

**General Topics :: Is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper issue?**

**Is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper issue?, on: 2017/3/6 9:14**

I have no desire to wade into the argument over The Shack book and movie. I want to say on a personal note I did read the book years ago. I got no checks in my spirit regarding any heresy in the book. But as others have said it was a message of God meeting a man at his point of desperate need. However I will leave that debate on the other thread.

When I ask is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper problem I'm thinking of something else. I'm thinking of venues of how we communicate spiritual truth. Basically the gospel.

Many of us are probably familiar with the Jesus video put out by Campus Crusade. This video is basically the story of Jesus has taken from the Gospel of Luke. This video probably more than any other medium or piece of literature has been instrumental in bringing many thousands upon thousands to the Lord Jesus Christ. This video has been translated into thousands of languages. And even to this day is still drawing people to the Savior.

Despite the success of this video and how God has used it, it has not been without criticism. There have been it's detractors who have come forth and said this video does not accurately portray Christ. They detractors have gone on to say that Jesus is only to be communicated through the pages of the written word. I would imagine in their minds the 1611 King James Version.

Most of the unreached people groups or UPG's in the world today yet to be reached with the gospel do not have a written language or tradition. The Wyckliff model of going into an unreached people group and reducing the language to an alphabet and then teaching the people to read. And then producing a translation of scripture would take 30 or 40 years. In this day and age when we believe that Jesus is about to return soon visionary missionaries are looking for new ways to communicate the gospel in the heart language of the people faster.

One model that has developed in the last 15 to 20 years has been a model called orality. Realizing that many of these unreached people groups have an oral tradition of storying. Ministries have taken the scriptures and have put them to about 240 story sets. That is the telling of God's word from creation up to the time of Christ by storying the truth of God's word. Storytellers are trained to tell the stories of God's word in the heart language of the people. Thus they go out and tell the stories to the people. And amazingly people are responding to hearing the truth of Jesus through the medium of storytelling.

I might add that really this is not a new way of telling the gospel or sharing the stories of God's word. The Old Testament Hebrews and the first century Christians heard the stories of God's word orally. Many of the first century Christians were illiterate. They would hear the scriptures and have the apostolic letters read and they would listen.

Yet in a religious mindset in America orality has come under criticism. Those who criticized the oral method say people need to sit under the polemic preaching of God's word to be converted.

This was the answer to a question posed at Grace Community Church a few years ago during the Strange Fire Conference. The question was asked what about Muslims who are experiencing dreams and visions of Jesus. It has been documented that Jesus is appearing to Muslims in dreams and visions. Another way that God is communicating. Yet the position taken by Grace Community Church and others that follow its Calvinistic suasion is that Muslims need to sit under the polemic preaching of God's word to be converted.

The argument for the polemic preaching of the word as advocated by Grace Community Church is taking out a Romans 10:14,

...How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believe? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?...

Does this mean that those in an unreached people group who do not have a literary base must sit under a verse by verse exposition of John MacArthur to come to faith in Christ?

I hardly think so. Can the storyteller or the one who may be showing the Jesus video not be the preacher to share Jesus?

I could go on and describe other mediums of how the story of Jesus is communicated and that is coming under criticism. If we are not careful though we will find ourselves in exactly the same type of situation that William Tyndale found himself in.

In the 1500's it was only the Catholic priest who had custodian of the scriptures and they were in Latin. It was the desire of Tyndale to have a translation of scriptures in English that the plowboy and milkmaid could understand the word of God. Those of us familiar with the story of Tyndale knew that he was martyred to get the New Testament into the vernacular of the people.

Yet today in our Protestant Evangelical tradition we have the same mindset. We have the pastor or clergy laity distinction. The clergy are regarded as the custodians of God's word. Any means to have the people understand the word outside of the clergy is frowned on. This ranges from contemporary translations of scriptures to the use of storying and audio and visual Bibles to communicate the truth of Jesus. The clergy maintains that only through communicating the printed word, verse by verse exposition, is the accepted way by which one can learn about Jesus.

Can one learn about Jesus by hearing His story told through a storyteller? Can one learn about Jesus by watching the Jesus video in their heart language? Can one learn about Jesus by seeing him in a dream or a vision? Can one learn about Jesus by hearing Him expounded from the printed word? I think any Spirit-filled Christian would say yes to any of the preceding questions.

So again I raise the question. Is the shack book and movie symptomatic of a deeper issue question mark and that is the issue of how do we communicate the truth of Jesus?

Is it possible that there are some, even in this forum, who would say that the only way Jesus can be communicated is through the 1611 KJV?

Brethren I submit that God is infinite. And that He can communicate through any number of diverse means to bring a person to Himself.

Again is the shack symptomatic of a deeper issue? Is it striking perhaps at our religious sensibilities of how God is communicating His truth?

Bro Blaine

**Re: Is the shack symptomatic of a deeper issue? - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/6 10:25**

I agree with you bear.

There is no indication that Paul was preached to. He had a vision in which he was asked a question- "Paul, why are you persecuting me?" and was deeply converted in an instant- "what would you have me do, Lord?"

I think it is safe to say that many Christians are suspicious of anything that does not run something like this:

Opening song  
Greeting/announcements  
Couple of more songs  
Turn to your neighbor and shake hands  
Offering  
Sermon  
Altar call/closing song  
Closing prayer  
Buffet line

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 10:48**

Brethren I have tried to clean up the typos in the OP.

Bro Blaine

**Re: Todd , on: 2017/3/6 10:50**

/// I think it is safe to say that many Christians are suspicious of anything that does not run something like this:

Opening song  
Greeting/announcements  
Couple of more songs  
Turn to your neighbor and shake hands  
Offering  
Sermon  
Altar call/closing song  
Closing prayer  
Buffet line ///

Bro sounds like the church I visited yesterday. Everything you mentioned except the buffet line. :-)

But I do agree with you. Anything that does not communicate Jesus in our religious paradigm comes under question.

Bro Blaine

**Re: Criticcal Article of the Jesus Video, on: 2017/3/6 10:59**

I have included an article that is very critical of the Jesus video. I wanted to include this article as an example of what I w as getting at in my OP.

Despite the fact that the video has been used by God to bring people to Him. The author of the article is critical on minor points about the Jesus video.

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Campus Crusade for Christ

A Critical Review of The Jesus Film

This review has been adapted from a review done by an East-coast pastor of the video The Jesus Film. The Jesus Film i s a major motion picture of the life of Christ based on the Gospel of Luke. Campus Crusade has made the Film available to more than 180 new mission agencies (in addition to the more than 400 already using it), and it continues to be one of the key ingredients of Campus Crusade's New Life 2000 ecumenical world evangelization campaign. Since Campus Cru sade claims The Jesus Film has been viewed by more than 710 million people, in 220 countries, in 340 languages, with 41 million "making decisions for Christ" (as of 6/96), its accurateness in doctrine and style must be a major concern to all Bible-believing Christians

1. The video claimed that there were one billion Christians in the world. This is obviously a loose definition of a Christian which would include many who name the name of Christ, but have not truly believed in His salvation on His terms.
2. Satan is portrayed in this video as a snake. This is not stated in the gospel of Luke on which the Film is based). If I we re asked how I would have handled this situation I would have had the narrator keep speaking and have a different voice for Satan.
3. The video says that Jesus was called upon to read in the synagogue, but Luke 4:16 states that Jesus stood up to rea

d. This indicated to me an authority which the movie leaves out. In the same scene the video shows Jesus kissing the scroll of Isaiah. This also is not recorded in Luke 4, and kissing the scroll is a form of worship which is contrary to the nature of God to worship any thing.

4. When Jesus calmed the sea in Luke 8:22-25, the video presented Jesus calming the sea without speaking. In Luke's gospel, it does not give the actual words which Jesus spoke, but it does record the fact that Jesus did speak! This is important because the Film removes the picture given in John 1:1-5, that Jesus is the Word of God.

5. The video, when portraying Legion, showed him naked and showed an inappropriate view of this man. Even if this was factual rather than speculative, it is inappropriate for a general audience.

6. The video dealt with parables, but only gave part of the reason for Jesus use of parables in His teaching.

7. When the video portrayed Jesus casting out a demon, the video did not indicate Jesus speaking. Again, while Luke's gospel does not record the actual words which Jesus spoke, It does record that Jesus rebuked the demon. This, again, is an omission of an important picture that Jesus is the Word of God.

8. In the video, after denying Jesus three times, Peter prays. This is not recorded in the gospel of Luke.

9. What really bothered me as I watched this video was simple fact that I never felt like I was getting the whole picture. It is true that Campus Crusade was only presenting what was recorded in Luke's gospel, but God gave us four gospels so that we could get the whole picture. It was very hard for me to see the crucifixion depicted, yet Jesus was not wearing the crown of thorns. It was also hard for me not to hear all that Jesus said as He hung on the cross. Since this video is meant to be evangelistic, and God has recorded and preserved four gospels for us, should not the whole picture which He has given us be portrayed?

10. The events presented in the video are out of order as they are presented in the gospel of Luke. If the intent was to stay true to the gospel of Luke, should not the message be presented as Luke gave it? (The Holy Spirit spoke through Luke!)

11. The video leaves out Jesus rebuking the Pharisees. The gospel of Luke, along with the other gospels, share much in formation regarding Jesus rebuking the Pharisees and the sin of the Pharisees. The video only presented John the Baptist rebuking the Pharisees. If those who made the video intended to leave out this information because they were emphasizing the gospel message, would not the gospel of John have been a better choice? (John 20:30,31)

12. The prayer at the end is all right, but it is not the prayer I would use to lead a person in salvation. The admission that, "I am a sinner," is not definitely clear although it is implied.

13. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, a question which was my own even before I viewed this tape: Does a video of the life of Jesus in any way offend God, i.e., are not the first and second commandments violated by the portrayal of Jesus on film? In the past, not even Hollywood dared to portray Jesus face-on. One saw the back of His head or hand in films such as Ben Hur. But now a man who doesn't even profess to be a Christian plays the part of God manifest in the flesh! Are those who "come to Christ" through the film coming to the real Jesus, or the actor who plays his part? (That actor, Brian Deacon, describes himself as a "lapsed Catholic" who hasn't practiced his faith: "I've had many doubts about Jesus' teaching," says Deacon. "I'm just an actor. I don't want the responsibility of being Jesus Christ ... The character of Jesus belongs to everyone and I had to find my own voice and emotions for the role." What "Jesus" is this who attracts multitudes!)

Whenever a film about Jesus is made, the one playing the role of Jesus must use facial expressions and tones in his voice to portray Christ. If he does this in any way wrongly, he has misrepresented God to people. This is much to scary a task for me! The Bible clearly states that, "... Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). The Bible also states that it is the preaching of the cross which is God's chosen method of evangelism. I do not have a problem with a video which preaches the gospel message, but I do get concerned about anyone playing the role of Jesus if Jesus is God!

Again is religious tradition getting in the way here of how we perceive the communication of Hid Truth?

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/6 11:40**

The dude who wrote that response has way yonder too much time on his hands.

**Re: Todd, on: 2017/3/6 11:55**

So agree my brother. So agree. But then those who are inclined to criticize The Shack, either the book or the movie, will also criticize more christ-centered videos like the Jesus film.

That is why I opened up this thread asking if the criticism of the shack movie is not symptomatic of a deeper issue. Can God communicate through other mediums besides the printed word?

Those in Christendom will say no. But I believe those who see that God is interested in a relationship will say yes.

Bro Blaine

**Re: A Critiwue of Orality , on: 2017/3/6 12:04**

I have included the last part of an article by the Bible League in which they criticize the orality movement in communicating the gospel to unreached people groups period

The Bible League article does a fair job in analyzing what orality is about. The article does say that the purpose of orality is to communicate the Gospel of Jesus to those groups that do not have a literary base. Those groups that missionaries call unreached people groups or UPG's.

However I believe the conclusions reached by the Bible League at the end of the article are not correct.

The conclusions are quoted below. The link to the complete article is at the bottom of this post. It was too long to post it in its entirety here. The article is well worth reading. It may not make much sense to those who are not involved in missions. But I post the article to show that there are those who criticize other means to get the gospel out other than through the printed word of the scriptures themselves.

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Quote...The Orality Movement, which is based on the flawed theories of a Jesuit priest and the weird practices of the Emerging Church, is teaching a false gospel. It is committed to a non-biblical version of the Christian faith that is without a doctrinal base. The oral Bible is not God's Word, but a collection of crafted stories. The deception of the oral Bible is that it crafts Scripture to make it culturally appropriate and worldview sensitive. It offers a non-offensive gospel that is not the gospel of truth.

And so we must conclude that the actions of the Orality Movement represent a serious attack on God's Word. The tragedy is that many true Christians are being deceived and misled by the persuasive promotion of the storytelling agenda. As reformed Christians we must warn our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those in the Third World, of the dangers of this movement. As Martin Luther opposed the darkness of Rome, so today we must oppose the darkness of Lausanne and its Orality Movement. We live in a time when there is a great hunger for the truth of God's Word and the doctrines of the truth...End Quote.

Link to Bible League article below.

<http://www.bibleleaguetrust.org/beware-of-the-oralty-movement/>

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I might add the Bible League has a vested interest in the printed word. Thus this may be their agenda for criticizing orality.

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2017/3/6 13:15**

The Shack is symptomatic of a deeper issue, but the question you've posed, Bear, is whether the controversy about The Shack (not the book/movie itself) is symptomatic of a deeper issue of what are the legitimate ways to communicate the gospel.

The Bible clearly sets forth what is the normative way for gospel proclamation: preaching. Not skits. Not movies. Not creative arts generally. Preaching.

The Bible clearly sets forth other miscellaneous means of communicating truth: Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Teaching. And (gasp) spiritual gifts to the Body operating in the assembly (tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, words of knowledge/wisdom).

The Bible clearly models yet another means of communicating truth: Written teaching, and in the New Testament in particular, written letters devoted to teaching. Teaching happens there by encouragement, advice, doctrinal exposition, written prayers and other literary forms. Let's group them all into one broad category, though: writing.

Within the miscellaneous category above is storytelling. Jesus did it. The apostles did it. In the Hellenistic culture of the New Testament, oratory storytelling was a high form of communication. Practically every oral form of communication we use today has its roots in the Greek culture's oral communication. We use it in education (Socratic method), politics (rhetoric, policy debates in the halls of legislation, debates by candidates), religion (examples of preaching by Jesus and also Paul are at the root of any half decent preaching today, but they shared those features with other Greek communication forms in their day).

Ancient storytelling, of which gospel preaching in the days of the New Testament is a later sub-type if you're doing a strictly analytical look at the communication form itself, began as an exercise of recitation long stretches of text from memory. Eventually, there developed a strain of artistry to it, a technique of delivery if you will, called sophistry. Sophistry was the training and application of certain speech techniques designed to garner buy-in from listeners. It was heralded, widely-used in the highest circles, and also derided by the likes of Plato and Aristotle who disfavored such techniques as barriers to being able to know truth (philosophically speaking).

So, the controversy over forms of communication is not new. There ARE problems presented in every form of communication that impact the substance of the matter communicated.

Concerns over orality are well placed, but not wholly correct. Fact is, many of the unreached people groups lack a written language and the time to introduce them to the gospel of Jesus Christ takes too long. There is nothing inherent in the New Testament to suggest that the model for gospel propagation must include a long cycle between introduction of the gospel and gospel maturity that requires written literacy. Orality is a legitimate means of missionary work, the most New Testament means of doing so (i.e., God has chosen the foolishness of preaching...) and is still under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit as HE sees to it that the work of the Lord reaches fruition in the end of days. We are putting our hands on the ark, so to speak, if we deny orality as legitimate in order to wait on us to perfect development of written language and then to translate the Bible into that language and then to teach it to those who have just learned to reduce a language to writing. Not that it shouldn't happen in that longer way, but one does not invalidate the other, here.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/6 14:07**

In the movie "Amistad" there is a scene where two slaves coming over on a ship come across an illustrated bible- obviously they could not read it but by looking at the pictures from OT through the NT they had a very good picture of who Jesus was and what he did.

I've always liked that scene in the movie.

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 15:41**

I thought Spielberg did an excellent job dealing with the conversion scene considering he is a Jewish fella.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 17:04**

Quote...In the movie "Amistad" there is a scene where two slaves coming over on a ship come across an illustrated bible - obviously they could not read it but by looking at the pictures from OT through the NT they had a very good picture of who Jesus was and what he did...End Quote

Wow. Forerunner to the digital visual Bible.

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/3/6 17:21**

This is the biggest straw man argument I think I have ever read on here.

In essence what you are saying Blaine is 'the reason folk don't agree with The Shack is because they only think the gospel should be presented through quoting scripture and probably only KJV bible'. Well what a load of nonsense! No one has said that at all. It is just a deceitful way of justifying this book and film. I think there are plenty of good books and films that do a splendid job of presenting the gospel and do not distort the truth of who God is like The Shack does.

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2017/3/6 17:50**

This has been a pretty good thread so far, I pray it don't spiral out of control. :-)

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/6 17:50**

Jesus = what God is like. Heb. 1:3

**Re: Dave , on: 2017/3/6 17:57**

Quote...When I ask is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper problem I'm thinking of something else. I'm thinking of venue of how we communicate spiritual truth. Basically the gospel...End Quote

Brother this is not a straw man argument. But I am looking at The Shack in terms of the medium of how we communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I included 2 articles in this thread which criticize the Jesus video and orality as a means to communicate Biblical truth. I may very well summarize that those who criticize The Shack would be opposed to the Jesus film, the visual Bible, storytelling, dreams and visions, and any other means of communicating God's word. Such would probably be opposed to contemporary translation of scripture. KJV being the only accepted translation.

Bro Blaine

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 17:59**

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 18:15**

Can movies and other digital medium be used to communicate spiritual truth?

For an example. There are movies or videos out about the Gospel of John, the gospel of Matthew, the book of Acts, etc. Is this an acceptable means to receive God's word? Or is the word only received through the printed page?

Is it acceptable to listen to an audio Bible? Or to listen to a story about the Bible? Is it acceptable to watch a movie such as War Room or Chariots of Fire?

Are these acceptable means to receive spiritual truth?

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2017/3/6 19:16**

"Can movies and other digital medium be used to communicate spiritual truth?"

Blaine asked if movies can be used? There are a lot of people that felt like The Matrix was a really great movie to share with non believers. There were tons of parallels through out the entire movie.

RDG

Just to be clear I was speaking of the first Matrix movie not the second or third

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/6 19:58**

Bear wrote: "There are movies or videos out about the Gospel of John, the gospel of Matthew,"

The Gospel of Matthew- at least the one I am thinking of with Bruce Marchiano, used only the biblical text for a script.

However, many would find fault with it because Jesus smiles wayyy too much. He is far too likeable.

**Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2017/3/6 22:11**

These other means are not made illegitimate because they are not the written or preached Word.

But, all forms of communication come with inherent biases that shape the content of the message. That is a truism that was expressed by 1960's communication philosopher Marshall McLuhan who said, rightly, "the medium IS the message". Jesus personifies that as the Living Word. "I am the message," is His....message.

God chose preaching. He chose words as the containers of truth. Jesus, again, is the Word, the perfect, complete expression of truth (message) as God the Son made flesh (the medium or, if you will, the container of truth). Still, by reason of Himself in us (Christ in you, the hope of glory) and by reason of the truth-mediating work of the Holy Spirit ("He ... shall be in you" and He shall "teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you") He anoints men and ordains WORDS (preaching) as the medium of His own choosing to propagate the gospel.

The biases of the spoken word are biases that God prefers over other forms of communication, and He so empowers that form that by it men are saved.



**General Topics :: Is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper issue?**

Can those words be spoken through non-preaching means? Yes. Is it the same? No. Is it a substitute? No. May it supplement? I won't answer that. Intuitively, I think yes, but I would know more about the actual efficacy of movies like the Jesus film as a missionary tool and how it is used in conjunction with true gospel Preaching. My guess is that more conversions and deeper commitments result from preaching when it is done with the film rather than the film and a mere invitation. Maybe I am wrong.

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 22:31**

""Can movies and other digital medium be used to communicate spiritual truth?"

Is not SI a digital medium? Ah, you say, but it is used to promote the preached word. But can a video tape carry the anointing of God or must the preached word be heard as it is uttered? I am sure we can agree the Word does not say that the Word was to be video taped and then shared millions of times. Yet it is. I wonder. When Peter spoke his sermon in Acts 2 and someone videotaped it, would men, re-watching it, be stabbed in the heart?.....bro Frank

**Re: Frank , on: 2017/3/6 22:53**

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Quote...When Peter spoke his sermon in Acts 2 and someone videotaped it, would men, re-watching it, be stabbed in the heart?...End quote

Very good question my brother. My guess would be only if the tape is anointed by the Holy Spirit?

Bro Blaine

**Re: , on: 2017/3/6 23:40**

I guess it goes to the deeper question of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Sinners in the hands of an angry God had little to no effect when it was first preached. Yet, the second time preached while Edwards was on the road, then down came the Spirit. Why not the first time? The Spirit of God moves as He pleases and where the wind shall blow next none of us know.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/7 7:21**

I think we have to be honest- when Paul was preaching there were only two ways I can think of for people to learn the gospel- preaching and reading. Since a great number of people were likely illiterate, preaching was it.

So when we say the Bible stresses preaching, what else could it possibly stress?

**Re: Is The Shack symptomatic of a deeper issue? - posted by StirItUp (), on: 2017/3/7 8:19**

I believe just about any medium can be used to communicate the gospel, as long as...

the message communicated stays true to that which has already been revealed in the scriptures.

Once we use "artistic licence" we are in danger of changing the message and "taking away from" or "adding to" the revealed truth.

The bible is clear enough on every subject of the human need.

That being said, one of the most effective ways of communicating by Jesus, was illustration, parable etc.

**Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2017/3/7 8:27**

Todd, the upshot of that question is that God was pleased to leave it that way, or else He would have commanded literacy in the New Testament. Scripture says He chose preaching as the means of communicating the gospel. Preaching is powerful only because God ordains it as that means.

But, it is also instructive about His nature. He forbade images to depict Him or His work. Image based knowledge is not a form of knowledge that reflects God's nature. To the extent that God reveals Himself in non-verbal forms, He has done so in nature. Read Psalm 19:1-4. Even there, the writer of the Psalm compares the revelation in nature to spoken verbal expression. Romans 1:20 confirms the sufficiency of this "speech of nature" as enough revelation of God to make men accountable for rejecting Him.

It is, though, still considered a word-work. And, when we consider that those things in nature that "declare" Him are themselves the product of His own word (Psalm 33:9, Hebrews 11:3, Romans 4:17) and that they were brought into existence through the person of the Son who IS the living Word (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16) it is clear that this idea of preaching and oration is closely related to WHO God is, His nature and being and less related to simply HOW the truth of Him is communicated.

All that is not to say that illiteracy was a non-factor in how people could hear the gospel, but it is irrelevant to God's revelation of Himself as the Word and His ordaining the spoken declaration as the vehicle of power to pierce the heart and convert sinners from death to life.

**Re: Tim, on: 2017/3/7 8:50**

He forbade images to depict Him or His work. Image based knowledge is not a form of knowledge that reflects God's nature.

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Then Tim it seems like you wouldn't not be in favor of media like the Visual Bible. Bruce Marciano portrays Jesus. The gospel of Matthew is taken word for word from the 1983 NIV Bible. In your mind would this be an acceptable means to portray scripture truth?

Also the movie The Gospel of John was taken from another contemporary translation of scripture. I think Good News for Modern Man. Again a word for word dialogue from the Good News New Testament. Yet someone is portraying Jesus?

If we're going to say that images are not acceptable to portray Christ. then that begs the question of the illustrated Bible that Todd spoke of earlier that led to the conversion of two illiterate slaves. For that matter what about illustrated children's Bibles that portray Jesus?

Brothers and sisters should we not have some common sense that dictate our understanding of how scripture truth is to be communicated?

Bro Blaine

**Re: The Jesus Video , on: 2017/3/7 8:58**

Bretheren unless we're going to dispel the conversions that are happening from the Jesus video that is based on the Gospel of Luke. Then we're going to have an issue since the Gospel of Luke portrays the image of Jesus.

Again just some thoughts to the discussion.

Bro Blaine

**Re: , on: 2017/3/7 9:26**

Bro Todd writes.....

"So when we say the Bible stresses preaching, what else could it possibly stress?"

That is a very valid point. We are to share the message of Jesus. Whether orally, or written, or preached or through sermons on SI or through texts, or through e-mails or through you-tubes or though however you are led by the Holy Spirit of the living God. Many of us fly to different countries and when there share the Gospel, now when the Scriptures were written it did not say to fly to different countries, it did say that we were to go to all the nations.

Should we not fly there because the Apostles walked or rode there or sailed by ship? Ridiculous I know, but if we must be that literal then surely we should be consistently literal? I know and understand the fears that many have, legitimate ones of how the Gospel is shared and many, rightly so, are highly suspicious of Hollywood or any other secular entity sharing truth. But for the most part, it is Godless entities sharing some elements of truth with the mass Godless. If they secular world looked at Christendom with the same eye as some look at them, then they would see a world of division and infighting and lack of love and schism. Sad, for the most part Christendom is no witness at all unless it is a witness to disunity. That is the greatest problem of them all.....bro Frank

**Re: Frank , on: 2017/3/7 9:49**

But for the most part, it is Godless entities sharing some elements of truth with the mass Godless. If they secular world looked at Christendom with the same eye as some look at them, then they would see a world of division and infighting and lack of love and schism. Sad, for the most part Christendom is no witness at all unless it is a witness to disunity. That is the greatest problem of them.

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Brother I agree with your observation.

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/7 9:55**

I did not mean to de-stress the absolute value of oral preaching.

I simply wanted to point out that by necessity no other means could even be mentioned in scripture due to the time it was written.

If Paul was writing today he might say something like "may your social media posts bear the fragrance of Christ."

**Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2017/3/7 10:45**

Blaine, very fair question. I want to be clear above all here.

In no way am I pooh-poohing the idea of visual depictions to communicate the gospel. This is not my dictum on what is appropriate or acceptable. I've watched movies that are "Christian" and enjoyed them. But, that is all I can say for them. They were enjoyable, moving, or fun or whatever.

But, follow me, here. Pardon the length. If communication theory bores you, ignore the rest of this. :) I've spent a lot of years -- my undergrad degree was in communications -- thinking on this and reading and pondering it. My views are informed to differing degrees by certain authors. So, I'm just coming clean with that. You can make of this what you will. But, please DON'T make of it that I condemn Christian-themed videos being used or viewed.

To say that image-based knowledge is not a form of knowledge that reflects God's nature is not to say He forbids images as communication of His word. It is simply an acknowledgement that they are two very different "technologies", so to speak, each with their own inherent biases. Because God is (and I almost cringe to type this for fear of being misunderstood) the "word God" (that is, He reveals Himself as the Word and not just IN words), He unsurprisingly eschews images as reflections of Himself AND He guides us away from misunderstanding Himself by forbidding the worship of images. He is zealous and jealous about His revelation of Himself. After all, it is HIS glory, HIS name's sake, HIS nature that is being served by our redemption in the first place.

(Bear, this is why I often come back to this issue of the nature of God and His character, His being. It permeates every other matter of our knowledge of God and our relationship with Him. Anyone who would listen to me may get frustrated or bored or disgusted with me, and I get it. But, I also am fixated on Him to some extent and His nature. Every sin that we commit is a proposition that we accept and which answers God's concern with us as being in His image, and here is what it says: "God, you say, 'I am that I am', well, 'I am who I am,' God. And what this I am is going to do and be is X, Y, Z, etc."

God is Word. Right? Does God love images? You bet. He made US in HIS image, and He loves us. But, how did He make us in His image? By the Word, through the Word. As His image-bearers, whenever WE engage in image-making we are exercising that much of us which retains a semblance of His image in us; because we are fallen and sinful, our image-making is also God-unlikeness in us. We cannot be trusted to make images because we will look upon our own creation and call it good, and we have no goodness.

That is the bias of an image. It demands approval. It demands recognition. Otherwise, it is of no utility at all. God was pleased to approve His image in us in creation before the Fall. HE recognized His image in us, and HIS recognition gave it value to HIM. And because He was personally present in the garden with His image-bearers, Adam and Eve, there was no issue about images, no need to address it.

In the fallenness of our existence, images take on an entirely different disposition. They do not simply reflect God's nature and image. They reflect those things that WE, the creators of the images, would have others to see in them, but the ability of those images to carry the fullness of truth --- compared to truth conveyed in words --- is PARTICULARLY lacking in the context of understanding who God is. That is, a video depiction of Jesus dying on a cross may depict an \*infinitely good\* event of historical and theological truth. If anyone sees that, they are expected to pass judgment on its value. Its value depends not on its ability to communicate historical and theological truth, but its ability to impress upon the mind a distinct kind of knowledge that only comes from image-based communication. It can never approach the depth of word-based propositions of that same event.

People may react to a Jesus film with opinions about Jesus as a great teacher and martyr and well-intended. They may walk away with a sense of injustice at the crucifixion of such a good man. They may even be emotionally or sentimentally moved with the thought of "He did that for me". But, they will never, by viewing that depiction, arrive at the truth of Jesus as God nor the truth of their own estate and need for Him, what life in Him really is, what the death and resurrection of Christ MEANS, nor any other necessary truth without which the gospel is never truly communicated.

But, people today will argue with that supposition. Why? Because today "in the image-driven world of our era and culture" seeing is believing. In an image based world, seeing a video depiction of Christ on the cross elicits reaction to the image, but not to the propositions made by the Christ's crucifixion. That requires words. Why? Because we are word-creations of a God who is inherently The Word. It is who He is. And, in the transformation of ourselves into the image and likeness of Jesus, it is who we are to be.

There's way more to this. Way more. But, this is already too long and boring and probably won't even be read by most who see it. So, for everyone's sake, the end. (•̂̂̂)

**Re: Tim , on: 2017/3/7 10:52**

Dear brother I appreciate what you're saying. But frankly you've left me somewhere at the last intersection. But then my background is not communication.

A question does come to mind though. Frank and I were discussing this earlier in the thread. In a medium of communicating the gospel truth. Does not the Holy Spirit have to bring the application of that truth from the medium to one's heart?

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2017/3/7 14:15**

If He doesn't, bear, it won't happen. He is sovereign.