

Dear Friends of *God's Story*,

Before recounting our amazing African adventure, let me mention that it is not just in Africa or Asia that God is drawing people to His Word through *God's Story* and *Simply The Story*. If you want to see how pastors in the USA are using STS, try the link on our home page www.SimpleTheStory.com "USA Pastor Discovers Impact of Oral Strategy." As well, go to the link on left "Downloads-Radio, STS & More" to hear great interviews of Asian & African nationals using these tools. Interviews aired on podcast done by www.Story4All.com and radio by www.friendshops.org

Selecting words to share our 17-day trip to Africa presents a challenge. How does one describe a handshake with a man who looks earnestly into your eyes as he says, "You don't know how much this training means to me." The grip lingers on, as if holding on to my hand longer will prove his depth of gratitude.

Days later emails from Africa began arriving. "You have shared us blessings (Storytelling) you received from our Holy Father. I wish you the age of Methuselah! I have started telling story. Everyone found it fascinating." [Ethiopia]

"...Am very excited about what the Lord is doing through the storytelling strategies. It is a defining moment in our continent in many ways." [Kenya]

"...i just returned home from a church that i was preaching.it was in a village and normally when they hear of a guest speaker even the vilagers that dont normally attend shows up.i gave the story of the man with shriveled hand and involved the congregatn.14 got saved and i prayed for the leadership they said that they saw themselves like pharisees.thanks for exposing me to orality." [Uganda]



By God's grace we trained over 200 attendees from 12 countries. Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Australia, & USA. Attendees ranged from evangelists serving in remote villages to national Christian leaders. Ages ranged from 5 years old to a few in their 70's. Most were literate. Believers new in the Lord studied Bible stories alongside seminary professors.

Those who use *God's Story* in many different countries excitedly shared reports of salvations. Typical was a man sets up viewings among Muslims. He told of seeing 72 Muslims coming to faith from watching GS. These converts are now walking with the Lord. Too, the interest and excitement over *Simply The Story* frankly is overwhelming.

Besides the workshops, we had opportunity to use STS in rural settings and in city churches. Once village in which we did this STS presentation of Scripture through telling Bible stories and leading probing discussions was Ekalakala. On nine other days, Bramuel had brought a team to a centrally located church in this region and trained the people in STS. "When we first came there, 'church' was

singing as they knew little about the Bible. Now these pastors are seeing salvations and growth," reported Bramuel.

Picture This: You enter a village church filled with about 60 people from the Comba tribe. There wait 15 pastors representing 11 different churches. You notice that the men wear their finest to church, coats and ties. Most coats look several sizes too large and hang loosely on the thin-framed people. As you look closely, you notice frayed sleeves and trousers worn thin. Who knows how many have used these same "Sunday clothes."

Hippo Time: The teaching must end by 4:00 pm so that the attendees can cross the river to return home before the hippos come out. Also, most in the church face a four hour walk to return to their round mud-hut homes.

While there, Bramuel tells as a story Genesis 35:1-5. Listeners note that Jacob gathered all of the idols held by his family, but then hid those pagan items under the oak tree in Shechem. As those gathered in the church discuss Jacob's actions, one lady stands up and excitedly points while saying something in Comba. An interpreter whispers to you, "The lady is saying, "We are Christians now. We still have our fetishes hidden away. We must not hide them any more. We must destroy them!" [You have just witnessed the power of God's stories to speak messages to the center of people's worldview!]

A New Kind of Circus: The day after our village trip to Ekalakala, I was invited to speak in a Sunday morning service. This church, in a circus tent, sits on the edge of the 2nd largest slum in Africa. The pastor is a bishop from Nairobi who left his big city church to plant churches in the slums. The attendance in Bishop Charles' church was maybe 70 or so, but only one other car besides ours and the bishop's was parked in the lot. They walked to church from their shanties.

After a lot of rousing Kenyan style praise & worship music in Swahili and English, I told the story of the bent over woman found in Luke 13:10-17. The participation in the discussion that followed this Bible story was animated. The attendees loved seeing how this woman who had been kept bent over for 18 years by the power of Satan was healed by Jesus. Jesus only said, "You are loosed from your ailment." Then He laid hands on her and the woman instantly straightened up, then glorified God.

Those in church were amazed to see how in the story the leader of the synagogue was incensed because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day! We discussed how amazing it was that this leader cared nothing about the woman who was healed, and instead classified the touch and words of Jesus as "work."

Jesus says, "You hypocrites. You all untie your animals on the Sabbath and lead them to water. Shouldn't this woman, this daughter of Abraham who had been bound by Satan for 18 years be untied on the Sabbath? The story of the bent woman ends with, "The enemies of Jesus were ashamed, but the people rejoiced over the glorious things that were done by Jesus."

After those in the congregation spoke out their observations and personal applications of this story, I decided to wind it up by asking this active crowd one summary question. When people have been very responsive during the STS discussion, a summary question always receives a good response. So I asked, "What in this story spoke to you personally?"

Silence....

Deciding to help encourage some kind of response I said, "Sooo, does it speak to you that the crippled women came to Jesus as she was?" or..."Does the way Jesus showed His power over Satan's power speak to you?"

Nothing....

Try as I might, no one responded. In desperation I made eye contact with our East Africa director Bramuel, sort of begging for him to break the silence and say something to get the answers to start flowing again. He just stared back at me! I was at a loss as this lack of any response from a crowd, who had been freely answering questions, did not make sense. I was asking the Lord what to do with this strange and unexpected situation when suddenly some men jumped up and hurried to something or someone in the 3rd row of the church.

Man Down... Quickly many men were praying over a person who was down having some kind of convulsive attack. They were calling in the name of Jesus for demons to come out. The rest of us prayed...ferently. After about 5 minutes (that felt like hours) the fallen man was up. Then the bishop gave an invitation and the young man walked forward for prayer.

Later I told Bramuel, "I have never had people not respond like that. Then, when I looked at you for help, you just looked back at me!" Bramuel answered, "That was so strange. I had an answer, but I could not speak and didn't know why."

This unexplained silence, Bramuel's inability to speak and the sudden attack....it became clear that the story of the bent woman, the way Satan had bound the woman (but his power had been overridden by Jesus), had just been rerun in front of us.

Welcome to Africa! The Word of God "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The whole time in Africa was like this. Even during the training while the 200 attendees learned how to do inductive Bible study oral style, we watched people discover personal applications in God's Word. The best way to share these Africa experiences with you is to show you letters we are receiving from those we trained. (Excerpts below)

[From Influential Ministry Leader in Kenya] "Oh what do I say. I went to three Bible schools. I teach theology in Bible school and facilitate discipleship program in Africa. But what I saw and heard in only two days was awesome.

"The story, and storying in style !! it is real, the Bible comes or oozes from the bottom. The treasure are there BUT you have to dig them out.

"Personally , I felt challenged, Blessed, humbled on how I have made Bible story become stone rather than God's story to His people. God help us!

"I have already mobilized all my program directors to catch this new wave and tool for discipleship among the unreached and even those who need a new, fresh touch from God.

"Thanks for opening our eyes to see the nuggets in the Holy Word.

"Thanks to all who sponsored us to attend the Big Story day. Thanks Thanks."

[Kenyan Youth Worker] "Glory be to God for bringing you to Kenya such a time when we were thirsty and hungry for the word of God to come out in a different revelation and you guys did it. may God bless your work. Whatever you are doing to nations its not in vain. the world is going to be changed by His word."

[Ministry Leader in Uganda] "Greetings. Am so grateful for the opportunity of attending the Orality conference in Nairobi Kenya. By God's grace I was able to Go. I had no idea what Orality was and for sure it didn't know what to expect." "When the first session was over, I was left puzzled and really

wondered where this treasure had been hidden for that long. I discovered a better simple and easy to learn to learn inductive bible study. I also discovered a very down to earth tool for evangelism.

“After the 3 days in the conference, it was time to get back to the field and implement what I had learned. I arrived on Thursday night in Uganda and on Friday morning I was in class and I was burning to share the treasure that I had just discovered. Normally our lessons in our leadership training goes for one and a half hours but that day, when the time keeper rang the bell, the whole class booed at him not to disturb him because they wanted us to continue with the story of Martha and Mary.

“As we applied the nuggets of what we learnt, the pastor stated weeping and saying we have been like Martha busy bodies and not taking time at the feet of Jesus to acquire what will not be taken from us.

“On Sunday I preached in a church and shared the same story and 5 people came to the Lord.”

[Kenyan Young Person] “Oooh, i dont know where to start, guess what? I have started implementing the training in the school where i study. i have told the story to some of my school mates and they are finding it so interesting. I was so happy the other day when i was talking to my friend whose mother was not saved and the mother came and found us talking. she sat down where my friend and i were. i just remembered the story Dorothy was telling us about martha and mary, i started telling her the story. my friends mother was so annoyed at martha for not listening and for being rude to Jesus.

“After that i told her that she was like Martha because she had not accepted Christ. she started crying for being like martha, being rude to Christ, and for not listening to him.

“Guess what happened next? she asked me to lead her to Christ! I am so happy that God is touching so many through the Gods story method. so far i have shared a story with two different people and they have both given their lives to Christ. The young man in Nairobi who gave his life to Christ is Ken and my friends mother name is Priscilla. i pray that many more will come to Christ.

“I plan on sharing this method with my school where I am studying and in our local church.”

[Like Bush Fire] I just got back from Sheshemane, Ethiopia. The conference was good. I was invited as one of the speakers. So I told stories in my two sessions (The leper, David and Goliath). The response was so powerful. One was the things that touched people in the story of David and Goliath is that God uses seemingly weak instrumentalities, then whatever experience God allows us to go through, it is never wasted rater God uses it to build our faith to deal with bigger problems. Many people were healed and delivered from demonic oppression.

I met a church planter who is an oral communicator (He cannot read or write). He has been struggling as he told me through an interpreter how to get access to God's word. I gave him a player with God's Story on it and trained him how to use it, he could only but shed tears of joy. He has a group of 25 illiterate disciples. I'll be going to train them next month on STS. Several other local churches who were present told me this is what they need. so they are coming up with dates when We could train them. It is spreading like bush fire.

Thank you for your prayers and support. It is the Body of Christ at work!

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