

STORIES

Have you ever thought about why stories are made? Not just the amusing ones we make up to pass the time or to keep our children interested. I am thinking about those fundamental stories which appear in all human societies in different forms - such as some of those in the Bible. They are stories about things we do not understand, life and death and the purpose of existence.

Recently, when preparing a class for our Quaker Children's meeting, I looked at some scientific accounts of the creation of the world and the evolution of life and realised that this is also a story, but one dealing only with the 'how' and 'when', it does not attempt to touch on the 'why'. When I looked at the two different stories in Genesis (the one about the creation in six days and the other about the Garden of Eden) I realised that neither was really about how it all happened, they were both, in different ways, trying to answer the question of why we are here. The physical details in the two stories are just stage scenery, changed between the acts. They are like the apparent differences between some Religions where on the surface they may seem different but at the heart they may yet be the same.

Might this help us to understand religious difference?

Imagine a huge stained glass window through which the Light of the Spirit is shining. We are all pieces of glass of different sizes, shapes and colours, all important parts of a picture of which the individual pieces can have no complete knowledge. Some of us feel that our size or shape or colour is the right one and that everyone should be like us. That cannot be right. The picture is beyond my, or anyone's, understanding and to think that I have been given an insight that I should impose on others would be arrogant. What I can and must do is try and let the Light shine through me as clearly and truly as I can - and let it speak through my life rather than through my inadequate words.

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