

MINISTRY SUMMARY

StoryRunners was born out of a growing awareness that most of the remaining unreached people groups are made up of oral preference learners. For them to understand the message, it must be presented in a way that addresses their culture and learning style. During the 1990s, three multi-agency consultations on orality and the Bible were held at various locations around the world. In discussion with those mission leaders who were also on this path of discovery (and even leading us down the path) we felt the need to more regularly gather to network on issues such as Bible storying, as well as related oral and audiovisual expressions, in order to take the gospel to unreached people groups. Our first annual consultation was held in December, 2001. This network later joined forces with a permanent task force that was formed at the 2004 forum of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization to address various aspects of making disciples of oral learners. It has come to be known as the International Orality Network.

In a parallel development, Table 71, a regular gathering of mission-agency leaders that arose from the Billy Graham Amsterdam 2000 Conference on World Evangelism, adopted a cooperative strategy centered on orality and Bible storying. An intersection of these different streams has resulted in OneStory, a partnership managed by the five largest organizations involved in the least-reached people groups and Bibleless language groups of the world. Each organization brings a unique set of strengths to a partnership ventured around Bible storying. The StoryRunners team provides the core operational function for OneStory.

Table 71 later initiated Finishing the Task. It is a movement which exists to connect local churches to all of the unengaged, unreached people groups of the world, developing indigenously lead church planting movements resulting in the evangelization and discipleship of the peoples. StoryRunners also provides the infrastructure and field training for the Finishing the Task initiative.

In a similar fashion, StoryRunners provides the logistical support of Finishing The Task, including the development and technical support of websites, developing the communications strategy, mobilizing churches, etc. We serve as “first responders” to all church contacts from the websites, conferences, and our own sponsored FTT Briefings for donors and pastors.

CORE VALUES

ALL PEOPLES

A core value that pervades all other values is that of reaching all peoples. This means that the proclamation of God’s Word will not be limited by the size of a people group, the level of literacy, the geographic or sociopolitical context, or any other parameter. StoryRunners values every unreached people group and dreams to see them reached.

GOD’S WORD IN THE MOTHER TONGUE

Proclaiming God’s Word to every unreached people group is at the core of StoryRunners. Making Scripture available in the heart languages of unreached people groups facilitates the development of viable, sustainable, reproducing and indigenously led churches. We desire for the gospel message found in God’s Word to flow freely at the heart level of every individual, with everyone having the opportunity to receive it, understand it, respond to it and reproduce it within their own culture. While providing oral translations of scripture, it’s also important to note that we work tenaciously in partnership with Bible translators to

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protect the integrity of scripture at every stage of each project. We value the finished and recorded stories as important foundation blocks to providing additional scripture resources within each people group.

HEART LEARNING STYLE

StoryRunners honors the communication style, learning preference and oral traditions of each distinct people group. With thousands of languages yet unwritten, learning how these cultures have retained and passed along their culture, language, history, music, poetry and values for thousands of years is critical. These “heart issues” are always packaged in a heart learning style (usually oral and highly cultural). God’s Word is full of stories that reveal to us His character, His plan of redemption, and His loving relationship with man. The Bible preserves these stories in a written record, but many of them were originally communicated orally, as was the primary means of communicating them over the millennia. A first generation of mother-tongue storytellers telling a carefully crafted, carefully selected set of Bible stories, and then equipping others to tell them, accurately provides for effective, deeply understood evangelism resulting in spiritual movements.

PARTNERSHIP

A priority and focus of StoryRunners is to be a catalyst in developing global and local partnerships in order to maximize the lasting fruitfulness of all our partnerships. An effective cross-cultural partnership model will bear witness of God’s grace to the world and bring glory to God. We are committed to partnering with local churches and to encouraging and facilitating their success in being on mission with God and working together to fulfill the Great Commission. We also believe in close partnership with national teams, national churches or local agencies for building sustainable models. Sometimes, the most fruitful model is a partnership with humanitarian groups to develop a more holistic ministry impact.

NATIONAL STORYING MOVEMENTS

StoryRunners envisions effective communication of God’s Word, resulting in evangelism and discipleship spreading broadly through every people group and deeply influencing lives. The result of this movement is the planting and growing of healthy house churches that respond to the unique, God-given culture of each people group while staying firmly grounded in God’s Word. Church planting becomes a spiritual movement as members of each local church plant new churches within their own people group and beyond. As God’s Word flows freely, we believe changed lives will result and God’s stories will multiply into other nearby people groups, resulting in a local storying movement.

NEGLECTED SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY

One of the values of StoryRunners is that God’s Word should flow freely into all segments of a people group. We are committed to intentionality in this area of need by focusing special efforts on women (especially in Muslim, Hindu and other cultures where the gospel might not flow freely between men and women). We are also developing special strategies for children, Deaf communities, families affected by AIDS/HIV, and other groups that have often been inadvertently overlooked by normal mission strategies.

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