

[The quotations on this thinksheet are from the final examinations of students in my 78S *THE ROOTS OF FAITH AND LIFE: THE BIBLICAL PARADIGMS.*]

The basic categories of the biblical literature begin, in my rendering of them, with the letter

**S**ong--supremely, the Psalms  
Story--supremely, Jesus' Parables, unique in the world's storytelling  
aying--especially "the Wisdom Literature," including Jesus' crafted gnomes.  
What is true of all language is excitingly true of Hebrew, viz. that abstractions are [the Lat. stem] "drawn from" concretions, i.e. physical human experiences. Visible and invisible, "body" and "soul," [the Gk. stem of *paradigm*] "point to" each other, and interpretation involves two-way communication. Accordingly, exploring the roots [the fundamental phonemes-sememes-morphemes] of the Bible's Hebrew-Aramaic-Greek words is at the same time exploring "the roots of faith and life." To extend the analogy linguistics uses from the plant world, the biblical songs, stories, and sayings are "fruits" from the "stems" of the "roots" of the biblical languages--the translinguistic fruits being faith, life, the glory of God, and the joy of the whole creation in God.  
Of the three literary tyles,  
STORY lies along [cf. lit. of *parable*] the entire reality of human existence,  
SONG moves "the heart" [Hebrew; but we would say "emotions," "feelings"],  
SAYING penetrates and illumines "the heart" [Hebrew; our "mind," "spirit"].  
→ Ergo, storytelling is the basic skill through which both to understand and to communicate the biblical "word"-revelation, way of seeing and living in the world (my definition of "a religion").

*Student comments on the course:*

"Looking for roots is very involving," getting my whole self into Bible study.

"I became aware that I have been more narrow than I thought I was, and more narrow than I intend to remain."

"Roots and paradigms have to be experienced, they cannot be merely taught. So I'm glad the course began with confusion and let us discover our own clarity."

"I've never studied a foreign language, so getting at the roots of the biblical languages was an unexpected pleasure as well as illumination."

"What a thrill to discover that, from growing acquaintance with the actuality of biblical roots and paradigms, one can both understand the dynamics of inherited theology and more intelligently and passionately develop one's own!"

My anxiety about change has lessened, for I am now more able to be "faithful to my own roots in Scripture and history and also open and universal in hope," having actually experienced in the course that "concepts can be developed along paradigmatic lines" heuristically, knowing that the explorations will always return to the physical ground [e.g., "turning"] and the grounding in faith.

Now that I've experienced that the abstracts of faith and theology are grounded in the concretes "of everyday life, I'm in better shape to perceive and live as a Christian in the world and also to communicate the gospel. The dynamic relation of eternal truth and changing circumstance was for me by Tillich's 'correlation,' but is now by paradigm."

"I've given up the compulsion to systematize everything in my mind, which now I see must share with, and not dominate, my body-psyche-spirit. Especially the vividly image-d paradigms help on this integration, this integral logic of life."