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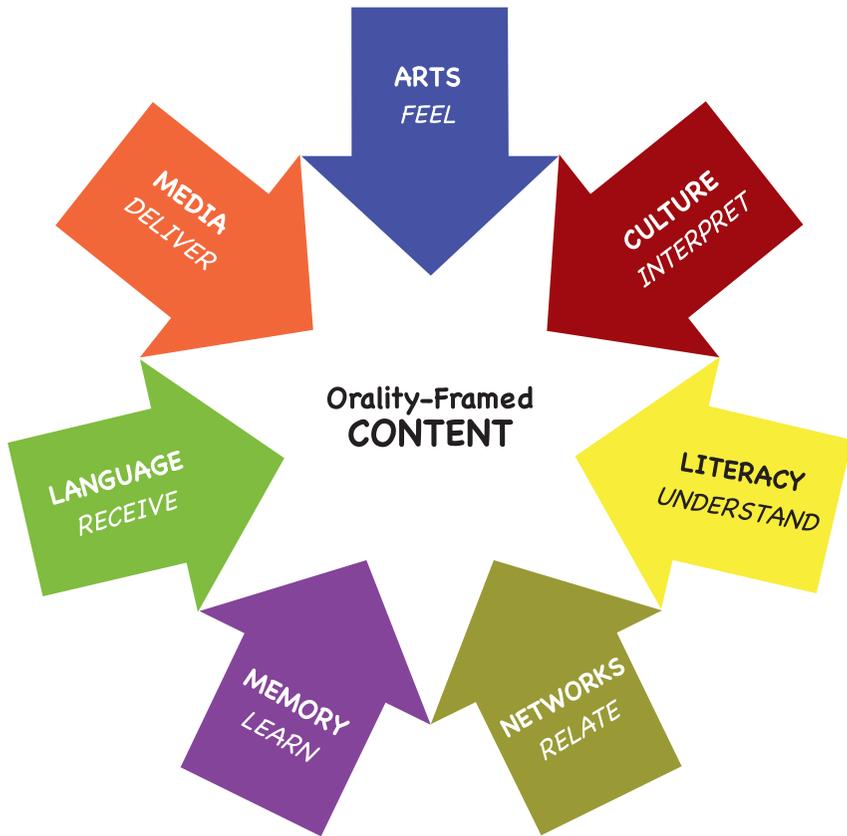
The Word Became Fresh



The Seven Disciplines of Orality

**Madinger • Snead • Gravelle • Moon • Getz
Handley • Logan • Swarr • Koch • Williams • Rye**

SEVEN DISCIPLINES OF ORALITY: A Holistic Model



Courtesy of Dr. Chuck Madinger who leads Global Impact Mission and serves on the International Orality Network's Leadership Team facilitating the Research Task Force.

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Cover Photo

Uniskript can be traced back to 1446 when King Sejong launched the Korean alphabet which triggered a literacy revolution in Korea. In 2002 Korean linguist Dr. Kim Cho shared her doctorate discoveries on the ancient alphabet at the University of the Nations. The basic idea was then further developed by a team of innovators from the University of the Nations. As a result, the letters were redefined and a technique created to generate new alphabets that are both attractive and relevant.

The art—visual and font creation—is all derived from within the culture, thus providing greater opportunities for natural embracement than an alphabet that might be imported from outside of one's culture.

As we watch the development of Uniskript, which had its roots in a phonic system from the mid-1400s, we are reminded just how much the digital era is mimicking and borrowing from the pre-Gutenberg era.

Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.
All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.
For you are great and do marvelous deeds;
you alone are God.

Psalm 86:8—10 (NIV)

Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

Orality Journal is the journal of the International Orality Network. It is published online semi-annually and aims to provide a platform for scholarly discourse on the issues of orality, discoveries of innovations in orality, and praxis of effectiveness across multiple domains in society. This online journal is international and interdisciplinary, serving the interests of the orality movement through research articles, documentation, book reviews, and academic news. Occasionally, print editions will be provisioned. Submission of items that could contribute to the furtherance of the orality movement is welcomed.

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Editor's Note

Samuel E. Chiang

More Textual / Digital Possibilities Please

When my family moved to Canada as immigrants, I was in my early teens and I knew only the Roman alphabet and seven English phrases that my grandfather had taught me. On the UNESCO “illiteracy to literacy” continuum, I fitted nicely into the illiterate category as a young immigrant in Canada. On the orality continuum (see Lovejoy 2012), which includes learners from those who are exclusively oral to highly textual/digital, and who by necessity or by choice prefer to learn in an oral manner, I was and still am an oral preference learner.

As an eager immigrant, I sought to learn English with gusto. But the Roman alphabet for the English language seemed arbitrary to me, and spelling of words did not always make logical sense. It was bad enough that I could not exercise intuition in the language acquisition effort, but I was lost because logic could not be readily applied to make words and sentences. I wished there was some way in which I could see the link between sound, symbols, and the writing system, so that I could progress along the UNESCO literacy continuum a little quicker.

Decades later, I believe there is now an in-between system which will move people more quickly into textual and language acquisition. The developers of this innovative system call this Uniskript[®].¹

While working on her doctoral studies in linguistics, Ms. Sek Yen Kim-Cho discovered the applicability of the Korean *Hangeul* alphabet system (see <http://sejong-nurigle.com/>). This system was developed by King Sejong (1397-1450), and put into place in 1446 for the Korean people (see page 3 of http://sejong-nurigle.com/uploads/14_Nurigle_Project_Proposal.pdf). Innovators used the principles of the *Hangeul* system and developed Uniskript.

Uniskript is developed from a set of proto-symbols: a rectangle representing the lips; a triangle representing the tip of the tongue; one to three lines representing how wide the mouth opens for the generation of vowel sounds, and so on. Whereas the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA,

<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>) covers all phones (the sounds possible within human language), Uniskript² is fitted to each language as it is developed, only covering the relevant phonemes (sounds possible within a *specific* language).

The difference between the Roman alphabet and Uniskript may be comparable to that of varying symbols used on public restrooms. Consider two washroom doors, the symbol ♂ on one and ♀ on the other. Most people will consider it common knowledge that the first symbol signals male gender and the second signals female gender, but these signs are completely arbitrary and perhaps difficult to remember. In fact, these symbols are created based on a high acquisition of literacy skills. On the other hand, one door with the icon of a man and another door with the icon of a woman in a skirt would be more intuitive (across *most* cultures), because the symbol corresponds directly to what it represents.

Uniskript is not meant to replace any already-existing alphabet; it is simply meant to introduce literacy in a variety of settings.

What Are the Applications of Uniskript, and Where Is It Going?

The innovators are already launching test trials, academic experiments, and scalable study groups to implement Uniskript into different domains. Consider the following.

Reading. Uniskript can be used as an introduction to reading, because it helps people see the correlation between symbol and sound. Uniskript teaches symbols (icons) that correspond to symbols (phones) in a way that makes sense. This process is called *iconophonological* or *icono-featural*. Uniskript is unique in that a visual translates directly to sound. Furthermore, the art—visual and font creation—is all derived from within the culture, thus providing greater opportunities for natural embracement than an alphabet that might be imported from outside of one’s culture. The implications for oral preference learners are huge, including those who are highly textual/digital.

Children. Children sometimes have difficulty learning to read because the Roman alphabet is arbitrary, providing no intuitive connection between sound and symbol. Uniskript can accelerate the reading process by making

a clear visual representation of how and where sounds are made. Children then understand how an alphabet represents sounds. Can we dream of what might be possible with biblical literacy?

Dyslexia. Current focus group studies and trials in the English language, it is already demonstrating that the deployment of Uniskript as a tool to introduce the concept of an alphabet to a child produces different outcomes. The alphabet avoids any mirror images that might create confusion as to what sound is meant to be produced. More scalable studies are now underway to see how individuals with dyslexia will function better with Uniskript.

Apraxia. Speech therapists handling cases of children apraxia (difficulties in handing motor movements involving facial muscles) and adult apraxia due to trauma are teaching patients how to speak through Uniskript.

Deafness. The advancement of technology is so great that hearing devices implemented into the ears can now help people who are born deaf to “hear”—but how do they pronounce words after years of inactivity in the muscle formation of sounds and words? Uniskript is deployed to help formerly deaf people to recognize facial muscle formation and how sounds can be made and words can form.

Lack of space precludes me from discussing the Uniskript digital input system, and ultimately, the Uniskript contribution to shell books (www.shellbooks.org) through crowd-sourcing.

This fledging system will need to be reviewed by many others (an intensive process which has already begun), and if proven fruitful, will take time to gain acceptance. If this happens, it may present a fresh hope for the 1.6 billion adults who are excluded from the opportunity of reading scripture for themselves.

As I watch the development of Uniskript, which had its roots in a phonic system from the mid-1400s, I am reminded just how much the digital era is mimicking and borrowing from the pre-Gutenberg era.

This issue of the Orality Journal is a special one; not only do we celebrate our one-year anniversary, but also the articles are keyed off from the anchor

piece by Chuck Madinger. He provides both scale and scope of coverage in “A Literate’s Guide to the Oral Galaxy.” Then, we include an aspect of each of the disciplines of orality—culture (Snead), language (Gravelle), literacy (Moon), memory (Getz), networks (Handley), arts (Logan), and media (Swarr, Koch, and the ION Audio Scripture Engagement team). Keith Williams was gracious to provide digital and mobile interests and implications for oral-preference learners. Tara Rye provided reviews on two excellent books that are now being translated into multiple languages.

As promised in the last issue, the labs on adaptive changes are here—in print, it is covered by Joe Handley (covering network and participatory learning in leaders development), and online, the blog (www.oralicity.net/blog) by Jennifer Giezendanner (describing the acceptance process of Bible storying in a cross-cultural organizational environment).

Finally, we are in for a special treat, as each of the writers of the “Seven Disciplines of Orality” are also the presenters at this year’s ION conference. What they have written is also mediated audibly into what they shall say and what we shall hear.

On the Journey Together,

Samuel E. Chiang
From Johannesburg, South Africa

- ¹ The developers of this system have filed patents globally.
- ² A simplified description of the process for developing Uniskript for a language involves a few steps: 1.) First, the phonemes of a language must be determined; if certain phonemes do not exist within a language, there is no need to develop extra symbols for it. 2.) A team is sent to collaborate with indigenous speakers of the language in order to determine how the proto-symbols may be adapted in a way that is relevant to their culture and art—sometimes images and shapes that are significant within a culture may be incorporated into the Uniskript alphabet. This creates a connection between the people and this new alphabet as well as the shape of the symbol and the mouth. 3.) Once symbols are decided on, an artist finalizes them, ensuring their aesthetics. 4.) A font is developed.

Reference

Lovejoy, Grant. 2012. "The Extent of Orality." *Orality Journal* 1(1): 11-39.



Culture

Durwood Snead

Durwood heads the international work of North Point Ministries in Alpharetta, GA. There he leads a worldwide ministry that mobilizes thousands, helping children at risk and creating churches that are effective at reaching their cultures. Durwood travels extensively, teaching and strategizing with ministries around the world. Before joining North Point in 2001, Durwood spent 26 years in business, including executive assignments at CMD Group and AC Nielsen. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond and has an MBA from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Durwood and his wife Judi have five children and nine grandchildren (so far).

A Story

In East Africa, there was a nomadic and quite remote people group. Some African evangelists and pastors had been working among these people for years bearing very little fruit. Because the people had so few visitors, they would assemble and listen to African pastors dressed in suits and ties, preach to them, and go through the Bible verse by verse. They listened the best they could and went back to their villages and huts. Over time, only women came to these meetings and even they seemed to do so out of obligation or the novelty of having an outsider visit. But they were not responsive to the messages they heard and did not seem to engage with the speaker.

One day, a new African pastor came, gathered a few villagers together, and began asking them about their village. *Who are you? What do you do? Where do*

you go? What are some of your biggest challenges? How do you communicate? This pastor went to a village gathering and watched and listened. He noticed the people would gather in groups and begin telling stories. The stories were animated, with people partially acting them out, sometimes breaking into song as they passionately wove their tales capturing the rapt attention of everyone in the group. After the story was done, they would discuss it. By the end of the session, they had thoroughly digested the story and anyone in the group could recount it.

After observing for quite a while, the new African pastor began asking more questions about the challenges these people dealt with and how they handled them. He learned they were a nomadic people who raised goats and followed the water, wherever it was. But he also

learned that they believed some things that were not true. For instance, they believed that all water was the same and that it should be withheld if someone had diarrhea. They also believed they should marry their daughters off early to ensure they get a husband. Many were suffering from malaria, but had no idea where it came from. Spiritually, these people believed that there were two gods who created everything and demanded sacrifice from everyone.

It became apparent to this new pastor that Satan had deceived these people into believing many lies. However, the only teaching they were receiving did not deal with the lies and was done in a way that did not resonate at all with their way they communicated with each other. The pastors who had come to this group had not found the key to unlocking their hearts and minds. This new pastor, however, was discovering some clues and his ministry among them became dramatically different.

Culture—What Is It?

Culture is what defines our “tribe,” our group of people that have similar education levels, beliefs, customs, dress, music, language, and communication methods. Culture connects us, gives us a sense

of belonging, familiarity, and peace. Culture can be one of the glorious manifestations of the diversity and complexity of God’s creation. The beauty of music, the colors of apparel, the stimulating tastes and aromas of food from different cultures around the world prime our senses and delight our souls.

Cultural anthropologists tend to study culture, appreciate its beauty, and celebrate its uniqueness. Sometimes, however, a closer look at a culture reveals lies people believe that are destructive to them physically, mentally, and spiritually. Beliefs determine actions and actions have consequences. These consequences can be deadly. We live in a broken world and often the glory of diversity is tainted by cultural customs that can be as extreme as child sacrifice.

God Using Culture

After humanity’s rebellion thousands of years ago, God ordered divisions to occur in the population of the earth, causing people to speak many languages. It is amazing how multiple languages can be spoken by hundreds of people groups on one island like New Guinea. But what if God, ever pursuing men and women, created all of these people groups as part of a strategy to bring people to himself?

God knew that the population of the world would grow dramatically and it would be increasingly difficult to bring the truth to almost seven billion people scattered over the earth. Purposely dividing these people into nations and people groups gives us direction in how to bring them the truth.

Culture becomes the key to unlocking the hearts of people all over the world. Studying it illuminates strategies ordained by God to reach people in their own setting. The characteristics of people groups vary widely. But most groups that have never heard the truth, commonly called unreached groups, have several characteristics in common. They are:

- Poor
- Uneducated
- Very connected to their tribe or group
- Easily deceived, controlled, and manipulated
- Oral communicators

They cannot be reached with traditional print communication, even in their own languages, because they cannot read. This characteristic makes them quite susceptible to all kinds of lies. Their sources of information are what they hear from others and the others may not have their

best interests at heart. Satan uses illiteracy to keep people in bondage to lies that can destroy them and cause them to lose hope.

But when the culture is studied and engaged, when customs, methods of communication, and physical needs are examined, the keys to unlocking hearts appear.

In the story above, the new pastor learned that this people group communicated through animated stories that also included impromptu singing. The pastor then examined some of the lies the people believed about water, illness, malaria, and even raising their own children. He developed content that addressed those issues and began delivering it in the story/drama/song methodology that he had observed. The people actively responded to this new method of communication, embracing the truths as they tried them out. This led the group to ask for stories from scripture about creation, original sin, God's love, and the Redeemer, all presented in the familiar format.

Revival broke out. Men began coming to meetings for the first time in years. Churches assembled under trees—many grew to the point where they needed bigger trees. Pastors that had been ministering

in the area began changing their methodology of preaching to the story/drama/song format and they too began to see greater results.

What God Is Up to Today

This is the most exciting time in history to be alive. It is astounding to observe how fast God is drawing people to himself.

God is disrupting the world, causing people who were captivated by generations of erroneous beliefs to be open to new ways of looking at the world and God. Political upheavals in the Arab world are causing many traditional Islamists to become disenfranchised with their governments and to turn from Islam to atheism or to look for alternative belief systems.

Culture is changing radically and rapidly. The first time I went to China in 2002 most men over the age of 50 were wearing the traditional attire of the communist era—matching pants, shirt, and cap. A couple of years later I saw that khaki pants had replaced the traditional dress. Within five years, men over 50 dressed very much like men of the same age in the U.S.—even wearing baseball caps. The introduction of Western fashion ideas through international business took a culture that had existed for decades and changed it in less than ten years.

Urbanization and civil war are causing people to flock to cities or adjoining countries for jobs, opportunities, and safety, bringing previously difficult to reach people to city metropolises, where they are much more readily accessible.

Social media is connecting people and sharing ideas on a geometric scale. College students today have more in common with college students from other countries than they do with previous generation from their own countries. Target marketing allows those meeting a very specific metric description to be targeted with specific messaging at a low cost. For example, for just a few dollars a Facebook message like a quote from Jesus can be sent to millions who describe themselves as “loving the prophet Mohammed” and the response is immediate. The trickle down effect of these ideas on oral learners is profound.

Cell phone technology is radically changing the landscape even among those who are poor. While there are five billion cell phone accounts in the world today, it is estimated that 90% of the world will have a smart phone by 2020, establishing a communication “channel” with oral learners that has never existed before.

Engaging with what God Is Doing

There are a number of things we can do to engage with what God is doing today.

Study the culture, embrace it, and use it. In Acts 17, the Apostle Paul was in Athens. Scripture tells us that Paul was getting upset with all the idols in the city. As he engaged with the people and asked questions, he attracted attention and was eventually asked to speak publicly. He used things about the culture to bring his message. Seeing an inscription to an unknown God, Paul said, “Let me tell you who he is,” and proceeded to give them a gospel presentation in their own culture.

God has created each culture in a unique way and we must study it to make the gospel as relevant to that culture as we can. We should address issues important to them, do so in familiar ways, and use every contextual example we can find to make the truth of the kingdom vital and real. Some cultures have adopted creeds from familiar European creeds with examples relevant to those cultures.

Don't make the gospel harder than it needs to be. In Acts 15, the church met and determined that the new Gentile believers did not need to be weighed down with all the rules the Jewish believers used in their worship. The gospel needed to be clear, but not out of reach for the people.

Transformation of hearts needs to occur, and often the rules we have are related to transformed hearts.

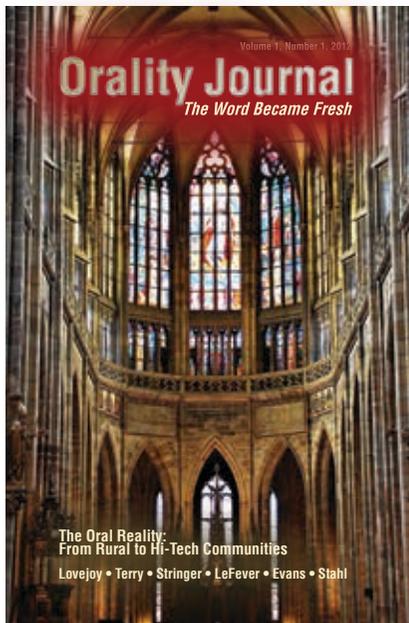
A friend in Afghanistan told me of a prominent villager who had come to be a follower of Jesus. He visited a small church with his entire family—six wives and a host of children. Suddenly, the “husband and wife” issue became less important than this entire family becoming followers of Jesus.

Don't confuse culture with tradition. While culture may be radically changing, traditions are parts of a culture that are clung to because they are familiar. This is frequently observed generationally. Culture is a bit like the wind—it shifts one way and then another. It can be feared because it is different, or it can be embraced, harnessed, and used to present truth. In many cases, God is rapidly changing culture while some (the church in particular) may hold on to tradition. When the church holds on to tradition instead of embracing culture, the church can become irrelevant.

Help meet human needs through love. Jesus set the perfect example for us. He healed the sick, cast out the demons, and introduced people to the truth that set them free. As oral learners embrace truth that helps them practically (especially their health), they become more open to the truth of the gospel that will set them free spiritually.



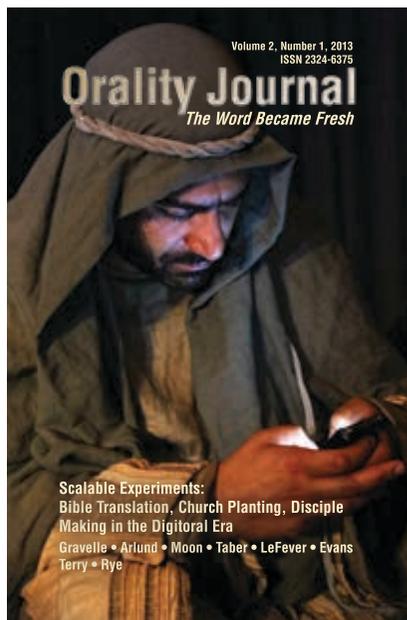
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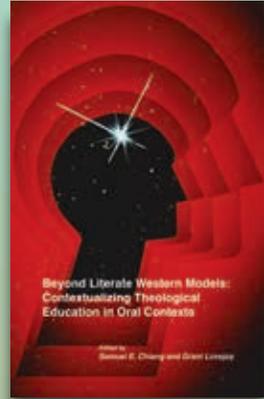
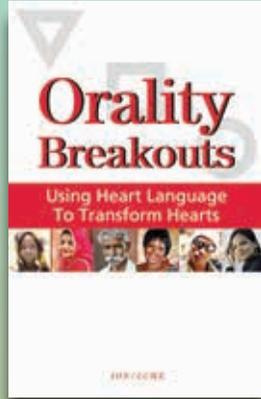
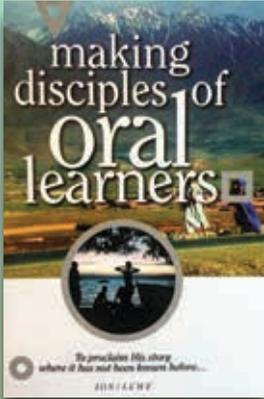


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The Oral Reality:
From Rural to Hi-Tech
Communities**



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