

Column

It was a secure and happy world . . . a world of colorful bulletin boards, weekly penmanship lessons, recess and even fairy tales. I am thinking of my second-grade classroom. I especially enjoyed it when our teacher – Mrs. Roberts – pulled out the red volume of fairy tales and began reading them to us.

Teachers today tell me they have no time for reading to their students. Not because they do not want to, but because their hands are tied by constraints imposed by government bureaucrats far removed from local classrooms. Instead of creating an environment of wonder and thirst for discovery, teachers must teach towards standardized tests.

Returning to fairy stories, these tales typically feature an imaginary world inhabited by fanciful beings. Listening to them requires the hearer – whatever his age – to exercise imagination. The set does not come readymade as on a television screen, but rather must be crafted in the listener’s mind.

Fairy tales are pleasant and helpful in developing the mind and creating a spirit of wonder. Nevertheless, there comes a time when they need to be allowed to function as signposts pointing to something beyond themselves. Echoing C.S. Lewis, this something is ‘the true myth’ of the Creator God coming down, taking human flesh, dying and coming to life again.

Tales and legends from the past may have hints and foregleams of the true story, but they are incomplete in and of themselves. However thrilling we may find these old stories, they pale in comparison with the one grounded in time, space and history and mediated to us in the Bible.

No, God Himself has given us a surer, more complete word. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty,” says 2 Peter 1:6.

As Easter looms ahead, why not consider revisiting the evidence for the historicity of the Christian faith . . . the story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. For your Lenten reading, may I suggest *Cold-Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace, an atheist turned believer. In this book, Wallace employs the techniques he used as a homicide investigator to examine the claims of Christ. By journeying

with him, almost certainly you will find your own faith strengthened and your ability to share the beauty of the Gospel enhanced.

Fairy stories can provide the entry to the trail, but the end of the journey is the empty tomb and the world that is to come. Go all the way.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings, being ordered by thy governance, may be righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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