

Sometimes when I spent time with the storyteller, I noticed that he seemed a little down. When I finally inquired about his state of mind, he began to talk about his concern for the effectiveness of his mission work.

“Sometimes I feel like I am speaking into the void! I create stories about God and His Kingdom, and in telling them I feel that no one is really listening. People seem to like what I say, but only as entertainment<sup>1</sup>. They aren’t absorbing the message. But I keep doing it because I am committed to it.”

I knew the feeling, and I knew that God spoke through the prophets of the same problem.<sup>2</sup>

But the more we talked together, the more we realized that there was always a portion of our message, even though it was sometimes very small, that seeped into the minds of our listeners. And we had to recognize that only God actually gives the increase<sup>3</sup>. Our role was that of the watchman<sup>4</sup>, communicating the advance of the Kingdom<sup>5</sup>.

We did see some infusion of spiritual thoughts throughout the community, though, and it was evidence that God was giving increase. These became like oral traditions that passed from individual to individual and from group to group – not Truth per se, but evidence of meditation on God and deepening of relationships with Him.

Thus, we realized that many people were involved in creative thinking, and had many great God-given ideas<sup>6</sup> about the Kingdom. The majority of these thoughts were never published in any sense as were the letters of some of our leaders. But they were used to encourage each other<sup>7</sup>; I saw this especially in the way they shared their ideas about the communion. Most importantly, beyond the community who shared them, God knew of them<sup>8</sup>. He hears them all, and appreciates those who glorify His name<sup>9</sup>. However He might deal with them, He accounts them as True Worship<sup>10</sup>.

The storyteller and I considered ways of collecting these thoughts, but finally we realized that they become permanently “printed” on God’s fabric of spiritual worship. We imagined that perhaps He considered them as a garden filled with beautiful or glorifying thoughts and meditations, swarming like a collection of butterflies.

Even though we sometimes felt that we were speaking into a “void”, we knew that it was really more like a deep cave. So, in this image, the sounds bounce around a bit before they are absorbed or simply disappear. And some of them returned to us. It was good to hear the faint echoes from the resonant cavities or cells of belief that were distributed throughout the Kingdom, and know that our work was not without result.

*May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,  
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

*Psalms 19:14*

1. Ezekiel 33:32; “Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.”
2. Jeremiah 5:21 and 6:10; Ezekiel 12:2; also Matthew 13:5; Acts 7:51 and 28:27
3. 1 Corinthians 3:7
4. Ezekiel 33

5. Ephesians 6:15; "... with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."
6. James 1:5; "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
7. Hebrews 10:24; "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds..."
8. Psalm 139:2; "You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar."; also note when Jesus knew the thoughts of his adversaries
9. I think of the "image" of the aroma of sacrifices (or our worship) reaching God
10. John 4:24 – in spirit and in truth

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