

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

A Good Book

Writing a book isn't as straight forward and simple as one might think. The author may have an overall idea or central theme, but what proves the most difficult is something called "character development"...or, rather, once the character has been developed, getting that character to "move" in the direction that the author would like. He or she may have created an individual, but it soon becomes apparent that this character has a life of its own...and that it's very unwise to try and force that character to do something out-of-character.

In other words, the story must move in accordance with the personalities created.

You can't create a strong-willed personality, for instance, and never expect it to make a decision. Nor can you endow your characters with "free will" and always be able to predict what they will choose to do. You might be able to predict what they are likely to do, but there is always the chance that they'll do just the opposite (just to be ornery).

If the author decides to free one of his characters into making a move that is unnatural to his already-developed character, he makes the entire story unbelievable; and the object of most books is to make you believe in what is taking place, at least while the book is being read. Any book that holds your attention, then, must have this element of believability, or truth, in it.

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It must also have an author that is “true to self,” for a book written by a middle-class American trying to imitate the style of a British nobleman isn’t as convincing as an author writing according to his own style and experience.

“Truth,” then, is an integral part of any good and enduring book. The creator must be true to his or her own nature and must allow his/her creations to be true to theirs. Once the ground rules have been set and the story has an overall direction, the creator can introduce new characters or situations, if needs be, to insure that the direction is maintained; but, as the story unfolds, the individuals must move according to their own personalities and development. Anything else creates disharmony, confusion, and turmoil...and is likely to produce a book that is seldom read. Perhaps that’s why

“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace”; [1 Cor. 14:33]

for life (like the enduring book) is given by the power of the Holy Spirit, and

“...the Spirit is the truth.” [1 John 5:7]

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