed, and I received a new batch of exegetical helps. These were very different from the previous generation. Gone was the incremental, fragmented approach. A unified, thematic approach replaced the disjointed one. Each book or letter was scripted around the perceived theme of the entire document and divided into segments to show how each section and associated terms within it tied back to the overall theme. Like the previous set of exegetical helps, it had depth, but this time it was tied to a unified whole. It treated the text as a literary document that deserved its own rightful distinctions. A holistic hermeneutic had replaced a fragmented one.

In a graduate class on education taught by Judy Lingenfelter at Biola, I observed something not only interesting, but also instructive. She took a child's puzzle composed of six to eight pieces and quickly scattered them indiscriminately on a table. She then called on a nearby student, who by happenstance was Asian, to put it back together. I summarize his response: "I can't, because I didn't see the complete picture on the box cover before you spread the pieces on the table."

Whether a written document or a child's puzzle, the whole is often lost to both those from the West and those of different cultures socialized under Western teachers. Parts receive the focus of attention (and award in the academy), often resulting in the loss of the whole. Westerners tend to be parts specialists or fragmentists. This is not without implications for understanding and teaching Scripture or presenting the gospel that derives from the same.

Most from the West have never heard a single sermon that covers the entire Old or New Testament. Fewer yet have heard one of the entire Bible. Most have never heard a book or letter covered in a single sermon or lesson. Westerners tend not to be people of the Book. Rather, they are people of the New Testament who feast on parts.

Most sermons originate from the New Testament, the last third of the Bible. Most are topical, bunny hopping from one verse to another and paying little attention to context, much like the first exegetical helps I first received. A possible reason exists for the West's penchant for the New Testament. A recent study by Rick Brannan of Logos's LAB blog "examined more than 830,00 verses across more than 300 works" and showed that "only 9 of the top 100 most-cited Bible passages in systematic theology come from the Old Testament—with Genesis accounting for 8 of them. (Isaiah is the

ninth)."[2] Many textbooks on systematic theology keep their readers turned pastor-teachers focused on the New Testament.

Most of us have been asked, "What is your favorite Bible verse?" Fewer have been asked, "What is your favorite book of the Bible?" Most of us have memorized Bible verses; few have memorized entire books or letters,[3] and fewer still the entire New Testament.

Most of us have learned the Bible from cherry pickers, snackers, Scripture surgeons, or fragmentists who believe real theology derives primarily from the New Testament. Since we tend to teach as we were taught (Bible bits learned through systematic theology), we create more of the same, even if the audience prefers to see the cover picture of the puzzle before attempting to put the individual pieces back into a meaningful whole—the one the author had in mind. Is it any wonder why a grand narrative,[4] the big picture, the metanarrative of the Scripture story is so foreign to pastors and people in the pews? Cross-cultural Christian workers and those they serve

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[2] Caleb Lindgren, "Sorry, Old Testament: Most Theologians Don't Use You," *Christianity Today: News & Reporting*, June 13, 2017, christianitytoday.com. *Christianity Today* raised this question, asking experts to comment. The following is part of what Kevin Vanhoozer, professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote: "I hope that any biblically literate theologian knows, first, where to find the most important biblical statements pertaining to various doctrines (the content matters); second, how to read individual biblical statements in their larger literary contexts attend to the distinct contributions of larger forms of biblical discourse (the larger context matters); third, that all the sentences and books of the Bible are elements in a unified drama of redemption, of which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (the whole counsel of God matters)." Craig Keener of Asbury Theological Seminary adds, "Much of Scripture is missing in part because much of Scripture's message is missing when theology starts with merely tradition's categories." Michael Bird of Ridley College noted, "The lesson I'm taking from this is that systematic theologians need to spend more time in biblical theology—in particular, in a biblical theology of the Old Testament." John Stackhouse of Crandall University states, "Since the overall shape of Scripture is a story—and how often Paul himself refers to the narrative of the Bible—it is remarkable that references to actual biblical events rank so low." Michael Allen of Reformed Theological Seminary claims, "we cannot be Christ-centered without being canonical in our approach." William Dyrness of Fuller Theological Seminary responds, "This collection of data is not representative of the Majority-World church and other minority groups, whose voices are mostly ignored, or a least underrepresented in such collections."

[3] In my training with New Tribes Mission (now ETHNOS360), I memorized four New Testament letters.

[4] Defining the post-modern age as "incredulity toward metanarratives" in *The Postmodern Condition,* Jean-Francois Lyotard is credited with popularizing the term "metanarrative."

at home and abroad? Those reaching post-modernists and post-truthers? In the West's penchant for fragmentation, have we made the Bible one of the worst-taught books in the world? Is it time for some course corrections? Is it time to change the conversation? Is it time to provide a clothesline (linear or circular) for all of the individual pieces of clothing that comprise the wardrobe?

The grand tour question for this article is, why is it important to view Scripture as a grand narrative? Sub-questions include: why do we assume that the Bible is a grab bag of stories? characters? symbols? rituals? themes? Why is the grand narrative of Scripture given so little attention? Why does the West (and those who have studied under her) have such a fragmented understanding of Scripture? How did we manage to untell two-thirds of the Bible? Why does the New Testament receive the most favored nation status in the West? Why does the North American church tend to understand the usefulness of the Old Testament solely for children? Was the New Testament ever intended to introduce Jesus to the world? Why do all four Gospels reference Israel before telling the Jesus story? Does the grand narrative of Scripture have anything to say about evangelism or discipleship? What necessary parts of the gospel story have been left on the cutting room floor?

To begin to answer the above questions, Part 1 of this article will define a grand narrative in relation to Scripture, provide reasons for the necessity of such, offer ways to identify it, and conclude with some of the assumptions that drive it. Part 2 investigates how the grand narrative of Scripture frames the gospel. After listening to some negative voices of locals and expatriates from various parts of the world concerning Western evangelism, it suggests possible changes to help put the "good" back into the "good news." It concludes by presenting the grand narrative of the Scripture story from four different value systems—legal, relational, control, and hygienic—offers a grand narrative that integrates all four, and provides two checklists to evaluate the composer's comprehensiveness.

META WHAT?

One of the first assignments in some of my classes is to write the theme (grand narrative/metanarrative) of the Bible in two to three sentences. When hearing this, the looks on the faces of students are always interesting. Some, no doubt, are thinking, doesn't the professor know that there are 66 books in the Bible, and he wants us to distill all that into a few sentences? The response of one seminary student is as follows:

> Why is it necessary in the first place to find a metanarrative in Scripture? Wouldn't it be enough to say, "The Psalms teach us one thing, the prophets teach us a different thing, and the Gospels another, and the Epistles another?" They could all be inspired and yet non-connected, couldn't they?

This seminary student took another route, but he ended up with the same result—a fragmented Bible:

> I have been a Christian for twelve years, I have read my Bible from cover to cover, I have studied the Bible formally in Bible college and informally in many small group Bible studies. However, I have never, in all of my time as a Christian studying the Bible, heard of a method for teaching through God's story in a chronological way so that it is easier to understand. The only exceptions to this reality in my life were the Old and New Testament survey classes that I have taken. Despite the way that those classes attempted to teach somewhat chronologically, the classes were often more structured around different genres of the content of different books of the Bible, and the survey courses never actually intended to teach Scripture chronologically.

Taught by Westerners, this young, married, Middle Eastern Indian seminarian smartly knew, seemingly unlike his sages, that the pieces had to be placed into a unified whole to make sense. "For me, I began my life with Christ with a vague understanding of Truth, and then spent the next fifteen years picking through sermons and books, trying to get the pieces put together into the right places."

A cross-cultural worker in China conveys a similar story:

> I will never forget my second year in China when I was working with about four girls on Bible study tools/practices. I met with one of them for lunch (the oldest in the group and therefore the de facto leader) and asked her what she thought would be helpful to study in our next session (as I wanted it to meet their needs). She said, "I want to learn the Bible." Upon further conversation, I discovered she wanted to understand the metanarrative of the Bible, how it all fits together. I was able to explain on a chart the timeline of all the Bible stories and how they fit together that way, but had no practice with or concept of a metanarrative in Scripture before she asked me that question, despite sixteen years of Christian schooling, each year with a Bible/theology class. I am still working on my understanding of the metanarrative of Scripture, or rather a clear retelling of it.

Before answering why it is necessary to find a grand narrative in the first place, I will first define it.

Defining a Grand Narrative in Relation to Scripture

A number of equally valid terms can be substituted for grand narrative. Some of these include: "overarching tale," "world-plot," "cosmic plot," "arch-narrative," "God story," "metanarrative," "guiding narrative," "Great Story," "theodrama," and "divine drama." For the purpose of this article in relation to Scripture, I will define a grand narrative as a single, succinct,

all-encompassing, summary of all (whole) the individual (parts) stories, symbols, and rituals within Scripture, giving each its meaning and validity. I will use grand narrative and metanarrative interchangeably.

A grand narrative serves as a totalizing framework[5] for all of the individual pieces, tying them into and expressing them as a unified whole. In the case of metanarrative, it is the narrative of narratives.[6] It (meta) transcends all other narratives. It answers the question, what is this Book all about? In relation to Scripture, it unpacks "the purpose of God in all its dimension" (Ac 20:27, VOICE). Moreover, it transcends *all* other metanarratives! It is *the* grand narrative of all grand narratives!

The Need for a Grand Narrative of Scripture

Reflecting on how I initially learned the Bible, I realized that the 66 pieces of the puzzle were virtually scattered over the tabletop by my dedicated, faithful Bible teachers, Sunday school teachers, and pastors. I was never shown the complete picture on the box top. Theologian David Wells tells us why this could have happened:

> . . . the fragmenting of knowledge within the seminary curriculum. Subjects and fields develop their own literatures, working assumptions, vocabularies, technical terms, criteria for what is true and false, and canons of what literature and what views should be common knowledge among those working in the subjects. The result of this is a profound increase in knowledge but often an equally profound loss in understanding what it all means, how the knowledge in one field should inform that in another. This is the bane of every seminarian's existence. The dissociated fields—biblical studies, theology, church history, homiletics, ethics, pastoral psychology, missiology—become a rain of hard pellets relentlessly bombarding those who are on the pilgrimage to graduation. Students are left more or less defenseless as they run this gauntlet, supplied little help in their efforts to determine how to relate the fields one to another. In the end, the only warrant for their having to endure the onslaughts is that somehow and someday it will come together in a church.[7]

If the picture on the puzzle box top were to emerge, it would mostly likely be up to me to put it together. Can 66 books written by multiple authors in different geographical locations over centuries actually produce a unified

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[5] See Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2003), 87.

[6] Christopher Wright asserts that "The Bible presents itself to us fundamentally as a narrative, a historical narrative at one level, but a grand metanarrative at another." *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 63.

[7] David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 224–5.

story? If not, it is unnecessary to discover the grand narrative that ties it all together. If so, a grand narrative is discoverable. Philip Yancey concludes that it is definitely possible to discern a single story:

> I find it remarkable that this diverse collection of manuscripts written over a period of a millennium by several dozen authors possesses as much unity as it does. To appreciate this feat, imagine a book begun 500 years before Columbus and just now completed. The Bible's striking unity is one strong sign that God directed its composition. By using a variety of authors and cultural situations, God developed a complete record of what he wants us to know; amazingly, the parts fit together in such a way that a single story does emerge.[8]

D. A. Carson concurs:

> The Bible as a whole document tells a story, and, properly used, that story can serve as a metanarrative that shapes our grasp of the entire Christian faith. In my view, it is increasingly important to spell this out to Christians and to non-Christians, as part of our proclamation of the gospel. The ignorance of basic Scripture is so disturbing in our day that Christian preaching that does not seek to remedy the lack is simply irresponsible.[9]

While definitely an untidy landscape of hills, valleys, deserts, bodies of water, lush fields, and forests, it is possible for a grand narrative to emerge. The 66 pieces of the puzzle can come together in a picture that closely resembles that which the Creator designed.[10]

Fragmentation can easily result in the loss of the big picture. For Fodor and LePore, that loss has enormous negative consequences. They argue that the whole is greater than the parts and, in reality, determines the vary nature of the individual parts. In fact, it is impossible to understand the parts in isolation from the whole. They also argue that the parts are intricately interrelated.[11]

Both the parts and the whole (grand narrative) are necessary for true meaning to prevail. Flannery O'Connor reminds us, "the whole story is the meaning."[12] Even so, the individual parts give way to and enhance the bigger

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[8] Philip Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read: Why the Old Testament Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 21.

[9] D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 84.

[10] Two early influential authors who concentrated on the metanarrative of Scripture include Graham Scroggie's *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption: The Bible as A Whole, Vols. 1–3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976); and Daniel Fuller's *The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

[11] Jerry Fodor and Ernest LePore, *Holism: A Shopper's Guide* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

[12] Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 73.

picture revealed in the grand narrative. To lose the grand narrative is to lose the meaning that the totalizing framework is designed to provide and protect. T. Desmond Alexander captures this concept well when he concludes, "Each book contributes something special to the meta-story and, in turn, the meta-story offers a framework within which each book may be best interpreted. In this regard, the longstanding principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture makes considerable practical sense."[13] Part of our hermeneutic must be to analyze the big story, the grand narrative, as well as the individual stories, because "meanings emerge from literary *wholes*."[14]

However, if the grand narrative is lost, consequences result. Such a loss opens the door to the possibility of multiple interpretations. Dean Flemming, focusing on the gospel story, cautions:

> We should not seek the heart of the gospel that we are trying to contextualize in any core of doctrines or in a set of timeless propositions that can be abstracted from Scripture. The danger is that when it comes to actually defining a gospel core (and what is *not* the core), it is hard to avoid remaking the gospel in line with our own cultural and doctrinal biases.[15]

Michael Goheen discusses domestication possibilities in relation to the sweep of Scripture: "If the story of the Bible is fragmented into bits (historical-critical, devotional, homiletic, systematic-theological, moral) it can easily be domesticated by the reigning story of culture."[16] Jackson Wu posits a possible domestication outcome:

> Lacking a framework inherent to the Bible, one inadvertently imposes a structure onto the narrative. Thus, many Western missionaries will naturally select and organize stories in ways that tacitly reflect Western culture. Even though they are using a "storying" methodology, their narrative becomes a "Trojan horse" for their systematic theology.[17]

Bifurcators, beware!

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[13] T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 10.

[14] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 82.

[15] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 301.

[16] Michael W. Goheen, "The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story in the 21st Century," Public lecture presented at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., (November 2, 2006), 9.

[17] Jackson Wu, "Rewriting the Gospel for Oral Cultures: Why Honor and Shame Are Essential to the Gospel Story," in *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference*, eds., Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: Capstone Enterprisers Ltd., 2015), 70.

A second reason for the necessity of a metanarrative is that a certain segment of the population prefers a more global way of learning. In *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development,* Malcolm Knowles, et al. develop a Whole-Part-Whole learning theory geared towards Western adult learners. The authors offer an andragogical learning template for instructional programs and lessons that follows the "rhythm of learning"—identifying the interrelationship of the whole to all the parts.[18] While geared for Westerners, this learning template, with certain adaptations, has deep implications well beyond adult learners in the West.

Field-dependent learners compose a significant number of learners around the globe and not just adults. Field-dependent learners[19] prefer a more global, holistic, and visual perspective of what is being discussed. They have an internal need to know the big picture *first.* Without such, they tend to impose their own sense of order, placing the parts into a culturally meaningful whole. They also "prefer less structured learning environments such as discussion or discovery."[20] Field-dependent learners prefer learning by discovery within previously identified soft boundaries.

Lastly, why is awareness of the grand narrative of Scripture important? "Because one's understanding of the sweep of Scripture is the heart hermeneutic that interprets every other part that is heard, read, or seen."[21] This is true whether one has articulated the grand narrative or not.

> The Psalmist reminds us, "The entirety of Your word is truth" (Ps 119:160, VOICE).
>
> We must remember that the New Testament builds upon the Old Testament, rather than merely adding to it. The four Gospels find their roots embedded deeply in the Old Testament. The Epistles find their framework in Acts, a natural outgrowth of the Gospels. Revelation builds on everything that precedes it, bringing a unified finality to the entire cannon. . . . The Jeweler has set the individual diamonds into a finished product—an eye-catching tennis bracelet with a hefty price tag. This raises an interesting question: can one really understand the parts without understanding the whole?[22]

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[18] Malcolm Knowles, et al., *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

[19] H.A. Witkin and D.R. Goodenough, "Cognitive Styles: Essence and Origins, Field Dependence and Field Independence," *Psychological Issues* 14 (51), 1981.

[20] B. Wooldridge, "Increasing the Effectiveness of University/College Instruction: Integrating the Results of Learning Style Research into Course Design and Delivery," in *The Importance of Learning Styles: Understanding the Implications for Learning, Course Design, and Education,* eds., R. R. Sims and S. J. Sims (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 52.

[21] Tom Steffan, "Saving the Locals from Our Theologies," unpublished paper, 2017, 28.

[22] Tom Steffan, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media/InterVarsity Press, 2005), 93–94.

For a more complete understanding of the Author and his Word, our hermeneutic must encompass the sweep of Genesis through Revelation,[23] not just the individual parts.

I summarize this section with a quote from the *Christian Education Journal:*

> Like a thesis statement in an article or book, the metanarrative of Scripture serves as a succinct summary alerting the reader/listener of what is to come (often mysteriously) in more explicit detail. While few have ever attempted to write this out in a few sentences, intuitively it defines everything one reads or hears from Scripture. Writing it out and constantly revising it will enable the Christian worker to better understand the unified nature of Scripture. The metanarrative of Scripture fights a fragmented and false understanding of the Sacred Storybook.[24]

WAYS TO HELP IDENTIFY THE GRAND NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE

When you enter an all-you-can-eat buffet, which foods do you choose first or automatically skip over? How do you place them on your plate? segregated parts? overlapping piles? all mixed together? In what order do you eat them? What is your buffet culture philosophy? What assumptions drive your samplings and selections? Are you a vegan? carnivore? Do you have a sweet tooth?

Before going to a buffet, we may discuss the types of food offered at different locations—Italian, Brazilian, Chinese, and Japanese. We do not usually, however, sit down to review our sampling, selection, and stacking philosophy and procedures. This does not mean that we do not have them. Allow me to make an assumption. Everyone has a foundational sampling, selection, and stacking philosophy, as well as a plan, whether articulated or not. Moving the discussion from the buffet to the Bible, Jackson Wu raises some pertinent questions:

> Certainly, many missiologists rightly stress the need to tell the "grand story" of the Bible; yet, what framework are people using to shape that overarching narrative? What implicit theology underlies our story selection? On what basis have we chosen one story thread and not another?[25]

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[23] Tom Steffan, "Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol," *Missiology: An International Review* 38 no. 2 (2010): 153–54.

[24] Tom Steffan, "Discoveries Made While Reconnecting God's Story to Scripture and Service," *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, 14(1) (2017): 178–79.

[25] Wu, "Rewriting the Gospel," 74.

The seven-mile Emmaus road trip is instructive in discovering the grand narrative of the sacred storybook. Roy Gingrich makes this astute observation about that eventful two-and-a-half hour walk down review lane:

> It cannot mean just a few scattered predictions about the Messiah. It means the Old Testament as a whole, encompassing all three of the major divisions of the Old Testament that the Jews traditionally recognized. . . . The Old Testament as a whole, through its promises, its symbols, and its pictures of salvation, looks forward to the actual accomplishment of salvation that took place once for all in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[26]

To discover the grand narrative of Scripture, it will be necessary to consider "The Old Testament as a whole"[27] (the Emmaus road discussion), as well as a sweep of the entire New Testament. This assumes that to understand the Scripture story, it is necessary to consider it as a literary document, or, as Aristotle determined, one that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Following are possible ways to help accomplish this.

Compare the Bookends

T. Desmond Alexander rightly suggests, "a story's conclusion provides a good guide to the themes and ideas dominant throughout."[28] We can go further. Any well-written book or movie has strong ties between the

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[26] Roy E. Gingrich, *Old Testament Survey* (Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2001), 4.

[27] J. Daniel Hays contends: "The prophets are powerful and inspiring. Their criticism of sin and injustice is harsh, scathing, and unyielding. Yet their words to the faithful are gentle and encouraging. Furthermore, in the prophets we are able to engage with God himself, for he is a major character throughout the prophetic material. God speaks and acts. He grieves, hurts, explodes in anger, comforts, loves, rebukes, and restores. God reveals much about himself through the prophets. We see his transcendence—that is, his 'otherness.' He is sovereign over all the world and in total control of history. Isaiah will ask, Who can comprehend God or his ways? Yet we are also shown God's immanence—his presence with us and his 'connectedness' to his people on earth.

"Likewise, the prophets have a lot to say about people. In the prophets, we see a story unfold that recounts how the people of Israel (and their neighbors) responded to God and his revelation to them. We see a tragic story of rebellion against God, followed by terrible consequences. At the same time, the prophets show us God's great capacity for forgiveness reflected in his constant call for repentance and renewal of the hearts of his wayward people. Although most of the people will reject God's call for repentance, the prophets will also tell us their own personal stories—how they encountered God and then proclaimed his word valiantly and faithfully in dangerous and hostile situations." *The Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 22.

[28] Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 10.

prologue and the epilogue. The Bible is no exception. Major matching themes, symbols, and rituals can be identified in Genesis 1–3 (prologue of the Garden) and Revelations 21–22 (epilogue of the New Jerusalem) (see Table 1). Identifying these will aid in discovering the grand narrative of the Bible in that they bracket the in-between chapters and characters into a unified whole, giving them meaning, legitimacy, aura, and authority.

Identify the Controlling Stories and Characters

The Bible contains hundreds of stories, possibly eight hundred,[29] depending on how they are separated. Gabriel Fackre defines story as "an account of characters and events in a plot moving over time and space through conflict toward resolution."[30]

Is the Bible just a grab bag of stories? Of course not! Jennifer Jagerson astutely asks:

> Is it possible to teach a paradigmatic story from each book of the Bible that makes clear to the oral learner what the big picture of the book is about? Might these paradigmatic stories be used to knit together the larger picture of God's overarching historical work to help insure a strong understanding of the meta-narrative?[31]

TABLE 1

Comparing the Bible's Epilogue and Prologue in Search of a Grand Narrative

GENESIS 1–3	REVELATION 21–22
1:1 "In the beginning God"	21:21:6 "I am the Alpha and Omega"
1:2 Earth chaotic	22:3 Earth orderly
1:26–28 Rule over my creation	22:5 Reign forever
1:28 "Be fruitful and multiply"	21:24 "People of all the nations"
2:9 Tree of Life in Garden	22:2 Tree of life on banks of rivers
3:3 Death	21:4 No death
3:8–10 Walk with God interrupted	21:3 Walk with God resumed
3:15 Satan's initial triumph	20:10; 22:3 Lamb's ultimate triumph
3:17 Ground cursed	22:3 No more curse
3:23 Banished from the Garden	21:2–3 Welcomed to new City
3:24 Withdraws from God's face	22:4–5 Will see God's face
Others	Others

[29] Personal correspondence with Grant Lovejoy, July 2, 2009.

[30] Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story (Vol 2): Authority: Scripture in the Church for the World (Pastoral Systematics)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 5.

[31] Jennifer Jagerson, "Hermeneutics and the Methods of Oral Bible Storytelling for the Evangelization and Discipleship of Oral Learners," *Great Commission Research Journal* 4 (2013): 260.

A controlling story is "a story that is collectively recognized as promoting a significant aspect of culture that divides insiders from outsiders."[32] What are the controlling stories that serve as turning points to advance the storyline—the grand narrative? Some of these would include: creation, the fall, the flood, Abrahamic covenant, building the temple, and Jesus' arrival.

Is the Bible just a grab bag of characters? Of course not! God has purposely chosen certain characters to advance the plotline of the specific narrative and the metanarrative. Who within the controlling stories are the controlling characters that drive the plotline of the specific story? How do they advance the mystery of the grand narrative? How do the characters make him the honored hero?[33]

Glenn correctly posits, "If I can't tell you who Moses, Paul, Abraham, Jesus, and David are, and in what order they appear in the Bible's drama, I can't possibly know much about what's really going on there."[34] It is time we become proficient in identifying the controlling characters (spiritual and human) that drive the individual stories and advance the grand narrative. These could include Lucifer, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, David, Jesus, Peter, Paul. Identifying the controlling stories and controlling characters of Scripture and their sequence provides another means to help define the grand narrative of the Scripture story that makes God the honored hero.

Identify the Controlling Symbols and Rituals

Is the Bible a grab bag of symbols and rituals? Of course not! Just as there are controlling stories and characters that help advance and define the grand narrative, controlling symbols and controlling rituals do the same. Symbols such as trees, doors, covenants, light, darkness, temples, rainbows, ark, dove, altars, blood, water, wind, circumcision, clothing, sheep, soap, oil, temple, and a host of others can be traced across the rugged landscape of Scripture, giving meaning to, and being defined by, the grand narrative. The same is true of controlling rituals such as washings, offerings, communal meals,

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[32] Tom Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement* (Rainmaker, 2018).

[33] Charles Koller believes, "the Bible was not given to reveal the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to reveal the hand of God in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not as a revelation of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, but as a revelation of the *Savior* of Mary and Martha and Lazarus." *How to Preach Without Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 32. Fee and Stuart rightly conclude, "Old Testament narratives are not just stories about people who lived in Old Testament times. They are first and foremost stories about what God did to and through those people. . . . God is the hero of the story. . . . God is the supreme 'protagonist' or leading decisive character in all narratives." *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 81.

[34] Glenn R. Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves: Learning to Read & Live the Bible Well* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016), 13.

assembling, and baptisms. What are the controlling symbols and controlling rituals within Scripture? Identifying these will help bring clarity to the grand narrative of Scripture.

Survey the Summary Verses

Good authors know that readers require periodic summaries. That includes the authors of Scripture. Richard Bauckham notes, "Scripture does not and could not summarize its story from a standpoint outside the story, which is unfinished. The summaries are themselves part of the story and even contribute to the story's own development,"[35] and we could add, to the development of a grand narrative of Scripture as well. Kevin Vanhoozer summarizes, "The rule of faith was not an invention of the church, but a 'construal' of Scripture as a unified narrative . . . nothing less than a summary of Scripture's own storyline."[36]

Some of the Old Testament summary statements could include: Exodus 3:15–17, 4:29–31, 6:6–9, 15; Deuteronomy 1:6–3:29, 6:10–25, 26:5–9, 32:7–43; Joshua 24:2–15; 1 Samuel 12:6–13; 1 Chronicles 16:14–22; Job 38; Psalms 76, 78, 105, 106:6–12, 136; Jeremiah 2:1–19; and Nehemiah 9:5–37. New Testament summary statements could include the genealogies in Matthew and Luke; Luke 24:27; Acts 7, 13; Romans 5–8 (exile in small pieces), 9–10; and Hebrews 11. How do these summary statements help build and refine the grand narrative of the Scripture story?

Determine the Chapter Breakdowns or Acts of the Bible

A grand narrative of Scripture assumes that chapters or acts connect the dots (the Bible bits) from Genesis through Revelation. It assumes that all stories are embedded in other stories.[37] N. T. Wright understands the embedded nature of the Scripture story when he writes:

> Everything Paul says about Jesus belongs *within one or more of the other stories,* of the story of the creator and the cosmos, of the story of God and humankind and/or the story of God and Israel . . . there really is, in one sense, a Pauline "story of Jesus," but it is always the story of how Jesus *enables the other stories* to proceed to their appointed resolution.[38]

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[35] Richard Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, eds., Ellen F. Davis and Richard. B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 42.

[36] Kevin J. Vanhooser, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005), 204, 206.

[37] Story also assumes the embeddedness of a cultural context (e.g., political, economical, religious, and geography, all of these, or others).

[38] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* Book 1, Parts I and II (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 517.

How do various authors perceive the chapters or acts of Scripture?[39] Some see a two-chapter book—the Old Testament and the New Testament. Others, like Arthur Glasser, propose a three-chapter book—Primeval History (Ge 1–11); Abraham and Israel (Ge 11–Ac 1); and Holy Spirit, Church, and Consumption (Ac 2–Rev 22).[40] Numerous others, including Trevin Wax, prefer a four-chapter book: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consumption.[41] William Dyrness assigns the drama five acts: Creation, Exodus, Exile, Jesus Christ, and Consummation.[42] Bartholomew and Goheen identify six acts: Creation, Rebellion, Redemption, Jesus Christ, the Church, and Restoration.[43] Moreau et. al offer a seven-act drama: Creation and Fall, Calling a People through Abraham, Rescuing and Separating a People, Maintaining God's Holiness, Save a People: Jesus the Messiah, Gathering a People: The Church, and Renewing All Creation: The Consummation.[44] The titles of these chapters or acts not only help discover how the authors perceive the grand narrative of the Scripture story, but they also identify the hero[45] of the book. Some of the headers will be found in the individual stories as well.

What are the assumptions behind identifying a grand narrative of the Scripture story? At least the following could be included:

1. History belongs to God.
2. God is the hero of history.
3. History is story shaped.
4. History is eschatological.
5. Scripture belongs to God.
6. God is the hero of Scripture.
7. Scripture is story shaped.
8. Scripture is eschatological.

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[39] What are the favorite numbers of different cultures? Why do Americans like threes? First nations like fours, but no fourth floor is found on the elevators in Jakarta? Chinese like eights? What are the implications for the use of numbers in sermons? evangelism? curriculum breakdowns?

[40] Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 29–30.

[41] Trevin Wax, *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011).

[42] William A. Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 1983).

[43] Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 12–13.

[44] A. Scott Moreau, et al., *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 29.

[45] Duvall and Hayes correctly assert, "If we miss God in the story, then we have missed the story." *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 349.

9. Chosen characters advance the storyline.
10. The gospel is embedded in God's total story.
11. We find our story of significance in (his) story.
12. It provides the hermeneutic to interpret Scripture.
13. It exposes heresy.
14. It challenges every worldview and theology.
15. It provides a framework for authentic local-global theology.
16. It offers softness and pliability for various faith traditions.
17. God is defined by what he does.
18. Others?

Whether a buffet or the Bible, unarticulated assumptions prevail in most of our eating and meaning-making practices. It is time to articulate them so that they can be better leveraged. It is difficult to leverage what we have not acknowledged or articulated.

THE ROLE OF THE GRAND NARRATIVE IN THE GOSPEL FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Christ followers from the West tend to favor theological fragments conveyed through abstract concepts often summarized in three points. This has frequently translated into a gospel presentation composed of abstract principles and ideas presented through culturally preferred numbers.

The "good news" communicated has also been strongly oriented toward a value system that biases legal language. This configuration can cause the majority of the world at home[46] and abroad to have a difficult time understanding the gospel, much less communicating it to others. The "good news" fails to magically come across as "good news." Rather, it often comes across as Western, foreign, or bad news.

Hear what some of the local voices and expatriates are saying in regards to Western evangelism and discipleship. For example, a Japanese church leader asked a missionary, "Why did Jesus have to die?" After the standard explanation—to pay for our sins—his response was, "To be honest, I don't find that explanation satisfactory."[47]

One voice from India declares: "It is rather alarming that nearly all teaching and preaching on atonement in Indian churches uses exclusively the language of medieval Roman law courts even though that setting is foreign to every Indian Christian's experience."[48]

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[46] See Andy Crouch, "The Return of Shame," *Christianity Today* 59 (2005): 32–41.

[47] Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 153.

[48] Steven R. Benson, "By One Man's Obedience Many Will Be Made Righteous: Christian Understanding of the Atonement in the Context of Asian Religious Pluralism," *Asia Journal of Theology* 9 (1995): 101–22.

An Indian student wrote this on her final exam for a class on honor and shame taught by Werner Mischke:

> Most of the missionaries who came to India in the past tried to teach people based on Western cultural values. This made a deep wound and separation in the society between East and West. Christians and Bible are considered completely foreign. We [Christians] are also following the same tradition and never looked at the Bible with our own cultural thinking. . . . So the effective contextualization of the gospel became a failure and India is still largely unreached.[49]

Tite Tiénou calls for a Christian message that is de-Westernized:

> If Christianity is de-Westernized, Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America will be able to defend themselves when accused of being agents of Westernization and puppets in the hands of foreigners whose intention is the destruction of local cultures and religions.[50]

Soong-Chan Rah drills deeper:

> It is the arrogance of Western, white captivity to assume that one's own cultural point of view is the be all and end all of the gospel story. Every seat has its advantages and disadvantages, and it is imperative for the entire global community of believers to learn from one another in order to more fully understand the depth of the character of God.[51]

Two other Indians offer some insightful advice, "You [Western Christians] are presenting Jesus with a knife and fork, but the gospel has to be eaten with fingers here." As one Brahman surmised, "We have not rejected Jesus Christ; you have not presented him in a way we can understand."[52]

These chilling and challenging comments demand change from our short- and long-termers taking the gospel abroad and those who train them. Why? Because, "If you mess up the message, you mess up the movement."[53] If we do mess up the message, expect to see nominalism, syncretism, split-level Christianity, legalism, and other "isms." Evangelism and ongoing discipleship are intimately tied together. Foundations matter! So, what must change? What can help minimize such communication noise?

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[49] Werner Mischke, August 31, 2015, wernermischke.org.

[50] Tite Tiénou, "Christianity Theology in an Era of World Christianity," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, eds., Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 42.

[51] Soong-Chan Rah, T*he Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 110.

[52] Jeremy Weber, "Incredible Indian Christianity: A Special Report on World's Most Vibrant Christward Movement," *Christianity Today* 60 (9): 47–48.

[53] Tom Steffan, *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 132.

What changes will help make the "good news" actually come across as "good news," not just abroad, but at home as well, to different ethnic groups? to post-modern and post-truth generations?

Change Our Perception of the Bible

The answers to the above questions begin with one's view of the Bible. Rather than perceiving the Bible as a fragmented self-help book, or a private devotional catalog, or a segmented encyclopedia, or a magic book of multiple tricks, or a book of lists of rules, or a splintered moral manual, or a topical theological textbook (common among those formally trained in the Bible and those they teach), we must perceive the Bible as a unified sacred storybook—the Scripture story. Perceiving the Bible as the Scripture story

> allows its readers and listeners to grasp the big picture, receive a more complete picture of God, expand traditional theological categories of convenience, respect the literary genres of the Storybook, move beyond argument-based evangelism, utilize the entire Storybook in evangelism, wed evangelism and follow-up, and embolden faith stories.[54]

The Old Testament matters. The New Testament matters. Unified, they do what neither can do on its own—capture the mystery of the grand narrative of the Scripture story.

A story, including the Scripture story, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This requires a grand narrative, a metanarrative that bundles the multiple pieces into a unified whole, thereby projecting while protecting the Author's message.

Determine the Predominate Genre of Scripture

While the genres in Scripture are numerous, if limited to three—propositions, narrative, poetry—which is predominate? In *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, I overestimated the percentage of narrative, assigning it 75 percent.[55] Poetry received 15 percent, with 10 percent going to propositions. After further research,[56] I revised the percentages as follows: narrative (55–

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[54] Steffan, *Reconnecting God's Story*, 90.

[55] Ibid., 36

[56] For example, Millard Erickson, *The Evangelical Left*, makes this observation as to the role of narrative in Scripture: "Indeed if one does a comparative analysis of the content of the Bible, the New Testament books that seem to deal most explicitly with narrative constitute only 56 to 62 percent of the content, depending upon whether one treats Revelation as narrative. In the Old Testament, the narrative books (Genesis-Job) constitute 57 percent of the material. It can, of course, be argued that the prophetic books contain considerable narrative, which they surely do, or even that they represent interpretation of the narrative and that the narrative is an interpreted narrative." *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Post-conservative Evangelical Theology* (Carlisle, UK: STL, 1997), 58.

65 percentage), poetry (25–35 percent), and propositions (10 percent).[57] Eugene Peterson persuasively posits, "The Holy Spirit's literary genre of choice is story."[58]

Perceive How the Grand Narrative of Scripture Frames the Gospel

Many Western Christians believe that the gospel, the good news, began in the New Testament. After all, Jesus did go "into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God" (Mk 1:14, NIV). Reductionism reigns.

Scot McKnight offers a reason for "the near total ignorance of many Christians today of the Old Testament story. One reason why so many Christians today do not know the Old Testament is because their 'gospel' doesn't even need it."[59] Such understanding (or lack thereof) means that the need for a metanarrative encompassing both Testaments will be absent. "It's like we began in the middle of the book, rather than the beginning, expecting them to know the introductory chapters."[60] Interestingly, however, the gospel is discussed or implied multiple times in both Testaments (see Ps 96:2; 106:7–47; Isa 40:9; 52:7; 61:1; Ac 13:32, 33; 14:15; Ro 1:1–4; Gal 3:8; 1Co 15:3–4). Reductionism of gospel to the New Testament must be challenged. Not all parts of the Old Testament drama should end up on the cutting room floor.

Jesus' overview of the Hebrew Scriptures to the two despondent disciples on the Emmaus road demonstrates the powerful role of the Old Testament in framing the gospel: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Lk 24:44, NIV). The story, of course, continued into the New Testament, tying both Testaments into a unified book driven by chapters and characters that advance the mysterious storyline in search of a satisfactory solution.

A question that requires debate and specific answers is, how does one's grand narrative or metanarrative of the Scripture story frame the gospel? The answer is central because the grand narrative of the Scripture story, not just the New Testament, frames the gospel.

Since many field-dependent people prefer hearing/seeing the big picture before the parts, possibly one of the best initial verbal presentations of the gospel for this audience is the grand narrative. As McKnight rightly concludes, "Any real gospeling has to lay out the story of Scripture if it wants to put back the 'good' into the good news," because "without that story there

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[57] Steffan, "Pedagogical Conversions," 150.

[58] Eugene H. Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997), 3.

[59] Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 44.

[60] Tom Steffen, *Business as Usual in the Missions Enterprise?* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1999), 79.

is no gospel."[61] Should they need more time to digest its "good" implications, they now have a big-picture framework in place. Any additional gospel presentations from others (articles of clothing) will now have a clothesline (linear or circular, depending upon pedagogical need)[62] upon which to hang them.

Give Narrative Theology a Place at the Table

I often ask students if they have taken classes in systematic theology. Every hand goes up. biblical theology? Fewer hands go up. historical theology? A few hands show, maybe. natural theology? It was a part of systematics. narrative theology? It is virtually unknown! How can that be, if narrative is the predominant genre of Scripture? Why does systematic theology (pulling treads out of a weaving) reign as queen of the sciences in the seminaries taught by surgeon specialists? N. T. Wright advances this answer:

> What happened with the Enlightenment is the denarrativization of the Bible. And then within postmodernity, people tried to pay attention to the narrative without paying attention to the fact that it's a true story. . . . The overarching story of who Jesus was, the story of God and Israel and the coming of Jesus, has to have a historical purchase on reality.[63]

In relation to theology, the Enlightenment was instrumental in replacing narrative with philosophy,[64] events with ideas, and characters with concepts. Paauw posits:

> The abandonment of story in the modernist attempt to make sense of the Bible is one of the biggest mistakes God's people have made with the Scriptures in the entire history of the church. . . . It is precisely the narrative character of the Bible that allows us to make an authentic connection between these ancient writings and our own lives.[65]

Sadly, if story has little or no focus, certainly *less focus still* will be on the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Nevertheless, hope is possible. In

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[61] McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, 85, 36.

[62] A perspective missionary asked this thought-provoking question, "Don't we need to teach people to think linearly so that they can understand Scripture?" This would be a great discussion question. How will this pedagogical preference affect cyclic or spiral thinkers?

[63] N. T. Wright, interview by Tim Stafford, "Mere Mission," *Christianity Today*, 2007, 40.

[64] Bruce Bradshaw notes, "According to Jacques Ellul, 'all errors in Christian thought' began when Christianity shifted the center of theology from history to philosophy." *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 22.

[65] Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves*, 106.

Shame and Guilt, Hannes Wiher captures one possible reason for the *reentry* of narrative theology:

> The analytic, conceptual, guilt-oriented thought patterns of the Enlightenment made the narrative disappear, and their failure made it reappear again. The development of narrative theology has to do with the rediscovery of shame orientation in theology.[66]

Gabriel Fackre defines narrative theology as "discourse about God in the setting of story."[67] If the predominant genre of the sacred storybook is narrative, and it is, evangelicals must give narrative theology its rightful role in the hermeneutic process.[68] We must learn to treat the Bible as literature composed of various genres, as did the revised SIL exegetical helps that listened to the entire document. We must acknowledge the sequence of the theologies before assigning the superiority of one over the others. In reality, they are all integrated, even if their formation has a sequence.

The Bible did not arrive as a book composed of Western systematic theology. Rather, systematic theology evolved over time from the multiple narratives that composed her as Western theologians teased out the answers to *their* questions. This often resulted in philosophical ideas being separated from characters and events—what I call The Great Bifurcation. This means that most people who were taught Western systematic theology will have to learn how to restory, renarrate, redrama, reevent, recharacter, resymbol, reritual, remetaphor (narraphor, symbophor, rituaphor),[69] and remystify theology laundered of her earthiness so that abstract, philosophical concepts can be placed within concrete characters and events.

Narrative theology, which focuses on the entire text that allows the flow of the various acts and actions within them to determine the theologies included by the author, can help reunite The Great Bifurcation. Narrative theology seeks to discern the theologies included by the author in the entire text. In contrast to systematic theology, which seeks to answer the theologian's questions, narrative theology attempts to discover the answers to the biblical author's questions.

While both the whole and the parts are necessary and should be valued, the start point is not theological treads (parts), rather, it is story (the weaving). The metaphor can be changed to, "Story is the ring that provides a setting for the precious gems of propositions."[70]

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[66] Hannes Wiher, *Shame and Guilt: A Key to Cross-cultural Ministry* (Hamburg, Germany: Culture and Science Publication, 2003), 333.

[67] Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview," *Interpretation* 37, 1983, 343.

[68] In reviving narrative theology (for some in the evangelical world), I am not including the aspect that denies the historicity of the biblical narrative.

[69] Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying.*

[70] Ibid.

Consider Character Theology

What if other theologies could paint different perspectives of the face of God? What could "character theology" add to the existing theologies? With more than 2900 characters in Scripture, how could (do) they teach abstract doctrine? Ruth Tucker advocates pushing personalities to the front page:

> For many publishers and preachers and ordinary people, the Bible is largely a manual of propositions. The colorful personalities pushing their way out of its pages are seen as secondary—if that. But any attempt to turn this incredible chronicle into a theological dissertation destroys the very essence of its message. We learn how to live and how to die by putting ourselves into the narrative. Indeed, we recognize these characters by looking in the mirror.[71]

Allow me to elaborate on character theology:

> By character theology I mean utilizing some of the more than 2900 human characters in the Bible, including groups, such as the Pharisees or Sadducees, along with those associated with the spirit world, such as the Holy Spirit, Satan, angels, and demons, to teach abstract doctrines, morals, and ethics. Character theology relies on earthy, concrete characters to frame abstract truths and concepts, thereby giving ideas a home. It does so even as it retains God as the center of the story, and the individual story's place within the broader sweep of Scripture. . . . For example, rather than teach the abstract doctrine of justification by faith, let the earthy lives of Abraham and David define this abstract doctrine (Romans 4). Or, review the life of Moses to teach the doctrine of adoption. . . . Dogma without spiritual and human characters defining it is on the fast track to coldness. Bringing Bible characters out of the closet will heat up the conversation.[72]

Character theology, which should precede concept studies, provides listeners and readers a concrete way to redraw the face of God.

In relation to connecting the cumulative characters to the biblical metanarrative, I wrote, "We have to study not only the spiders, or the Bible characters; it is equally important to study the web, or the meta-narrative . . . because God has chosen to weave his grand story with the smaller stories of particular people."[73] Telling their stories is a part of telling *the* story; they make the invisible metanarrative visible. If character theology is tied to whole-part-whole learning theory for field-dependent learners, a powerful pedagogy to redraw the face of God can result for many.

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[71] Ruth A. Tucker, *The Biographical Bible: Exploring the Biblical Narrative from Adam and Eve to John of Patmos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 2.

[72] Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying.*

[73] Steffan, *The Facilitator Era*, 148.

Character theology has the potential to paint a different picture of the face of God through the numerous good and evil characters and the fence setters in between, portrayed on the pages of the Scripture story. That is because, as John Goldingjay contends, the "story-shapedness of Scripture corresponds to the story-shapedness of human experience."[74] The lives of Bible characters speak to lives of all peoples as they contain slices of life—family feuds, sickness, sexual sins, warfare, barrenness, birth, curses, death, power abuse, persecution, poverty, execution, employment, intimacy, and finances.[75] A cast of biblical characters makes it easy for listeners and viewers to identify with their choices, the resulting consequences, the implications they have for abstract doctrines, and the role it plays in delineating the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Bible characters provide a rich reservoir from which to draw a more complete and accurate picture of the face of God.

Discern and Develop Value Systems

When residing among the Ifugao of the Philippines, I intuitively presented the verbal gospel (in the dialect) predominately from my preferred value system, expressed through the *legal language* of guilt and innocence (known as G/I).[76] Sadly, that is not uncommon for most Western evangelists. As I unceremoniously discovered, "suitcase theology" has its limitations.

Imagine if I showed you a PowerPoint slide that pictured well-known Western evangelism models, such as the Four Spiritual Laws, The Roman Road, Evangelism Explosion, Chronological Bible Storying (Firm Foundations), and Simply the Story, and asked the question, what do these models all have in common? How would you respond? The answer is that they are all based on legal language—guilt and innocence (G/I).[77] Nothing is wrong with that, of course, unless G/I is not one of your preferred value systems. Timothy Tennent tells us why such can happen:

> Since Western systematic theology has been almost exclusively written by theologians from cultures framed primarily by the values of guilt and innocence, there has been a corresponding failure to fully appreciate the importance of the pivotal values of honor and shame in understanding Scripture and the doctrine of sin. Even with the publication of important works such as *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning* and *The New Testament World,* systematic

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[74] John Goldingay, "Biblical Story and the Way It Shapes Our Story," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 27 (1997): 6.

[75] Rob Bell states it this way: "We have to embrace the Bible as the wild, uncensored, passionate account it is of people experiencing the living God. . . . We cannot tame it." *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 63.

[76] Because of their animistic background, I also included fear/power.

[77] The same is true of Western discipleship models.

> theologies have remained largely unchanged by this research. In fact, a survey of all of the leading textbooks used in teaching systematic theology across the major theological traditions reveals that although the indexes are filled with references to guilt, the word "shame" appears in the index of only one of these textbooks.[78]

To be relevant at home and abroad, Western evangelism must move beyond the sole value system of G/I.

Increase the current value systems. Ever since Eugene Nida identified the three reactions to sin as fear-based, shame-based, and guilt-based in his classic *Customs and Cultures,*[79] most authors have followed suit. The trilogy, with slight variations, dominates the past and present literature. The three prominent value systems in use today in the missions world include: (1) guilt/innocence (legal language), (2) fear/power (control language), and (3) shame/honor (relational language). Could there be a fourth, or even additional, value system?

I have added a fourth value system to the trilogy based on hygienic language—pollution/purity (P/P). Following is some of my rationale for doing so:

> Werner Mischke addresses purity/pollution (P/P) in *The Global Gospel* as one of the sub-dynamics of the honor/shame value system as does Georges. When considering its dominance in both the Old and New Testaments, and various cultures around the world, I wonder if P/P represents a fourth value system—another possible "first among equals"? It seems one would expect to find this value system in those religions tied to Abraham—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religions, such as Hinduism, Shintoism, and aspects of animism among First Nations tribes. Trauma victims, e.g., those sold into sexual slavery, could also be included.[80]

It is interesting to note that during the early years of the modern day Orality Movement,[81] the definition of orality rarely expanded beyond story, and the expectation was that when speaking, one would only tell stories without using PowerPoint or other aids. Forget about propositions. Oral-preferenced people do not use propositions. Today, however, those within the movement have greatly enlarged the definition to include song, the arts, symbols, rituals,

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[78] Timothy Tennent, "Anthropology: Human Identity in Shame-Based Cultures of the Far East," in *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 91–92.

[79] Eugene Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975), 150.

[80] Steffen, *Worldview-based Storying.*

[81] Ibid.

drama, and so forth.[82] Even the definitions of orality have changed, and Walter Ong, the key theorist, has been challenged. Those within the honor and shame movement may find themselves on a similar learning curve in relation to the number of value systems and other aspects—is it guilt/innocence or guilt/justice? Time and insight may reveal the necessity to expand the value systems beyond the trilogy initially introduced by Nida.

Check your radar screen for shame and honor. The value system of shame and honor began to appear on the radar screens of evangelicals in the West serving cross-culturally around the year 2000. Presently, articles and books continue to roll off the presses. Activities proliferate. For example, in 2014, Andy Crouch, then with *Christianity Today,* attended an orality consultation convened by the International Orality Network (ION) that focused on honor and shame.[83] Riding with him from the airport to Houston Baptist University in a driving rain, I asked why he was attending this consultation focused strongly on cross-cultural contexts. His response was that he was here to "eavesdrop on this missions conversation." A year later, here is a summary quote from his article. Notice the slight Americanized twist on honor and shame:

> So instead of evolving into a traditional honor-shame culture, large parts of our culture are starting to look something like a postmodern fame-shame culture. Like honor, fame is a public estimation of worth, a powerful currency of status. But fame is bestowed by a broad audience, with only the loosest of bonds to those they acclaim. . . . Some of the most powerful artifacts of contemporary culture—especially youth culture—are preoccupied with the dynamics of fame and shame.[84]

In *Shame Interrupted,* Edward Welch generalizes about Scripture and shame. While the Bible is about more than shame, Welch captures the critical necessity to slow walk shame through the narrative ark of the Scripture story:

> The Bible, it turns out, is all about shame and its remedy. Why else would it be introduced at the very beginning?" . . . Since shame is so painful, we could be tempted to race to the end of the story and hope to be done with it quickly. But shame rarely responds to quick fixes.

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[82] See Michael Matthews, *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality* (TellWell, 2017); Steffen, *Worldview-based Storying*; and Robert Strauss, *Introducing Story-Strategic Methods: Twelve Steps toward Effective Engagement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).

[83] See Chiang and Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference* (Capstone Enterprises Ltd., Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2015).

[84] Andy Crouch, "The Return of Shame," *Christianity Today* 59, 2005, 38.

> Better to walk through the biblical story than run through it. There is much to be learned from shame's long history. . . . Scripture is giving Jesus' credentials to you. He is a commoner and an outcast who knows you and identifies with you, so you can identify with him. He is also the King who takes you to the heights of honor and privilege.[85]

In 2013, the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University offered its first graduate course on honor and shame, now titled Honor and Shame in Scripture and Service. Distinguished dissertations on the topic have resulted from scholar-practitioners, two of which presented in part at conferences are by Patty Toland ("Redeeming and Strengthening Honor and Shame Practices in Church Relations") and Lynn Thigpen ("Redeeming the Poverty-Shame-Limited Education Cycle through Gracing").

Discern the value system percentages. Most people (cultures) have one or two value systems that they prefer. For the animistic Ifugao of the Philippines, fear/power (F/P) and shame/honor (S/H) dominate. Guilt/innocence (G/I) and pollution/purity (P/P) have little influence on their daily lives. That does not mean that the last two values systems are inferior or unimportant. Rather, it means that the Ifugao place most value on two—F/P and S/H. It also means that my initial evangelism only focused on one of their preferred values (F/P) and one of mine (G/I). Communication noise naturally resulted. To help alleviate such noise, Christian workers should ask two questions, what percentage should I assign to each of the four value systems of the host culture[86] or to my culture?

Examples of Grand Narratives of the Scripture Story

At this point, I would like to offer four possible grand narratives, each driven by a specific value system. Students in my various classes or consultations wrote these. Before doing so, here are several emphases that a grand narrative can include.

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[85] Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012), 41, 45, 113.

[86] How dominant is the value system of honor and shame in Scripture in comparison to the West's favorite—guilt/innocence? Timothy Tennet makes this observation: "a survey of all of the leading textbooks used in teaching systematic theology across the major theological traditions reveals that although the indexes are filled with references to guilt, the word 'shame' appears in the index of only one of these textbooks. This omission continues to persist despite the fact that the term guilt and its various derivatives occur 145 times in the Old Testament and 10 times in the New Testament, whereas the term shame and its derivatives occur nearly 300 times in the Old Testament and 45 times in the New Testament." "Anthropology: Human Identity," 92. Hannes Wiher came up with different statistics from both Testaments. He found that shame and honor had a total of 968, while guilt and justice had 1350. *Shame and Guilt*, 214–215.

Each value system has its preferred **terms for God** (and Satan has his counterfeits). The *legal language* of guilt and innocence assigns God names, such as Just, Holy, Lawgiver, Judge, Truth, and Merciful. The *control language* of fear and power assign him names, such as King, Master, Victor, Liberator, Almighty, Prince of Peace, and Consuming Fire. The *relational language* of shame and honor prefers names such as Father, Faithful, Wonderful Counselor, Shepherd, and Jealous One. The *hygienic language* of pollution and purity favors names for God such as Purifier, Refiner, Holy, and Physician.

Each value system has its preferred **role for Jesus** as well (and Satan has his counterfeits). The *legal language* of guilt and innocence assigns Jesus' role as substitute. The *control language* of fear and power allocates Jesus' role as victor. The *relational language* of shame and honor calls for a mediator, while the *hygienic language* of pollution and purity prefers the role of purifier. As you read the grand narratives below, each focused on a single value system, keep "terminology" and "roles" in mind (see Appendix A for a more expanded overview).

> *Guilt/Innocence*
>
> The theme of the Bible is the all-powerful, loving God pursuing a relationship with sinful, broken mankind. God, who is holy and perfect in every way, reaches out to remove the punishment and guilt of sin, restoring and lifting up mankind into a position of harmony with himself.
>
> *Fear/Power*
>
> The theme of the Bible is the kingdom of God. It pronounces amnesty for repentant rebels, judgment and death for his enemies, and instruction and rewards for those rightly related to the King.
>
> *Shame/Honor*
>
> The Bible is the story of God, the Patron, creating humans, his clients, in his image to share his honor and glory, and the way he responded to rebellion and dishonoring from his clients by initiating a redemption plan to restore humans back into his image and glory through the means of a mediator, his Son, Jesus Christ.
>
> *Pollution/Purity*
>
> In the beginning, God created the world perfectly free from any impurities, defilements, or pollution. Through wrong choices, uncleanness and impurity entered the world and entered the lives of every human. All people became dirty, defiled, and unclean. Because of this, humans could no longer have a relationship with God who is totally pure and without defect. God, however,

> provided a way for us to be restored to him, to become clean again in his sight. He did this by sending his Son, the Lord Jesus. Jesus was also perfect and completely pure, and through his death and resurrection, all of our impurities could be cleared away. By putting our faith in Jesus, and asking him to clear away all our impure thoughts and unclean behavior, we can become clean again and have a right and proper relationship with God. This eternal relationship will last forever when we live with God in his glory, and all of his creation is made new and pure again.

While it is instructive to differentiate the four value systems for discussion purposes, like the four above, we must never forget how integrated they are within our daily conversations, our music,[87] and the Scripture story.[88] For example, all four can be found in 2 Timothy 1:3–13, Hebrews 1:1–8, and Peter 1:21–22. It is evident that the texts of Bible authors flow smoothly from one value system to another.

A diamond with four cuts. The four value systems can be likened to four cuts that a professional diamond cutter makes on a diamond. Each precise cut adds new value to the diamond, accentuating beauty formerly unseen but always present.

I will now attempt to offer a diamond with four cuts—a grand narrative that integrates the four value systems. Due to the humanness of this non-professional diamond cutter, it will not be expected to be the finished product. It may even necessitate further cuts. For sure, it will require extended polishing. Here is my current attempt of stating the grand narrative of the Scripture story that honors the hero of the Scripture story:

> Counterfeit tried to usurp the Patron-Father's authority and honor but is ultimately defeated. Even so, Counterfeit managed to influence his highest creation, people, to do the same. They became haughty, disloyal, unclean, and guilty. This required the Patron-Father to reestablish his rightful rule and honor over *all* his cre-

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[87] Can you spot the four value systems in the first stanza of Lauren Daigle's "How Can It Be":

> "I am guilty
> Ashamed of what I've done, what I've become
> These hands are dirty
> I dare not lift them up to the Holy one."

Track 2 on *How Can It Be*, Centricity Music, released April 2015.

[88] The same percentages could be assigned to various books of the Bible. In a PowerPoint presentation of the descriptors of Jesus in the Gospels, Joel Butler, after calculating each gospel, estimates that the cumulative breakdown to be: G/I – 2%; F/P – 37%; S/H 45%; P/P 16%. "Jesus in the Gospels," unpublished document, 2017.

ation (spiritual/human/material). He did so through initiating the mediator work of Jesus who restored broken relationships through defeating the spiritual powers and paying the penalty for sin. Justice through grace resulted. Those from the nations who chose to follow Jesus demonstrate their collective loyalty and obedience as worshiping co-laborers who experience suffering and refreshing rest as they impatiently await the final restoration of the world.

Evaluating the grand narrative. Having a checklist to evaluate a grand narrative of the Scripture story will help creative composers to adjust their attempts as they strive towards accuracy and attractiveness for their audience.[89] With that in mind, I have created two checklists to analyze one's grand narrative of the Scripture story. The first checklist covers the story components of the grand story. Who is the protagonist? the antagonist? What is the issue God must deal with first? What is the issue that people face? What is the resolution to solve both issues? What choices can people make? What are the consequences of such choices? Should any other categories be included.

As a value system, shame and honor never stand alone in a culture. Rather, they are intrinsically tied to other values systems, as seen above, and to a number of other cultural institutions (e.g., economics, politics, social structure, religion, and the arts). A second checklist, therefore, is required.

Four value systems. The checklist begins with a search for the four value systems—G/I, F/P, S/H, and P/P. As noted above, every culture has all four, but rarely, if ever, does it give equal fondness to all four. Some, like the Deni of Brazil, value only one (F/P) while others, like the Ifugao of the Philippines, prefer two (F/P and S/H). Others may value three. I am not aware of any that favors all four equally.

Collectivism. Tied strongly to relational-based shame and honor, the next consideration pertains to collectivism. While Westerners tend to place great emphasis on the individual, Scripture awards it to groups (two or more), e.g., extended families, the church, the elect, the Pharisees, and so forth.

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[89] James Dunn shows the strengths of what postmoderns perceive as weaknesses to having a grand narrative, which is applicable for a grand narrative of Scripture: "The problem being that the single grand narrative effectively brackets out a good deal of the data, privileges some of the data as more conducive to the story the historian wants to tell, and orders the selected data into a narrative sequence which validates the view put forward by the modern historian." *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 203.

Limited good. The concept of limited good comes in multiple versions and is as relative today as it was during Bible times. It is premised on the idea that only so much of a certain good (tangible or intangible) exists, and it cannot be multiplied. For example, if only four apples are available, and someone has three, the rest of us are being cheated. It is a zero-sum game that requires redistribution, because "Someone's advantage is someone else's disadvantage."[90] The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. Envy is never far from the concept of limited good. Interestingly, God's offer of grace and mercy is never limited.

Patron and client. Another inclusion, again tied closely to relational-based shame and honor, is patron and client. Both of these roles dominate Scripture on the human and spiritual levels. Patron refers to a person or spirit who has the tangible or intangible means (networks, advice, money, or power to bless or protect) to aid someone in need. On the bottom end of this hierarchy, clients look to the patron to supply their needs whether short- or long-term. As an African proverb states, "The hand that receives is always under the hand that gives." While either can initiate the relationship, both usually know the social risks involved.

Reciprocity. The bidirectional obligation between patron and client demands reciprocity even in this "lopsided friendship." The Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms defines reciprocity as "an implicit, non-legal contractual obligation, unenforceable by any authority apart from one's sense of honor and shame."[91] A Chinese proverb captures the patron's perspective, "I shower blessings to those who submit to me and do all I can to subvert those who resist."

When the client is unable to return the gift in kind, he or she can still offer something to the patron—praise in public. "Honor is the currency of the powerless; it is what clients short on material goods can offer to patrons."[92] A fair return, not an equal return, is expected. Praising the patron in public will often do, as it demonstrates the client's allegiance and loyalty.

Word and works go together. The Bible is never content with addressing only soul or spiritual issues. At creation, souls were given bodies and a beautiful garden in which to reside. Someday, they will receive new bodies and live in a new environment. The same is true for all Christ followers. We are commanded to multiply those who honor God globally (see Hab

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[90] George M. Foster, *Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 124.

[91] http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/.

[92] Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 126.

2:14 for the end results) and are stewards of the world (Ge 1:28) in which we live. In *Total Truth,* Nancy Pearcey weds multiplying and subduing to the grand narrative, "The promise of Christianity is the joy and power of an integrated life, transformed on every level by the Holy Spirit, so that our whole being participates in the great drama of God's plan of redemption."[93] Whole nations require whole churches. Whole churches require the whole gospel for the whole community and the whole person. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment go hand in glove.

Missio Dei. The last category I include, often missed by theologians and consequently pastors, is *missio Dei*.[94] The Great Commission did not begin in the Gospels. Rather, it began early in Genesis, predominately with Abraham where we begin to see God's great concern for the nations. Actually, Genesis 3:15 lays the foundation for good news as it introduces the antagonist and the necessary warfare that must take place before the protagonist triumphs in total victory. The gospel we find in the New Testament finds its roots sunken deeply in the Old Testament. If we are to grasp *missio Dei,* argue Bruce Ashford and David Nelson, we must capture its connection to the grand narrative:

> In order to build a biblical-theological framework for understanding God's mission, the church's mission, and the church's mission to the nation, one must first understand the unified biblical narrative, including its four major plot movements—creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.[95]

WRAP UP

It is important to view Scripture as a single grand narrative, because the grand narrative—the metanarrative—paints a comprehensive picture of the face of God beyond that of the individual parts. Whether a linear clothesline (like the Emmaus road discussion) or circular, the clothesline keeps the individual pieces in place even as it reveals the wide range of the wardrobe. While each piece of clothing has value, the summative value of all the pieces of clothing supersedes that of any one of the individual pieces of clothing. The whole is greater than the parts. This means that if we are to

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[93] Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 95.

[94] Kevin Vanhoozer points out that of the 100 top verses included in Western systematic theology textbooks, Matthew 28:19 was included. However, was it included because of the Great Commission or the Trinity? Lindgren, "Sorry, Old Testament."

[95] Bruce Riley Ashford and David P. Nelson, "The Story of Mission: The Grand Biblical Narrative," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed., Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 6.

grasp a bigger, broader, more comprehensive picture of the face of God, we must not only know and value the individual pieces of clothing, but more importantly, we must also know and value how they all tie together to form a comprehensive wardrobe that brings honor to the Wearer.

Failure to comprehend the Scripture story as a book composed of multiple chapters (or acts) and characters that moves mysteriously to completion opens the door to multiple interpretations. Our cultures, framed by rival grand narratives, often substitute our own understanding of the content and characters and sometimes even the context. Why is a metanarrative needed? Because "The metanarrative of Scripture fights a fragmented and false understanding of the Sacred Storybook."[96] All those adhering to rival grand narratives must, and someday will (Php 2:9–10), submit to the grand narrative of the Scripture story. How well do you know the hermeneutic that interprets the individual events *and* the grand narrative? Can you articulate the grand narrative of the Scripture story in a few sentences?

The Scripture story centers on relationships. More precisely, it centers on restored relationships designed to reinstate his rightful honor and universal kingdom among the nations (Rev 21:26–27). While written decades ago, it remains true today, "Because the seeds of destruction are inherent in any presentation of the gospel message, church planters must accurately present the foundational cornerstone of the household of God."[97] Sadly, too much of the gospel, especially segments from the Old Testament that strongly depict God's interaction with humanity negatively (cursing) and positively (blessing), thereby defining him, has been left scattered on the cutting room floor. Far too often, we have made the gospel a mininarrative that is ripe for cultural reduction and reinterpretation.

In a postmodern world that argues that no one story is superior, we must be patently clear as to the meaning of the single and superior gospel story. The restoration of relationships between the Creator and the created requires the hermeneutic of the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Does your evangelism include an Emmaus road hermeneutic?

The value system of shame and honor is framed in relationships (spiritual, human, and material), a major theme in the grand narrative of the Scripture story. This message speaks with clarity and conviction to tribal peoples in the deepest jungles, to urbanite Millennials in the most modern of cities in the world, to international students who study at our universities. After restoring his lost honor through the client, Jesus, the Friend of Friends, offers unlimitedly through the mediator-patron (Jesus) a gift, one that these client groups so desperately long for because of inherited and practiced sin

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[96] Steffan, "Discoveries Made While Reconnecting," 179.

[97] Tom Steffan, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting That Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997), 134.

(defaming the Patron)—complete acceptance, full inclusion, real community, genuine worth, and transcendence.

In return, through the wooing of the Holy Spirit, faith responders change allegiance, evidence loyalty, participate in a faith community, and offer him public praise collectively and privately. This holistic message from the Creator-Redeemer is especially meaningful to these audiences when communicated through the grand narrative of the Scripture story that includes the other value system(s) that they appreciate. The clothes hanging on the linear or circular clothesline now define the wide-ranging scope of the wardrobe owner. The gospel becomes good news because the chapters and characters honor the Hero of the Scripture story, and they discover themselves and a new community within that unparalleled story.

To gain a more comprehensive picture of the face of God and his story, we need to see him through at least these four cuts of the diamond—G/I, F/P, S/H, and P/P. To present a gospel message that hits not just the heads but also the hearts of our audience, we must present the good news through the sweep of Scripture in the percentages that they place on the various value systems. Ongoing discipleship, which should follow seamlessly for the new faith followers, should eventually add those value systems not previously given much attention. This will help to paint a more complete picture of the face of God, gaining him more deserving honor and devotion.

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APPENDIX A[98]

FOUR VALUE FRAMES OF THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL FRAMES	GUILT/ INNO-CENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLU-TION/ PURITY
LANG-UAGE	Moral Law	Moral Code	Moral Custom	Moral Values
NAMES FOR GOD	Just One Righteous Judge	King Jealous-lover Patron	Victor Deliverer Lord	Cleanser Pure One
NAMES FOR SATAN	Liar Accuser	Challenger Debater	Adversary Prowling Lion	Dirty One
GOD'S ISSUE	Justice chal-lenged	Lost face	Power usurped	Holiness polluted
PEOPLE'S ISSUE	Broke God's law	Dishon-ored patron	Usurped God's power	Polluted commu-nity code
SIN	Broken law	Broken relation-ship	Chal-lenged power	Polluted commu-nity code
RESULTS	Separation from a holy God	Estrange-ment Humilia-tion Identity loss	Con-trolled Possessed	Contamin-ation
COSTS	Punish-ment	Abandon-ment	Domina-tion	Separation
ARENA	Private-Public	Public-Private	Public-Private	Public-Private
PLAYERS	Self-Soci-ety	Society-Self	Society-Self	Society-Self stoned him to death.
FOCUS	Internal behavior	Public action	Internal emotion	Internal action

[98] This material is extracted from my forthcoming book titled: *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual.*

APPENDIX A (continued)

FOUR VALUE FRAMES OF THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL FRAMES	GUILT/ INNO-CENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLU-TION/ PURITY
EMOTION	Regret	Unworthy	Powerless	Dirty
OUTCOME	Restitu-tion	Relation-ship	Control	Accep-tance
ACTION	Confess Correct Fix Apologize	Beat self Hide Retaliate Suicide	Appease Manipu-late Placate	Appease Manipu-late Placate
INTER-VENER	Substitute	Mediator	Victor	Purifier
RESULT	Forgive-ness Pardon Obedience	Loyalty Inclusion Reaf-firma-tion	Freedom Peace	Purified Spotless Innocent

About the Author

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