

Storylistener Subjectivity in Response to Mark's Passion-Resurrection Narrative

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ABSTRACT: Amid a three-decade resurgence of interest in storytelling throughout the USA, a network of storytellers has attempted to recapture the ancient practice of narrating the stories of the formative events and founding parents of the Judeo-Christian religion. This study employed Q methodology to explore how listeners respond subjectively to a storytelling presentation of a biblical narrative. Two types of storylistener were found, both reporting imaginative and other kinds of cognitive response. One type also described emotional involvement in, and the other critical detachment from, the story event.

Introduction

During the past three decades storytelling has been rediscovered in the United States as art form, pedagogical method, and communication medium. Popular interest is reflected in storytelling events offered at schools, libraries, museums, and festivals for people of all ages. Professional attention is provided by the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling, founded in 1973 with headquarters in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Academic interest is growing in numerous disciplines, with speech communication no

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exception.

Meanwhile there has developed a cadre of persons who seek to recapture the ancient art of telling the stories of the formative events and founding parents of the Judeo-Christian religion. Their organization is a Network of Biblical Storytellers, founded in the mid-1970s and headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. Their mission is to learn stories from the Bible and present them orally, not by verbatim repetition but by flexible adaptation to listeners in specific contexts. Their rationale is that the early church formed its sense of identity and purpose by telling stories. Their claim is that storytelling is "more alive, more present, more comprehensive in its appeal" than silent reading (Boomershine & Bartholomew, 1976, p. 1)—psychologically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Review of the Literature

When HopKins and Long (1981, p. 238) identified research objectives for oral performance of literature, two questions about storytelling were raised. The first question was: *who are the storytellers?* During its first half-century, the speech communication literature presented a fairly unified picture of educators using stories with children and youth (Abernethy, 1960). Then the range of venues broadened (Seaberg, 1968), until today everyone is considered a storyteller. To be human is to be *homo narrans*. Narrative has become "an alternative paradigm for human communication" (Fisher, 1984, p. 1). Similarly, during much of the twentieth century, telling Bible stories was assigned to religious educators for young people (Barrett, 1960; Cather, 1925), but this too has expanded to include persons of all ages in varied settings (Bartholomew, 1992; Boomershine, 1988).

The second question was: *how do storytellers affect storylisteners?* Much has been claimed for the effects of storytelling, but less has been substantiated by systematic research (Kougl, 1984). Early claims clustered around physical, educational, emotional, and ethical poles: (a) creating states of increased awareness which renew activity; (b) developing reason and imagination; (c) arousing pleasurable emotions; and (d) guiding decision-making (Howes, 1935, pp. 382-383). Later claims gravitated toward these poles, and increased research intensified their valences, as studies from a single year suggest (Kirkwood, 1983; Mumby & Spitzack, 1983; Garner, 1983).

Meanwhile the impact upon listeners of telling Bible stories has been analyzed by rhetorical criticism (Boomershine, 1981a, 1981b;

Boomershine & Bartholomew, 1981; Reid, 1994; Scult, McGree, & Kuntz, 1986). Kirkwood (1983) found storytelling to (1) arouse emotions in listeners; (2) picture consequences of beliefs and actions; (3) create brief states of non-rational awareness that temporarily halt intellectualizing; and (4) overcome obstacles to change through self-confrontation. Howes' (1935) emotional, educational, physical, and ethical values again come to mind. Kirkwood (1983, 1985) also viewed storylistening as oral and personal. Since most religious stories were "originally oral communication acts" (Kirkwood, 1985, p. 60), ignoring the medium imperils research into their effects upon people (cf. Stephenson, 1967). Moreover, the personal bond that develops between teller and listener is like that between parent and child. The childlikeness—considered a condition of spiritual growth in many religious traditions (Kirkwood, 1983)—brings to mind the earlier emphasis upon children as storylisteners.

In sum, there is general consensus in the literature about the universality of storytelling and emerging agreement about its intrapersonal and interpersonal effects. But there appears to have been no systematic study of the subjective responses of listeners to oral and personal storytelling prior to the research being reported. The question that impelled this study was: how do listeners respond subjectively to biblical storytelling?

Method

Q Sample

A Q sample of 42 statements about biblical storylistening was constructed from a concourse of 198 statements gathered over five years from: (a) comments made by people after listening to a Bible story told; (b) statements based upon personal experience and intuition; (c) insights adapted from a literature review; and (d) consultation with colleagues. Most of the concourse was from the first category to insure natural expression (Brown, 1980, pp. 28, 46-48). The 198 statements were judged sufficient in number by the law of diminishing returns (Brown, 1980, p. 259).

Selection of the 42 statements was guided by design in order to sample the concourse comprehensively. The interacting levels of main effect A, storytelling impact, were based upon Burke's (1945, 1952, 1968) primary dimensions of linguistic symbol systems: (a) grammatical, which creates a vocabulary for human actions in stories

in terms of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose; (b) rhetorical, which enables response to human conflict in storylisteners by seeking the overlap of motives of one person (or group) with another; (c) poetical, which gives pleasure through use of human symbols by storytellers; and (d) ethical, which pictures human character in diverse story settings. These dimensions were adopted because they gave contemporary expression to recurring themes of rhetorical and poetical theory. They include the purposes of rhetoric and poetics (Cicero, 1942a, 1942b; Horace, 1939): to inform (grammatical), to persuade (rhetorical), to entertain (poetical). They also reflect the close ties of communication studies to psychology (grammatical), politics (rhetorical), poetics, and ethics (Aristotle, 1954).

The levels of main effect B, storylistening response, grew out of Stephenson's (1978) study of movie-goer reactions as: (e) emotional, involving enjoyment of the movie; (f) evaluational, reflecting expectations of it; and (g) experiential, pointing to their encounter with its deepest human attitudes and values. These categories, depicted in Table 1, were used in the absence of storylistener response studies, because of the similarity of that investigation to this one in goal and method.

Table 1
Q Sample Design

Main Effects:	Interacting Levels:	
A Storytelling Impact	a Grammatical	b Rhetorical
	c Poetical	d Ethical
B Storylistening Response	e Emotional	f Evaluational
	g Experiential	

The concourse was sampled for 36 statements using the formula: $N=3AB$. Comprehensive representation was protected by the principles of homogeneity, as similar statements within cells of the design were conjoined, and heterogeneity, as the most different statements from each cell were chosen. Six statements were added, two enriching the storylistening response effect and four noting preferences about frequency of use that reflected comments often elicited from storylisteners. The 42 statements (see Appendix A), which fell within the 40 to 50 range suggested by Brown (1980), were cosmetically edited, made into a deck, and tested in another study

(Parker, 1982).

Q Sort

Q sample statement cards were sorted into a quasi-normal distribution, as shown below, to indicate responses to a telling of Mark's "Passion-Resurrection Narrative" (Rhoads & Michie, 1982) from "Most Uncharacteristic of My Response," -5, to "Most Characteristic of My Response," +5:

Distribution Values

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
(3)	(3)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)

Distribution Frequencies

A P-set guided recruitment of the 57 participants in the study (Brown, 1980, p. 192). Main effects were (A) gender, based upon an empirically based likelihood that men and women experience storytelling differently (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; McLaughlin, Cody, Kane, & Robey, 1981); (B) age, limited to adults because of the recent emphasis upon stories as adult fare (with two 17-year olds and one 16-year old included based upon their maturity level); (C) storylistening experience, added because of pilot study hints that newcomers to biblical storylistening might attend to the method more than the story; (D) theological orientation, given an intuition of its impact on listener responses.

Table 2
P-Set Design

Main Effects:	Interacting Levels:	
A Gender	a Male	b Female
B Age	c Younger	d Older
C Storylistening Experience	e Novel	f Regular
D Theological Orientation	g Liberal	h Conservative

Three experienced storytellers each told the "Passion-Resurrection Narrative" from *The Gospel According to Mark* 14:1-16:8 at a different site. At the first site 17 participants represented 13 cells; at the next site 23 people represented all 16 cells; at the final site 18 persons represented 12 cells (but one Q sort was dropped from the last site because of insufficient data). After the story was told, the cards were sorted, recorded, and interpreted during audiotaped group interviews.

Q Analysis

Q-sort scores were correlated, and the matrix factored. Two factors emerged, with a .074 correlation to each other. Their representative factor arrays had a .096 correlation to each other. The Factor A array had a composite reliability of .98 and Factor B of .94. When their rank-ordered statement z-scores were correlated with the first two factors in the pilot study already mentioned, Factor A correlated .85 ($p < .001$) with one, and Factor B correlated .44 ($p < .01$) with the other.

Based upon a .40 criterion, 38 Q sorts were loaded purely on Factor A, 7 on B, 7 were mixed, and 5 were null. Looking at the P-set, (1) both factors included listeners from all 3 settings; (2) Factor A represented 15 of the 16 P-set cells, with no special meaning assigned to the empty cell; and (3) Factor B represented 6 of the cells, and 6 of the 7 persons were male.

Interpretation of each factor was based upon its statement array and related interview comments of persons who loaded purely on it. Interpretation of Factor B also drew upon comparisons to Factor A because this approach fit both the structure and meaning of the two arrays and the availability of interview comments. Only two who loaded purely on Factor B contributed substantively during the interviews, and so supplemental comments were drawn from three of the seven persons with a mixed loading when their opinions seemed in keeping with the Type B group as a whole.

Comparison of factor scores followed the similarities of consensus statements (Statements—henceforth S—1, 6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 36, 40) and differences between contrast statements (Ss 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42.). The latter were considered significantly different between factors if there was a difference of two or more rank scores between the factors.

Results

Type A: Emotionally Involved Listeners

First, *Type A storylisteners responded to the telling of Mark's Passion-Resurrection Narrative by recreating the story in the imagination as the story was told.* This happened because the storytelling lent qualities of stage performance and eyewitness account, which created a sense of "presence" to the events and characters of the story.

- +4 (6) The "dramatic" approach made it easier for me to picture what happened in the story.
- +5 (24) The story came alive as if the storyteller had just seen it and were telling me what had happened.
- +3 (22) I felt like I was there.

The dramatic quality gave the story "visibility," not as acted on a stage but as enacted in the imagination, according to Storylistener (henceforth SL) #32, by creating "pictures in a person's mind's eye." The eyewitness quality added "vitality" because the telling seemed like sharing firsthand experience of events in progress or just passed: SL #26 "got wrapped up in it, caught up in it, and it became very much alive." This group felt present to the story, "connect[ed] ... with what really took place ... like someone telling you something as a private thing, because you feel part of it" (SL #8).

Neither the storyteller's communicative behaviors nor the storylistener's attentive behaviors interfered with imaginative activity. This was true of the narrator's communication even during substantive departures from prior understandings of the story and stylistic deviations from previous experiences of its telling. It was also true of the listener's attention whether because of the absence of slips into inattention or because of the presence of shifts into attention to related experiences of the biblical story or one's personal story.

- 4 (3) I noticed departures from the written text with some discomfort.
- 2 (28) I was sometimes distracted by the storyteller's style and delivery.

- 2 (10) I faded in and out while listening.

Departures from the text of a story were not negatively valued by these listeners; SL #26 noticed "when [the teller] was putting in some elaborative material ... [but] I didn't find myself so disturbed by [it]." Some listeners positively valued departures, like SL #24:

It really hits you when you hear it in a different way, and not the translation from the R.S.V. [the Revised Standard Version of the Bible] or anything like that. It's a different thing when you hear it from somebody's own mouth and in their own words.

Nor did listeners tend to be distracted by a teller's verbal and nonverbal communication. Some were even attracted. For SL #54, "the quality of the storyteller has a lot to do with it"; for SL #25, the orality—with infused feelings and inflected voice—"made it a lot more real than I've heard it before."

Thus the attention of these listeners tended not to wax and wane during the telling. Some, like SL #26, denied lapses of attention: "Obviously when it was so vital, why I couldn't fade in and out." Others temporarily refocused attention upon themselves or some experience:

I found myself stopping on certain parts of the story, and thinking about ramifications, and then I'd have to catch up, because they were really jarring other thoughts that were related, but related, I suppose, to me. (SL #45)

I saw the movie ... "Jesus of Nazareth." And I kept relating to that story seeing those pictures over in my mind as the story was told. (SL #55)

Second, *Type A listeners arrived at new understandings of both Mark's Passion-Resurrection Narrative and their own life experiences during the storytelling:*

- +3 (37) At some point during the telling of the biblical story, I developed a new understanding of its meaning.
- +2 (1) At some point during the storytelling, I discovered a new insight into my own life and experiences.

This group viewed storytelling as an "aid in comprehension and

retention" (SL #54) of a biblical story. Comprehension was focused more upon taking in concrete happenings rather than upon drawing out abstract ideas: "The thing that storytelling does for me is to make it more real, help me understand what interactions are going on" (SL #8). Retention was helped by the "sticking" potential of the aural experience: "Since people of old were able to put it in the[ir] minds and pass it on verbally because they didn't have writing, perhaps it will stick in our minds more so" (SL #54).

Storylistening was not necessarily qualitatively superior to textual analysis for understanding the biblical narrative.

- +1 (26) Listening to the story being told was more helpful to me in understanding it than doing careful analysis of the text.

These persons may simply have preferred to work on understanding a narrative by both studying the text and hearing it told, e.g.,

I love to create things in my mind. But what happened today meant more to me because I did have a more in-depth understanding of the text. And I think the combination of the two is good. (SL #43)

Put another way, textual analysis and aural experience may be mutually edifying and not mutually exclusive.

This group also tended to see storytelling as means to new insights into the meaning of their own lives. For some, insights were quite specific; for others, they were more general. SL #24 reported inner confirmation of an intention to prepare for the ministry during the story: "It sort of helped me to reaffirm that decision and really say to myself, 'Yes, this is where I want to be going'." SL #45 responded more generally: "I just felt as though I was seeing some things more clearly as a result of sitting with a group of people listening to the story ... and at the end I felt a calm and togetherness."

Third, *the Type A group was moved emotionally by an exciting and enjoyable experience of a story perceived to be important:*

- +5 (20) I was moved.
- +5 (5) It was exciting to listen to the story.
- +4 (4) It was a real delight!
- +4 (23) I sensed the importance of the story.

These storylisteners were "moved" both by the storytelling as medium and by the story as message. SL #24 stressed the medium: "It really hits you when you hear it ... from somebody's own mouth and in their own words." SL #10 emphasized the message: "I think mostly I was moved by the story. Every time I hear that Passion Narrative, I am moved. It means a lot to me."

The excitement and enjoyment of the story events were repeatedly affirmed by Type A listeners: "from the entertainment aspect, it was wonderful" (SL #12); it "touches the soul rather than the mind" (SL #10). While "that is not a fun story" (SL #13), SL #24 "felt a lot of joy coming out of it." They felt like crying (SL# 41: +3) but not laughing (SL# 42: -3). There *were* "light" moments in this "heavy" story, as SL #16 explained:

One thing that [the storyteller] said, he kind of smiled. You kind of grin, just a little—I mean, there is a little lightness in there. ... It was a smile—not a "Ha-ha-ha!"—but, you know, it definitely was lighter.

All of this contributed to a sense of the story's importance, since the storytelling "makes it easier for me relate to the importance, and understand the importance, of it" (SL #26).

These storylisteners rejected the notion that nothing was accomplished by the storytelling and denied any negative reactions to the values implicit in the storytelling:

- 5 (30) Nothing was accomplished.
- 5 (21) I was offended.
- 5 (29) It somehow rubbed me the wrong way.
- 3 (36) Surprisingly, I disagreed with the values presented in the story.
- 2 (15) My beliefs and values were challenged.

The denial of negative reactions may have been because the story event was regarded as a positive experience or because values were not perceived to be at issue: "I didn't feel that the story was challenging or presenting specific values. I guess I wasn't tying in with the values too much in the story" (SL #26).

Fourth, *the Type A group expressed interest in regular use of biblical storytelling in their own churches.* The tendency of this interest was

strengthened by negations of belief that storytelling would be rejected in their own churches or should be restricted to the educational programs of those churches.

- +2 (11) I'd like to hear the scripture lesson presented like that every Sunday in my church.
- 4 (13) That would never go over in my church.
- 4 (34) Storytelling should be confined to a voluntary in-depth Bible study class.

Positive valuing of "every Sunday" might have been higher except that some took storytelling for granted. SL #53 noted, "Since I do hear it that way on Sunday, I sort of take it for granted." Negative valuing of "never go over" and "should be confined" reinforced the "every Sunday" position. SL #46 stated, "I'm sure it would go over." SL #25 "felt anger ... that storytelling should be confined to a voluntary in-depth Bible study," while SL #53 added, "It's appropriate everywhere." SL #26 responded more tentatively: "I don't know in myself yet exactly how [story-tellers] ought to be used in the church and yet [S 34] didn't seem to resonate."

Type B: Critically Detached Storylisteners

First, *Type B storylisteners also responded to Mark's Passion-Resurrection Narrative with imaginative recreation of the story as it was told.* Both groups imaginatively visualized the story because of the dramatic quality of its telling (SL #6: +4 [+4]—with the Type A factor score in brackets for comparison) and felt "present" to its events and characters (SL #22: +2 [+3]). While Type A listeners noted its imaginative aliveness (SL #24: +3 [+5]), Type B listeners stressed its imaginative reality:

- +5 [+2] (7) There is something real in the telling of the story that doesn't come across in the reading of it.

The told story drew attention to parts of the story which "jumped out, in the aspects that I never realized before" (SL #35). But feeling present to the story took a different twist. Rather than participation in, there was distance from its events; instead of identification with, there was a sympathy for its characters. As SL #36 explained,

I'm not sure "distant" is the right word. I guess maybe it is. It wasn't that I was there, but it was that ... there are enough things similar in my life that I can be sympathetic to Peter, but that is not to say that I'm in Peter's shoes.

SL #44 offered a similar qualification: "No matter if we're having dramatic stories, the things around us are also going to be part of our understanding." Thus there seemed to be more restraint to the imaginative investment of Type B listeners than to that of Type A listeners.

Second, *Type B listeners were helped to understand the Bible story more by oral presentation than by textual analysis but were not helped to reach new insights into their personal experiences:*

- +4 [+1] (26) Listening to the story being told was more helpful to me in understanding it than doing a careful analysis of the text.
- +1 [+2] (1) At some point during the storytelling, I discovered a new insight into my own life and experiences.

In absence of related interview comments, interpretation of these statements is left to their place in the factor array. Oral presentation may have been preferred over textual analysis because imaginative involvement while listening increased understanding of the story. Intrapersonal insight may have been neutralized because of a similar focus upon understanding the narrative aurally and imaginatively.

Third, *the Type B group was detached emotionally from the story event, in sharp contrast to Type A listeners:*

- 0 [+5] (20) I was moved.
- 5 [+3] (41) At points I felt like crying.
- 5 [-3] (42) At points I felt like laughing.
- +1 [+5] (5) It was exciting to listen to the story.
- 0 [+4] (4) It was a real delight!

Along with not indicating whether they were moved or unmoved by storylistening, these persons strongly denied feeling like crying or laughing. They also seemed disinterested in other emotionally charged

expressions of response. SL #35 seemed to represent a number of similar responses when dismissing SL #4, which "to me just doesn't say anything."

Unlike the others, the Type B group was rubbed the wrong way by the story event (SL #29: +3 [-5]), perhaps by the communication of the storyteller, the attention of the storylistener, or the interpretation of the story.

- +5 [-2] (28) I was sometimes distracted by the storyteller's style and delivery.
- +2 [-4] (3) I noticed departures from the written text with some discomfort.
- +5 [-2] (10) I faded in and out while listening.
- +2 [-2] (25) I wanted to see if the storyteller saw the story as I did.

Storyteller communication was distracting for at least three reasons. One was the temptation to compare the narrator's skills of presentation with one's own: a retired preacher (SL #41) observed, "I was comparing his way with [my] way." Another reason was a tendency to analyze presentational skills for their own sake: SL #36 was bothered at first by a change of rhythm in the telling, "but the more [the storyteller] got into it, and the more I got used to it, it seems to me that it freshened it up a little bit." A third reason was discomfort when language usage varied from wordings of the text with which the listener was familiar: SL #56 commented, "I have the King James Version at home. I guess that's what bothered me."

Storylistener attention waxed and waned during the story event. The waning seemed due to notice of storytelling technique (see above) and story setting. SL #44 noticed,

for example, while looking around, things like this over here ... so that when I did fade out, it's mostly because I thought about [a wall picture] over there.

Story interpretation carried both positive and negative connotations when there were disparities between a teller's and listener's views of the narrative. Both sides emerged in the comments of SL #36. On the negative side:

It didn't ruin the story for me, but I was uncomfortable when [the

storyteller] added something like, "Their eyes were weighed down by powers beyond their control," which is not in the Marcan account.

The discomfort was explained as "the exegete coming through from the story." But in a positive vein:

Some of that's okay. ... For instance, the R.S.V. [Revised Standard Version of the Bible] says, "The guards led him away into the praetorium, that is, the palace." Well, it makes it more clear if he does the exegesis and says, "That's the barracks for the soldiers."

But SL #36's recollection of the wording was inaccurate. Mark 15:16 R.S.V. reads, "And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium)." And SL #36's interpretation of the text was only one of several plausible meanings (Gealy, 1962). Thus criticisms of Type B listeners did not necessarily represent a better grasp of the story than the teller's but instead represented a critical view of its telling that judged its merits and demerits from the listener's own point of view.

These listeners were so emotionally uninvolved in the story event that virtually all of the uncharacteristic statements dealt with affect, as the following examples show:

- 3 [-5] (30) Nothing was accomplished.
- 4 [+1] (31) I think my life was changed as a result of listening to the story.
- 3 [+1] (38) I felt much hope.

Perhaps this was because of attention to the past or future. Hence the narrative had changed SL #36's life "in the past, but not today. I think if I get any insight, it will be tomorrow or the next day." To SL #35, "Anytime the Bible story is told, ... something is accomplished. I'm not sure what the seeds are going to be."

Fourth, *Type B listeners recommended occasional use of biblical storytelling in their own churches:*

- +4 [0] (2) I would like to see this way of presenting the biblical story used every once in a while.

There was interest in having this method of presentation used, but not all of the time or to the exclusion of other methods.

Discussion

Two propositions for a theory of storylistening emerged from this study. First, *storylistening is an interpersonal experience that occurs in oral-aural communication events* (Kirkwood, 1983). When the basic medium is sound, events and persons in a story will be more present and meaningful to a listener. This is because "voice ... conveys presence as nothing else does," and "sound conveys meaning more powerfully and accurately than sight" (Ong, 1967, pp. 114-115).

Second, *storylistening is an intrapersonal experience that leads to cognitive-affective responses* (Howes, 1935; Kirkwood, 1983). The primary cognitive response is imagining, by which a listener remains in the "here and now" of a story setting while entering the "there and then" of a story world in the mind (Searle, 1983). The storyteller's communication behaviors attract some listeners (Type A) into identification with the narrative's events and persons but distract others (Type B). For both groups, hearing stories told aloud is "more alive, more present, more comprehensive in its appeal" (Boomershine & Bartholomew, 1976, p. 1) than reading them in silence. A secondary cognitive response is understanding, by which a listener gains new insight into the told story (both groups) and related personal experience (Type A) (Crites, 1971).

Affective responses to storytelling include emotional involvement and critical detachment (Kirkwood, 1983, 1985). Emotionally involved listeners (Type A) report a close connection between imagination and emotion. Emotions and attitudes are touched by stories, which, in turn, "focus, concentrate and direct affective energy" (King, 1982, p. 18). Critically detached listeners (Type B) appear somewhat indifferent to the story event emotionally and resistant to it attitudinally (Kirkwood, 1983, 1985). In part this may be accounted for by distractions from aspects of narration which lead to inattention.

In hopes of further creative thinking and empirical research into the interpersonal dynamics and intrapersonal subjectivity of storylistening, limitations of this study and recommendations for future investigations are now suggested. First, exhaustive identification of structures of operant subjectivity among storylisteners was outside the purview of this project. Hints of a third type of listener response, for example, were detected in the data of this and another (Parker, 1982) study which suggest emotional release. Future research might identify and interview persons who claim to have had such experiences, using the Q deck under varied conditions of instruction (e.g., your first

storylistening experience, your ideal storylistening experience, your most moving storylistening experience).

Second, two minor problems with the Q statements were noticed. The possibility that the exclamation marks punctuating S 4 and S 5 might attract undue attention could be alleviated simply by replacing the exclamation points with periods. To avoid undue attention to the nearly identical wording of S 41 and S 42, S 42 could be rephrased, "Sometimes I almost laughed."

Third, the P-set did not include by design nonwhite, nonanglo, nonprotestant, or nonreligious groups. Perhaps studies with such audiences would benefit from an expanded Q sample. Nor did the storytellers include women or noneuroamericans, which should be remedied in future investigations.

Fourth, the story utilized in this study was selected for being long and complex enough to appeal to listeners in varied ways. Its 25-minute length nonetheless yielded significantly similar groups of response to a 2-minute presentation in the study mentioned above. This adds credibility to Kirkwood's (1983) preference for brief narratives.

In conclusion, two groups of storylisteners were discovered during this investigation. Both were imaginatively involved in and cognitively influenced by the telling. One was emotionally involved in the experience and practically interested in regular use of biblical storytelling in their own churches, while the other was critically detached from the experience and practically interested in occasional use of the method in their own churches.

Appendix A

Biblical Storylistening Q Sample

1. At some point during the storytelling, I discovered a new insight into my own life and experiences.
2. I would like to see this way of presenting the biblical story used every once in a while.
3. I noticed departures from the written text with some discomfort.
4. It was a real delight!
5. It was exciting to listen to the story!
6. The "dramatic" approach made it easier for me to picture what happened in the story.
7. There is something real in the telling of the story that doesn't seem to come across in the reading of it.
8. I felt the connectedness or interdependence of a world under the

lordship of Jesus Christ as the story was told.

9. I felt the separateness or alienation of human sin as the story was told.
10. I faded in and out while listening.
11. I'd like to hear the scripture lesson presented like that every Sunday in my church.
12. It hit me where I live.
13. That would never go over in my church.
14. My life seemed connected to the lives of God's people throughout the ages and around the world.
15. My beliefs and values were challenged.
16. I was astonished by what I heard.
17. As the tensions of the story were resolved, I sensed the possibility of some tension in me being resolved.
18. Fear or pity concerning myself or someone else was aroused, vented, and calmed.
19. That was an "esthetic experience."
20. I was moved.
21. I was offended.
22. I felt like I was there.
23. I sensed the importance of the story.
24. The story came alive as if the storyteller had just seen it and were telling me what happened.
25. I wanted to see if the storyteller saw the story as I did.
26. Listening to the story being told was more helpful to me in understanding it than doing a careful analysis of the text.
27. I became aware that not only is that what Christ and the church stand for, but that's also what I stand for.
28. I was sometimes distracted by the storyteller's style and delivery.
29. It somehow rubbed me the wrong way.
30. Nothing was accomplished.
31. I think my life was changed as a result of listening to the story.
32. Hearing the story facilitated needed healing between me and some individual or group.
33. I prefer a more formal reading of the text.
34. Storytelling should be confined to a voluntary in-depth Bible study class.
35. Listening to the story helped me understand why someone I know acts as he or she does.
36. Surprisingly, I disagreed with the values presented in the story.
37. At some point during the telling of the biblical story, I developed a new understanding of its meaning.
38. I felt much hope.
39. I experienced a new respect for myself and others as unique creations of God.
40. I was struck by the importance of sharing in our common humanity.

41. At points I felt like crying.
42. At points I felt like laughing.

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