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Letter From the Editor

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Letter From the Editor

Abstract

When I began preaching occasionally at my home church some years ago, I struggled at first with the ebb and flow of engagement in the eyes of those listening. I longed to flip the classroom, so to speak, or at least call on the sleepy friend in row four or the murmuring teens to my left. The head pastor assured me that some people would be shocked into staying home if I treated the sanctuary too much like a university classroom, so I restrain myself. Instead I study their responses as I speak, counting it a win when my words keep the Sunday morning nappers alert and hold at bay the film of distraction that can slide over the eyes of even the most polite listener. And if I feel the energy in the room diffusing, the answer is simple: Tell a story.

Letter From the Editor

Dr. Jennie A. Harrop, Assistant Editor, ICCTE-J

Greetings, Friends.

When I began preaching occasionally at my home church some years ago, I struggled at first with the ebb and flow of engagement in the eyes of those listening. I longed to flip the classroom, so to speak, or at least call on the sleepy friend in row four or the murmuring teens to my left. The head pastor assured me that some people would be shocked into staying home if I treated the sanctuary too much like a university classroom, so I restrain myself. Instead I study their responses as I speak, counting it a win when my words keep the Sunday morning nappers alert and hold at bay the film of distraction that can slide over the eyes of even the most polite listener. And if I feel the energy in the room diffusing, the answer is simple: Tell a story.

Our brains are wired for story, and our hearts are wired for connection. “We tell ourselves stories in order to live,” Joan Didion writes in her book of essays *The White Album*. “Why storytelling?” Steve Denning writes in the *Forbes* article “The Science of Storytelling.” “Simple: Nothing else works.”

When we hear a story, we enter the storyteller’s brain for a time, reveling in the transparency of human connection and drawing parallels to our own lives. When we hear a story, we relax into the familiarity of form and nuance, allowing the storyteller to lead us toward new images, concepts, and questions. When we hear a story, we draw a little closer to our Creator – and to the Son who chose parables as His primary means of communication.

Welcome to “Stories from the Field,” our special issue designed to allow you a glimpse into the lives of your peers. We were so pleased and encouraged by your response to our call for papers this past year that we have expanded our special issue into two segments; the second installment will be published in late summer 2017.

Peace to each of you as you teach, lead, serve, and enjoy the power of a good story.

Dr. Jennie A. Harrop

Assistant Editor, ICCTE-J