



Telling the Gospel Through Story: Evangelism That Keeps Hearers Wanting More

By Christine Dillon



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The 2013 *Outreach Magazine* Resource of the Year in Evangelism! Everybody loves a good story. In an age when prepackaged gospel formulations leave people cold, well-told Bible stories can be used powerfully by God to touch people's hearts and draw them to himself. After ministry in both Western and non-Western contexts, church planter Christine Dillon has discovered that Bible storying is far more effective than most other forms of apologetics or evangelistic presentations. In fact, non-Christians actually enjoyed storying and kept coming back for more. Storying provides solid biblical foundations so listeners can understand, apply and respond to the gospel, and then go on to fruitful maturity in God's service. This book includes practical guidance on how to shape a good story, how to do evangelism through storying and how to lead Bible discussions. With particular insights for trainers and those working in crosscultural contexts, this guide provides you with concrete steps for sharing the Story that everyone needs to hear.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Dillon's easy-to-implement instruction is a helpful resource for the reader wanting to experience the power of story. Her work offers the storying movement and the church a valuable medium to communicate with." (Mark W. Overstreet, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, April 2013)

"This wonderful 'how to' book is not merely a brief introduction to storytelling, but is an in-depth biblical and practical study of this important subject. Regardless of your present approach to evangelism, you will find this book to be a significant help as you have the opportunity to introduce others to Jesus Christ." (Paul Cedar, *Outreach Magazine*, "Resources of the Year" issue, March/April 2013)

"This is a must-read for the beginner, as well as those already involved in storytelling as a way of sharing the gospel. I highly recommend it." (Skip Holman, *Baptist Standard*, November 19, 2012)

"*Telling the Gospel Through Story* provides a fresh approach to all who take evangelism seriously and seek proficiency at making Christ known." (Jerry Root, *Christianity Today*, July/August 2012)

"There are many subjects that can be discussed and understood at primarily an academic level. Orality is not one of them. Christine Dillon understands this distinction and has treated the topic of storying in a practical and hands-on fashion in *Telling the Gospel Through Story*. Her journey into orality has been bumpy, like my own, and has been hammered out through years of both firsthand experience and hosting training seminars in numerous contexts. One sentence in the book sums up her overall philosophy: 'Nothing beats hearing the stories being told in a real situation.' I appreciate her willingness to glean from other practitioners and even to plug the approach that has most resonated with me personally--Simply The Story. If you find that the exegetical tool in your communication tool belt is like Thor's hammer, but your narrative communication is more like a pair of tweezers, then this is the book for you." (Dr. Larry Dinkins, Th.M., Ph.D., OMF International missionary to Thailand for 32 years)

"Christine has given us a most welcome introduction and primer in her book *Telling the Gospel Through Story*. While her context is crosscultural, she makes a strong case for pastors and evangelists everywhere to understand the importance of, and the ways and means to share, biblical narratives. This book will be helpful in all gospel preaching and homiletics in general." (Lon Allison, executive director, Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College)

"We live by stories. Family stories. Celebrities' stories. Historical stories. Something happens. And then--? We stop to listen. We can't help it. The story pulls us in. Much of God's revelation is story. People act, but even before that, God acts. Christine Dillon knows the power of God's never-ending story. In this book she shows us how to tell it so as to transmit truth that will transform the listeners." (Miriam Adeney, author of *Kingdom Without Borders: The Untold Story of Global Christianity*)

"This is an excellent book that I would encourage all serious Christians to read. Using moving stories, Christine shares insights she has learned about telling (gospel) stories effectively. She answers the questions that will come to the reader's mind. Christine is honest that this method will not cause all to come to Christ, but the method may have the best chance of people hearing the whole story and wanting more. I will be recommending this book for all our workers, both new and experienced." (Richard Schlitt, deputy general

director, OMF)

"Human beings make sense of our lives through stories. Yet all too often when it comes to evangelism, Christians offer some abstract theological propositions for people to agree with or not, rather than inviting them to enter the Story the Bible is narrating. Christine Dillon calls us to recapture the beauty, power and mystery of storying the gospel, and does so with the wisdom of a practitioner." (Sean Gladding, author of *The Story of God, the Story of Us*)

"I appreciate Christine Dillon's knowledge and experience of using storytelling in evangelism. Many people love to talk about 'orality' and theorize on how and why it should work. Christine learned the concepts of storytelling and immediately started using them. Over the years, she has had to improve her skills, change her approach and develop her methods. This ongoing process has been key in her success. Now she has written down what she has learned. This is a must-read for those wanting to develop these same skills." (John Walsh, president, Christian Storytelling Network)

"At last, a really practical book on Bible storying! Christine Dillon gives us a step-by-step guide on how to tell Bible stories based on a carefully laid biblical foundation, nuggets of wisdom from her research and her own experiences of telling Bible stories on planes, at the hairdresser, with friends and on the streets. The result is a book that encourages, inspires and helps me to use storytelling much more often in sharing the message of the Bible with Muslims. I will be highly recommending it to all my students and Christian friends." (Richard Hibbert, director, School of Cross-Cultural Mission, Sydney Missionary & Bible College)

"People throughout history have been fascinated and attracted by a well-told story. The biblical story, which focuses on God's dealings with humankind, is the greatest story ever told. In this fresh treatment of the role of storytelling in the communication of the gospel, Christine Dillon, using her extensive personal experience of working crossculturally, writes winsomely and helpfully about ways in which we can engagingly bring the gospel alive through the art of storytelling in a global generation of increasing numbers of oral learners who love to hear a good story. There is no greater story to be told than the story of God's love for people in the person of Jesus Christ. This book will help you be more effective in telling that story." (Lindsay Brown, former general secretary of IFES and international director of the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization)

"Because of my close association with pastors and pastors-in-training from other cultures, presenting the truths of Scripture through stories has been a longstanding interest. Of all the books (and seminars) that I have considered on this subject, Dillon's book rises to the top." (E. A. Sorum, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 112, no. 2, Spring 2015)

About the Author

Christine Dillon works as a church planter in Taiwan with OMF International. She has been a missionary there for the past twelve years, but lived in Asia as a child while her parents were missionaries as well. The prevalent belief system in Dillon's area is ancestor and idol worship with only .8% of the population being christian. Her evangelism approach consists of storying, discipling, and training of locals and other missionaries. Dillon previously published *1-2-1 Discipleship* in 2009 (Christian Focus).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Adrian Rogers:

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