

**New Ways to Tell the Story**  
by Ken Behnken

*This article first appeared in the Jan. 30, 2004 Mission Moments. Permission is given to copy this article for distribution within your own congregation. Please credit the author and The Center for U.S. Missions in Irvine, California, [www.centerforusmissions.org](http://www.centerforusmissions.org). For more information, contact the Center at 949-854-8002 x1780.*

The next wave in missions is an emphasis on oral learning, according to an article in the Jan/Feb 2004 issue of *Mission Frontiers*. Nearly 70% of the world's population and 50% of the USA's population desire a non-literate approach to learning and decision-making.

The author relates that people who do not read regularly, have only a tenth grade education or less, or have been taught by rote memorization are attracted to Chronological Bible Storytelling. Chronological Bible Storytelling is based on ancient storytelling principles.

He goes on to say that memorizing Bible stories is not enough. Oral learners must harvest the Biblical truths from the presentation. Applications to real life emerge within the oral context. Storying is based on Bible principles that address theology and practical, real life issues. Dialogue, discussion, repetition, and even drama or singing the stories aid in retention and retelling.

How effectively are we reaching the oral learner from the pulpit and in our Bible studies? Have we taken time to hone our storytelling skills as we relate Biblical truths and stories? The author says, "The beloved three points and a poem is dead." It is the chronological narrative related to practical real-life issues that helps keep the Gospel message alive today.

Stories must be simple and reproducible. Don't count on modern technology (cassettes, video, Power Point), although it can be helpful in certain cases. Greg Parsons, the General Director for World Missions, said, "If any oral communication depends on "hardware" like a cassette, it stalls the spread of truth. If someone has to use even a picture he can't draw himself, the story won't spread."

If you are interested in learning more about Biblical Storytelling go to <http://FJseries.org>. Under "Learn Storying," look at "The Ten Step Process." ■